

BECOMING “AMERICAN”: RACE, CLASS, GENDER, AND ASSIMILATION
IDEOLOGIES IN YOUNG ADULT MEXICAN IMMIGRANT FICTION

by

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(Under the Direction of Joel A. Taxel)

This dissertation explores representations of race, class, gender and ideologies of assimilation in thirty-two young adult novels involving the Mexican immigrant experience published from 1953-2009. The study draws upon several theories, but is primarily located within the paradigm of critical Marxist educational, cultural, and literary theories including the sociology of school knowledge and critical multiculturalism based upon the work of Raymond Williams, Michael Apple, Joel Taxel, Stephen May and Christine Sleeter. I also draw upon theories of assimilation throughout U.S. history such as *e pluribus unum*, the melting pot, multiculturalism, transnationalism, and hybridity, with emphasis upon the work of Homi Bhabha that conceptualizes cultural hybridity as spaces of cultural negotiation and rearticulation. To provide further context for the study, I also review representations of Mexican Americans in larger American culture via historical accounts, school textbooks, and the entertainment media of television and film. I address the following research questions: What ideologies of assimilation are suggested in young adult contemporary fiction involving the Mexican immigrant experience? How do they change (or not change) over time? How do the intersections of assimilation ideologies and representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender in young adult contemporary fiction change (or not change) over time?

To analyze the texts, I used a qualitative methodology of literary content analysis. Information from the novels was grouped into the following self-constructed categories: Issues of story (setting, narration, protagonist ethnicity/gender, author ethnicity/gender); representations of ethnicity (physical descriptions, characterizations, relationship to those outside of culture); representations of socioeconomic status (occupations, living conditions); representations of gender (roles, attitudes, descriptions); issues of language (inclusion, accuracy); issues of cultural identity; references to agency and position; references to Mexican American history.

It was found that the novels fall into four ideological categories: assimilation as unattainable, as conformity, as adaptation/bicultural practice, and as hybridity. Although earlier publications (1950s-1970s) largely reflected ideologies of unattainability or conformity, some later publications also continued to reflect these ideologies, including the most recent title of the sample (2009). Mexican Americans were often stereotyped within these ideologies, reflecting a selective tradition. Novels suggested multiple ideologies, often reflected through secondary characters.

INDEX WORDS: immigration, immigrant, Mexican Americans, assimilation, selective tradition, children's literature, ideology, hybridity; transnationalism

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B. Mus., The University of Georgia, 1981

M. M. Ed., The University of Georgia, 1983

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2011

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Lamar Dudley Cowan and Ruby Thomason Cowan, for their inspiring love of all things UGA and all things literary, respectively. This study is also humbly dedicated to the Mexican American families whose lives, stories, and children I have the privilege of sharing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The extent to which the professors at this university have influenced and stimulated my thinking is beyond record. I am especially indebted to the keen, discerning, and critical perspective of Dr. Joel Taxel, whose work serves as inspiration and model for my own. I specifically came here in hopes of studying with him, and I could not ask for a better mentor. Joel read my many drafts, combed each word meticulously, and provided specific commentary to put me on the right track every time. He also seemed to have an uncanny ability to care for my mental and emotional wellbeing as well, sensing when to tell me to take a few days off to “rest my brain.” I cannot thank him enough for his quick and patient responses, his nearly constant availability, and his unfaltering support. He is a brilliant scholar, and a wonderful human being.

Dr. JoBeth Allen has been invaluable to my development as a writer. She is undoubtedly one of, if not the best writing instructor I will ever encounter. She too is a brilliant scholar with a knack for saying just the right thing in a concise, cogent, and caring manner. JoBeth inspires and challenges me to do and be more than I ever think I can – and for this I am grateful.

To Dr. Jennifer Graff I owe the kindle and focus of a dissertation topic that had begun to spark earlier in my doctoral program during courses on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) with Dr. Pam Shepherd, issues of culture in literacy education with Dr. Bob Fecho, and the Red Clay Writing Project with Drs. Allen and Fecho. Jenn’s excellent course addressing representations of the immigrant experience in children’s literature, as well as her own personal interest, extensive knowledge, and passion for the subject, helped me to articulate my own research interests and agenda.

I am also indebted to all the dear friends in my life who have patiently listened to me talk about my work, asked me how it is going, and understood over and over when I turned down invitations to do anything away from my desk for the past 5 ½ years. I am especially grateful to my precious Rick, whose constant love, understanding, practical wisdom, and sense of humor helped me to put things in perspective when needed.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“...we should insist that the immigrant who comes here...becomes an American and assimilates himself to us...there can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American but something else also, isn't an American at all” (Roosevelt, 1919, np).

“What is really meant by assimilation is only the acceptance and imitation of Anglo-Saxon civilization...people are considered assimilated or assimilable to that degree which they are capable of imitating the existing order of things” (Bercovici, 1925, np).

The United States is a nation of immigrants. From the first explorers and colonists to set foot upon the North American continent to the most recent arrivals, our country is filled with a mixture of those who were here, and those who have come. A transformational process affecting families and their children, large-scale immigration is arguably one of the most important social developments in American history (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). There has always been controversy surrounding the newest group of immigrants, especially regarding how they may impact the U.S. economy and assimilate into the mainstream of American life. Over the past two and a half centuries, various waves of immigrants to the United States have arrived from Europe, Asia, and more recently Africa and Latin America, each raising concerns for the preservation and stability of the American economy and culture.

Immigration has become a politically charged topic of debate in recent years, as an unprecedented number of immigrants continue to enter the United States. Current census data reveal the largest increase of immigrant population in U.S. history from 2000 - 2005, with a record 37.9 million documented and undocumented immigrants estimated to reside in the United States in the year 2008 (Batalova, 2009); major sending countries include Mexico, China, India,

the Philippines, Vietnam, Russia, and Korea, with many other countries represented¹. The children of these immigrant families comprise *one fifth* of American school enrollment today, with recent projections indicating a potential growth of 15 million new arrivals to the United States over the next 10 years (Camerata, 2007). Few American classrooms remain unaffected by this incredible surge in immigrant population. Amidst the ongoing public debate regarding the possible approaches to immigration, schools across the nation attempt to address the multiple needs of immigrant children as they acclimate to new surroundings.

According to current census data, Mexicans remain the largest U.S. immigrant group since 1980; recent statistics reveal approximately 11.5 million Mexican immigrants residing in the United States, accounting for 30.7 percent of *all* U.S. immigrants (Batalova, 2009). With a contiguous border of 2,067 miles, the country of Mexico offers an accessible opportunity for U.S. immigration. Current Mexican economic hardship, poverty, and social conditions such as drug-related violence make immigration an increasingly desirable and necessary option for many seeking a better life; Mexican President Calderón describes Mexico's struggles to control drug activity as "a fight for territory" that challenges "the very authority of the state" (Hawley, 2010, np). Despite the dangers of border patrols, searing desert heat, and the Rio Grande River, Mexican immigrants continue to arrive in the United States daily, with projections for the future well into the millions annually. However, the majority of Mexican immigrants are *undocumented* – an undeniable fact that continues to influence public sentiment regarding the growing Latino population (Passel & Cohn, 2009).

1. Undocumented Mexican immigrant estimations are derived from the examination of three data sources: The Census Bureau's monthly Current Population Survey, Mexico's National Survey of Employment and Occupation, and The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics' reports of Border Patrol apprehensions. For a full discussion of this methodology, see Passel & Cohn's (2009) report from the Pew Hispanic Center, Washington D.C., Appendix B.

Current U.S. immigration statistics regarding Mexican immigrants are reflected in my own southeastern U.S. school system and community: children of Latino origin (and specifically Mexican origin) maintain an increasing presence in our student population, with families drawn by available work in the local poultry industry. As a school library media specialist and self-professed cultural worker (Freire, 1970), I am personally moved by these engaging young faces, outraged at the narrow and disparaging comments about “those children” that echo in the hallways, and professionally challenged to develop a library media program that supports both the curricular and individual needs of our rapidly growing immigrant population. Observing and interacting with these Mexican immigrant children and their families, I cannot help but wonder how our newcomers manage to navigate the predominantly white, middle class environment of our school and community as outsiders to the dominant culture. In choosing literature and curricular materials for our school population, several questions arise as I consider the landscape of available children’s literature: How do young Mexican immigrants find themselves and their culture represented in the literature offered on school library and classroom shelves? How does this literature position or construct them based upon legal status? What subtle or overt messages regarding assimilation does this literature convey? How does this literature suggest that they live as Americans?

The Latino Threat Narrative

Concerns with illegal immigration and its subsequent drain on American economic resources have spawned the development of a public discourse surrounding Latino immigrants (and specifically *Mexican* immigrants) that Leo Chavez terms the *Latino Threat Narrative* (2008). Within this discourse, the American public is cautioned via the media and press that Mexican immigrants – and especially *illegal* immigrants – pose a threat to the wellbeing of the

United States as they perceivably take jobs from naturalized citizens, overburden social services, fail to contribute to the United States economy, demand a bilingual nation, and generally threaten America's values, identity, and way of life (Chavez, 2008). Mexican immigrants are viewed within this narrative as inassimilable into American society, remaining in the margins due to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language, and cultural affiliation. Along these lines, Samuel Huntington (2004) asserts that there is no "Americano dream" - only an "American dream" - and claims that a cultural divide between Latinos and European Americans could "replace the racial division between blacks and whites as the most serious cleavage in U.S. society" (Huntington, p. 32). Huntington also asserts that Mexican immigrants are *unwilling* to assimilate to American life, citing the propensity of many to live in enclaves and ascribe primarily to their own language and culture.

The Latino Threat Narrative creates and perpetuates what Martínez Alemán (2006) describes as an "essentialized" (p. 25) image of Mexican immigrants, wherein *all* Mexican immigrants are assumed to be members of a homogenous group possessing identical interests, attributes, qualities, cognitive abilities, and desires. Despite the fact that Mexican (and all Latino) immigrants come from a wide variety of economic backgrounds, educational experiences, geographic regions, cultural identifications, religious affiliations, and family situations, they often find themselves lumped in the United States into a single, monolithic, and arguably reductionist category: Latinos hail from a hugely diverse group of countries, continents, and regions, including the Dominican Republic, Haiti, South America, Cuba, Puerto Rico (ironically, a U.S. territory), Central America, and Mexico, with each possessing an immense array of cultures. Additionally, many new immigrants experience the U.S. categorizations of *Latino* or

Hispanic for the first time, as these labels are not used for identification in their countries of origin (Montecinos, 1995).

Within a Latino Threat Narrative, Mexican immigrants are often associated with *illegality* and *criminality*. As Latino gangs have gained notoriety in the United States – particularly MS-13, dubbed in a *National Geographic* documentary to be “The World’s Most Dangerous Gang” (Ling, 2006) – images of violent or criminal Latino foreigners have occupied a large portion of the national debate on immigration. As we will see in Chapter 4, these ideas are also reinforced by the entertainment media, with films and television programs featuring Mexican drug lords, bandits, prostitutes, and human traffickers frequently appearing in American theaters and homes (Larson, 2006). According to Ron Unz of *The American Conservative*, “a perception has taken root in the minds of the American public and many elected leaders that the greatest threat posed by mass immigration is crime” (Unz, 2010, np). Former Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo also articulates this idea, stating that “the face of illegal immigration on the border is one of murder...drug smuggling...vandalism...and infiltration of people coming into this country to do us great harm” (quoted in Unz, 2010, np). However, Unz challenges these contentions, citing data refuting the widespread notion that America’s Latinos have high crime rates: recent prison population demographics and U.S. crime statistics indicate that, contrary to popular belief, Latinos and non-Hispanic whites have approximately the same crime rates in the United States. As we will see in Chapter 4, the image of the border referenced by Tancredo is also constructed as a site of criminality and legality in film and television, further perpetuating a Latino Threat Narrative.

Latinos are also associated with illegality and criminality regarding immigrant status, as evidenced in the recent controversial immigration laws of the states of Arizona, Alabama, and

Georgia. Governor Jan Brewer of Arizona signed a 2010 bill into law allowing law enforcement officials to question or search (without a warrant) any individuals *suspected* of being in the country illegally, raising concerns for the possibility of racial profiling. Although proponents of the Arizona legislation applaud the governor for taking action to solve a crisis that they claim the federal government has not addressed, others assert that procedures surrounding the identification of undocumented (illegal) immigrants is an “open invitation for harassment and discrimination against Hispanics regardless of their citizenship status” (Archibald, 2010), violating the civil rights of legal citizens. These laws have gained widespread support, with several other states, including Texas, Utah, Ohio, and Maryland, and recently Georgia considering the adoption of similar policies (Condon, 2010). Although theoretically intended for potentially undocumented immigrants of all nationalities, actions such as these continue to position all Latino immigrants as readily identifiable and undesirable outsiders, worthy of our suspicion and mistrust.

The Latino Threat Narrative also constructs Latinos as *different* from all previous immigrant groups who supposedly assimilate into American society: Latinos are described as inherently unwilling - or perhaps incapable - of integrating into a predominantly European American way of life. In the extreme form of this narrative, Latinos represent an *invading force* seeking to re-conquer formerly owned land in the U.S. Southwest by establishing concentrated residential enclaves, or “beachheads” (Huntington, 2004, p. 35). Those embracing a Latino Threat Narrative cite cultural affiliations and expressions such as the use of the Spanish language and the establishment of Spanish-language television and radio stations, as well as statistical information such as poor employment statistics and lack of educational progress in the United States to support this view (Chavez, 2008).

However, the development and maintenance of various avenues of cultural expression is not unique to Latinos, nor does the existence of these indicate an unwillingness to participate in American life. Many other immigrant and marginalized groups in the United States continue to maintain active, vibrant expressions of cultural identity and solidarity: African American, Vietnamese, Korean, Dominican, and Jewish groups (to name only a few) also produce newspapers, television/radio programs, and other forms of cultural media that serve to unify and give voice to each of these groups. Many of these publications, programs, and organizations remain active to this day, such as the New York-based *Dominican Times News* and the *Atlanta Jewish Times*. Some U.S. immigrant groups remain politically active in both the United States and in their home countries or nations: many Dominicans retain dual citizenship, participating in elections and campaigning both here and abroad (Pessar & Graham, 2001), and American Jews remain an enormous political force in the United States, especially regarding policies toward Israel and the Middle East (Plitnick, 2010).

As a result of perceived Latino threats to European American norms, ethnic studies programs are also coming under fire. In addition to aggressive immigration laws, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed a bill targeting a K-12 school district's ethnic studies program (Davenport & Cooper, 2010). The legislation prohibits classes that focus on the history, literature, and influence of a "particular ethnic group," such as those within the Mexican-American Studies program in the 56-percent Hispanic Tucson school district. School superintendent Tom Horne supports the bill, claiming that the program promotes "ethnic chauvinism" and racial resentment toward whites: "Public schools should not be encouraging students to resent a particular race....and it's long past time that we prohibited it," Horne states. Although the measure does not prohibit classes that address the history of a particular group,

such perspectives are to be included in general courses, as to not “promote ethnic solidarity” (Davenport & Cooper, np).

Sentiments and actions such as these demonstrate the powerful role that American schools play in shaping the knowledge and perceptions of society regarding a marginalized group: a selective version of history and cultural narrative is presented for digestion by all. Issues of power and position determine whose story is told, and *how* it is told; by repositioning the specialized (and possibly more critical) study of Mexican American history to a diminished, de-centered place within the overarching narrative of “American” history, the Texas school board has retained control of how Mexican American history is viewed, especially regarding the treatment of Mexicans by the U.S. government both past and present - a point discussed as we explore the representations of U.S. and Mexican history in American textbooks in Chapter 3.

Undocumented Immigrants and American-Born Children

Although the Latino Threat Narrative indeed perpetuates many mistruths and monolithic essentializations of Mexican immigrants, it is also fueled by elements of inescapable truth, and the backlash against illegal Mexican immigrants in the United States is not without some foundation. The swelling tide of undocumented immigrant families places a tremendous strain upon an already buckling U.S. economy: undocumented immigrants increase the demand upon tax-supported American social services and institutions such as hospitals, clinics, and schools, with Mexican immigrants estimated to comprise a large percentage of those benefiting from these publicly funded institutions. According to the nonpartisan, Washington-based Pew Hispanic Center, over half of the estimated 11.9 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States are thought to be Mexican born (Passel & Cohn, 2009). The U.S. Census Bureau’s monthly Current Population Survey also suggests a high estimated percentage

of unauthorized Mexican immigrants, including 80% - 85% of Mexicans who have been in the United States for less than a decade (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). A 2009 Pew Hispanic Center report providing the most detailed portrait to date of the U.S. Hispanic immigrant population found it largely comprised of young Latino (predominantly Mexican) families having children at a greater rate than previously known, with the majority of these families uninsured (see *Figures 1.1 & 1.2*).

Undocumented immigrants also come under fire for their lack of contribution to the U.S. economy through income or property taxation. Many argue that these taxes pay for the very social services and institutions that serve undocumented immigrants, such as health care facilities, prescription medication programs, public income assistance, and education. Schools in particular are pushed to meet the growing needs of the immigrant population, especially in the area of language education (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Additionally, American-born children of undocumented parents are entitled to public education, regardless of whether or not their undocumented parents contribute to the U.S. economy. However, many undocumented immigrants do in fact pay income taxes in the United States: Gerald Prante, of the nonpartisan research organization The Tax Foundation, notes that 1.4 million individuals filed income tax returns in the United States in 2006 using a Tax Identification Number in lieu of a social security number, with nearly 8,000 applications for Tax Identification Numbers coming from the state of New Mexico alone in 2003 (Prante, 2006).

American-born children of undocumented immigrants present a dilemma for those concerned with immigration policy and the impact of immigration on American society, as well as for those with humanitarian concern for the wellbeing of families and children. Because any child born in the United States has a right to citizenship regardless of his/her parents' immigrant

status in accordance with current interpretation of the 14th Amendment, the growing presence of American-born immigrant children complicates the debate over policies aimed at their parents. South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham suggests that the 14th Amendment, originally designed to grant birthright citizenship to freed slaves and later, the children of legal immigrants, was *not* intended to also include the children of those who are outside of legal immigrant status, as their non-citizen parents are not “subject to the jurisdiction” of the United States as stated in the amendment (Kane, 2010).

The growing number of American-born immigrant children in the United States cannot be taken lightly: according to the Pew Hispanic Center (2009), nearly 79 percent of the 5.1 million children (younger than 18) of illegal immigrants were born in this country and are therefore U.S. citizens. In total, 4 million U.S.-born children of illegal immigrants lived in this country in 2009, alongside 1.1 million foreign-born children of illegal immigrants (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Children born in the United States are also entitled to education and social services: according to Passel & Cohn of the Pew Hispanic Center (2009), children of illegal immigrant parents now account for about one in fifteen elementary and secondary school students nationwide, and more than one in ten in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, and Texas. These percentages provide a compelling reason to explore how the immigrant experience is represented in school curriculum and literature, a point I will begin to explore in Chapter 2 in my discussion of the sociology of school knowledge.

The Question of Assimilation

The question of assimilation is inevitably linked to issues of immigration, and can be viewed from the perspective of both the immigrant and the receiving culture. Many immigrants to the United States, especially youth, make the conscious choice to blend into American society

and culture to begin anew; others choose to retain strong ties to their cultural heritage and ways of life in the United States. Still others forge identities that combine elements of both cultures, and often experience various levels of internal and external conflict as they navigate this unknown terrain (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2008). As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, this struggle with mixed, hybrid cultural identity has begun to surface more frequently in contemporary films and young adult novels dealing with the Mexican American immigrant experience.

Immigrant assimilation may also be viewed from the position of the receiving culture, and inherently involves issues of power and conformity, as Bercovici (1925) suggests above. As we will see in Chapter 2, U.S. history is filled with various opinions of how an immigrant should live in America, ranging in ideology from the inclusive and welcoming *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one) of our founding fathers to the expectation of cultural relinquishment as seen in Teddy Roosevelt's 1919 letter to the American Defense Society quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The great melting pot, an image long held as representational of American assimilation ideology, continues to circulate among those who hope that all may bring their cultural lives to the fire to forge a newly created American society. However, all were not – and arguably still *are* not – “meltable” due to race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (Warner & Srole, 1945). America's newest (and historically largest) group, Mexican immigrants are also experiencing this sort of reception. As America continues to receive immigrants into a largely white, middle class fold of cultural expectations and values, Mexican immigrants often find themselves on the outside of mainstream culture and unwelcome - a situation exacerbated by issues of legal status and a troubled American economy. As Bercovici (1925), an Italian immigrant to the United States so

aptly noted, newcomers are often “measured” against a rubric of white, Anglo Saxon cultural standards, and may fall short according to those of the dominant culture.

However, as we will see in the following chapter, conceptions of assimilation continue to evolve (and dissolve) over the past two decades, especially with the advent of globalization and increased communication technology. Immigrants are able to move from country to country with greater ease today, remaining at once both “here and there” - a part of both home and country of destination - by keeping regular, frequent contact; some even participate in the political life of the home country, as exemplified by the strong community life and political participation of Dominicans in New York City (Pessar & Graham, 2001). These *transnational* families, living across borders and boundaries of space and place, continue to form new, *hybrid* identities as immigrants in the United States, bringing a new sense of what it means to be American (Foner, 2001). This redefinition of American identity, made possible by today’s communication technology and travel capabilities, challenges earlier conceptions of assimilation involving a complete turn or surrender of home culture in order to become a member of American society.

The work of hybridity theorists is especially pertinent to the discussion of power relationships between immigrants and the dominant culture, as well as to the formation of new, fluid forms of culture proceeding from these relationships. Although transnational immigrant families are able to connect and maintain cultural ties, they also enter into cultural encounters with others. Bhabha (1994) suggests that cultural formation occurs in a “stairwell” of fluid passage between two poles, opening up the “possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (p. 5). Latina scholar Gloria Anzaldúa, one of the first to crystallize and celebrate the potential of hybridity, refers to these in-between spaces as “borderlands,” boldly calling for a new kind of world consciousness, and a new sort of human

being (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 216). Theorists working in the area of hybridity call us to critique relationships of power at the point of cultural intersections (or borders), raising several questions: Who sets the standard to which we assimilate? Who determines the extent to which one has assimilated? How are all groups, both dominant and minority, represented? Whose histories are present, and how are these histories conveyed? As Bercovici (1925) observed nearly a century ago, the dominant culture typically monitors and controls “the border,” both figuratively and literally; how do Mexican immigrants fare? As we will see in Chapter 4’s discussion of television and film representations, the image of the border is a frequent theme in many of these works; the border signifies the edge of danger, threat, evil, and promiscuity, and is to be defended at all costs by those that uphold the “American” way of life, as seen in repeated calls to protect our borders from the onslaught of illegal immigrants. The border is also presented as a boundary to cross in the search for personal identity or truth, a theme occurring occasionally in both film and young adult novels, as I will discuss in subsequent chapters.

Mexican Immigrants and the Selective Tradition

Mexican immigrants in the United States, like many other marginalized groups, are frequent targets of stereotyping (the essentialization of an entire group based upon the characteristics or behavior of a few members) and discrimination, and according to a recent Associated Press Poll of Hispanic and non-Hispanic American adults, 61% of the nearly 2,000 respondents acknowledged this fact (Fram, 2010). Jokes, racial slurs and demeaning images continue to freely circulate in advertisements, television programs, films, and the internet, often presenting colorfully dressed, sexualized, or criminalized Mexican immigrants as the subject of amusement or mistrust. Websites such as Mexicanjokes.net (“Not Racist – Just Funny”)

currently feature pictures, demeaning jokes, and insults to use for “Mexicans who do not speak English,” and continue to receive contributions from viewers (“Mexican Jokes,” 2010).

Images and representations such as this fall within an array of commonly held beliefs and assumptions regarding Mexican American life, history, and culture in the United States that comprise what Raymond Williams calls a *selective tradition* (Williams, 1977). The perpetuation of a selective tradition is a significant means by which societal groups maintain power, shaping how a marginalized group is viewed, what perspectives are deemed important, and how this information is conveyed. By shaping a society’s affective and cognitive interpretations of the world through a process of naturalization termed by Gramsci as “hegemony” (2000, p. 422), the interests of the dominant group are continuously reified and renewed. The selective tradition of the dominant culture strongly impacts what is considered knowledge, and how that knowledge is discussed and viewed. Within the selective tradition, “certain meanings and practices are selected for emphasis and certain other meanings and practices are neglected or excluded” (Williams, 1977, p. 115). Thus, a highly selective version of the past provides an important link to the present, offering what Williams calls “a sense of predisposed continuity” (pp. 115-116). The invisible “obviousness” (Althusser, 1986, p. 7) of traditional beliefs and historical construction constitutes the lens through which the present and future is viewed and interpreted, and those whose stories are not a part of (or in conflict with) this narrative often find themselves marginalized and oppressed.

Within the selective tradition, Mexican American history, culture, and people are viewed and positioned in U.S. society according to the interests of the European American dominant culture. As seen in Chapter 3, historians and school history textbooks interpret important events in U.S./Mexican history from a vantage point favorable to the United States in a manner similar

to the treatment of Native American and African American history in school curricula and historical accounts; thus viewed, Mexican lands gained through intimidation and conquer were “annexed” through voluntary “cession” as the United States defended itself against the aggressive advances of an untamed, less civilized Mexican population (Zinn, 1999, p. 159).

The question of assimilation is also inevitably and inextricably linked to the selective tradition. As frequently evidenced in U.S. history, immigrants are often deemed “unmeltable” (Warner & Srole, 1945) by American society based upon issues of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, politics, or religion. Today’s Mexican immigrants frequently experience this silent (and sometimes not so silent) determination: Mexicans are often viewed as inassimilable for many reasons including darker skin color, lower educational status, presumed intellectual ability, poor English language skills, a reputation of criminality, allegiance to Mexico, and a history of being ‘conquered’ by the United States. Parallels may be readily drawn between the current selective tradition regarding Mexican immigrants and that of African Americans in the United States several decades ago; some have determined the growing presence of Mexican immigrants to constitute America’s most pervasive “race” issue since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s (Huntington, 2004).

The selective tradition regarding Mexicans is also evident in the entertainment industry. As we will see in Chapter 4, the powerful mediums of television and film are especially adept at “selling ideology that does not upset the social order” (MacDonald, 2010), suggesting or reifying the commonly held views of marginalized groups within society. Marginalized “others” are therefore kept “in their place” through typecasting and positioning within these programs – an especially evident tendency with Latino characters - and their histories are often are repackaged to reflect dominant American perspectives (Nericcio, 2007). Although improving over time, the

entertainment industry has generally presented American viewers with an array of Mexican bandits, prostitutes, drug dealers, Latin lovers, dark ladies, buffoons, simpletons, and supportive sidekicks to European American characters (Fojas, 2008; Larson, 2006).

My own recent viewing of the popular children's film, *Beverly Hills Chihuahua* (Gosnell, 2008) with a group of afterschool students revealed nearly all of the above in its depiction of a heavily-accented, sombrero-wearing, amorous brown dog humorously threatening to "go all kinds of Mexican" on another character. This line, along with many others in the film, suggests Mexicans to be hot-tempered, aggressive, and emotionally volatile. Most disturbing, however, was the fact that the students all laughed at this line, and none questioned the naturalized appropriateness of this depiction; what ideas might these students have internalized about Mexicans from this film for young people? These and other images of Mexican immigrants in the larger culture continue to influence how we view and position this immigrant group within American society.

Literature also presents a powerful medium for the perpetuation of the selective tradition. Providing both windows and mirrors for readers of all cultures (Bishop, 1990), literature offers a view of the experiences and lives of marginalized groups for both insiders and outsiders. It is encouraging to see the rise of best-selling and Pulitzer Prize winning novels that authentically portray the experiences of Latino groups in the United States, such as Dominican author Junot Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007), and Mexican American author Victor Villaseñor's acclaimed memoir, *Burro Genius* (2004). Similarly, children's literature has also begun to offer vivid representations of the Latino immigrant experience as evidenced in the work of Francisco Jiménez (*The Circuit*, 1997) and Ann Jamarillo (*La Línea*, 2006).

Children's literature plays a significant role in the perpetuation of the selective tradition, as it inevitably conveys the ideologies of a society's dominant social groups (Kelly, 1974). Eloise Greenfield (1985) posits that all art is political, and must be scrutinized beyond its simple aesthetic value: "Whether in its interpretation of the political realities, or in its attempts to ignore these realities, or in its distortions, or in its advocacy of a different reality, or in its support of the status quo, all art is political and every book carries its author's message" (p. 20).

Although there are a few examples of culturally authentic literature available to readers, many negative, inaccurate, and demeaning images continue to infiltrate Latino literature for children and adults, circulating and reifying a selective tradition regarding this immigrant group. As I will discuss in Chapter 5, scholars in the field of children's literature have begun to address the representations of our largest U.S. immigrant in literature for young people (Beck, 2009; Naidoo, 2007), yet few studies have specifically examined the representations and ideologies of children's literature involving the Mexican immigrant experience, and none have exclusively examined literature for young adults. Additionally, the topic of the ideology of assimilation regarding this or any immigrant group is yet to be systemically explored within the field of children's literature. These silences leave a significant gap in the literature regarding Mexican Americans, the largest immigrant group in the United States.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing presence of Latino children in the United States, it is disturbing to see the actual publication statistics for children's books by and about people of Latino heritage, as well as other parallel culture groups (Hamilton, 1989). In a report compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2010), only 121 of the approximately 5,000 total published children's books in 2009 were designated as "by or

about Latinos.” This discouraging percentage stands below that of African Americans (a total of 240) and Asian Americans (147), although higher than the year’s bleak statistics for Native Americans (45). It is also important to note that these figures include children’s literature of *all* genres, and for *all* grade levels. Although there has been some improvement in the past few years in the publication of Latino children’s literature, these books remain a disproportionately small part of the total U.S. publications of children’s literature – a noteworthy point given the prominent role of children’s literature in the written and enacted school curriculum.

Given the disproportionate number of published children’s books by or about a current Latino population of nearly 12 million in the United States, it is especially pertinent to examine the representations and ideologies of those books that *are* available. Although scholars have increasingly focused upon representations of African Americans (and other marginalized groups) in children’s literature since Larrick’s 1965 landmark alert to the “all-white world of children’s books,” very few critical studies of exclusively Latino, and specifically Mexican American children’s literature have been conducted. In light of both the historical and current controversies surrounding Mexican American immigration and assimilation, this notable gap in the literature merits attention.

The present study makes *no* attempt to resolve political or social issues regarding Mexican immigration; I neither have nor seek answers to what many perceive to be the “Hispanic challenge” (Huntington, 2004, p. 30) facing the United States. Issues such as these are beyond the scope of this study, and certainly beyond my expertise. However, it *is* my intent that this study will cast some light upon representations of Mexican immigrant history and culture in children’s literature, and perhaps more importantly upon the surface and underlying ideologies of assimilation regarding Mexican immigrants in American society that are reflected in these

works. In the spirit of “critical multiculturalism” (May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 17), I wish to bring questions about the positioning of Mexican Americans by and within the largely European American dominant culture to the surface for our examination; I believe that asking and honestly answering these sorts of questions can begin the necessary conversations for a more just and humane society. Regardless of public opinion or political policy, the children remain; how will our literature greet them?

Research Questions

In this study, I examine various young adult novels involving the Mexican immigrant experience to critically explore ideologies of assimilation. As assimilation ideologies are strongly tied to issues of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender, I also examine the intersections of these issues over time. I approach this study with several questions: How are Mexican immigrants and their culture represented in literature for young adults? What ideologies of assimilation to American society do these novels convey? How do representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender intersect with ideologies of assimilation? Do these representations and ideologies change (or not change) over time? To answer these questions, I will therefore combine these ideas to address the following overarching research questions:

1. What ideologies of assimilation are suggested in young adult contemporary fiction involving the Mexican immigrant experience? How do they change (or not change) over time?
2. How do the intersections of assimilation ideologies and representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender in young adult contemporary fiction change (or not change) over time?

Chapters to Follow

In the next chapter, I will review the theoretical framework from which I approach this study. Beginning with critical theory and the sociology of school knowledge, I then review conceptions of assimilation in U.S. history. I follow with a discussion of critical multiculturalism and the tenets of critical literacy that influence my reading and analysis of texts, and conclude with a review of transnationalism, globalization, and theories of hybridity.

Chapter 3 examines the selective tradition regarding Mexican Americans as evidenced in the work of historians and in school textbooks.

Chapter 4 will briefly explore representations of Mexican Americans in the entertainment media of television, film and advertising that contribute to the establishment and reification of a selective tradition regarding Mexican Americans.

Chapter 5 is a review of studies in children's literature, beginning with research that addresses marginalized groups. I then discuss studies of Latino children's literature, and conclude with research that specifically addresses Mexican Americans in children's literature, noting gaps in this body of work.

Chapter 6 is a detailed description and explanation of the methodology used for the analysis of texts, as well as a discussion of my selection and sample process.

Chapter 7 examines the various ideologies of assimilation in the sample novels, including the intersections of representations with these ideologies.

Finally, in Chapter 8 I discuss the conclusions of the study, as well as implications for both theoretical consideration and educational use. I also discuss the limitations of the present study, and investigate the possibilities for future research.

Table 1.1***Definition of Terms***

American Culture – refers to Western ways of living as indicated by choices of clothing, homes, music, and the celebration of holidays such as the Fourth of July (see *Americanized*).

Americanized – indicates the influence of Western culture including clothing, foods, music, and social conventions (dating, gender roles) upon immigrant individuals living in the United States. Can also be used to connote a Westernized way of thinking or cultural perspective.

Chicano – a term largely used during the 1960s and 1970s to describe persons of Mexican descent.

Conservative – individuals that favor free markets and limiting government involvement in the economy and personal issues. However, some conservatives favor government involvement in social issues such as heterosexual marriage and abortion; others feel that government should not intervene in social matters.

Latino – a contemporary term used to describe persons of South American, Central American, Mexican, Dominican, Cuban, or Puerto Rican descent (see page 133).

Illegal immigrant – a person who enters a country without permission, including those that bypass traditional border entry points or overstay a visa. This term may not apply to those seeking asylum, who must “illegally” set foot upon American soil in order to request asylum.

Immigrant –a person who comes to one country from another with the intent to live permanently. May also be used to describe persons of subsequent generations whose families immigrated, i.e. first, second, third generation immigrant.

Political Right – a perspective that supports social order and hierarchy, advocating a need for principles of natural law and transcendent moral order for all. Those embracing this stance reject egalitarian objectives, claiming either that equality is artificial, or that imposing social order (e.g., through affirmative action, civil rights legislation) is detrimental to society, and often seek to preserve the wealth and power of aristocrats, nobles, and others in power. An example of this position can be seen in the actions of the Texas school board to reconfigure the curriculum to align with more “traditional,” European American perspectives of American history.

Receiving Culture – the dominant culture into which an immigrant enters.

Undocumented immigrant – a person without the proper immigration paperwork to live and work in a country.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework

Although I have not located any systematic studies of assimilation ideology in children's literature, my study is an attempt to redress this situation, and draws upon a number of theories. As this study is primarily located with the paradigm of critical theory, and specifically within the sociology of school knowledge, I will begin with a review of the literature in this area. I will then look at the area of literature and ideology, followed by a review of ideology and literature written for young people. I then follow with a discussion of the various theoretical conceptions of assimilation in U.S. history, as well as the ideas of multiculturalism, critical multiculturalism, and critical literacy. The chapter concludes with an examination of contemporary assimilation debates, and the theories of transnationalism and hybridity.

Critical Theory and the Sociology of School Knowledge

My study is located within the philosophical parameters of critical theory. Historically founded upon the Frankfurt School's commitment to the critique and transformation of society in response to the atrocities of Nazi Germany, *critical theory* questioned positivist approaches to research, as well as the search for cost-effectiveness without consideration of human interests. In addition to placing "human subjectivity and social action at the center of history" (Shannon, 1990, p. 148), critical theory also opened the door for the development of qualitative research methods to examine knowledge as something other than value-neutral and objective. Following in the footsteps of founding scholars Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Jurgen Habermas, critical scholars such as Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1970) argue for the

need to use the experiences and histories of marginalized and oppressed groups as a beginning for critical inquiry (Damico, Campano, & Harste, 2008). Thus, many see critical theory as a paradigm concerned with emancipation and transformation, making “distorted conceptions and unjust values problematic” (Schubert, 1986, p. 181) and seeking to “expose that which is oppressive and dominating” (p. 181).

As my study specifically addresses literature available for use within the school curriculum, I also locate my study within the sociology of school knowledge. Broadly defined as “the study of the content and organization of school knowledge with emphasis on the relationships between school curriculum, students, educators and the political/economic structure of society” (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1995, p. 322), the sociology of school knowledge critically interrogates issues of power, position, and privilege related to schooling and curriculum. Scholars working within the sociology of school knowledge seek to understand *whose* knowledge is deemed worthy of study and perpetuation, as well as *how* this knowledge is presented in the school curriculum. Although theorists disagree as to the exact ideological and social function of schools, most agree that educational institutions are indeed “active agents of cultural and economic production” (Taxel, 1981, p. 207).

Central to the tenets of the sociology of school knowledge is the idea that “knowledge distributed by schools via textbooks, tradebooks (such as novels), films, etc. as well as the social relations of schooling (the hidden curriculum), represents a very limited segment of all available knowledge” (Taxel, 1980, p.1). The sociology of school knowledge also interrogates the “orchestration of cultural form” in both texts and popular culture that seemingly naturalizes dominant/subordinate relations (McCarthy, 1993, p. 295). Additionally, critical and cultural studies emphasize the interconnectedness of the social, political, economic, and cultural aspects

of people's lives to that of the "exploitative relations of larger society" (Apple, 1986, p. 5), what Apple calls "relational analysis" (Apple, 1986, p. 5); within this idea, school curriculum must *not* be viewed ahistorically or apolitically, or separated from a larger ideological context.

According to Marxist tradition, schools select and prepare (or perhaps produce) future laborers according to a hierarchy of race, class, and gender; however, in addition to "processing people," schools also "process knowledge" (Taxel, 1981, p. 207), granting legitimacy to those whose knowledge is considered appropriate. This legitimizing of knowledge provides support to the dominance of some and to the subordination of others. Raymond Williams (1961) suggests that the "active shaping" (p. 145), or distribution of knowledge, mirrors power relations and contributes to its ongoing reproduction by creating and maintaining a dominant, "hegemonic" culture (Williams, 1976, p. 204). "Tradition" is therefore established through the powerful operation of the "selective tradition" as "certain meanings and practices" are selected for emphasis or exclusion (Williams, 1977, p. 115).

Scholars working within the sociology of school knowledge also assert that it is "naïve to think of the school curriculum as neutral knowledge" (Apple, 1993, p. 46), claiming education and issues of power to be inseparable. All texts - standardized textbooks, trade books/novels, or other curricular materials - are part of a "complex story of cultural politics" (Apple, 1993, p. 62) that serve to establish a sense of natural reality and legitimacy. Terry Eagleton (1983) posits that "without particular interests we would have no knowledge at all... Interests are *constitutive* of our knowledge, not merely prejudices that imperil it" (p. 12). These ideas are certainly evident in the recent decisions of the Tucson school board to eliminate Mexican American ethnic studies programs (Davenport & Cooper, 2010), as well as in the revisions of the Texas social studies

curriculum to reflect the more conservative views of the Texas Board of Education (Foner, 2010).

As I examine my sample of young adult novels involving the Mexican immigrant experience, I am especially interested in the surface and underlying ideologies of assimilation present in the novels, as well as the hegemonic relationships of power, position, and privilege that may influence these ideologies. As hegemony is constantly “challenged” and “altered” (Williams, 1977, p. 112), I will also consider how ideologies of assimilation in the novels may resist hegemony and the selective tradition. Relating to the sociology of school knowledge, I will look for what particular perspectives and information – or “knowledge” - is legitimized and perpetuated through these novels potentially included in the school curriculum (Taxel, 1980, p. 1), as well as *how* this knowledge is presented. The concept of the selective tradition is central to this study, as information and perspectives selected for inclusion (and omission) composes the view of Mexican immigrant history and culture that is perpetuated through these books. As novels (and all texts) constitute the “interests” (Eagleton, 1983, p. 12) of those that produce them, an examination of these novels in a historical context is also important, as well as a look at the relationship of current events and perspectives surrounding Mexican immigrants to the content of the books. Given the six-decade publication range of my sample novels, I hope to gain a sense of how ideologies and perspectives may change over time.

The Selective Tradition and Children’s Literature

As discussed in Chapter 1, the selective tradition is a significant means by which a societal group maintains control over how marginalized groups are viewed and represented (Williams, 1977). Within the field of children’s literature, a small number of researchers have specifically addressed the selective tradition at work. Joel Taxel (1981) examined the treatment

of race, class, and slavery in books written about the American Revolution. This important work demonstrates the “paradoxical fact” that despite blatant race and class discrimination in the emerging nation, the historical recreation of America’s beginnings in children’s fiction is ironically constructed according to the operative selective tradition as a struggle for “freedom” and “liberty” (p. 218). Noting that the selective tradition operates powerfully through omission, Taxel (1981) cites evidence that authors have “consistently omitted, and often slandered, the points of view of social groups whose history, not coincidentally, has been marked by powerlessness and oppression” (1981, p. 222). Along these lines, Taxel (1993) also addresses the “national mythology” (p. 7) surrounding Christopher Columbus in his examination of several children’s books that minimize or neglect the voices and perspectives of the virtually annihilated Taino people.

In another critical study, Taxel (1991) examined instances of both dominant ideology and resistance to that ideology in fiction for young people in a study of the work of children’s author Mildred Taylor. Taxel’s work also indicates that resistance to the selective tradition relies heavily on the “insistence of peoples from many diverse cultures that comprise our multiracial, multicultural nation to have their history and culture treated with respect, dignity, and sensitivity” (1995, p.164), an idea essential to understanding the importance of resisting dominant ideology.

Chandra Power Adkins (1998) examined the selective tradition in historical fiction for young people in a study of children’s novels accused of presentism, arguing for the importance of considering the plausibility of resistant, counter-hegemonic voices in historical literary settings. Adkins challenges critics’ accusations of “writerly presentism” (1998, p. 126) or the imposition of contemporary values and sensibilities on characters from different historical

periods, in works such as *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (Avi, 1990). Adkins also considered accusations of what she termed “readerly presentism” (1998, p. 29), the idea that readers who criticized characters in historical fiction novels for not resisting were unreasonably imposing contemporary expectations on an author’s depiction of an era when such attitudes would not be realistically consistent with the period. Examining works such as *Amos Fortune, Free Man* (Yates, 1950) and *Sounder* (Armstrong, 1969), Adkins determined that opposition to slavery and racism was indeed present in the post-Civil War era, and novels such as these do not reflect these oppositional voices. Novels accused of presentism, Adkins maintains, often reinforce stereotypes and constitute a way of viewing the past that denies resistant voices; racism and oppression become a thing of the past, rather than a persistent issue.

The development of American school curriculum has largely reflected the selective tradition of the Western European canon, emphasizing historical events, ideas, and literature deemed most important for study. Scholars have examined the definition and selection of canonical material (including novels) deemed important for common study (Eagleton, 1983; Levine, 1996; Rabinowitz, 1987); Gates and McKay (1997) even suggested that “every [literary] anthology defines a canon” (p. xxxvii). The canon was heavily contested during the Civil Rights and Women’s Movements of the 1960’s, as unequal and unjust representations of African Americans, women, and subsequently many other minority groups received long overdue challenge and attention, a point discussed further in this chapter. Given the unprecedented number of immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, entering the United States over the past decade, it is not surprising to note the significantly contested nature of matters surrounding the literary and curricular canon as America continues to experience demographic change (Apple, 1993; McCarthy, 1993).

Textbooks and State Standards

Textbooks have long been recognized as purveyors of selected, school-sanctioned information and perspectives, and some have explored the canonical role of textbooks in legitimating knowledge (Anyon, 1978, 1979; Loewen, 2007). Anyon's work with elementary social studies textbooks revealed texts that are "highly politicized," involving a "whole range of conscious and unconscious political and ideological choices" (1978, p. 51). Within these texts, members of marginalized groups are tacitly encouraged to passively acquiesce to choices within the range of what society offers to those outside of dominant culture. More recently, Loewen (2007) critiqued twelve high school history textbooks in *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, noting the strong influence of the political right in determining textbook content. Loewen found the textbooks he examined to offer factually inaccurate, Eurocentric, mythologized views of American history that essentially ignore many important aspects and perspectives, such as the construction of President Wilson's unauthorized invasion of Mexico in 1916 as a peace-keeping mission rather than an uninvited military interference in the country's civil war (Loewen, 2007).

Textbook content is strongly affected (and arguably shaped) by state curricular standards. Approved changes to the Texas 2010 state social studies curriculum attracted national attention due to the potential affect upon textbooks both state and nationwide; as Texas centrally certifies and adopts textbooks, publishers have a strong incentive to alter their textbooks to conform to the state of Texas's standards. Some have raised concern that the changes omit information and perspectives pertinent to a comprehensive, nuanced, just and inclusive understanding of U.S. history; according to Eric Foner (2010), the standards reflect "conservatives' overall vision of American history and society," and give a favorable impression of "women who adhere to

traditional gender roles, the Confederacy, some parts of the Constitution, capitalism, the military, and religion” (np). Foner also notes important omissions from the new standards, such as stories of “women who demanded greater equality... slavery, Reconstruction... environmentalists, labor unions... foreigners,” and “the unequal treatment of nonwhites” (np). The Texas School Board of Education seeks to instruct children with a history that “celebrates the achievements of our past while ignoring its shortcomings” (Foner, np). Students in kindergarten will now begin their public education learning about “patriots and good citizens” rather than “people” who have contributed to American life; the stories of those who demanded greater equality such as John and Abigail Adams, Harriett Tubman, and suffragette Carrie Chapman Catt have been replaced with examples of “good citizenship” such as Red Cross founder Clara Barton.

Christine Sleeter has also called attention to state standards. In an examination of California school curriculum, Sleeter found the state standards to endorse a “curricular Manifest Destiny” that celebrates “explorers” and “newcomers” who “visit” and “settle” (2004, np). Sleeter also determined that California’s curriculum “folds students into a ‘we’ that is Western and Judeo-Christian...with “difficulty incorporating as ‘we’ those whom the United States had previously colonized” (np). As we will see in Chapter 3, those “previously colonized” undeniably includes Mexican Americans - seven present day U.S. states were once partially or entirely owned by Mexico, including the completely “annexed” states of California, Nevada, Utah, as well as portions of Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Sleeter also notes that “they [the California standards] treat Mexicans mainly as immigrants, ignoring that the United States took California from Mexico after waging war against Mexico” (2004, np)

Scholars have observed several means by which ideologies of the dominant group are supported in texts and school curriculum. In his seminal work, *An Introduction to Multicultural*

Education (1994), James Banks noted that schools approaching cultural inclusion often purport to do so by superficially acknowledging or incorporating the perspectives and history of marginalized groups into an existing (and essentially unaltered) Eurocentric curriculum through a “contributions” or an “additive” approach to curricular reform (1994, p. 30). According to Banks, the contributions approach restricts the recognition of minority groups to a ‘heroes and holidays’ array of festivals, holidays, foods, and celebrated individuals; the additive approach includes themes and perspectives of marginalized groups, yet offers them as separate, or in addition to, the standard curriculum. As Banks noted, neither of these approaches challenges the naturalized hegemony of the dominant culture; each reinforces the inferior position of minority culture, and essentially relegates the contributions of minority groups to the enrichment of the established cultural majority.

In a similar vein, Apple observed that dominance is often maintained in texts through the act of “mentioning” (1993, p. 56), wherein isolated elements of the history and culture of marginalized groups are included with little substantial elaboration. Apple (1993) also asserts that dominant cultures “appropriate” marginalized cultures by “reshaping” or “hooking” them into an association with the “values and ideologies of the ruling groups in society” (p. 56). Additionally, dominance is maintained through the act of omission (Taxel, 1981); the absence of information or perspectives about marginalized groups serves to foreground certain views, shaping the history – or selective tradition – to include only those portions of history deemed worthy of perpetuation. This is especially true of Mexican American history, as I will further discuss in Chapter 3.

Levine (1996), however, reminds us that canons have also been contested and re-contested throughout history. Strongly linking the debates over the literary canon to

multiculturalism and the ongoing definition of American identity, Levine suggests that issues of control lie at the core of these debates:

The admission that literature, history, and canons are more complex...entails a *loss of control* [emphasis mine] and an acceptance that the academic world, like the larger universe, is more chaotic...and more affected by such matters as geography, class, race, ethnicity, gender than many of us have been willing to accept (Levine, 1996, p. 99).

Certainly the current national debate over issues of immigration is strongly related to ideas of what it means to be or become “American,” and ideologies of assimilation run throughout these debates. Samuel Huntington (2004) cautions that “the persistent flow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples...unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans...have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture” (p. 30). The above-mentioned “loss of control” (Levine, 1996, p. 99) is important to note as I consider the presence of assimilation ideologies in children’s literature, as expectations and perceptions of immigrant assimilation relate to issues of control and power.

The concept of the selective tradition lies at the center of this study. As Taxel (1981) notes in his study of Revolutionary War novels, the selective tradition operates powerfully through the omission, reduction, or even slander of historically powerless or oppressed groups, ideas that strongly influence my reading of Mexican immigrant fiction. I will be interested in how issues of race/ethnicity, class, and gender are represented, how these issues may reinforce or resist the selective tradition regarding Mexican immigrants, and ultimately how these issues may influence or shape ideologies of assimilation over time. Adkins’ (1998) work regarding the selective tradition and the issue of presentism is also influential to my study, as she suggests the plausibility of counter-hegemonic voices in historical texts. In this vein, Adkins cautions against

excusing or dismissing racism and other forms of oppression in literature written in a previous time period as appropriate for the era, as this both denies the past of resistant voices and locates oppression in the past rather than as a persisting contemporary issue; characters indeed may act with agency and in opposition to how history may construct them. As my study encompasses works of contemporary fiction spanning six decades, it will be important for me to read with these lenses as I consider the perspectives of Mexican immigrants offered in my sample novels.

Ideology and Literature

Ideologies are described as “systems of belief which are shared and used by a society to make sense of the world,” pervading “the talk and behaviors of a community” and forming “the basis of the social representations and practices of group members” (McCallum & Stephens, 2010, p. 24). Often imperceptible to readers (and authors), ideology operates both overtly and covertly to convey the hegemonic order of social and political life. A term developed in the Marxist tradition to discuss power relations among societal groups, ideology does not necessarily imply *intentional* oppression or control of one group by another. Although a Marxist perspective of ideology can imply exertion of power over another, scholars such as Althusser (1986) suggest ideology to be a “set of assumptions forming the imaginative world of groups, hailing us, creating us as persons, and calling us into being” (p. 7). Ideology naturalizes structure, offering a sense of “obviousness” (p. 245) and naturalization to the order of things. Considered “most powerful when it is least visible,” ideology is therefore examined by literary theorists to surface the underlying “cultural assumptions and unexamined messages” contained in texts (Apol, 1998, p. 35).

There has been some debate within the scholarly community regarding the nature of literature and art as strictly aesthetic or ideologically political, and where one falls on this

continuum determines how literary texts are evaluated. Adherence to the idea of literature as an aesthetic entity implies that it is indeed *possible* and desirable to both read and consider texts separate of our own cultural, social, economic and political position. The “art for art’s sake” (Adkins, 1998, p. 42) movement began with the Romantic-era privileging of imagination, and continued well into the 20th century. Townsend (1969), one of the most often cited proponents of a separate, aesthetic approach to literature, claims that literary matters must not be associated with political concerns. Johann Aitken (1988) claims that literature is “wild” and may not be contained for “any cause, however worthy...” (p. 215); works of literature might well be given a “free pass” from critical scrutiny under such a stance.

However, most scholars of literary history have noted the problematic nature of reading and evaluating literature apart from any social, political, or cultural context (Eagleton, 1983). Sociocultural theorists suggest that readers inadvertently bring *themselves* to texts, making connections to their lives; resisting or questioning their own world may cause them to question textual ideology and cultural assumptions (Lewis, 1999). Gerald Graff (1994) ponders the idea (and perhaps even the possibility) of context-free reading: “Should we try to forget our ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation when we read, or should we bring these factors into play...? Is the reading of literature inevitably political, or does it transcend politics?” (p. v).

Louise Rosenblatt’s seminal work in reader response theory continues to inform how we read, evaluate, discuss literary texts. Rosenblatt states that her continued insistence on the term “transaction” establishes the active role of both the reader and the text in interpretation and “ensures that we recognize that any interpretation is an event occurring at a particular time in a particular social or cultural context” (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 295). Rosenblatt also acknowledges the difficulty associated with text, context, and interpretation, recognizing that the “theoretically

distinguishable” aesthetic and social/political elements of text and its interpretation are “actually *inseparable*” (1938, p. 23). Citing the experience of readers with texts, Rosenblatt (1995) posits that literature “acts as one of the agencies in our culture that transmit images of behavior, emotional attitudes...and social and personal standards” (p. 212). It is important, Rosenblatt argues, to understand literature in the context of “personal obsessions, class bias, political aims....that may color the world the writer chooses to create” (p. 250).

My own reading of the sample novels is partially influenced by Rosenblatt’s work. Counter to the ideas of those suggesting art (including literature) to stand outside of cultural context (or critical scrutiny), I concur with Rosenblatt that social, political, and aesthetic elements of text and interpretation are inseparable. As I later explain, I also recognize that these are my readings: others may not explain or interpret the texts as I do. My transactions with and interpretations of texts occur within my own particular social, political and cultural context, and acknowledge my own potential biases based upon my education and experiences at the particular time of my reading. However, I also move beyond Rosenblatt to embrace a more critical stance of literary interpretation that assertively critiques the ideology of texts, as well as the potential implications of these texts for schools and the larger society, a point discussed in the following section.

Ideology in Literature for Young People

The study of ideology in relation to children’s literature emerged during the late 1960’s, as the questioning of social assumptions and representations about race, class, and gender emerging from the Civil Rights and women’s movement began to impact the “production and reception” of literature for children (McCallum & Stephens, 2010, p. 359). Some have explored the texts themselves for the presence of ideology (Kelly, 1974; McCallum & Stephens, 2010;

Nodelman, 2003; Taxel, 1981); others have examined student responses and interactions with ideology in text (Beach, Thein, & Parks, 2008). In this section, I offer a brief discussion of significant work in the field of ideology in children's literature that informs my present study.

Scholars working in the field of children's literature acknowledge the unavoidably ideological and political nature of literature for young people. R. Gordon Kelly (1974) discusses the reflection of society's adult values, beliefs, and traditions in children's literature: "Cultural continuity requires not simply that a group's beliefs be explained to the young...but that the validity and importance of the beliefs...be internalized" (1974, p. 154). Children's literature, Kelly asserts, "has more to do with social and cultural values than with literary values" (1985, p. 85), and "may contribute to the process of socialization or enculturation" (1974, p. 153). Kelly also asserts that children's literature may be considered as an effort to "make a particular way of life attractive to those considered to lie outside the boundaries of a group...to act on particular definitions of self and society" (1974, p. 154). Along these lines, I will be particularly interested in the various ways that American life is presented in the sample novels, as well as how Mexican immigrants may view themselves within American society.

Nodelman (2003) recognizes the importance of sociocultural context to the reading and evaluation of children's literature, stating that works must not be read ahistorically. Nodelman also discusses issues of national ideology in children's literature, suggesting that "characters in many American children's novels take for granted that anyone, no matter how humble, can improve his or her lot in life and achieve a dream. That basic, unquestioned assumption defines them as Americans" (2003, p. 154). In American texts, Nodelman continues, "acceptance of limitations often actually allows the characters to keep on aspiring, but now toward realistic goals" (p. 154). Such observations suggest a national ideology of hard work as a road to

achievement; Nodelman notes “limitations” to be “realistic,” and the acceptance of these as necessary to American success.

Some have examined various types of ideology at work in children’s literature. Hollindale (1992) described three types of ideology: 1) explicit views of the author, 2) implicit views of which the author may not even be aware, and 3) views inscribed within the language used by the author. Hollindale’s work is also associated with the ideas of *surface* and *passive* ideology within children’s texts; surface ideology contains obvious, explicit statements of “social, political, and moral beliefs a writer wants to recommend to children” (Nodelman, 2003, p. 151). Passive ideology, the more potent and invisible of the two, involves those implicit values that are “taken for granted by the writer and widely shared by the society” (Nodelman, 2003, p. 152). Hollindale (1992) also addresses the issue of how ideology may act upon child readers, arguing that ideology is not “transferred to children as if they were empty receptacles...it is something which they already possess, having drawn it from a mass of experiences far more powerful than literature” (p. 35). This observation suggests that literature can indeed reify a selective tradition, confirming and ratifying what children may already “know.” To this end, Hollindale underscores the importance of Nodelman’s call for teaching critical literacy, stating that it is our responsibility as educators not to “promote ideology, but to understand it, and to find ways of helping others understand it, including children themselves” (p. 27).

However, it is important to note that although children do come to texts with certain ideological predispositions, their ideological positions are also in constant formation. Using a sociocultural model of literary response in lieu of a traditional reader response model, Beach, Thein, and Parks (2008) examined the construction of adolescents’ identities as they engaged with the “social worlds” of multicultural literature (p. 6). The researchers found “ongoing

tension” as the students “performed new practices associated with critiquing some of the racist and sexist practices operating in the larger school and neighborhood culture,” and a struggle with the need to remain loyal to the school and neighborhood (p. 8). Although some students in the study were unable to surrender their allegiances to “status quo discourses and cultural models” (p. 276) in order to critique the institutions within which they lived and identified themselves, others entertained dialogic tensions between the authoritative or persuasive voices in texts and their own social worlds. Findings such as these, as well Nodelman’s call for critical literacy, point to the ongoing need for both research and pedagogy regarding ideology in children’s literature.

Joel Taxel has contributed extensively to the investigation of ideology and the selective tradition in children’s literature. Noting that the selective tradition operates powerfully through omission, Taxel (1981) cites evidence from his study of Revolutionary War fiction for young people that authors have “consistently omitted, and often slandered, the points of view of social groups whose history, not coincidentally, has been marked by powerlessness and oppression” (1981, p. 222). Taxel (1991) later examined and discovered instances of both dominant ideology and resistance to that ideology in fiction for young people in a study of the work of children’s author Mildred Taylor. Taxel’s work also indicates that resistance to the selective tradition relies heavily on the “insistence of peoples from many diverse cultures that comprise our multiracial, multicultural nation to have their history and culture treated with respect, dignity, and sensitivity” (1995, p.164), an idea essential to understanding the importance of resisting dominant ideology.

Finally, McCallum & Stephens (2010) explored frameworks for investigating ideology in children’s literature from a perspective of critical discourse analysis. Approaching texts with the

assumption that all aspects of discourse in texts are shaped by ideology, including language structures and narrative forms, the researchers identify several concepts germane to the understanding of ideology. McCallum & Stephens claim that “ideology operates within...three components of a narrative: the discourse (linguistic and narrative structures); the story (characters and the actions they perform); and the significance (organization of social attitudes and values)” derived from the first two components (p. 365). In order for reading to be a “critical process,” it is advantageous for readers to “understand the textual processes that embed ideology within fiction” (p. 5). Although my study does not specifically employ critical discourse analysis, with its emphasis upon the adherence of ideology in language and narrative for text analysis, McCallum & Stephens offer some useful conceptions of how ideology appears in text that will assist me as I investigate my sample novels.

McCallum & Stephens suggest that ideologies are suggested in several different ways in texts. One such way is the *topicalization* of an ideological position, wherein books openly advocate “attitudes or positions as desirable for readers to espouse” (p. 364). The researchers cite *Owen and Mzee* (Hatkoff, Hatkoff, & Kahumbu, 2006) as an example of this form of ideological representation; the implicit presence of the writer’s assumption that “no creature should be alone” demonstrates the powerful impact of taken for granted values upon the ideology of a text (p. 6). McCallum & Stephens also identify the concept of *implied subject positions* in texts as crucially important to the investigation of ideology. Such positions “inevitably seek...reader alignment with or against the social attitudes and relationships” within the narrative (p. 366). The method of narration employed in the text serves to align the reader with ideology, and the researchers cite Wyile’s (2003) accounts of narration types in children’s literature: “immediate-engaging first person (time of narration close to time of events); distant-engaging first person

(time of narration later than time of events); and distancing narration (a non-identified narrator), which Wyile concluded to be “not prevalent in children’s literature,”...and “more suited to adult narratives” (2003, p. 190). However, McCallum and Stephens cite several contemporary authors who use this form of narration, including Neil Gaiman in his Newbery winning title, *The Graveyard Book* (2008). As we will see in Chapter 7, ‘omniscient,’ non-identified narration, despite Wyile’s observation, frequently occurs in the sample novels for this study.

McCallum & Stephens (2010) also suggest that *intersubjective relationships*, or the “subject positions of characters in relationship with other characters within social structures,” are important to an understanding of ideology in texts (p. 371). “Social structures” can construct a subject position for a character, and texts may depict characters in either conflict or accordance with such structures or expectations as they resist or conform. Within this ideological construction, characters are often caught in personal conflicts or identity struggles. In Viola Canales’ Pura Belpré winning novel, *The Tequila Worm* (2005), Sofia’s relationship to others, both of her own culture and family and to those of European American culture, demonstrates an ideology of resisting racism by ignoring and/or passive resistance. As she meets with racial/ethnic hostility and class differences, Sofia’s relationships to both her oppressors and her allies in the book underscore the invisible ideology that racism will disappear with greater understanding, and is not to be named as such or actively opposed by the oppressed.

Finally, McCallum & Stephens’ (2010) *representations of transgression* proved useful to my analysis as a means of making ideologies apparent, as well as a way to “redefine or even overthrow” them (p. 17). In these representations, characters are depicted as separating themselves from the “otherness of the world” through “roles or actions involving subversion, deviance, or revolt” (p. 17-18). According to McCallum & Stephens, a common form of

transgression in children's literature is "transgression against norms of behavior determined by the adult world" (p. 19). An example of this may be seen in the relationship between protagonist Miguel in Krumgold's Newbery title, *and now Miguel* (1953) and his (briefly) rebellious older brother, Gabriel. Miguel's relationship with Gabriel regarding his brother's transgressive desire to leave the fold, while offering a brief glimpse of resistant possibility, underscores the implied necessity and desirability of conforming to the family's expectations, and therefore supports the ideology of group conformity and allegiance as an accepted means of insuring safety, security, and family continuity.

All of the above ideas strongly influence my reading and discussion of the sample novels. I adopt Kelly's (1974) position that children's novels convey the ideological values of a society's adult members. In accordance with Nodelman (2003) I will not read the novels ahistorically, but rather within sociocultural and historical context, yet Adkins (1998) also urges to me allow for the plausibility of resistant voices in versions of the past (and present) – a concept especially important to my reading of earlier titles in my sample. Hollindale's (1992) conception of ideology as both surface and passive suggests that I must note both obvious indications of ideology such as direct statements, as well as indirect manifestations of ideology indicated through character behaviors, issues of narration, or positioning of immigrants in relation to those of the dominant culture. McCallum & Stephen's (2010) discussion of ideological manifestation in texts will provide some specific tools with which to identify ideology such as the overt (surface) technique of topicalization, and the more subtle (passive) indications of ideology that may present themselves through intersubjective relationships or representations of transgressive resistance. Taxel's (1980, 1991) assertion that the selective tradition (through which ideology is conveyed, reified, or resisted) operates powerfully through the act of omission reminds me to

note not only what texts may imply through words and actions, but to also consider how the absence of information and perspectives may contribute to ideologies in the sample texts.

Finally, I draw upon the work of Beach, Thein and Parks (2008) to reinforce the very purpose and importance of this study. These researchers demonstrate that students' personal identifications, world views, and ideological beliefs are not static, but constantly forming and open to change; although some may be unable to transcend the "cultural models" and "status quo discourses" (p. 276) in which they live and operate, others are changed by their guided encounters with literature. As students engage in the dialogic tensions of conflicting ideas that oppose their current cultural models, many are able to form new conceptions of race/ethnicity, class, or gender. It is my hope that this study will raise some critical questions regarding the representations and ideology surrounding our largest immigrant group in the young adult novels available to our "constantly forming" American youth.

Critical Literacy

As critical theory investigates issues of hegemony, ideology, and the selective tradition, I approach the reading and analysis of text from the Marxist perspective of *critical literacy* (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004). Critical literacy positions readers as active participants in the reading process, inviting them to move beyond passive acceptance of a text's message to "question, examine, or dispute the power relations" (McLaughlin & DeVogd, p. 15) that may exist in texts. From a Marxist perspective, critical literacy focuses on issues of systemic power and privilege, and in the tradition of "critical multiculturalism" (May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 17) also promotes reflection, transformation, and action (Freire, 1970). Rather than view texts in a potentially monolithic, "essentialist" manner that assumes all members of a marginalized group to possess the same qualities and attributes (Martínez Alemán, 2006), those engaged critically

with texts also acknowledge the complexity of issues, raising questions and seeking alternative explanations as a way to more fully understand a situation. Critical literacy is particularly attractive to me as an approach to text because it allows me the freedom to simultaneously function as a code breaker, meaning maker, text user, and text critic (Luke & Freebody, 1999).

Critical literacy also acknowledges that readers have authority to question, respond, and act upon text. Although reader response theorists such as Louise Rosenblatt (1938, 1978) recognize readers as specific readers reading specific texts in specific contexts, they are nonetheless viewed as active agents that impart meaning to texts through a process of *transaction* involving interpretation and experience. Proponents of critical literacy, however, suggest that we must also think beyond the text to take up alternative perspectives and question the larger social issues potentially raised by our analysis. As suggested by critical multiculturalism, adopting a critical literacy stance would allow me to critique not only representations of Mexican immigrants, but also the perspectives of the European American dominant culture. A critical literacy perspective, informed by the sociology of school knowledge, would ask *whose* knowledge these representations reflect, and how Mexican immigrants are positioned in relationship to European American dominant culture.

As I hope to gain a greater perspective and understanding of issues of representation and ideology in Mexican immigrant fiction for young people, a stance of critical literacy brings the component of social justice into play. Understanding power relationships is the essence of critical literacy, and encouraging others to question both texts and the institutional, social, and cultural contexts in which they occur is critical to the transformation of both schooling and society. In short, the findings of this study will say as much about the social and political context of American society from the author's viewpoint at the time of publication as about the actual

representations and ideology present in the texts themselves (Taxel, 1981). Findings will also reveal the possible messages conveyed to young people of all backgrounds and heritage in American schools regarding our largest immigrant group. It will be especially interesting to note how the novels construct the ideology of immigrant assimilation, as “fitting in” is a strong desire for many youth of all ages during the adolescent and teen years regardless of immigrant status or heritage.

Conceptions & Definitions of Assimilation in U.S. History

In order to discuss ideologies of assimilation in the sample novels, it is necessary to understand how the issue of immigrant assimilation has been conceptualized in U.S. history. The question of assimilation is an important, complex, and arguably central aspect of all scholarship and discourse surrounding immigration. Regarded by some as integral to immigrants’ success in the United States, assimilation has become a source of contentious debate over the past two decades. Amidst the strong sentiments of the political right that immigrant failure to assimilate threatens the wellbeing of America (Huntington, 2004; Schlesinger, 1991), more liberal opponents of assimilation contest its benefits and necessity, arguing that immigrants have, and should continue to retain important aspects of their native cultures (Suárez-Orozco, 2000).

Once an unquestionably foundational concept for the study of ethnic relations, assimilation has come to be seen in recent decades by sociologists as an “ideologically laden residue of worn-out notions” (Alba & Nee, 2003, p. 1) in light of the transnational connection of many contemporary U.S. immigrants with their home countries. However, despite this opposition, assimilation theories and their attendant ideologies often continue to underscore decisions made affecting important aspects of immigrant life including education, health care, employment, and citizenship. Issues of race and class remain at the core of these views,

influencing the institutional and societal approach to language, culture, and civil rights as members of the dominant culture respond to perceived threats to the status quo posed by immigrants (Nieto, 1995).

As my study examines ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and assimilation ideology in children's literature, it is necessary to compare the ideologies in texts with both historical and contemporary conceptions of assimilation in the United States. In order to better understand the conceptions of assimilation presented in children's books, I will explore the evolution of assimilation debates in the United States over the past two and a half centuries. Beginning with a look at Early American conceptions of assimilation, and the undercurrents of racism and classism present in these ideas, I then explore the common assimilation metaphor of the melting pot and the Americanization theory of assimilation, comparing these views to later challenges issued by scholars. I follow with a discussion of the formation and synthesis of an assimilation canon via the Chicago School of Sociology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and discuss the changing views of immigrant presence in the United States with the rise of multiculturalism. The section concludes with a discussion of contemporary scholarship in the area of immigrant assimilation, and the theories of transnationalism and hybridity.

Scholars have difficulty agreeing upon a uniform terminology or definition for the concept of assimilation. A term coined by early twentieth century sociologists to describe an observed trend of immigrant Americanization, assimilation is referenced across scholarly disciplines in a variety of ways, including acculturation, adaptation, amalgamation, acclimation, absorption, incorporation and integration. *Random House Dictionary* (2009) currently defines the term as "the merging of cultural traits from previously distinct cultural groups, not involving biological amalgamation" (np). *The American Heritage Dictionary* (2009) defines assimilation

as “the process by which a minority group gradually adopts the customs and attitudes of the prevailing culture” (np). The ideological focus of these two definitions is distinctly different: the first implies a blending of cultures (excluding intermarriage), with all involved undergoing a change; the second suggests a stratified, unidirectional view, with minority culture conforming to dominant culture. Despite the assertions of some that previous ideas of assimilation such as the complete surrender of allegiance to home country are no longer in operation or applicable to contemporary society (Glazer, 2004), the contrast of these two current definitions of assimilation suggests that these views have not progressed in linear fashion - perhaps current thinking may contain remnants of the past.

Early American Conceptions of Assimilation

Regardless of terminology, conceptions of assimilation have been important to the understanding of the American experience from the nation’s early colonial history. America was viewed from its inception as a breaking of ties, a liberation from the past, an entry into a new life, and an “interweaving of separate ethnic strands” to form a new national identity (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 29). The concept of *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one) became the embodiment of American ideals for the newly emerging nation. Originally used in reference to the formation of a new nation from many colonies and states, the phrase later came to suggest the emergence of a single people from many peoples, races, religions, and ancestries. Although never codified by law, *e pluribus unum* was considered to be a *de facto* motto of the United States until 1956, when Congress adopted *In God We Trust* in this official capacity. Both phrases continue to appear on American coins to this day (U.S. Dept. of the Treasury, 2009).

Despite these lofty ideals, building the new settler nation through immigration was a contentious business. The *unum* had a decidedly Anglo flavor; although the founding patriarchs

of the United States were themselves immigrants, issues of power and privilege affected decisions regarding all newcomers that followed. George Washington set an initial tone for what would become the first rendition of American assimilation ideology – a “divide and conquer” sort of approach – as he counseled newcomers against retaining individual language, habits, and beliefs. Immigrants, Washington maintained, should come not in “clannish groups,” but as individuals, prepared for “intermixture with our people... assimilated to our customs, measures, and laws,” to soon become “one people” (Fitzpatrick, 1940, p. 23).

Benjamin Franklin also expressed concern for the maintenance of Anglo society and the dispersal of immigrant groups. Alarmed by the number of German immigrants entering Pennsylvania as a “colony of aliens,” Franklin blatantly worried that these newcomers would “Germanize us” rather than us “Anglifying them” (in Heer, 1996, p. 12). John Quincy Adams also reiterated Washington’s insistence on the distinction of a new American (Anglo) identity as he admonishes potential immigrants to “cast off the European skin, never to resume it,” looking only “forward to their posterity, rather than backward to their ancestors” (quoted in Sollors, 1986, p. 4). Each of these early statesmen appears to be firmly entrenched in the naturalized “obviousness” (Althusser, 1986, p. 7) of Anglo superiority; looking to one’s home culture is implicitly un-American.

Others, however, perceived the idea of *e pluribus unum* in a somewhat more inclusive, interactive way. Acknowledging the idea that immigrants should leave old ways behind to embrace new ones, French immigrant Hector St. John de Crevecoeur seems to offer a somewhat less Anglicized perspective, recognizing that both the immigrant *and* the host society are changed. Noting the astonishing diversity of American settlers in his *Letters from an American*

Farmer (1782), de Crevecoeur foreshadows the melting pot as he describes a new, emergent national identity, or “race” of Americans resulting from diverse ethnic intermarriage:

From this promiscuous breed...that race now called Americans have arisen...What then is American?...He is an American, who leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys... individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men. (de Crevecoeur, 1782, Letter III, np)

Although de Crevecoeur did not realize it at the time, this statement indeed held true for America: immigrants may or may not have left behind all “ancient prejudices,” (1782, np), but they certainly found themselves immersed in many “new ones” [prejudices] in the New World. Although de Crevecoeur’s “prejudices” most likely referred to various interests, beliefs, or ways of living chosen by immigrants, it is also important to note the significance of *racial* prejudice occurring in the United States both then and now. Immigrants continue to “receive” new prejudices as they experience marginalization, or to adopt them as some attempt to align with those of the dominant culture in the marginalization of other groups (Roediger, 2005).

Race and Class: Immigrants as Capital

Issues of race and class factor heavily into how immigrants have been and continue to be treated in the United States. Early American society was undeniably Anglo-centric in nature (Schlesinger, 1991), and those of European heritage continued to exclude those who arrived after them. Nonwhite peoples already living in America, as well as slaves imported unwillingly from Asia and Africa, were cast into racial categories well outside of “white” (Roediger, 2005); racial superiority and dominance became a shameful fact of our country’s foundation. Cast into categories based upon race and class, immigrant labor was subsequently viewed from a

production perspective, and calculated in terms of economic benefit to the country. The Northern states, with the advantage of easy port access, incorporated and utilized the greatest number of immigrants, often eliciting resentment from their Southern peers. In an 1884 address to the recently-formed Southern Immigration Association, President A. J. McWhirter cited the Southern states' imminent need to tap into the North's profitable immigrant capital: "the shrewd capitalists of the North and East have...turned the tide of immigration in their centres of manufacture...giving them a...control of wealth never otherwise to be obtained (McWhirter, 1884, p. 342). McWhirter goes on to describe the slavery-entrenched South's forced consideration of immigrant labor as a result of the Civil War:

Our 'peculiar institution,' as it [slavery] has been called, had developed in us a carelessness or apathy towards the development of other resources...but the cataclysm of civil war, disrupting our inherent customs...has brought us face to face with the grand necessity for the utilization of our undeveloped resources. ... For the development of these resources we are to look to foreign capital and foreign labor. (McWhirter, 1884, pp. 342-344)

Immigrants are viewed here as underdeveloped resources - only slightly above slaves in terms of service to the Southern States due to their paid labor status - and positioned as lower-class servants to the dominant Anglo-European majority. However, even recent immigrants were still considered higher on the social ladder than free slaves, despite citizenship status (Roediger, 2005).

As evidenced by Early American and post Civil War views of immigrants, Anglo ethnocentrism and hegemony largely underscore concepts of assimilation. These ideas continued to circulate as the developing nation responds to the influx of immigrants toward the end of the

19th century. American education and state policies continued to reflect these basic assimilationist views as well, seeking conformity, cohesion, and the cultivation of citizenship norms (Olneck & Lazerson, 1980). In the following section, I will discuss 20th century America's approach to immigrant assimilation.

The Melting Pot

For many years, the metaphor of the *melting pot* has symbolized the nearly universal image of American assimilation. This conception came to suggest the casting of individual cultural characteristics into a great American melting pot, yielding a new, blended creation of citizen. Unlike earlier views of assimilation, the melting pot theory appears to place value on immigrant contributions and alterations to the larger American landscape, although this value is admittedly associated with surrender for a newly formed national identity. Popularized in 1908 following a landmark play by Jewish immigrant Israel Zangwill (1908), the melting pot remains a popular, circulating social and political conception. Described as a “hymn to the power of assimilative forces in American life” (Thernstrom, 2004, p.48), Zangwill's drama features a cross-cultural European couple (Cossack and Russian Jew) whose forbidden love is made possible as they are reborn in an America assumedly free of Old World prejudices and hostilities. Interestingly, Zangwill's protagonists do not exhibit the commonly-held conception of melting pot behavior: the two characters retain their individual characteristics, finding the freedom in America to unite for a common purpose - they do not actually “melt,” but join together. It is also interesting to note Zangwill's European view of early twentieth-century America as free of prejudice and hostility, despite the deeply entrenched racism in the United States at the time.

The melting pot theory contained some problematic inconsistencies. Largely Anglo in flavor, the melting pot theory of assimilation did not apply to those of dark skin and non-

European heritage, generally considered to be *unmeltable* (Warner & Srole, 1945). Despite Ralph Waldo Emerson's inclusion of Africans and Polynesians in his description of a "vigorous new race" similar to that of Europe following the Dark Ages, America of the early 1900s (Gordon, 1964, p. 117) - an America deeply entrenched in racial hostility for African Americans and Native Americans within its walls - often regarded the flow of Latinos, Asians, and other non European ethnicities to its shores and borders with skepticism and contempt. These deeply embedded, exclusionary attitudes and practices continue to manifest themselves with each wave of American immigration, and continue in contemporary response to America's newest immigrants, as I will subsequently discuss.

Despite the widespread acceptance of the melting pot concept, there were also those suggesting that the melting pot is an ideal beyond our grasp. In their seminal work *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1970), Glazer and Moynihan posit that the melting pot simply did not happen. Cultural distinctions among ethnic groups can and do survive cultural erosion by the creation of newly regenerated ethnic identities in America: "As the old culture fell away – and it did rapidly enough – a new one, shaped by the distinctive experiences of life in America, was formed and a new identity created" (p. xxiii). According to Glazer and Moynihan, the merging of distinct cultures always seems to elusively lie just ahead, in the future of subsequent generations. This continual deferral of the "final smelting" of different cultural "ingredients" (p. 290) - or least the White ingredients - suggests a need to search for systemic causes.

Contrary to the popular opinion that the failure of the melting pot was due to the large influx of new and unassimilated immigrants, Glazer and Moynihan allude to a more underlying cause, asserting that America possesses a "central tendency in the national ethos" (1970, p. 291) that structures all peoples into groups of various status and character. From one perspective, this

statement could imply that America values diversity in endorsing the formation of many subnationalities.

Americanization Theory

The *Americanization theory* of assimilation appeared as World War I called issues of foreign-born loyalty to the surface of public thought. In response to wartime patriotism, Kallen (1915) and Bourne (1916) stated that immigrants were not assimilating at all, sharply challenging the idea of a peaceful, homogenous American melting pot. Although both Kallen and Bourne offered somewhat futuristic visions of a “trans-national America” (Bourne, 1916, p. 86), their work served to alarm the sensitive American public to the possibility of disloyal, unassimilated foreigners. Standardization, denationalization, and conformity became the resulting focus of this negative conception of assimilation; no longer considered assets, an immigrant’s racial inheritance was now viewed as a “foreign impediment” to be “forthwith cast away” (Daniels, 1920, p. 3).

This rigid idea of standardization was not well received by all. William Smith called the idea “preposterous,” citing the complexity of American society - even those of “old American stock” contain variations in religion, trade, attitude, and even language dialect (1939, p. 116). It is a “naïve assumption” (p. 116), maintains Smith, to view American customs as superior to all others. The push to Americanization also aroused resentment in foreign-born individuals such as Romanian immigrant Konrad Bercovici, who outspokenly resisted the perceived coercion, condescension and outright hegemony of the movement:

What is really meant by assimilation is only the acceptance and imitation of Anglo-Saxon civilization...people are considered assimilated or assimilable to that degree which they

are capable of imitating the existing order of things. Such appraisal of assimilatory abilities is false. (Bercovici, 1925, p. 16)

In addition to commentary regarding the seemingly forced compliance implicit in the Americanization movement, Bercovici also refers to the inherently problematic inaccuracy of measuring assimilation by this standard, as an immigrant may indeed “assimilate” to American life, yet not emulate “Anglo-Saxon” values or practices; how, for instance, might a Jewish immigrant be deemed as assimilated according to such a standard? Notably, this assessment of American hegemony did not come from one within the social order, but from the perspective of an outsider to the culture.

Strong evidence of the Americanization theory at work continues beyond its inception, including the detainment of Japanese Americans during WWII, the English-only mandates of many Native American reservation schools, the controversy surrounding bilingual education, and the contemporary outcry against the use of the Spanish language in public and educational settings. These and other examples appear to demonstrate an [Anglo] American desire to maintain control both within and outside its borders.

As I examine children’s literature, I am especially interested in Bercovici’s (1925) and Smith’s (1939) critique of Americanization as inappropriate and hegemonic. Mexican immigrants today choosing to retain cultural components such as language and family traditions are often viewed as unassimilated to American society, yet these same immigrants display multiple cultural competencies as they actively participate in American schooling and contribute to the American economy. Americanization efforts continue to surface in the form of strong opposition to bilingual education, indicating the desire of some to require immigrants to not only adapt, but *conform* to language and cultural standards. Recent changes in Texas textbooks

(Foner, 2010) to reflect conservative, Judeo-Christian values and discourage the examination of institutional racism also indicates an intensification of Americanization; even the telling of American history is selectively crafted to shape (or distort) the role of immigrants (and marginalized others) in relation to the “Anglo-Saxon” culture referenced by Bercovici. Although the degree of immigrant assimilation (implicitly the desired goal) is often linked to the extent to which an immigrant can reflect European American cultural norms, or “act American,” immigrants today continue to redefine the concept as they navigate between multiple worlds and cultures.

The Chicago School

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, sociologists of the University of Chicago formed the initial understanding of assimilation as a paradigm for immigrant study. The Chicago School’s definition of assimilation envisioned a diverse mainstream society in which people of various racial and cultural origins evolve a common culture sustaining a common national existence (Park, 1930). In critical response to the total Americanization model of assimilation favored during the final decades of mass European immigration, the empirical work of Robert E. Park and E. W. Burgess (1921) provided a widely known early definition of assimilation: “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (p.735). Park’s work is identified with the idea of assimilation as the end stage of a “race-relations cycle” of “contact, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation” - a sequence he viewed as unidirectional, inevitable and irreversible (1950, p. 150). Each stage of Parks’ cycle refers to the relationship (or positioning) of those *outside* the dominant culture to those *within* the dominant culture;

newcomers come into initial contact with the receiving culture, compete with its' members for economic and social position, accommodate (adapt) themselves to societal norms, and eventually assimilate into the dominant culture. Notably, Parks does not consider it necessary for the dominant culture to change, or to accommodate the newcomer - especially those of nonwhite race: the responsibility for change lies solely with the immigrant.

Sociologists Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole (1945) added a generational dimension to Park's ideas by positing that although assimilation was the inevitable direction for all groups in the United States (including native-born African Americans), there was great variation in the number of generations taken for it to occur. According to Warner and Srole, race continued to strongly (and perhaps *primarily*) affect the progression of assimilation: the darker the skin, the slower the assimilation process. All groups of European origin, including the "dark caucasiod" Armenians and Sicilians, were characterized as assimilating in a "short" to "moderate" time period (one to six generations). Non-Europeans, viewed as more racially distinct, faced a more uncertain future, ranging from "very slow" to "a very long time in the future which is not yet discernable." Warner & Srole offer a striking precursor to the imminent upheaval of the Civil Rights Movement, implicitly understanding racism as a *systemic* issue; Warner & Srole indicate that dark-skinned groups "will not be totally assimilated until the present American social order changes gradually or by revolution" (p. 292).

Measuring Assimilation: Gordon's Multidimensional Indicators

Amidst discussion surrounding the scope and duration of assimilation, questions remained regarding the systematic and consistent measurement of individual and group assimilation. Distinct elements of assimilation were yet to be unraveled for analysis until Milton Gordon's *Assimilation in American Life* (1964) entered the conceptual arena to essentially

synthesize the “canon” of current understandings regarding assimilation theory. Gordon’s work became the touchstone for many subsequent studies of assimilation, focusing attention on the final stage of Park’s (1950) race-relation cycle – accommodation and assimilation. Offering a multidimensional view of the assimilation process, Gordon posits acculturation, or the adoption of the cultural patterns of the host society, as the first, inevitable step in a one-way process. Gordon’s work contributed to the codification of a conceptual framework through the specification of some key dimensions of assimilation: cultural, structural, marital, identity, and civic. Gordon also includes “prejudice” and “discrimination” (1964, p. 81) as dimensions of assimilation, although he takes an arguably naïve stance toward racism by suggesting that prejudice and discrimination will simply disappear over time as immigrants achieve structural assimilation; once surface-level functionality is accomplished, “all of the other types [of assimilation]...will naturally follow” (pp. 80-81). Gordon also suggests that an eventual increase in intermarriage will provide further supporting evidence of assimilation and contribute to the decline in prejudice and discrimination (p. 81).

Amidst the efforts of Gordon and others to measure and analyze assimilation, the hegemonic mores of European American society remained operational: the assimilation canon continued to be undeniably racist and classist in nature. Immigrants (and marginalized others) were expected to assimilate to the white dominant culture, as Bercovici (1925) had so eloquently observed. Gordon adds the idea of class and religious affiliation to the conception of American assimilation, suggesting the specific “core culture” to which all acculturate to be the “middle-class cultural patterns of, largely, white Protestant, Anglo-Saxon origins” (1964, p. 72). Despite Gordon’s work regarding various dimensions of assimilation, he did not develop a theory of correlational relationships that impede or promote the process (such as intermarriage, location of

residence, or use of language) nor did he consider systemic issues of racism or classism as influencing factors. This lack of correlational specification or implication of society strengthened the general assumption that assimilation would be a universal, inevitable outcome for all immigrants.

However, some researchers began to question the inevitability of assimilation, as well as influential causes and conditions. Chicago School researchers Shibutani and Kwan (1965) turned attention to issues of institutional power and control, although their work played a limited role in formally shaping subsequent literature on assimilation theory. Addressing correlational mechanisms previously neglected by Gordon and others, Shibutani and Kwan's identified irregular findings in previous and current assimilation research, showing that assimilation was *not* an inevitable outcome of intergroup contact. According to Alba & Nee (2003), Shibutani and Kwan also maintained that genetic differences between groups do not explain social differences; ethnic stratification is embedded not only at the informal social level, but also in the *institutional order* in which the dominant culture holds power and control.

Multiculturalism: Toward a Negotiated and Reformed Unum

Few ideas have stirred more heated public debate in the past few decades than that of multiculturalism. Originating in late nineteenth and early twentieth century concepts of *cultural pluralism* rejecting forced assimilation to Anglophilic culture (Bourne, 1916; Kallen, 1915), contemporary multiculturalism has evoked a divisive national debate, largely due to the divergent views that citizens hold regarding what constitutes an American identity and the nature of American society (Banks, 1994). Consequently, the debate has launched a power struggle within the field of education over who should form the canon used to shape the curriculum of American's schools, colleges, and universities (Carnochan, 1993; McCarthy, 1993).

Multiculturalism began in the late 1950s and early 1960s with the Civil Rights Movement, as demands for social and educational reform emanated from African Americans and other groups of color, followed by women, people with disabilities, and gay rights advocates (Banks, 1994). The multicultural movement gained momentum as African Americans and other marginalized groups began to address what McCarthy (1993) terms the “deep imbrication of traditional, canonical school knowledge” as legitimating of “authority and inequality in society” (p. 289), demanding school reform. Racism came to be understood as a *systemic* problem, emanating from deeply embedded racial ideology (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995), and schools came to be viewed as potential sites of contested (or uncontested) power.

As previously mentioned in this chapter, James Banks contributed extensively to the examination of hegemonic cultural dominance in school curriculum through the articulation of multicultural school reform. Banks (1994) describes the purpose of multicultural education as one of exposure and emancipation, seeking to end discriminatory practices that reinforce stereotypes and challenge the Eurocentric foundations of American schools. According to Banks, multicultural educators view *e pluribus unum* as the “appropriate national goal” (p. 8). However, Banks asserts that the *unum* must be negotiated to reflect national diversity; reformation of the *unum* is a collective and participatory process involving all stakeholders. Countering the view held by Hirsch (1987) that schools should transmit common cultural knowledge in a noncritical way, Banks (1994) argues that students and teachers should actively question core school knowledge regarding whose interests it may serve. Offering a multileveled approach to curriculum reform, Banks moves educators through four tiers of multicultural integration: the aforementioned “Contributions Approach” – a superficial inclusion of heroes and holidays; the “Additive Approach” – the addition of themes and perspectives to the existing curriculum; the

“Transformation Approach” – the structural reorganization of curriculum that allows for multiple perspectives; and the “Social Action Approach,” involving student decision and action on important social issues (pp. 30-31). Banks’ ideas for reform called educators to evaluate their approach to multicultural education based upon these stages, and to set goals to inclusively incorporate (and possibly act upon) the perspectives of marginalized others.

Critical Multiculturalism and Assimilation

In the past decade, the conception of multiculturalism has progressed to include a critique of the privileges of membership in the dominant white culture. *Critical multiculturalism* de-centers whiteness and Western culture as the reference point for viewing marginalized “others.” Whiteness is recognized as a “sociohistorical form of consciousness” that involves the “refusal to acknowledge how white people are implicated in certain social relations of privilege and relations of domination and subordination” (McLaren, 1998). Scholars working within critical multiculturalism call for a fuller analysis of oppression and institutionalization of unequal power relations in education (May & Sleeter, 2010).

Many proponents of multiculturalism caution educators that a hidden agenda of assimilation lies just behind a trivialized view of culture implied within Banks’ first two levels of integration (Kalantzis, Cope, & Slade, 1989). “Implicit conservatism and unconscious racism” (Nieto, 1995, p. 197) allow dominant groups to maintain status quo, placing the burden of conformity to the mainstream entirely upon the shoulders of those in the margins. Nieto later calls for a redefinition of American assimilation as we explore “the untapped possibility of pluralism” (2002, p. 111); departing from an either/or formulation of assimilation, Nieto suggests that *all* members of society, both immigrant and native, are called not to *be* American, but to *become* American together. This process of becoming requires all to negotiate both individual

and group identity on a continuous basis. According to Nieto, adopting a new, monolithic, multicultural canon (often evidenced in schools by the emphasis on celebrating diversity) denies us the challenge of tackling the larger issues of structural inequality. Rather, diversity must be problematized and addressed critically (Greene, 1993).

Bhikhu Parekh (2006) describes multiculturalism as the “creative interplay” of three important insights: the cultural “embeddedness” of human beings (p. 338); the desirability and inescapability of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; and the internal plurality of each culture. These perspectives challenge previous ideas positing assimilation as an inevitable fact, and individual culture as internally uniform and subject to generalization. According to Parekh and other proponents of multiculturalism, culture is an essential, *inalienable* component of humanity; immigrants therefore cannot simply set aside their cultural lives as Roosevelt, Adams, and other previous assimilationists may suggest.

Opposition to Multiculturalism

Amidst the positive sentiment of some regarding multicultural education, its critics continue to strongly voice opposition to the movement and its tenets. Several misconceptions and widespread myths continue to circulate, perpetuating harmful misunderstandings about theory and practice in multicultural education, increasing racial tension, and trivializing the field’s many accomplishments. Critics of multicultural education often claim that multicultural education will divide the nation, placing too much emphasis upon individual cultures (the *pluribus*) and not upon societal unity (the *unum*). Political scholar Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (1991) underscores this view in *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, suggesting that multiculturalism is a reaction to Anglo- or Eurocentrism, potentially evolving into its own version, or “cult” of ethnocentrism: “The very word, instead of referring as it should to all

cultures, has come to refer only to non-Western, nonwhite cultures” (Schlesinger, p. 80). Fearing a fragmentation effect, those opposing multiculturalism claim that it “exaggerates differences, intensifies resentments and antagonisms,” and “drives ever deeper the awful wedges between races and nationalities” (Schlesinger, p. 106).

The second misconception regarding multicultural education is that it stands in opposition to the West and Western (American and European) civilization. Although the movement is not against the West, it does demand that the truth about the West be told to students, illuminating the discrepancies between the ideals of freedom and equality and the realities of racism, classism, and sexism (Banks, 1996); some critics even claim that multicultural education has reduced or displaced the study of Western civilization in American school curriculum (D’Souza, 1991; Leo, 1990). However, researchers Graff (1992) and Applebee (1992) each found this to be untrue: both the nation’s high school and college reading lists remained largely white, male, and Western, with Shakespeare, Dante, Chaucer, Twain, and Hemingway topping the lists. A review of *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* (Meyer, 2011), an upcoming high school literature anthology, reveals a majority of the traditional canonic “classics” such as Hemingway, Chaucer, Dickens, Joyce, and Faulkner. “Multicultural” additions to this 2011 feature additional works of poetry, plays and short stories by authors such as Jhumpa Lahari, Junot Diaz, and Judith Ortiz Cofer; major sections of the anthology, however, continue to be devoted to American and European authors.

Finally, critics of multicultural education suggest that the movement is an entitlement program and a curriculum reform initiative for those outside of middle class, European American male culture – African Americans, Latinos, the poor, women, and other marginalized groups (D’Souza, 1995; Glazer, 1997). According to proponents of the movement, multicultural

education is not ethnic or gender-specific, but designed to equip *all* students, including those of the dominant culture, with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to effectively function as active citizens of the nation and the world (Gay, 2000; Grant & Sleeter, 1997; Taxel, 1997).

Contemporary Assimilation Debates

The sheer intensity and radical shift in sources of new immigration over the past decade have stimulated robust scholarly interest and public debate surrounding immigration. Although assimilation is discussed within multiple disciplines, two broad concerns have set the research and debate parameters in the United States - the economic and the socio-cultural consequences of large-scale immigration. Researchers addressing *sociocultural* issues examine intermarriage, religiosity, language proficiency, educational experiences, residential trends, and ethnic identity (Alba & Nee, 2003). Some scholars debate language issues, including the issues surrounding bilingual education (Carliner, 2000); others examine the political consequences of large-scale immigration, asking questions regarding immigrant attitudes, civic affiliations, and dual citizenship (Huntington, 2004; Pessar & Graham, 2001). Recently, scholars have chosen to focus on immigrant practices often deemed unpalatable within mainstream American cultural models and social practices, such as arranged marriages or wearing veils (Suárez-Orozco, 2000).

The impact of immigrants upon American schools is a frequent topic of interest and concern. As discussed in Chapter 1, American schools are increasingly called upon to educate the rising tide of immigrant children (both American-born and undocumented) that continue to enter publicly funded schools, straining already stressed and greatly reduced U.S. educational budgets. Additionally, in a manner reminiscent of the Americanization era, political pundits and journalists claim that immigrant students dilute and destroy the educational environment of American schools, alarming the public with reports of declining test scores and rising school

violence (Huntington, 2004). Carola and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco (2001, 2008), Alejandro Portes (1996), Ruben Rumbaut (1995), and Irina Todorova (with Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2008) are among a growing body of scholars interested in the experiences and performance of Latino immigrant children in American schools. Focusing primarily upon Latino students – the largest contemporary immigrant population – the work of these and other scholars continues to reveal the multifaceted identities and competencies developed by immigrant students and their families. Contrary to earlier conceptions of assimilation and adaptation, recent studies reveal that although many immigrants experience success and upward mobility, factors such as race, color, class, and parental education continue to lock many out of the opportunity structure, creating a “rainbow underclass” of racialized minorities (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 4).

The *economic* consequence of immigration also elicits public and scholarly attention; research surrounding these issues has often focused on the assessment and comparison of immigrant occupational status, income, and unemployment to that of natives (Alba & Nee, 2003). Recent economic debates continue to reflect concerns regarding the impact of immigration on native workers’ wages, as well as the use of public services by non-taxpayers and the potential contributions of low-skilled and poorly-educated immigrant workers to an increasingly knowledge-based economy (National Research Council, 1997). The issues of legality and citizenship remain strongly contested in both the political and social arena, as immigration policies and border restrictions are shaped and enforced (Ngai, 2004).

Transnationalism and Hybridity: Rethinking Traditional Narratives

The advent of *transnationalism*, previously foreshadowed by Bourne (1916), has created a new form of immigrant, often possessing a greater sense of cultural identity and empowerment as well as the ability to combine and adapt elements of old and new, “here and there” culture to

form a unique, “hybrid” identity (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 4). Described as a social movement emerging from the heightened interconnectivity of people and the loosening of country boundaries, *transnationalism* is also used in reference to ways of living within the context of diasporic spaces (Brah, 1998; Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). Globalization and rapidly expanding communication technology gives today’s immigrants an unprecedented ability to socially and politically participate with home countries or families, creating community spaces across borders. Researchers within the fields of *transnational* and *hybridity* studies explore the social and civic identities and behaviors of individuals, families, and groups as they continue to navigate and negotiate a new land (Appadurai, 1996; Brah, 1998; Foner, 2001; Suárez-Orozco, 2000). According to Suárez-Orozco (2000), the bicultural competencies and sense of dual consciousness developed by new immigrants may well prepare them to be cultural brokers for us all.

Although numerous quantitative studies within the past century have supported the prediction of traditional theories regarding the inevitability and unidirectional nature of assimilation, contemporary scholars are often confronted with findings unexplained by earlier conceptions of assimilation. According to Suárez-Orozco (2000), the dominant narratives of immigrant assimilation were structured by three assumptions; the “clean break” assumption, the “homogeneity” assumption, and the “progress” assumption (p. 9). A brief discussion of these follows, with a reexamination of their efficacy for today’s diverse immigrant population.

In light of transnationalism, it no longer seems useful to assume that immigrants will make a “clean break” from their home country. A new ease of mass transportation and communication technologies allow immigrants to be at once “here” and “there” (Suárez-Orozco, 2000, p. 11), bridging national borders; immigrants continue to emerge as “relevant actors” (p.

11) with political, social, and economic influence in both places. It may also no longer be useful to assume that immigrants are joining a homogenous, middle-class, white American mainstream (Portes, 1996). Shaped by ideas of multiculturalism, the America many immigrants must navigate today is more complex and varied than the nation encountered by European immigrants a century ago. In contrast to the renaming ceremonies experienced by earlier immigrants, today's newcomers often enter a society with racial and ethnic communities that encourage and foster cultural expression. However, immigrants may also find themselves categorized according to the nation's latest referential terms for ethnicity, often unbeknownst to them prior to U.S. immigration, such as *Asian* or *Hispanic* (Montecinos, 1995).

Finally, the assumption that all immigrants embark on an upward journey of progress needs reconsideration. Contrary to earlier conceptions of assimilation, recent studies reveal that although many immigrants experience success and upward mobility, factors such as race, color, class, language, and parental education continue to lock many out of the opportunity structure, creating a "rainbow underclass" of racialized minorities (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 4). For many new immigrant groups, length of U.S. residency seems to be associated with *declining* school achievement, health, and aspirations (Kao & Tienda, 1995; National Research Council, 1998; Rumbaut, 1995). Large numbers of poorly educated, unskilled workers-many of them in the U.S. without legal documentation-come to survive, or to escape war and violence. These groups often settle in areas of poverty and racial segregation, experiencing limited economic opportunities and schools poorly prepared to educate America's newest residents.

Hybridity Theory

Hybridity theory is discussed across many academic disciplines, including biology, linguistics, social sciences, post-colonialism, multiculturalism, and globalization. A circulating

term in the fearful discourse of racial mixing toward the end of the 18th century, issues of hybridity first surfaced in the exploration of racial purity. As chronicled in M.T. Anderson's award-winning novel, *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing: Traitor to the Nation* (2006), Early American and European scientists concerned with racial supremacy often conducted biological experiments to determine the superiority or inferiority of African Americans and Asians to European Americans. In recent years, hybridity has been used to discuss the cultural effects of increased immigration and globalization. Kraidy (2005) describes hybridity as the "cultural logic" of globalization, because "traces of other cultures exist in every culture" that offer "transcultural wedges" for the marketing of media and commodities worldwide (p. 148).

Some consider hybridity to be a "risky notion" that must be understood in historical and social context, with issues of power lying at the center (Kraidy, p. vi). The discourse of hybridity connects two opposing perspectives: *cultural imperialism* - those claiming that hybridity colonizes and appropriates culture - and *cultural globalization* - those favoring the more benign concept of a global community (Kraidy, 2005). Those opposing the latter assert that conceptions of hybridity ignoring issues of power are essentially "multiculturalism lite" (Pieterse, 2004, p. 4), as they fail to acknowledge the naturalized (and often Westernized) hegemonic standards by which hybridity is measured on the world stage. Kraidy asserts that the cultural imperialism thesis has been "thoroughly demonized" in recent years, in favor of the more palatable concept of globalization (2005, p. vii).

Homi Bhabha (1994) also addresses issues of power relating to the theorizing of hybridity. Although individual and cultural hybridity is often viewed as a positive result of globalization and transnationalism, Bhabha critically asserts that hybridity connotes essentialism, colonization, and hegemony. According to Bhabha, the European practice of cultural analysis

creates simplified polarities of *self* and *other*, constructing groups as political objects whose histories and identities are written to blend with the desired positioning of the hegemonic dominant culture. The very *act* of theorizing hybridity, Bhabha asserts, suggests a position of superiority and dominance; who, then determines the efficacy and dimensions of cultural blend?

Rather than referencing a space of cultural negotiation and new creation, hybridity can also mean the appropriation and translation of cultures to fit a nationalistic, colonial purpose. Seeking to honor the complexity of culture, Bhabha situates issues of race and national identity in the foreground of debate, and calls for a rearticulation of “the sum of [collective] knowledge from the perspective of the signifying position of the minority that resists totalization...producing other spaces of subaltern signification” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 162). Minority groups must therefore have a voice in shaping *how* their stories are told and incorporated into a receiving culture, yet even this process is called into question; true cultural negotiation must take place at the cultural “border” (p. 225), an in-between space where junctures of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and nationality are interrogated. This “hybrid moment” of change results in the rearticulation, or translation, of elements that are “neither the *One*...nor the *Other*, but something else besides, which contests the terms and territories of both” (p. 28).

The “border” is an often used, emotionally charged, and highly controversial term in reference to Mexican immigration. As we will see in Chapter 4, the image of the border in films such as *Lone Star* (Sayles, 1996) and *Traffic* (Soderbergh, 2000) signifies an unknown and undesirable terrain dividing two radically different worlds, and is often used to invoke a sense of threat, danger, evil, lawlessness, and immorality (Chavez, 2008). The news is filled with the rhetoric of border patrols, fences, crossings, protection, and desperation; television and film continues to associate the U.S./Mexican border with drug activity, prostitution, and other illegal

behavior, a point also further explored in Chapter 4. Bhabha's conception of the border as a site of negotiation and reformation will continue to inform my reading of young adult fiction, as I consider how "the border" may be discussed in these works.

The concept of transnationalism (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002) will also influence my textual analysis. As transnationalism provides for a "both here and there" approach to cultural identity and participation, characters may choose to separately "practice" both traditionally Mexican and Westernized "American" culture, or to appropriate and remix elements of each to form a highly personalized, evolving cultural identity.

Bhabha, Kraidy, and Pieterse's critical approach to the concept of cultural hybridity is important to my exploration of YA novels involving the Mexican immigrant experience. As I read and discuss the novels in my sample, I will remain aware of how Mexican immigrant history, culture, and contemporary life may be co-opted, or repackaged, to reflect a potentially essentialized (and possibly Westernized) brand of immigrant "hybrid" desirable to the dominant culture. I will also remain alert to the possibility of hegemonic, assimilationist ideologies lying beneath the surface of hybridity; whose stories or histories comprise the newly "reimagined" immigrant identity or culture? And perhaps more importantly, how does the dominant culture view these cultural intersections?

Implications for the Present Study

Based upon this historical review of assimilation ideologies, I am especially attentive to the ideas of critical multiculturalism and Bhabha's (1994) conception of hybridity. Each of these critical perspectives examine the dominant culture - as well as immigrant "outsiders" - as complex and interconnected issues of race, class, gender, nationality, and ethnicity are continually negotiated and redefined at points of cultural intersection. Bhabha and others ask us

to consider the potentially hegemonic perspective of those whose tradition remains the cultural standard, and from whom authorization of cultural hybridity proceed. Sites of cultural negotiation are not neutral zones, but often infused with the power of the hegemonic majority to determine how a group is positioned in larger society. The advent of globalization and transnationalism presents increased opportunities for an inclusive, multicultural society of culturally competent, “hybrid” citizens – an implicit and explicit goal of multiculturalism; the willingness of all (especially those of the dominant culture) to participate in such an endeavor remains to be seen: important questions must be asked regarding the power and privilege of those who remain in positions of dominance.

However, opportunities do not typically come without significant challenges. The undercurrent of racism and classism running beneath some past and present conceptions of immigrant assimilation continues to resurface with each newly perceived threat to Anglo-American hegemony, and the response to Mexican immigration appears to be no exception. Constructions of these and other immigrants as unmeltable “others” serve to divide rather than unite, and the results of such marginalization are often observed on our streets and in our schools. The utopian expectations of de Crevecoeur (1782), Zangwill (1908), Park (1930), and Gordon (1964) of the great melting pot to reduce racial stratification did not occur; as Banks (1997) and Nieto (2002) suggest, a trivialized view of cultural incorporation does not produce the necessary structural changes that allow those of diverse backgrounds to forge a common destiny.

The conceptions I have examined of assimilation throughout United States history strongly reflect the cultural and economic climate of an era, and I seek to compare these various ideological views with those present in fiction published and available to children today. R.

Gordon Kelly (1974) suggests that children's literature often reflects the ideology of a society's adult members; what messages have, and continue to greet Mexican immigrant youth in the United States?

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter, I have positioned myself within the tradition of critical theory, and specifically within the sociology of school knowledge. As I seek to interrogate issues of hegemony, ideology, and the selective tradition in literature for young people, I have also aligned myself with those who believe literature, including children's literature, to be ideological and political in nature. Along these lines, I employ the perspective of critical literacy as I approach texts in order to examine issues of ideology and representation. Additionally, I have reviewed the various conceptions of assimilation throughout U.S. history that may potentially reflect in literature for young people, and discussed the more contemporary theories of transnationalism and hybridity. As previously discussed, the ideas of critical multiculturalism and hybridity reinforce a Marxist approach to the critique of hegemonic dominant culture; hybridity theory is especially useful to my examination of immigrant assimilation, as it examines issues of power and privilege at the intersections of culture.

CHAPTER 3

The Mexican American Experience in U.S. History

“One can lie outright about the past. Or one can omit facts which might lead to unacceptable conclusions” (Zinn, 1999, p. 8.)

In order to critically examine ideology and the selective tradition in young adult novels involving the Mexican immigrant experience, it is necessary to have a general understanding of how this group is represented in the larger American culture. In this chapter, I will therefore explore various accounts of both European American and Latino historians regarding Mexican American history, as well as how this history is presented to young people in American school textbooks.

The relating of history is not an act of neutral objectivity. The work of the historian is inherently infused with ideology, supporting certain economic, political, racial, national or sexual interests (Zinn, p. 8). Historians inevitably emphasize some facts over others, and the selection (or exclusion) of information often serves to establish and reify the selective tradition (Williams, 1977) surrounding a people. Although some who convey historical information assume a critical stance encompassing multiple perspectives, other historians approach history from the perspective of an implied readership sharing common interests and perspectives. Simply put, a particular interpretation of history can easily become *the* version of history that we all recognize, legitimize, and pass on to society's younger members. In order to better understand how the history of Mexico and its people is represented in academic history, I now turn my attention to the work of historians.

The story of Mexican history as it relates to the United States has been told from a variety of ideological perspectives over the years. European American U.S. historians have largely ignored or minimally addressed Latino history (with the exception of Howard Zinn), leaving the task of conveying this history to specialists within the Latino community (Gonzalez & Fernandez, 2003). In this section, I will chronologically examine the presentation of Mexican history relating to the United States from the viewpoints of several contemporary and historical scholars both inside and outside of the Latino community, noting inclusions and omissions in these historical accounts. I will then discuss representations of Mexican history in American textbooks, and the implications of these versions of history for my study of young adult fiction available to students within an American school curriculum. Although a complete and comprehensive discussion of all aspects of Mexican American history is beyond the scope of this study, I will seek to highlight aspects of this history that are frequently overlooked in historical accounts and student textbooks, as well as to provide an informed research base for my examination of young adult fiction.

Aztec Civilization and Spanish Occupation

Much emphasis is placed in contemporary Latino scholarship upon the rich and diverse heritage of the Mexican people. Both Indian and Spanish heritages strongly influence the lives and history of today's Mexican and Mexican American culture (Gonzalez & Fernandez, 2003). Most historical accounts of Mexican history begin with the encounter of Cortes and the Spaniards with ancient civilizations of pre-Columbian Mexico. Fueled by Christopher Columbus's "discovery" (and subsequent brutal conquest) of Hispaniola in the late fifteenth century, the lure of fantastic riches in the tropical, unconquered regions of Mexico currently inhabited by many tribes of indigenous peoples also pulled young Cortes to explore and conquer

territory previously uncharted by Europeans. The militaristic (and human-sacrificing) Aztec people had attained dominance in the area, and although culturally advanced, linguistically diverse, and technologically developed, they eventually succumbed to Spanish force (Zinn, 1999). Ironically, the Aztec belief in the return of the fair-skinned, bearded serpent god Quetzalcoatl eventually sealed their defeat; Cortes and his Spaniards bore a striking resemblance to the native's conception of the Aztec god, and the Indians of Mexico were convinced that their god had returned to them. Trust therefore became their downfall, and the Spanish conquered Mexico (Samora & Simon, 1993).

However, not all historians acknowledge the rich, advanced Indian cultures of Mexico prior to Spanish conquest, choosing to describe the behaviors and spiritual practices of the ancient Aztecs as barbaric, primitive, and uncivilized (Loewen, 2007; Zinn, 1999). The ritual of human sacrifice is often offered as conclusive and undeniable evidence of this construction – an ironic assertion in light of the brutal, murderous behavior of Spanish conquerors such as Columbus and Cortes allegedly coming in the name of Christianity. Other historians fail to even acknowledge the cultures of the indigenous Indian peoples of Mexico beyond the “ancient” Aztecs, beginning instead with the arrival of the Spanish on Mexican soil (Loewen, 2007). This general devaluing of indigenous peoples as the root of a civilization is not new to American history - a point I will continue to explore in my discussion of Mexican history in American textbooks, and in my later analysis of young adult fiction.

Manifest Destiny – American Expansionism and the Mexican Nation

According to historians Zinn (1999) and Gonzalez & Fernandez (2003), the history of Mexico and the United States begins with the all-too-familiar cast of the covetous American gaze toward land owned by others. In a manner paralleling the U.S. invasion and conquest of Native

American lands (Jennings, 1976), the United States once again set its sights on acquiring Mexican territories that would complete the spread of American ownership from coast to coast. Spanish and Mexican territories currently forming the southwestern states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, California, Colorado, and Wyoming soon became the focus of American politicians. Democratic President James Polk, an expansionist who confided on the very night of his inauguration his intentions to acquire California, ordered General Taylor to move troops to the Mexican-inhabited Rio Grande area. Pending annexation to the United States, Texas would provide a vantage point from which to base troops for this clearly unsolicited provocation of Mexico by the United States. Colonel Ethan Allen Hitchcock writes of the President's orders to move his "whole command" to the Texas border to "take up a position on the banks of or near the Rio Grande" and "expel any armed force of Mexicans who may cross that river" (quoted in Zinn, 1999, p. 149). The Washington *Union*, a newspaper expressing President Polk's position, essentially published a call to arms against Mexico by the populace in 1845: "A corps of properly organized volunteers... would invade, overrun, and occupy Mexico. They would enable us not only to take California, but to keep it" (quoted in Zinn, p. 151). Shortly following this article, John O'Sullivan, editor of the *Democratic Review*, issued the infamous statement regarding American rights to seize and conquer in a manner reminiscent of medieval European religious crusades, saying that it is "our *manifest destiny* to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions" (quoted in Zinn, p. 151).

All that was needed to begin a war was a military incident, and it came with the murder of Colonel Cross. Found brutally murdered eleven days after his disappearance from a scouting expedition along the Rio Grande, the American government asserted he had been killed by

Mexican guerillas; Cross was solemnly buried with volleys of rifle fire in clear view of the Mexican residents. The next day, Taylor's soldiers were surrounded and attacked by Mexicans; Polk got his wish – the war had begun through Mexican acts of violence, and the President quickly dispatched troops to the Rio Grande as a necessary measure of defense. Yet Colonel Hitchcock knew the truth:

I have said from the first that the United States are aggressors... We have not one particle of right to be here... It looks as if the government sent a small force on purpose to bring on a war, so as to have a pretext for taking California and as much of this country as it chooses... (quoted in Zinn, p. 151).

Hamnett (2006), Kluger (2007), and Remini (2008) also acknowledge the calculated provocation of Mexican forces by General Taylor's army. In *A Concise History of Mexico*, Hamnett (2006) asserts that U.S. troops were arguably on Mexican soil at the time of Mexico's "initiated action" against Taylor's regiment; Taylor's advance to the banks of the Rio Bravo was in fact a "calculated violation" of the post-1836 Mexican frontier beginning with the Rio Nueces, *not* further south on the Rio Bravo (Hamnett, p. 150). According to Hamnett, Taylor's advancement to the Rio Bravo with the objective of threatening the Mexican town of Matamoros, "has occasioned too little comment in the literature" (p. 150). Kluger (2007) also describes Polk's provocation of the Mexicans to "strike first" at the disputed territory of the border, with subsequent escalation to "full-scale war" (p. 443). Remini (2008) additionally concurs that Polk "invited a Mexican attack" in his advancement of troops across the disputed border territory into the Rio Grande (p. 123).

The above-mentioned lack of comment is evident in earlier historical accounts such as Henry's (1956) interpretation of Taylor's actions at the border: in response to Mexican "threat,"

Taylor was ordered [by Polk] to move his “Army of Observation” to the “the vicinity of the Rio Grande...claimed by Texas and thus the new southwestern frontier of the United States” (p. 150). Taylor’s troops are later referenced as an “Army of Occupation,” ironically launched in response to “the threat from across the border” (p. 150) for the purpose of “conquering a peace” – an oxymoron in itself (p. 151).

Congressman Abraham Lincoln also challenged the integrity of the Mexican War, calling for Polk to specify the exact spot where American blood was shed on American soil (Acuña, 2004). The War, contends Lincoln, is not the collective will of the American people; Lincoln and other Congressmen strongly opposed “marching an army into the midst of a peaceful Mexican settlement, frightening the inhabitants away...to you [this] may appear a perfectly amiable, unprovoking procedure; but it does not appear so to us...” (quoted in Zinn, 1999, p. 154). Henry David Thoreau also strongly opposed the Mexican War, refusing to pay his poll tax as an act of civil resistance. Some politicians felt that issues of slavery affected the decision to take land from Mexico; The American Anti-Slavery Society claimed the war was “waged solely for the detestable and horrible purpose of extending and perpetuating American slavery throughout the vast territory of Mexico” (quoted in Zinn, p. 155).

It is impossible to know the extent of popular support for the Mexican American War; historians have talked easily about “the people” and “public opinion” (Zinn, 1999, p. 158), yet often these citations refer to the expressions of newspapers which may seek to *create* public opinion rather than *reflect* it. However, there is evidence of organized workingmen (an early union) opposing the annexation of Texas. A New Hampshire newspaper admonished the “base” action of the government to allow “men that live upon the blood of others an opportunity of

dipping their hand still deeper in the sin of slavery” (quoted in Zinn, p. 159). Horace Greeley questions the purpose and morality of the war in an 1846 article for the New York Tribune:

Have the histories of the ruin of Greek and Roman liberty consequent on such extensions of empire by sword no lesson for us?...Who believes that...victory over Mexico, the “annexation” of half her provinces, will give us more Liberty, a purer Morality, a more prosperous Industry, than we have now? (quoted in Zinn, p. 159).

“Obtaining Peace” – Codifying a Selective Tradition

As the march to Mexico City concluded the war, Colonel Hitchcock writes of the “horrible fire of our mortars...with dreadful certainty...in the centre of private dwellings” (quoted in Zinn, p. 166). Yet the Colonel also penned a dutiful letter for General Scott to deliver to the conquered Mexican people - printed in Spanish and English by the tens of thousands - revealing an outrageously self-deceptive American view of the war:

...we have not a particle of ill-will towards you – we treat you with all civility – we are not in fact your enemies; we do not plunder your people or insult your women or your religion...we are here for no earthly purpose except the hope of obtaining peace (quoted in Zinn, 1999, p. 166).

American forces, under the direction of President Polk, therefore viewed the war (although solicited by themselves) as a peace-keeping mission levied against a violent and aggressive Mexican people; Americans once again expand and conquer under the guise of morality and liberty. The above “dutiful letter” essentially served to codify the selective tradition that remains in operation today surrounding the Mexican American War, occurring not in retrospect, but at the very point of final conquest. History is often told through the eyes of the conqueror, as this moment demonstrates.

Acuña (2004) also discusses the “unwarranted aggression” (p. 51) of the United States against Mexico. Suggesting that some choose to “perpetuate the myth” (p. 50) that Mexico began the war – a common sentiment in nineteenth century textbooks and historical accounts (Elson, 1964; Henry, 1956) - Acuña corroborates Hamnett’s assertion that responsibility for the Mexican War lies with the United States. Asserting that Polk used the Mexican firing on Taylor’s troops as a “pretext” for war, Acuña also states that Taylor was provocatively stationed in the “contested region” between the Rio Grande and the Rio Nueces (as opposed to Hamnett’s claim that the territory was entirely Mexican territory) when Mexican forces fired upon them (p. 51).

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

The Mexican-American War created unparalleled bitterness and hostility toward the United States, not only in Mexico, but throughout Latin America. The United States obtained the image of the “Colossus of the North,” a great power who arbitrarily imposes its will on implicitly weaker, defenseless Latin nations (Samora & Simon, 1993, p. 98). The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, drafted by the chief clerk of the State Department Nicholas Trist and President Santa Anna of the conquered Mexican nation in the city after which it was named, became the root of continuing resentment between America and Mexico. Although the Treaty resulted from months of joint deliberation following the Mexican defeat, the agreement eventually ratified by U.S. senators was not the exact treaty agreed upon and signed by the Mexico, yet the defeated Mexicans were powerless to resist (Acuña, 2004). By the terms of the Treaty, Mexico approved the prior U.S. annexation of Texas (1845), as well as ceding (or perhaps surrendering) a vast expanse of land long coveted by the United States to fulfill the goals of Manifest Destiny. In return, the U.S. agreed to assume all war claims against Mexico, and pay \$15 million (later reduced to \$10 million, payable in two installments). Loss of Mexican lands was a bitter pill to

swallow, especially in light of the subsequent discovery of gold in California land once belonging to Mexico. Following the financial agreement between the nations, the *Whig Intelligencer* ironically concluded that “we take nothing by conquest... Thank God” (quoted in Zinn, 1999, p. 169).

In addition to ending the war and increasing U.S. territory, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo also made certain provisions for future relationships between the two countries. However, loopholes created future problems, such as the establishment of permanent boundaries. Rather than set the boundary, the treaty merely provided for a joint commission to undertake the task. Although the line was eventually drawn at the Rio Grande, the movable course of the river (only a foot to either side) would cause a new stir of dispute. Gold rushers brought on a new need to revise the border, as the installation of a transcontinental rail line would require another piece of Mexican land to best situate the route; the Gadsden Purchase closely followed, a treaty that essentially renegotiated the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Once again, the less powerful Mexico had little choice but to cede to avoid further conflict.

The New U.S. Citizens – A Broken Contract

Perhaps the most compelling violations of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo concern the treatment of America’s newest citizens residing in territories once belonging to Mexico. Given the choice to leave the conquered territory within one year or stay to become full U.S. citizens, most former Mexican nationals remained in the largely rural, isolated U.S. frontier, becoming the nation’s first “Mexican Americans” (Samora & Simon, 1993, p. 100). The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo bound the United States to *protect* these newly acquired citizens, and to guarantee their civil rights. Ironically, some of the most controversial issues existing today involving Mexican Americans (and other Latinos) in the United States, such as bilingual education, multilingual

access to government documents and services, and the right to maintain cultural customs without interference were addressed and guaranteed here over 150 years ago; yet few of these guarantees came to pass for Mexican American citizens – even to this day. Lack of enforcement of the Treaty of Hidalgo remains an issue between European Americans and those of Mexican heritage, and continues to foster what Acuña terms a “legacy of hate” (2004, p. 58) as evidenced in the impassioned (and often violent) rebellion of the Chicano Movement (1960s-1970s).

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo gave Mexican Americans the right to retain their language, thus theoretically giving the government responsibility for conducting business and publishing documents in both Spanish and English. Such a right would also compel U.S. schools to educate children in their native language, a topic of fierce contention in the past decade (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). New citizens were given the right to retain their Roman Catholic religion, and to follow cultural customs and practices observed by their families for many generations. However, even these basic civil rights were soon violated; Mexican American citizens soon found themselves demoted to second class status due to language barriers, and their Anglo neighbors often took positions of superiority that viewed Mexican Americans as inferior (Samora & Simon, 1993). Powerless and defeated, Mexico had no means of enforcing the rights of the Treaty for its disposed former citizens, and the United States virtually cast the agreement aside.

Although the war was over, the conquest and acquisition of Mexican property continued. The Treaty also provided for the protection and retention of property previously owned by Mexican American citizens, including the right to inherit or purchase property in the new U.S. territory. However, U.S. officials were reluctant to recognize Mexican and Spanish land grants; European Americans arriving in previously owned Mexican lands were accustomed to Anglo-

Saxon paperwork and protocol surrounding property ownership, and therefore settled upon the most desirable tracts. Original Mexican American owners were required to file claims to land their ancestors had owned for generations, paying huge sums for surveys or attorneys; many claims languished in archives, others were tied up in court for decades, only to be decided in favor of ranching or mining interests. Still other properties owned by Mexican Americans were simply surrendered to the United States through foreclosure by frustrated and bankrupt families who could not afford to defend their own property (Samora & Simon, 1993). Facts such as these do not often appear in the work of European American historians: neither Fellows (1972) nor Maisel's (1957) account of U.S. Mexican history includes a discussion of the civil rights promised to Mexican Americans in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Even Howard Zinn's critical account of U.S. history ends the Mexican American story with the signing of the Treaty, stopping just short of a discussion that addresses the subsequent treatment of the newly acquired Mexican American citizens. The burden of telling the *entire* Mexican American story continues to rest upon the shoulders of the conquered.

“Cessation” and “Annexation”: The Language of Colonization

Although some accounts of history describe the loss of Mexican territories to the United States as acts of “cessation” or “annexation,” as seen in Maisel's *They All Chose America* (1957, p. 176); others such as Zinn (1999), Samora & Simon (1993), and Gonzalez & Fernandez (2003) critically assert that the United States conquered and colonized desired Mexican territories for economic and political purposes (Gonzalez & Fernandez, 2003; Zinn, 1999). The first version of the story implies *choice* - Mexico *agreed* to join with the U.S. as a result of deliberation and negotiation; the second implicates *force* and *conquest*, with America essentially overrunning a weaker opponent as a dominating force. The opening quote of this section by Zinn (1999) seems

especially applicable here – the omission of information regarding the circumstances of the “cessation” certainly creates a more favorable impression of the United States’ actions.

Maisel (1957) begins his account of Mexican history with American indebtedness to Mexican culture for their contributions to southwestern American life. Citing our debt to “the men of Mexico” for the introduction of techniques related to the “Western Cowboy” such as lassoing, breaking wild mustangs, and the wearing of chaps, the historian also praises Mexican culture for giving us new words to incorporate into our English vocabulary such as *pinto*, *corral*, *fiesta*, and *pronto* (pp. 172-173). In an authoritative authorial voice implicitly representing all Americans, Maisel states that Mexico “ceded the [southwest] region to the United States” (p. 173), but gives no background or circumstances behind this voluntary relinquishment. Although he acknowledges the presence of “their ancestors” in present day U.S. lands, Maisel emphasizes the *exploration* of these lands by Mexicans rather than their claim to *ownership*. Mexicans have left “lovely, lyrical names” behind for these lands, writes Maisel, as well as well-blazed trails created by “Spanish speaking predecessors” that “eased the way” for subsequent English colonizers (p. 173).

Maisel (1957) describes the Mexican culture as “simple, pastoral,” and “unprepared to compete with the flood of ambitious, hard-driving immigrants that suddenly engulfed them” (p. 176). The “downtrodden...poverty-stricken peons” of “old Mexico” moved eagerly to the new American southwest (now Anglo owned) to gratefully accept low paying migrant jobs that would make “even the poorest of their fellow countrymen seem Croesus-rich” (p. 176). These migrant workers were not “hired not as individuals, but as crews,” moving from camp to camp with “no opportunity to learn English or acquire our customs” – an implied disadvantage to Mexicans. Mexicans, according to Maisel, are represented as a distinctive group of poor, unskilled,

monolithic “others,” who have willingly ceded their lands to a greater Anglo nation. Mexican culture is viewed as a contributing subset to hegemonic Anglo culture, offering enrichment to an already established and virtually complete cultural landscape. According to Maisel’s historical account, assimilation to American language and “customs” appears to be the obviously desirable goal for all Mexicans.

Thankfully, more recent accounts of Mexican American history have begun to honorably trace the full development of the Mexican American experience from Pre-Columbian civilization to present day life in the United States. Historians such as Acuña (2004), Hamnett (2006), Kluger (2007), and several others address the Mexican American experience from a more inclusive, respectful, and arguably critical perspective than that of earlier historians, honoring both the unique history and cultural identity of the Mexican American people.

The Lynching of Mexican Americans – A Historical Silence

The lynching of Mexican Americans in the Southwest has long been overlooked in American history, and only two of the historical reference texts I examined included the topic (Acuña, 2004; Acuña & Compean, 2008). It is estimated that at least 597 Mexican Americans were lynched between 1848 and 1928, the majority working within the agricultural and ranching industry; some suggest that as many as 473 of every 100,000 Mexican migrant workers fell victim to this atrocity (Carrigan & Webb, 2003). Extreme racism in the American Southwest positioned Mexican Americans as Indians (also tormented by European Americans), and the growing tide of resentment against those who elected to stay on previously owned lands fueled the formation of vigilante groups such as the Minute Men reminiscent of the Ku Klux Klan in the Southern States with the intent of eradicating unwanted Mexican American citizens. The Texas Rangers, often lauded in Anglo-authored American history, brutally repressed (and lynched) the

Mexican American population in Texas, and it is estimated that thousands of Mexican Americans were killed at their hands (Carrigan & Webb, 2003). The vigilante Minute Men has experienced revival in the contemporary American Southwest with the grassroots emergence of the Minuteman Project (Chavez, 2008). Using the media to influence public discourse regarding the distinction between “citizens” and “aliens,” volunteers of the Minuteman Project drew national attention as they arrived in Arizona in April of 2005 to monitor the U.S.-Mexico border, decrying the dilution of the “rights and privileges of U.S. citizenship” due to unchecked immigration (p. 4). Responding to public pressure surrounding these issues, the U.S. House of Representatives later passed harsh immigration reform proposals (H.R. 4437) to enhance border security, enforce immigration laws, and address terrorism (GovTrack, 2010).

Mexican Labor in the United States

The remaining nation of Mexico following American conquest experienced much upheaval and civil unrest, eventually resulting in a revolution spanning nearly a decade beginning in 1913. Mexican Americans, largely participating in U.S. gold mining, ranching, and agricultural industries, experienced a huge population shift as thousands upon thousands of Mexican refugees – an estimated *ten percent* of the total population of Mexico - migrated to the American Southwest fleeing the ravages of civil war. By 1925, Los Angeles had the largest community of Mexicans in the world outside of Mexico City (Samora & Simon, 1993). This large-scale mass migration strongly resembles the current surge of Mexican immigrants to the United States, yet due to the immediate American need for cheap migrant and industrial labor during this period, issues of legal status were not foregrounded. As evidenced by nearly constant attention in the contemporary national news media, issues of legality and documentation occupy a central position today in the discourse surrounding Mexican immigrants (Chavez, 2008). Like

the borders of the Rio Grande, American policy and sentiment regarding the presence of Mexican (or any) immigrants in the United States is moveable (but not negotiable), and linked to American need or desire for the services of that group to society; *lack* of American need positions Mexican immigrants as disposable and/or undesirable people, subject to the changing decisions of those in power.

The Bracero agreement of 1942 is one such example of American concession due to a need for less expensive Mexican labor. A temporary agreement between Mexico and the United States designed to fulfill a need for domestic labor during World War II, the Bracero agreement allowed Mexican nationals (non U.S. citizens) to work in the United States for the prevailing minimum wage of 50 cents per hour. Not unlike the American approach to the stipulations and guarantees of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the promises of the Bracero agreement to Mexican laborers regarding health care, housing, food, wages, working hours and discrimination were largely disregarded. Texas circumvented these requirements by hiring “wetbacks,” or illegal immigrants not affiliated with the Bracero program, ironically because they had no rights as illegals in a foreign country (Samora & Simon, 1993, p. 140). When the war ended in 1945, Americans returned to jobs held by Braceros, and the program was to cease. However, agriculturalists had become accustomed to paying lower wages to those with little power to ask for more, and the Bracero agreement was extended, ending in 1964.

Mexican American migrant labor continues to contribute largely to the U.S. economy, yet the harsh and inequitable conditions of this arrangement are often omitted from historical and contemporary accounts of the Mexican American experience. Although Latino historians Samora & Simon (1993), Gonzalez & Fernandez (2003), and Acuña & Compean (2008) extensively address Mexican migrant labor and the Bracero agreement, European American historians Zinn

(1999), Fellows (1972), and Maisel (1957) offer minimal or no coverage of the topic. Maisel describes the migrant labor system as “wonderful...for the factory farms. Paying ten to twenty cents an hour for Mexican labor, they could ship they could ship their produce all the way to the East Coast, and *still* [emphasis mine] undersell the market” (1957, p. 178). Although Maisel does go on to describe the poor migrant camp conditions such as squalid living conditions, disease, and undernourishment, he later concludes that migrant living brought “opportunities which many eagerly grasped...teenagers got their first chance to associate with other American youths, to learn English...Younger children – again for the first time – were able to attend classes throughout the school year” (p. 178-179). Maisel’s perspective on Mexican American history reflects a position of Anglo superiority similar to that reflected in pre Civil Rights era sentiment regarding African Americans – the grateful, contented laborer (slave) accepting assistance from the Anglo benefactor. Mexican Americans, as implied by Maisel, lack the agency to improve their lives or choose differently, and were actually *fortunate* to be working for Anglos.

Fellows (1972) also offers an Anglocentric perspective on migrant labor and the Braceros, using generalizing statements and brief, nonspecific descriptions to sweep across the topic. Stating that during the 20th century “there have been a considerable number of Mexican-Americans engaged in seasonal work in agricultural areas,” Fellows reports that many of these men were “once an important addition to the American farm labor force” (p. 61), leaving the unstated implication that they are no longer necessary. According to Fellows, the workers reside in rural “colonias,” or colonies, where “they tend to gather together,” but no description of the living conditions in these colonias is included, nor are the conditions of the labor addressed beyond a single statement, “hired by contract” (p. 61). Fellows goes on to say that the practice (of hiring Braceros) was halted “due to opposition on the part of American laborers (many of

whom were Mexican-Americans)” claiming “unfair competition” (p. 62). Zinn (1999) makes no mention at all of migrant labor or the Bracero agreement in his extensive account of U.S. history.

Mexican Repatriation – A Forced Migration

The Mexican Repatriation, or forced migration of Mexican Americans, remains a little known and shameful fact of U.S. history. Prompted by concerns for the protection of American jobs during the Great Depression of 1929, President Herbert Hoover launched an active drive against illegal immigrants, authorizing raids upon public and private establishments in the areas of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Mexicans (and Mexican Americans) were viewed as usurpers of American jobs and a burden on social services – a common cry in contemporary society (Huntington, 2004) - and the Immigration and Naturalization Service therefore largely targeted Mexicans due to the proximity of the border, the physical distinctiveness of Mexican Americans, and easily identifiable neighborhoods or barrios (Ruiz, 1998). Unfortunately, the quest to rid the country of undocumented Mexicans also deported thousands of Mexican American *citizens* against their will: although no precise figures exist, estimates ranging from 500,000 to 2 *million* Mexican American individuals and families were either coerced, threatened, raided, jailed, or transported across the border - often to a country in which they had never resided (Koch, 2006). Others, whose numbers remain untallied, “voluntarily” left the United States due to job denials or lack of appropriate paperwork such as birth certificates left behind during a raid. The civil rights of American-born children were simply ignored, and many later discovered when they wished to return to the United States that they had inadvertently relinquished their U.S. citizenship by voting in a Mexican election or serving in the Army (Meier & Ribera, 1993). One cannot help but draw a strong parallel to this

event and the 2010 Arizona legislation allowing the racial profiling of Latinos for the purpose of flushing out and deporting undocumented immigrants (Koch, 2006).

In recent years, legislation has been introduced urging both a public apology and the inclusion of the Mexican Repatriation in American textbooks and school curriculum. In January of 2006, California became the first state to enact a bill that apologizes to Latino families for the 1930s civil rights violations, but declined to approve the sort of reparations the U.S. Congress provided in 1988 for Japanese-Americans interned during World War II. Senator Joe Dunn, sponsor of the approved California bill, also urged measures to require that students be taught about the 1930s deportation (Koch, 2006). However, apologies and non ratified bills do not change systemic issues: as Arizona and other states begin to identify and deport Mexicans (and other Latinos) without proper paperwork, and American citizens remain uneducated about our historically (and currently) unjust treatment of Mexican Americans, history may be destined to repeat itself once again.

The Chicano Movement

Scholars debate when Chicano (Mexican American) history regarding the United States actually began, and who should be included in this history (Gonzalez & Fernandez, 2003). Major debates pivot upon the following issues: Do Chicanos constitute another immigrant ethnic group (similar to Chinese, Koreans, and others), or are they an indigenous population who were disposed of their land, as were the American Indians? How are Chicanos similar to and different from other non-dominant peoples? Are Chicanos unique? (Moore & Pachon, 1985). Although a thorough exploration of these important questions is beyond the scope of this study, comparisons to other groups will inevitably add to the richness of discussion as I read and discuss novels for young adults involving Mexican immigrants. My analysis will also be strongly informed by the

consideration of the question of Mexican Americans as disposed indigenous people versus an immigrant group, especially as this may apply to the attitudes and perceptions of the characters in the books or to the ideological perspective of the author.

Although scholars and journalists often disagree over the Chicano Movement's inception, participants, and primary goals, most concede it to be a social movement parallel to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Larson, 2006). In reaction to European American discrimination and racism, proponents of the Chicano Movement demanded equal civil rights and opportunities for Mexican American (Chicano) citizens. The movement ranged in tone and focus from conservative economic and social protest to the strong cultural nationalism and militant stance of the Brown Berets, a Chicano youth group often compared to the Black Panthers (Larson, 2006). Mexican American students became an active voice – parallel to their African American counterparts – for an assertive cultural nationalism advocating “Chicano power” (Meier & Ribera, 1993, p. 218). Numerous organizations formed, including the Denver-based Crusade for Justice, founded by Rodolfo Gonzales in 1966 to organize Chicanos for demonstrations, marches, strikes, and other efforts to demonstrate the neglect of the Mexican American community. In addition to protest, the Crusade notably created alternatives to Anglo-dominated institutions, such as a school to instruct young children about Chicano culture (Escuela Tlatelolco), a political party (Colorado La Raza Unida), and a newspaper (*El Gallo*) (Larson, 2006). This public assertion of cultural group identity through the establishment of media and political modes of expression again parallels that of the African American community, as well as the activities of many other marginalized cultural groups in the United States to this day.

Early proponents of the Chicano Movement such as Gonzales and Tijerina embraced a form of nationalism based upon the failure of the United States government to honor the promises of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Samora & Simon, 1993). However, this emphasis failed to include the civil rights of new, undocumented immigrants in the United States. As the movement progressed, the focus shifted to immediate and practical issues affecting Mexican Americans, such as unequal educational and employment opportunities, political powerlessness, and police brutality. Chicano college students also formed *el Moviemeinto Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan*, an organization promoting the establishment of Chicano Studies Programs; as recently seen in Arionza (2010), programs such as these are now coming under fire for allegedly “promoting ethnic solidarity” and encouraging racial resentment of whites (Davenport & Cooper, 2010, np) – a sentiment reminiscent of Washington’s admonition that immigrants should not remain in “clannish groups,” but enter American society to become “one people” (quoted in Fitzpatrick, 1940, p. 23). However, as Bercovici (1925) observed, becoming American often implicitly means becoming *White European American* – at the expense of any other ethnic heritage.

The Chicano Movement also brought a broad base of support for the plight of the seasonal farm worker. Cesar Chavez, union organizer of the National Farm Workers Association, led a national boycott on grapes that prompted eventual negotiation between workers and growers. Advocating tactics of nonviolent opposition often compared to those of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, Chavez led peaceful protest and hunger strikes that garnered national attention for the Chicano community.

As is often true of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Civil Rights Movement, Chavez’s visionary and effective leadership in the Chicano Movement frequently serves to represent the

entire movement, disregarding other strong and influential individuals and group. This is evident in some of the European American authored histories I examined, yet these texts give minimal attention to the movement; Fellows (1972), writing in the chronological center of the movement, describes Chavez as “feeling himself to be part of a subjugated and dominated minority” who is trying to preserve the ethnic solidarity “against the inroads of the ‘Anglo culture’” (Fellows, 1972, p. 58). Fellows interprets (or rather *misinterprets*) the intentions of the Chicano Movement (although not named as such), suggesting that Mexicans must avoid the temptation “to stray from the Catholic religion,” to “drop his Spanish language in favor of English,” or to “relinquish the traditional dominance of the male over the female” (p. 58) – issues largely addressed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, with the possible exception of gender relationships. The tendency to focus upon the successes (or failures) of single individuals as representative of all belies the rich complexity of a people’s culture and history (Banks, 1994) as often seen in the inclusion of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as representative of the Civil Rights Movement in many U.S. textbooks and historical accounts (Aldridge, 2006).

Zinn (1999) devotes two pages of his 702-page volume to the Chicano Movement, with a paragraph about Chavez, yet he also briefly discusses other activities within the movement. Although Zinn’s account is condensed, he touches upon several important issues, including labor protests in the canning and textile industry, campaigns for government representation and school improvement, the establishment of radio and television presence, Mexican American participation in the Vietnam War protest, and the increasing prominence and recognition of Chicano (and other Latino) artists, writers, and musicians. Larson (2006), however, positions Chavez and the farm worker strikes centrally due to heavy press coverage (her particular research focus), discussing the Crusade for Justice (organization) and Chicano youth activities.

Larson, like Zinn, devotes a little over two pages of her volume to the Chicano Movement (as opposed to 28 pages devoted to the Civil Rights Movement).

Although these historians offer sparse coverage of the Chicano Movement, others devote a great deal of detailed attention to its issues. Meier & Ribera (1993) devote a full 30 pages to the movement, including topics not addressed by Anglo historians such as activities supporting Chicana liberation (paralleling the women's liberation movement) and Chicano religious concerns regarding Protestant pressure and Vatican neglect of the Mexican American Catholic population. Meier & Ribera also detail the rise of the "Chicano Cultural Renaissance" (p. 233), a term for the rise of Chicano (and other Latino) art forms to express individual and cultural identity. Authors such as Richard Rodriguez (*Hunger for Memory*, 1982), Sandra Cisneros (*The House on Mango Street*, 1984), and Ernesto Galarza (*Barrio Boy*, 1971) are discussed, as well as numerous others emerging during this period whose public exposure has been limited by lack of access to mainstream publishing houses (Meier & Ribera, 1993). These examples, along with those of film, poetry, and academic work serve to illustrate the depth of Chicano experience, intellect and expression often overlooked or neglected by mainstream European American society.

Samora & Simon (1993) devote a full four chapters of their historical account of the Mexican American people to issues of Chicano equality, identity, organizational activity, and artistic expression, yet do not identify these as part of a specifically defined movement. Providing extensive coverage of the struggles surrounding education, civil rights, labor issues, and political activities, Samora & Simon offer many examples beyond Chavez of Mexican American participation in the advancement of Mexican American (and Latino) culture and position in the United States.

Recently, historians are coming to recognize the importance of primary documents and authentic voices in the retelling of Latino history. Acuña & Compean's three-volume compilation of Latino history, *Voices of the U.S. Latino Experience* (2008) contains letters, interviews, treaties, and speeches ranging from 1648 to 2006. Standing in poignant witness to the events described (and often omitted) by historians, first-hand accounts and historical documents often render prior versions of events inaccurate and reduce (or eliminate) the ability of historians to cast events in their own ideological light. It is difficult, for example, to overlook or minimize the aggressive, brutal, and unjust U.S. treatment of conquered Mexicans when the words of General Ulysses S. Grant resound: in a letter penned to his fiancée Julia Dent in 1846, Grant writes:

some...think it perfectly right to impose on the people of a conquered City...and even to murder them where the act can be covered by dark. And how much they seem to enjoy acts of violence too! I would not pretend to guess...but the number would startle you.

(quoted in Acuña & Compean, 2008, p. 88)

Zinn (1999) also makes strong use of quotations from American historical sources. However, the *Latino* voice is distinctly absent from these accounts, and inclusion of these perspectives would not only enhance, but support and validate the story. Primary documents such as those included in the work of Zinn, Acuña & Compean, and others continue to enrich our understanding of Mexican American and Latino history, as well as provide a means of ideological “check and balance” for single-sided perspectives.

Mexican American History in U.S. Textbooks and Informational Books

Although a respectable body of historical and contemporary research exists surrounding the education of Mexican American and other Latino students (e.g. Nieto, 2004; Suárez-Orozco

& Suárez-Orozco, 2001), there are serious gaps and omissions in scholarship addressing the representation of Mexican American history and culture in curricular materials such as textbooks, novels, and other informational texts. Beyond Loewen's (2007) comprehensive, critical review of the content of U.S. high school history texts, there are few other studies that examine Mexican American or Latino history in U.S. secondary school textbooks. Studies that critically examine supplemental informational texts for Mexican American content are equally rare, and typically discuss nonfiction works along with other genres such as fiction and poetry; in Chapter 5, I will review studies in children's literature that have addressed Mexican American representations in children's and young adult fiction. Although an extensive discussion of nonfiction books and textbooks is beyond the scope of this study, I will briefly review scholarship examining the representation of Mexican American history and culture in school textbooks and informational texts as a means of background for my study of young adult fiction.

Textbooks dominate history and social studies courses more than any other subject. As discussed in Chapter 2, textbooks, novels and other curricular materials play an important – if not central – role in the presentation of school knowledge worthy of study (Apple, 1993; Taxel, 1980). Elson (1964) describes nineteenth century American textbooks as potential tools of indoctrination to a patriotic sense of “Americanness” (p. 341), emphasizing patriotic rather than critical citizenship. Although this situation is much improved, recent studies of textbooks reveal a continued emphasis upon patriotism and the presentation of U.S. history in a favorable light (Loewen, 2007). In the following section, I will briefly examine the ideological focus of history textbooks, as well as the treatment of Mexican American history and culture in secondary school history textbooks frequently used in the United States.

In a 2007 study of thirteen high school history textbooks frequently used in the United States, Loewen determined these monstrously large volumes (an average of 7 pounds and 850 pages) to be largely nationalistic (and arguably assimilationist) in nature. The titles themselves reflect this focus, ideologically positioning readers before the book is even opened: titles such as *The American Way* (Bauer, 1979), *The American Pageant* (Kennedy, Cohen, & Bailey, 2006), *Land of Promise* (Berkin & Wood, 1983), and *Triumph of the American Nation* (Todd & Curti, 1986) all suggest feelings of pride, grandeur, and patriotism. The covers of these texts are also graced with images that reinforce nationalist attitudes, such as American flags, bald eagles, and the Washington Monument.

As evidenced in some of the previously reviewed accounts of U.S. history, textbooks also omit information that “might reflect badly upon our national character” (Loewen, 2007, p. 5), establishing and reinforcing the selective tradition of what we are to believe about ourselves and others. Loewen also notes that textbooks “seldom use the past to illuminate the present,” nor do they “use the present to illuminate the past” (p. 6) – a disturbing trend, as history continues to repeat itself in many arenas of the worldwide stage. Confirming Zinn’s (1999) observation that historians may either “outright lie” or “distort facts” to prevent “unfavorable conclusions” (p. 8), Loewen also determines that textbooks contain both: some of the information presented in textbooks is “flatly wrong or unverifiable,” producing “startling errors of omission and distortion” that “mar American histories” (Loewen, p. 7). However, more than just histories are marred – the truthful representation and treatment of marginalized others is marred by minimization or omission as unimportant to what is deemed “official knowledge” (Apple, 1993) for American citizens. Employing what Loewen terms a “godlike,” (p. 8) omniscient tone – strongly evidenced in the work of Fellows (1972), Maisel (1957), and Miers (1956) – textbooks

authoritatively speak to and for *all*, a technique that discourages active questioning and resistance.

Mexican Americans – An Absent Culture

There is a notably resounding silence regarding Mexican American history and culture in U.S. textbooks (Zinn, 1999). Although Loewen (2007) is far more sympathetic than most, even *his* treatment is sparse: the 444-page book of research findings reveals only 13 pages that even *mention* Mexico in any capacity. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is not included in the index or body of the work, nor any details of the conquest of Mexico; no mention is made of the Mexican Repatriation during the Great Depression, or of the Chicano Movement of the 1960s. Even Cesar Chavez, the frequent “poster child” for Mexican American history, is omitted from these high school texts (and therefore Loewen’s discussion), although the biographical study of Chavez (and other non Latinos) as an example of exemplary *individual* accomplishment remains a part of the elementary curriculum in some areas of the United States (Georgia Performance Standards, 2010). However, as previously discussed in Chapter 2, other areas of the United States such as Texas have altered state educational standards (ultimately reflected in adopted textbooks) to an extremely conservative stance, reducing curricular coverage of items such as equal rights (race, class, ethnicity, and gender), labor unions, slavery, and “foreigners” (Foner, 2010). It stands to reason that the story of the conquest of Mexico – and the subsequent American failure to honor the civil rights of its new citizens under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo - would not be regarded as information favorable to the American image.

The Mexican American War is briefly referenced as the “Mexican War” in the high school textbooks Loewen examined (2007, p. 152), a naming technique that removes American role and responsibility for the war. However, coverage of the War is limited to *citation alone*:

textbooks instead focus upon U.S. issues of civil war and slavery, but neglect to mention the heavy interest of Southern planters in the acquisition of Texas and the Mexican-owned southwestern territories for the establishment of slave states in the wake of Southern defeat. The texts examined are silent regarding the U.S. provocation of Mexico, the conquest of territories resulting in the acquisition of nearly seven additional U.S. states, and the subsequent mistreatment of indigenous and migrating Mexican Americans comprising the American Southwest.

As previously noted, Hoover's repatriation of an estimated 500,000 to 2 million Mexican Americans is not mentioned, even in discussions of the Great Depression. Instead, high school texts choose to focus upon President Woodrow Wilson's military "intervention" (Loewen, 2007, p. 16) in the Mexican civil war beginning in 1914, emphasizing the peace-keeping nature of the mission – the ideology reflected in Polk's conquest of Mexico in 1848. The conquest is omitted; readers are moved directly into the period *following* the war. The selective construction of America as saviors of the oppressed, sweeping in to establish peace in less civilized foreign nations remains alive and well in contemporary U.S. textbooks.

Loewen notes that textbooks later capitulate to Wilson's poor tactics and motives in the invasions of Mexico and Latin America, wriggling to "get the hero off the hook" (p. 17) in subsequent editions. Stopping short of calling Wilson's Latin American actions "Bad Neighbor" (p. 17) policies, textbooks such as *Challenge of Freedom* state that "President Wilson wanted the United States to build friendships with the countries of Latin America. However, he found this difficult..." (quoted in Loewen, p. 17). Several textbooks blame the invasions on the country invaded, in a "they deserved it" sort of manner: the *American Pageant* (Kennedy, Cohen, & Bailey, 2006) states that "Wilson recoiled from an aggressive foreign policy...Wilson reluctantly

dispatched marines to protect American lives and property” (quoted in Loewen, p. 17). These are untruths: historian Walter Karp (1979) has shown that this view of a reluctant Wilson contradicts the facts – reminiscent of Polk’s pre-election decision to acquire Mexican lands, the invasion of Mexico and Latin America was Wilson’s idea from the beginning, and it upset both Congress and the American people. Loewen also notes the textbook authors’ common use of another device when describing our “Mexican adventures” (p. 18): they identify Wilson as ordering troop withdrawal, but never specify anyone as ordering them in. Such passivity insulates historical figures from the full recognition of their “unheroic or unethical deeds” (p. 18).

Cruz (1994) examined six widely used history textbooks in grades 7-12 (some of the same titles later examined by Loewen in subsequent editions) to assess the representation of Latin Americans. Findings revealed a limited inclusion of Latin American history and perspectives in the textbooks, with content included in the texts continuing to reinforce stereotypes of Latinos as “lazy, passive, irresponsible, lustful, animalistic, and violent” (p. 55). In *The American Pageant* (Kennedy, Cohen, & Bailey, 2006), the section on the Mexican American War is entitled “The Mastering of Mexico” and describes Santa Fe, New Mexico as an easy conquest for General Stephen Kearny’s troops: “This sunbaked outpost, with its drowsy plazas, was easily captured” (pp. 283-284). In a later study of pictorial representations in textbooks, Cruz (2002) also found the few accompanying pictorial representations of Latinos in these and other chapters to reinforce stereotypes. As we will see in Chapter 4 of this study, this textbook’s description of the Mexican-occupied Santa Fe invokes the frequent stereotype of a remote, sleepy Mexican village often seen in American film and television involving Mexican or Latino characters.

Cruz (1994) also found Mexicans to be portrayed as violent and animalistic in the textbooks she examined. In *America: the Glorious Republic* (Graff, 1985), Mexican General Santa Anna's men are said to have "mauled" Americans in battle (p. 338). Cruz notes that references to American victories in the text are sanitized to emphasize American success rather than Mexican cost, yet Mexican victories are expressed in terms of the violent damage inflicted upon Americans using terms such as "mauled," "maimed," and "pillaged" (1994, p. 58). *A Proud Nation* (May, 1989) portrays Mexicans as a violent people who look forward to aggressive conflict: "To Mexicans, the picture was clear...the United States was taking over their country. Yet they were confident that should it come to war, their nation would be victorious, since Mexico's army was much larger...in a way, they were anxious for conflict" (p. 384). This assumptive casting of Mexicans as lawless, violent and animalistic is reminiscent of depictions associated with Native Americans as savages to be subdued and "herded" onto reservations. Images of Mexican bandits and drug lords in film and television also perpetuate this stereotype of criminality and lawlessness, as we will see in the next chapter of this study.

However, despite problematic passages such as those above, some of the textbooks in Cruz's (1994) study also present Mexicans as "logical, reasoning strategists" rather than as barbarians simply looking for war (p. 59). Schwartz and O'Connor's *Exploring American History* (1986) presents the same event as May's (1989) textbook above, but with a more respectful perspective of Mexican strategy and ability: "The Mexican government was certain it could win the war. Mexico's army was five times larger than that of the United States. Mexico felt that its soldiers were better fighters in the deserts of Mexico. It was certain that the northern states would not support the war, because Texas was a slave state" (Schwartz & O'Connor, 1986, p. 244). This and other similar passages indicate some progress toward a representation of U.S.

Mexican history and culture that honors the Mexican people as an intelligent, capable civilization.

Noboa (2003) conducted a review of the curricular standards, adopted textbooks, and classroom practices used in the teaching of U.S. history in Texas to determine the status of Latino representation. Examining three of the six U.S. high school history textbooks adopted by the Texas Education Association (and all published in 1992), Noboa categorized references to Latinos in the textbooks using Garcia's (1980) approach to sentence categorization, and assessed the factual accuracy of information. Findings "consistently" reveal Latinos to be "underrepresented" in the teaching of U.S. history in Texas – results that are not surprising in light of Texas's recent changes to state curricular standards and the elimination of Mexican American ethnic studies programs (Noboa, 2003, p. vii). Although the purpose of Noboa's study was not to exclusively focus upon the critical analysis of textbook content, his study offers an overview of the alarming lack of inclusion of Latino history and perspective in the curriculum of a state whose very origins spring from the shared history of its Latino citizens. As other states purchase nationally marketed textbooks whose content is inadvertently influenced by the Texas state curricular standards, Noboa's findings are significant to the study of textbook and curricular content in the United States.

Informational Books

Nonfiction, informational books assume a prominent place in the school curriculum. Often used by teachers to supplement classroom history and social studies textbooks, informational books are also chosen for recreational reading by students, remaining the largest circulating section of many school library media centers (Ross, McKechnie, & Rothbauer, 2005). However, few scholars beyond the Council on Interracial Books for Children's (1975) landmark

study of Chicano children's literature have specifically (or extensively) examined nonfiction children's literature for representations of Mexican American history and culture. The Council determined the 60 non-fiction books they examined to "fall short of meeting the needs of Chicano children" by "providing a highly selective picture of Mexican and Chicano people and culture for non-Chicano readers" (CIBC, p. 10). Citing one particular school textbook, *Mexican Americans: Past, Present, and Future* (Nava, 1969) as "assimilationist," depicting Mexican Americans as "one more minority with problems" the Council also identified other problematic issues in the texts such as the use of incorrect Spanish language and terminology (misusing the gendered terms "Chicano" and "Chicana") and tendency to essentialize all Chicano people as rural, migrant, unskilled, or poor (CIBC, p.10). Additionally, the Council found some favorable examples of Chicano culture in nonfiction books, such as the Chicano-authored *A Mexican American Chronicle* by noted historian Rodolfo Acuña (1970). Designed for older readers, this text establishes the variety and breadth of early Mexican Indian culture, the emergence of a strong Mexican people struggling for independence, and realistic, non-romanticized versions of the Mexican-American War from a Latino perspective.

Barrera and de Cortes examined nonfiction texts in 1997 and 1999, noting a few "encouraging changes" such as recognition of Mexican American contribution to community and national culture (1997, p. 136). However, the authors also note the chronic tendency to depict Mexican American life "in both limited and limiting ways": some stereotypical symbols are fading (serapes, burros), new ones are taking their place (Santa Fe furniture, religious icons), and others remain (piñatas, tacos, and fiestas). Mexican Americans continue to be tied to the traditional past, in a form of "arrested cultural development," and continue to be depicted in the role of either immigrant or migrant (1997, p. 136). In a 1999 study of children's fiction and

nonfiction, Barrera, Quiroa, & West-Williams commend two photo-essays for their engaging photography and text; however, one is set in the West (roping cattle), and the other is set in an urban barrio. Although the authors do not mention this, Mexican Americans are depicted in traditional (or stereotypical) settings for Latinos in the United States, rather than in a mainstream neighborhood or rural setting. Barrera, et al also examined biographical works, noting works about Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, claiming an “unbalanced view” of the Chicana as a “superwoman” who juggled both child-reading and union work (p. 326). However, Barrera and her colleagues (1999) do note the gradual and steady (“poco a poco”) improvement of the quantity and quality of nonfiction books about Mexican American history and culture, as increasing numbers of Latino authors and researchers contribute to our understanding of this important piece of neglected American history (Barrera, et al, p. 315). There is clearly a need for additional research in the area of informational books for children about the history and culture of our nation’s largest and fastest growing immigrant population.

Concluding Thoughts

Although there have been significant improvements over the past few years, Mexican American history largely remains an incomplete, inaccurate, and untold story in American textbooks and informational books. Historians such as Kluger (2007), Loewen (2007), and Zinn (1999) have commendably (and critically) addressed portions of the U.S. and Mexican experience; a few others have explored the full chronology of Mexican and Mexican American history (Acuña, 2004; Hamnett, 2006; Samora & Simon, 1993). Older historical accounts have presented an Anglo centric perspective of Mexican American history and culture (Fellows, 1972; Maisel, 1957; Miers, 1956), possibly related to date of publication. However, these scholarly texts continue to circulate among those researching Mexican American culture, and their

ideological messages ring surprisingly true to much of the current sentiment surrounding Mexican Americans in the United States. Latino historians continue to produce poignant, authentic accounts of Mexican American history that contribute to a changing paradigm regarding Mexican American history; their accounts not only fill in the “gaps,” but *write* the story from the perspective of the marginalized Mexican American people. These important works are essential to both Anglo and Mexican American understanding of what *really* happened in the past - in hopes of more effectively critiquing the present.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of this section is the virtual silence of American history textbooks regarding the Mexican American experience in U.S. history. As evidenced in Loewen’s research, *nothing* beyond a discussion of Woodrow Wilson’s “peace-keeping” intervention in the Mexican civil war made it into the high school history textbooks he reviewed. The history of the Mexican American experience is not *distorted* here, as it is simply *omitted*. Cruz (1994, 2002) and Noboa (2003) also find an alarming shortage or absence of Latino representation in currently used textbooks, as well as the continued perpetuation of disparaging, stereotypical images.

Assimilationist and nationalist ideology runs deeply through these textbooks, as publishers design patriotically illustrated textbooks to “help students ‘discover’ our ‘common beliefs’ and ‘appreciate our heritage’” (Loewen, 2007, p. 325) – but whose beliefs? Whose heritage? Apparently, this common belief and heritage does not include the conquest, acquisition, and subsequent mistreatment of Mexican Americans, yesterday or today. The history of a U.S. immigrant population that grows annually by the millions continues to lie in the margins, unavailable to those of all ethnicities who may lead America into the future.

CHAPTER 4

Mexican Americans in Television and Film

Latino stereotypes are the mask that can't be pried away, the fabric that becomes skin (Nericcio, 2007, p. 29).

Although the concern of this study is with representations of Mexican immigrants in children's literature, it is also important to contextualize it to representations in other media. The entertainment industry maintains a powerful position in the shaping of American culture: portrayals of ethnicity, nationality, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, and physical or cognitive ability regularly circulate through cyberspace and into U.S. homes through television, internet, films and radio. Americans – and especially *young* Americans - are consuming these images at record levels: statistics reveal an astonishing and ever-increasing amount of time and attention devoted to the consumption of various forms of entertainment media in the United States (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010). According to Nielson Media Research (2009), Americans spend an estimated 151 hours per month watching television and downloaded media from the internet. Although a composite figure for American film consumption that accounts for all the various mediums such as cable television, internet streaming, video rental or purchase, and movie attendance is not available, current information clearly indicates that films also remain a popular source of entertainment: Netflix, a popular internet-based video rental company, reports 15 million U.S. subscribers ("Overview," 2010), and a recent Nielsen report indicates approximately 1.4 *billion* cinema tickets sold in the United States in 2009 ("Fact Sheet," 2009).

Given these figures for American media consumption, entertainment media clearly offers a significant opportunity to establish and perpetuate a selective tradition regarding cultural groups such as Mexican Americans (Williams, 1977). As previously discussed, art forms – including entertainment media - are inherently political (Greenfield, 1985), conveying ideological messages that can serve to establish and naturalize the characteristics of a group of people, and suggest how we are to view historical and contemporary events (Hollindale, 1992). Through the repeated visual presentation of “certain types of people in certain types of roles,” patterns emerge in films, television, and internet videos that encourage viewers to see others and ourselves in certain ways (Larson, 2006, p. 14). As discussed in Chapter 2, such positioning has serious implications for marginalized others; “they” often remain on the outer edges of “our” society, considered only in relation to and from the perspective of the dominant culture – an important point to consider as I examine my sample of young adult novels.

Although a thorough analysis of the effects of entertainment media on consumers is beyond the scope of this study, it is important to recognize the potential influence upon viewer’s (and specifically *students*’) perceptions. Researchers in the fields of mass media, social science, and communication have critically examined the influence of various forms of entertainment media on viewer’s real-world perceptions of ethnic groups (Bazalgette & Buckingham, 1997; Berg, 2002; Harwood & Anderson, 2002). Findings of these studies indicate representations in media to have a definite effect upon viewer’s perceptions of the competence, socioeconomic status, social roles, and stereotypic characteristics of ethnic groups. In combination with print and internet mass media representations, literary works, and school curriculum, entertainment media offers yet another vehicle through which the selective tradition is established and reinforced.

Although an examination of *all* forms of entertainment media containing representations of Mexican Americans would be informative to my study, such an examination would itself be worthy of a dissertation. To provide a wider context for the present study, I will therefore focus upon the various representations, misrepresentations, and exclusions of Mexican American people, history and culture as portrayed in American television and film that contribute to the establishment and reification of the selective tradition (Williams, 1977). Drawing upon the work of media scholars and historical records of television and film, I will briefly explore representations of Mexican Americans that perpetuate specific narratives or stereotypes and serve to establish or reify the selective tradition. I will then briefly examine representations of Mexican Americans in advertising, and conclude with the implications of these representations and portrayals for my analysis of young adult contemporary novels.

Mexican Americans remain largely underrepresented in American television and film (Larson, 2006). Nerricio (2007) asserts that Mexican Americans are an essentially co-opted and “subject[ed]” people, constructed by the largely European American entertainment industry, with little contribution of their own to “mainstream, mass-cultural” media representations of their communities (p. 17). Mexican Americans (and other Latinos) are often presented in “limited ways” that simultaneously “reinforce their inferior status” through stereotyping, minimization, or exclusion (Larson, 2006, p. 57). It is the nature of stereotypes to contain elements of truth about a group of people that are generalized to all members: representations of Mexican immigrants as criminals, domestic workers, blue collar laborers, or law enforcement sidekicks to European Americans are all accurate depictions of some (and arguably many) Mexican Americans in the United States. However, the danger lies in the essentialization – all are not content to remain in the shadows, all are not funny, all are not uneducated, all are not promiscuous, all are not drug

traffickers. Although Mexican Americans are beginning to occupy more positive roles in television and film, these roles represent a very small portion of the total; programs and films often celebrate the lives of individual heroes such as musicians Selena (*Selena*, Nava, 1997) and Ritchie Valens (*La Bamba*, Valdez, 1987) and artist Frida Kahlo (*Frida*, Taymor, 2002) rather than the everyday lives of Mexican Americans in the United States. However, as we will see, there are a small number of contemporary films and television programs that resist stereotypical images and feature realistic, everyday families, such as *Tortilla Soup* (Ripoll, 2001), *Real Women Have Curves* (Cardoso, 2002), and *George Lopez* (Helford, 2002-2007).

In *Media & Minorities* (2006), Larson discusses the effects of casting upon the representation of marginalized groups. Larson identifies four major ways that Latinos are selectively excluded from television and film: 1) casting Latinos into specific genres, such as Westerns or urban crime dramas; 2) casting Latinos of differing heritages interchangeably (Puerto Rican actress Jennifer Lopez played the Mexican American singer, *Selena* in 1997); 3) casting European American actors in Latino roles (Italians Marissa Tomei - *The Perez Family*, Nair, 1995, and Nicholas Totorro - *NYPD Blue*, Bochco & Milch, 1993-2005 each played Latino/a characters); and 4) casting Anglo actors in Latino roles, avoiding cultural identification (Natalie Wood played a Latina in *Westside Story*, Wise, 1961). Issues of casting strongly influence the representations of Mexican Americans, especially as related to the genres of programs and films that involve Mexican Americans, as well as the various roles assigned to Mexican Americans within this media.

Mexican Americans in Television

Relative to population statistics, Mexican Americans are drastically underrepresented in American television, with only slight improvement in the number and quality of roles they play (Berg, 2002; Larson, 2006; Nericcio, 2007). The few Latino characters that are included in television programs receive little screen time in comparison to their African American and European American counterparts: Latinos receive only 5 percent of screen time on major broadcast networks – African Americans receive 16%, and European Americans receive 79% (Monk-Turner, et al, 2010). Notably, the researchers also observed Latino characters to be more frequently ridiculed than those of any other ethnic minority group.

Latinos also receive fewer television roles, most of which are secondary to European American characters (Larson, 2006). Based upon a recent overview of ethnic character roles in U.S. television programming spanning 1950–2007, media archivists have identified a total of 78 programs with identifiably or implicitly Mexican American characters (see *Table 4.1*), and a chronological examination of these programs reveals some notable trends in plot, characterization and setting. As evidenced by the plot summaries and character descriptions of these programs, early television programs present Mexican Americans in a largely patronizing and demeaning manner (“Mexican,” 2010, May): characters were assigned nicknames, dressed in stereotypical garb, and placed beneath their European American superiors. Beginning with comic sidekick “Sy” in the *The Jack Benny Show* (Marks, 1950-65), Mexican television characters have worn serapes & sombreros, spoken in monosyllables when speaking at all, born names such as “El Toro” (*The Adventures of Kit Carson*, Irving, 1951-56), “Pancho” (*The Cisco Kid*, Landres, 1950-56), “General Frijoles” (*The Real McCoys*, Thomas, 1957-63), and “Go Go Gomez” (*Empire*, Sackheim & Hudson, 1962-63), and accepted their lot as second class citizens in an

Anglo-run world. Later programs continue the trend of ethnic naming and secondary positioning: “The Bean” plays sidekick to an Anglo police officer (*Freebie and The Bean*, Saltzman, 1980-81); “Chico” (played by Puerto Rican actor Freddie Prinze) good naturedly accepts constant racial slurs from his European American employer (*Chico and The Man*, Komack, 1974-78); hot-tempered “Ponch” is subdued by his steady European American police motorcycle partner (*CHiPS*, Rosner, 1977-83). Although there is progressive improvement over time, Mexican Americans remain largely in the shadow of their European American counterparts.

Although Latino representations in film have garnered research attention over the past decade, few scholars have specifically examined these representations in American television. Greenberg & Fernandez’s (1979) landmark study examined 255 television episodes during a week of programming for three television seasons spanning the 1970s. Findings revealed a scant 1.5% of the total characters as Hispanic: characters were evenly cast in either service positions such as car washers, waiters, handymen, and construction workers or in criminal roles such as bandits and thieves. Additionally, Greenberg & Fernandez found the characters to be cast as comic, or as serious – but criminal. Over two decades later, Greenberg, Mastro & Brand (2002) found the percentage of Latino characters on television to not only have failed to improve, but to have dropped to 1%. Treviño (2005) also examined television and film representations, concurring with the stereotypical casting and representation found by Greenberg & Fernandez. Treviño maintained that television representations originate with those of motion pictures, and “negatively reinforce” the selective tradition regarding Mexican Americans (p. 8).

Mastro & Behm-Morawitz (2005) more recently examined contemporary television programs with Latino characters spanning a two-week period, concluding that many stereotypes persist, reinforcing dominant ideology rather than challenging it and providing “hegemonic

messages” about Latinos in the United States (p. 124). Although the researchers noted that subservient and subordinate images of Latinos appeared to be decreasing in the present decade, stereotypical sexualized images of Latinos such as Latin lover, harlot, dark lady, and the comic buffoon continue to appear in contemporary television programs (p. 125). The researchers cite evidence of the later in the lazy, confrontational, and heavily-accented character of Rosario, a maid on NBC’s *Will & Grace* (Burrows, 1998-2006). Larson (2006) also examined the representation of Latino characters in television and film, determining Latinos to be largely underrepresented and frequently stereotyped. Although Larson’s analysis focuses primarily upon film representations, she correlates the persistence of stereotypical representations in both television and film in a similar manner to that of Treviño (2005).

Genre and Character Typecasting – Historical Dramas

Larson’s (2006) observation of genre typecasting is evident in American television including characters of Mexican heritage. American television programs from the 1950s through the early 1970s were largely historical westerns set in the late nineteenth century (post Mexican conquest), featuring stereotypical Mexican characters in the role of bandits, outlaws, ranch hands, cooks, and comedic simpletons (Treviño, 2005). The American West is presented in these programs as a wild frontier, roamed by unruly and unlawful Mexicans who must be either subdued to serve Anglo interests, or driven back across the border from whence they came, as seen in programs such as *Mackenzie’s Raiders* (Breslow, 1958-1959). Programs such as the *The Cisco Kid* (Landres, 1950-1956), *The Real McCoys* (Thomas, 1957-1963), *The High Chaparral* (Dortort, 1967-1971), and *Rawhide* (Warren, 1959-1966) present the American West as largely run by European Americans and populated with a more benign Mexican character; Mexicans in these programs are simple and one dimensional, wearing serapes and sombreros, bearing names

such as “Pancho,” “Pepino,” “Pedro,” and “Hee Soos” (respectively), and speaking emergent English in monosyllables or distorted mispronunciations such as “The Shereef ees coming” (“Mexican,” 2010). However, the television version of O. Henry’s Cisco Kid character offers an exception to this tendency; although the original story presents the Kid as a vicious, non-Hispanic outlaw, the television character is an articulate, heroic Mexican caballero. Yet the criminal stereotype persists - regardless of his affable personality and heroic, Robin Hood-type persona, the Kid is still considered an outlaw, on the run for unspecified crimes.

Although many of these earlier programs cast Mexican Americans in subservient roles such as ranch hands, cooks, or cattle herders, others featured Mexican American characters that assisted frontier law enforcement, or became sheriffs themselves; Walt Disney’s 1958 *Frontierland* production of *The Nine Lives of Elfego Baca* (Foster, 1958) counters the commonly depicted bandit image of Mexican Americans, showcasing a peace-loving (although implicitly *reformed*) Mexican frontier sheriff who avoids firearms, favoring amicable compromise to avoid confrontation. However, this character is a rare exception to the common fare for Mexican American characters, especially in the early days of American television.

Contemporary Dramas

Contemporary dramas with Mexican American characters are also overwhelmingly located in the American Southwest, despite current census information placing large numbers of Mexican immigrants in southeastern states such as Georgia, North Carolina, and Kentucky (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). These programs are largely set in the urban California cities of East Los Angeles and San Francisco; rare exceptions to this rule include *The John Larroquette Show* (Reo, 1993-1997) set in St. Louis, Missouri; *Father Knows Best* (James, 1954-1962), also set in Missouri; *Dallas* (Moore, 1978-1991) set in Texas, *The Golden Palace* (Harris, 1992-1993) set

in Miami, Florida; *Fantasy Island* (Levitt, 1978-1984) set on an undisclosed tropical island; and *Profiler* (Saunders, 1996-2000), the only program set in Atlanta, Georgia.

Although the shift from frontier to urban or suburban settings brought some improvement in Mexican American television depictions, Mexican American characters were still largely conscripted to secondary, supportive, service, or sidekick roles (Larson, 2006; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Domestic and working class positions occupy a significant portion of the roles assigned to Mexican Americans; occupations of television characters mainly include housekeeper (*Dallas*), hospital orderly (*Birdland*, Coles, 1994), bartender (*Hotel Malibu*, Lechowick & Latham, 1994), sports team mascot (*Bay City Blues*, Bochco, 1983), cab driver (*Knight & Daye*, Ganz, 1989), hotel bellhop (*Payne*, Lyman, 1999) and gardener (*Father Knows Best*, James, 1954-1962). Mexican Americans in these shows perform tasks that typically serve the needs of an Anglo constituency, and are often represented as contented, dependent, and grateful to their employers or benefactors. The work of these characters remains essentially in the background, supporting the implicitly more important work of the family or business, and providing occasional comic relief or wise words.

Beginning in the 1970s, Mexican Americans began to assume supporting roles as policeman, detectives, firefighters, emergency technicians, lifeguards, and investigators that assist Anglo protagonists ("Mexican," 2010). The war on illegal drugs often takes center stage in these shows, with programs such as *Dan August* (Martin, 1970-1971), *Freebie and the Bean* (Saltzman, 1980-1981), *Nash Bridges* (Cuse, 1996-2001), and *Pacific Blue* (Nuss, 1996-2000) featuring Mexican Americans who assist their European American partners in ridding California of drug dealers. Mexican American partners/sidekicks in these and other television dramas act as

bridges or access points to the Latino community for the predominantly European American law enforcement agents.

Mexican Americans also experience criminalization in contemporary television settings, occupying the role of villain in a manner reminiscent of the conceptions of bandits and marauders seen in the early 1950s (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Treviño, 2005). *On the Rocks* (Rich, 1975-1976) features the wisecracking antics of an incarcerated Mexican youth serving time for theft; Ricardo Montalbán plays a “scheming” business tycoon in *Dynasty II: The Colbys* (Spelling, 1985-87); the 2003 miniseries *Kingpin* (Mills) features a Stanford-educated Mexican American male who runs a drug cartel. Several other historically popular programs with European American protagonists have also featured Mexican (and other Latino characters) as “criminals of the week,” such as *Ironside* (Young, 1967-1975), *Police Story* (Gerber, 1973-1978), *Kojak* (Mann, 1973-1978), *Starsky and Hutch* (Blinn, 1975-1979), and *The Mod Squad* (Spelling & Thomas, 1968-1973). These and other representations of Mexican characters as untrustworthy or violent criminals are not exclusively constructions of the past, but also continue today; an episode of the current CBS television program, *Criminal Minds* entitled *Machismo* (Bee, 2006) features detectives crossing the U.S./Mexican border from California to pursue a suspected Mexican serial killer.

In contrast to the programs mentioned above, the contemporary sitcom *George Lopez* (Helford, 2002-2007) offered a more favorable perspective of Mexican American life in the United States. Concerned with the lack of Latino-oriented programs on American television, actress Sandra Bullock approached popular stand-up comedian Lopez in 2000 to produce and star in a show featuring the daily lives of a working class Latino family in Los Angeles, California. The Emmy award-winning show (“2006-2007 Primetime”) employed an all-Latino

cast, with the exception of Albanian American actress Masiela Lusha, who played George's daughter, Carmen (a technique of possible Latino casting exclusion previously mentioned by Larson (2006); Lusha's character was later written out of the show with the daughter going away to college. *George Lopez* is notable for the program's portrayal of a Mexican American family as a "normal," loving, cohesive unit with two responsible parents, two occasionally wise-cracking children, and several extended family members. Although the program was cancelled in 2007 due to insufficient advertising revenue, *George Lopez* continues to air outside of primetime on Nickelodeon ("Series," 2006).

In *George Lopez*, the middle class Lopez family appears to be assimilated to American life, enjoying a fairly comfortable lifestyle, with little reference to Mexican culture beyond the occasional insertion of Spanish words or phrases into their otherwise English speech. Although issues of immigration are not mentioned in the series, the degree of Americanization and English language proficiency indicates that the family is unlikely to be new to life in the United States. The program also largely avoids the above-mentioned stereotypical representations that often pervade television programs involving Latino characters, such as criminal, violent, simple, irresponsible, or untrustworthy. However, George's daughter Carmen – although college bound – occasionally engages in behavior that alludes to the sexualized Latina image mentioned previously; she is discovered – like many college students – to be sexually active, and has multiple boyfriends during the course of the show. Additionally, the character of George's mother, though not appearing on the program, is described as alcoholic, abusive, and inattentive to her son during his upbringing – a story that parallels the real-life experience of the actor. Her character remains in the background to that of her successful, Americanized son who is

admirably represented as having risen above his disadvantaged circumstances to succeed both personally and financially.

George Lopez is significant for several reasons: Mexican American characters are the central focus of the program; Mexican American families are portrayed as typical and normal, with daily issues similar to those of many American families; Mexican American characters are largely portrayed in an individualized, humanistic manner as opposed to a depersonalized, stereotypical image; Mexican American characters act with agency to resolve their own difficulties; Mexican American families are presented as self-confident, contributing members to American society, countering the Latino Threat Narrative (Chavez, 2008) as discussed in Chapter 1.

U.S. Children's Programs with Mexican American Characters

In a similar manner to adult programming, Mexican American characters are also underrepresented - and often degraded - in entertainment media for children in the United States. Beginning with the introduction of Speedy Gonzales to audiences in a 1955 Oscar-winning short feature (Nericcio, 2007), animated Latino characters have evolved into educational role models such as Dora the Explorer. The road, however, is paved with stereotypes, many of which persist today. The following is a brief look at a few examples of Mexican American representations in children's entertainment media.

Speedy Gonzales, deemed "The Fastest Mouse in all Mexico," is an animated cartoon mouse from Warner Brothers with a white shirt, a yellow sombrero, and a comedic Mexican accent (Maltin, 1980, p. 266). Nericcio offers a full scholarly dissection of the figure of Speedy Gonzales in *Tex[t]-Mex* (2007, pp. 111-152), calling Speedy the "crowning achievement of mainstream U.S. ethnic stereotyping" in his stereotypical representation of Mexicans as "dirty

rogues” and “rapacious bandits” (p. 128). American media critic Leonard Maltin describes Speedy as a “caricature of a Mexican peon...an ever-smiling, ever-confident character” whose “primary asset is speed...but he has little else going for him” (1980, p. 266). Speedy was frequently coupled with his cousin, “Slowpoke Rodriguez,” a lazy, slow, and often intoxicated rodent who frequently requires assistance from his Speedy to get out of trouble (Maltin, p. 266).

Controversy over ethnic stereotypes in Speedy Gonzales episodes led the Cartoon Network to ban the airing of Speedy Gonzales in 1999. However, the ban was short-lived: fan campaigns and lobbying by the League of Latin American Citizens¹ brought Speedy shorts back to the air in 2002 (Park, 2002). Speedy Gonzales continues to appear on American network television, and remains popular in Mexico, appearing frequently on Televisa’s Canal 5 since the channel’s inception (Park, 2002). An episode featuring both Speedy and Slowpoke entitled “Mexican Borders” (McKimson, 1962) aired in the U.S. on a 2010 Looney Tunes New Year’s Day marathon via Cartoon Network. Clearly, Speedy continues to entertain, despite the recognition of blatant stereotyping and demeaning images of Mexican Americans.

In the 1990s, a “new and popular animated Mexican” (Nericcio, 2007, p. 145) entered the programming lineup on MTV and Nickelodeon in the character of chihuahua Ren on *The Ren and Stimpy Show* (Kricfalusi, 1990-1996). Like Speedy Gonzales, Ren is Mexican, but his character is more defined by his temper than his amorous pursuit of the ladies. Nericcio calls Ren an “evolutionary step forward” from the “retrograde theatrics” of Speedy (p. 146) – a more intelligent, less predictable, multi-dimensional character than his earlier mouse predecessor.

1. The League of United Latin American Citizens, founded in 1929 in Corpus Christi, Texas, promoted assimilation into European American culture, believing that adaptation to American institutions and economic success could combat racism and discrimination by changing negative perceptions held of Mexican Americans. For further discussion of the League, see *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* by David G. Guitierrez (1995).

Ren's "Mexicanness" (p. 146) is defined by his accent and pedigree – he is a purebred Chihuahua – not by predictable gags and stereotypical jokes common to Speedy episodes. Ren lives in a respectable, 1950s suburban community, and has an equitable, love-hate relationship with his feline roommate, Stimpy. However, despite improvements in the representation of Mexican character Ren, he still embodies a familiar stereotype – that of the "excitable and irritable" Mexican (Nericcio, p. 145).

For the past decade, a young Latina television character named "Dora the Explorer" has appeared weekly on Nickelodeon, teaching millions of children the English alphabet, colors, and Spanish phrases (Gifford, 1999-2010). The character of Dora moves Latino representations in children's programming a step further, creating an image of a child – not an animal – who acts with confidence and agency. The brown-skinned Latina of unknown nationality travels freely about the world, crossing borders without consequence to "explore." Dora has become quite popular, with all manner of merchandise such as clothing, bookbags, and lunchboxes available for purchase featuring the young Latina's image. The cartoon character has been regarded as a symbol of freedom for immigrant families, conveying a globalized, universal, "borderless" sense of Latino identity in her ambiguous appearance and confident ability to move without reservation throughout the world (Guidotti-Hernández, 2007).

However, Dora's positive, spunky Latina character has become the subject of recent scrutiny. In the wake of Arizona's recent controversial laws requiring authorities to question people about their immigration status, Dora's immigrant status has come into question; "mug shots" of an allegedly illegal-immigrant Dora have appeared on various websites with a blackened eye, supposedly arrested for attempting to cross the Mexican border (see *Figure 4.1*). Several websites such as *The Huffington Post* (Tareen, 2010), have reported Dora's mock

capture by authorities; a Facebook page claims Dora's status as a specifically *Mexican* illegal immigrant, citing her fluent Spanish and backpack of life-support equipment similar to that carried by those illegally entering the U.S. via the Mexican desert (Rinaldi, 2010). Dora is even posited to be trafficking drugs: Swiper, a fox who travels as her sidekick, "is obviously some sort of border patrol person trying to collect evidence" of Dora's possibly illicit transport of packages to various destinations (Rinaldi, 2010).

Latinos in American Advertising

American advertising offers yet another venue for the perpetuation of stereotypes regarding Latinos. Hotels, restaurants, toy manufacturers, and food marketers continue to display representations of Latinos, and specifically Mexicans, that construct this group as second class citizens who are colorful, unintelligent, dishonest, or conversely – eager to serve European Americans. Chiquita International Brands' "Chiquita Banana" advertisements continue to feature the image of a flamboyantly dressed "spitfire" Latina in a large fruit hat, dancing and singing to a hot-rhythmed tune. Latinos are also frequently presented as servants to Anglos; The Four Seasons Hotel in San Francisco promotes their exemplary valet service to guests in an ad displaying the image of "Jose Ortiz, Shoeshine Attendant" as he proudly holds a pair of spotless men's dress shoes; the caption to the photo assures customers that "Jose is a virtuoso at ensuring you always put your best foot forward." Jose's sidekick, Maria Escamilla, will press your clothing, and "guarantee that all your unwanted wrinkles will vanish" (Nericcio, 2007, pp. 35-37).

Perhaps the most well known Mexican stereotype in American (and international) advertising is the character of Frito Bandito, developed by the Frito-Lay Corporation. Beginning in the late 1960s, the handlebar-mustached, poncho-wearing, mule-riding, gun-toting bandit

became an icon for Frito Corn Chips, suggesting that Mexicans are sneaky thieves who cannot be trusted by Anglos. In one noteworthy 1970 advertisement, Frito Lay cashed in on the recent Apollo 11 moon landing: the Bandito appear on the moon to extort parking fees of Fritos corn chips from two surprised Anglo astronauts (Nericcio, 2007). In 1996, Frito-Lay worked with Warner Brothers to adopt the cartoon image of Speedy Gonzales for their product; although this move supposedly removed the negative connotation of banditry and dishonesty from the product icon, the image of Speedy is not much better; harkening back to the 1950s, Speedy Gonzales entertained children with representations of Mexicans as dirty, illiterate, sexually rogue, lazy, and drunken (Nericcio, 2007). The move to Speedy was essentially a lateral move; the mouse appears cute and harmless, but the ideology remains toxic.

Mexican Americans in Film

In addition to the limited representation of Latinos in television, Latinos also continue to be underrepresented in American films (Larson, 2006). According to the most recent data available from the Screen Actors Guild, Latino-Hispanics represent a scant 6.4% of all film and television roles combined. Noting the 6.3% figure for 2006, the Guild states that “minorities, seniors, and female actors have achieved few gains in recent years in the number of film and TV roles they receive” (Keifer, 2009, np). Within this small percentage of roles, Latinos play smaller, typecast parts that often perpetuate stereotypes. Although roles for Latinos show some improvement in recent years, they still largely fall within one of several niches, as seen in the above discussion of television roles. In this section, I will examine the ways that Latinos are represented in American film. Beginning with a discussion of the trope of the border used in early films of the Western frontier, I then examine stereotypical images of Latinos and Latinas in

film, including the bandit, the Latin Lover, the lazy peon or comic buffoon, the dark lady, the spitfire, and the dysfunctional or disadvantaged Latino.

The Trope of the Border & the Mexican Bandit

Since the inception of the motion picture, Hollywood has conjured images of the border to reinforce the story of U.S. dominance in the American hemisphere. Exploiting the trope of the border, the film industry is able to capture and illustrate several “American” ideals and values, including integrity, moral clarity, survival, industriousness, confidence, and self-sufficiency. Similar to its historical predecessor and partner, the western frontier (or border) film, the U.S./Mexican border film explores one of the most emotionally charged zones of conflict in U.S. history, offering viewers the desired symbol of a strong, fortified, and protected nation (Fojas, 2008). The border is also invoked to represent a “vital repository of threatening ideas” (Fojas, p. 2), such as homosexuality, prostitution, drug trafficking, and terrorism. In these films, undesirable (or unassimilable) people hover around the border – racially mixed characters, domineering women, terrorists, immigrants, and Mexicans – and the need for border security is reinforced. Border narratives clear up the differences between the “bad guys” and the “good guys” - the proper citizen and the “unwanted guest” - and align viewers with singular and exceptional moral heroes ranging from mavericks to vigilantes. To this day, the U.S. film industry remains the most pervasive “image machine” of the southern U.S. border for a global audience (Fojas, p. 3).

Hollywood has largely perpetuated the image of the Mexican bandit along the border by misrepresenting history and minimizing political tensions between Mexican Americans and European Americans. The bandit is not only an abiding icon of Mexican culture (as seen in the “Frito Bandito”), but also of the borderland narrative. Early silent films with plots involving

Mexican bandit villains emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, including *Tony the Greaser* (Sturgeon, 1914) and *Guns and Greasers* (Semon, 1918). Popular after the U.S. war with Mexico, the degenerating term “greaser” originated in Anglo perceptions of Mexican skin color, and indicated an outlaw who is unhygienic, filthy, unsavory, violent, and criminal (Reyes & Rubie, 2000, p. 5). The term was eliminated in cinema after World War I, due to the demand for films in the Latin American market that necessitated the elimination of derogatory depictions.

However, removing the term did not remove the sentiment. Following the greaser films, the bandit emerged as a greedy, murderous, psychopathic character lacking empathy for others or a moral compass. The bandit demands moral retribution from Anglo characters – he is a “demented, despicable character” with “brutal behavior” (Rodriguez, 2004, p. 113). The infamous Texas Rangers often function as the hero of bandit films, ending lawlessness and disorder along the Rio Grande, as seen in early western film such as *Border Bandits* (Hillyer, 1946), *Border Incident* (Mann, 1949), and *Bandido* (Fleischer, 1956).

Although the Western film genre gradually fell out of favor with the American viewing public, the criminal bandit image continues to cycle through American films with new settings and characters. Contemporary versions of the Mexican bandit story typically occur in violent urban settings, as bandit villains play the roles of gang members or drug dealers in East Los Angeles or San Francisco. Other versions of the bandit image include foreign drug runners, rebels, and dictators. During the 1990s, many films strongly associated Mexicans (and all Latinos) with violence and criminality, such as *American Me* (Olmos, 1992), *The Mambo Kings* (Glimcher, 1992), and *The Specialist* (Llosa, 1994). Recent films of the 2000s also continue to reinforce these themes, as evident in such as the drug-themed films *Traffic* (Soderbergh, 2000) and *A Man Apart* (Gray, 2003) featuring U.S. government officials that protect the United States

from the menace of Latino drug traffickers. Each of these films tacitly assumes the use of force against Latino characters to be a necessary measure due their “criminal nature” (Larson, 2006, p. 59). However, as previously mentioned in Chapter 1’s discussion of the Latino Threat Narrative (Chavez, 2008), it is important to note that these representations are not entirely unfounded, but stem from a disturbing reality; the presence of drug trafficking across the Mexican American border continues to threaten the lives and security of both Mexican and U.S. citizens.

The Latin Lover, the Lazy Peon & the Comic Buffoon

Mexican males are often stereotyped as exotic and sexualized in American films. These “Latin Lovers” (Cortes, 1997, p. 80) are depicted as suave, sensual, tender, and potentially dangerous to women under their spell. Latin lovers are typically presented as lighter-skinned members of the upper class, and although they are more likely to be European than Latin American (Rudolph Valentino, an Italian immigrant, was the first actor associated with this image), late Mexican American actor Ricardo Montalbán was often typecast into this role. Well-known for his television role as the mysterious Mr. Roarke on ABC’s *Fantasy Island* (Levitt, 1978-1984), Montalbán was often troubled by the way he was asked to portray Mexicans, and founded *Nosotros*, an advocacy group for Latinos working in the movie and television industry (Dederer & Weber, 2009). Montalbán’s career included many depictions of the “Latin Lover” in American films, playing the alluring, exotic romantic interest of many European American female stars such as Cyd Charisse (*Mark of the Renegade*, Fregonse, 1951), Shelley Winters (*My Man and I*, Wellman, 1952), and Lana Turner (*Latin Lovers*, LeRoy, 1953).

The Latin Lover stereotype is also associated with predatory behavior, and often combines sexualized images with criminality: both Andy Garcia’s character in *8 Million Ways to Die* (Ashby, 1986) and Al Pacino’s character in *Scarface* (De Palma, 1983) are gangster and/or

drug runner versions of this stereotype. As Cortes (1997) observes, dark Latino men in films present even more of a threat to Anglo women than their lighter skinned counterparts, and offer the opportunity for Anglo men to save the day by “riding to the rescue of their racially-sexually threatened damsels” (p. 83). The sexualized Latin Lover, although a smooth-talking, carnal temptation to Anglo women, is therefore constructed as dangerous and evil.

The image of the lazy Latino resides in the background of European American drama in films. Acting essentially as props, “complacent, weak, and illiterate peons” (Tevino, 2005, p. 14) in Western films slept up against buildings and under trees, played guitars as Anglos romanced, and provided cowardly audiences for gunfights. These largely one-dimensional characters had few lines, spoke emergent English with heavy accents, repeated Spanish words and phrases (“si, si, senor”; “arriba, arriba!”) and always seemed to make silly mistakes. Films such as *The Magnificent Seven* (Sturges, 1960) and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (Foreman, 1969) featured many such representations. Although *The Magnificent Seven* depicts European Americans as protecting defenseless Mexican peons from bandits, it nonetheless suggests that Mexicans fall at either extreme - criminals or peons – and need Anglo help to solve their “problems.”

Latino characters also function in films as comic contrast for the supposedly more serious, responsible or capable Anglo characters. Buffoon characters are typically presented as humorous due to their limited language skills, naivety, or supposedly lesser intellectual abilities, and typically occupy secondary positions in the film. Pancho, befuddled sidekick to more a refined Mexican bandit in *The Return of the Cisco Kid* (Leeds, 1939), is presented as intellectually less able than his European American counterpart, and dependent upon him to make all the decisions. Further examples of the weak, bumbling buffoon stereotype can be seen

in *The Gay Caballero* (Brower, 1940), *Bandido* (Fleischer, 1956), and in the pistol-packing antics of Panchito Pistoles in Walt Disney's *The Three Caballeros* (Ferguson, 1945). Comedians Cheech and Chong also present images of clueless, drug-using buffoons in films such as *Up in Smoke* (Adler, 1978) and *Cheech and Chong's Next Movie* (Chong, 1980).

Dark Ladies and Helpless Victims

Latinas also experience demeaning characterization in American film. Although less likely to be depicted as violent than their male counterparts, they are often more likely than their Latino male counterparts to be sexualized (Larson, 2006). Images of Latino women tend to fall into two general types: "innocent-yet-desirable," and "hot-and-aggressive" (Larson, p. 60). Latinas experience degrading representation in these roles, positioning them as objects of pity or ridicule.

Mexican women maintained a central presence in film depictions of Hispanics from 1930-1945, a period identified by Cortes as one of "sexuality and frivolity" (1997, p. 83). Actresses of the time portrayed images of exotic entertainment for men falling into three different types: frivolous, sensual but restrained, and lusty. Carmen Miranda played many of the colorful, frivolous roles, exaggerating Latin American culture with her dancing, bizarre headdresses, hotly-rhythmed singing, and heavily-accented speech. These shallow characters served as a backdrop for stories about European Americans in exotic settings, such as *Nancy Goes to Rio* (Pasternak, 1950). This familiar trope continues today, as Latina characters are used to establish Hispanic cultural referents and provide settings for primarily European American stories, a technique used in films such as *Beverly Hills Chihuahua* (Gosnell, 2008). Latinas are also cast as dark, virginal, and mysterious objects of desire. The stereotype of restrained sensuality appeared early in the 20th century, depicting women as aloof, reserved, unknowable,

and often aristocratic. Examples of films containing this stereotype include *Flying Down to Rio* (Freeland, 1933) and *Rose of the Rio Grande* (Nigh, 1938). This depiction appeared less frequently over time, due to difficulty associated with fully developing these “mysterious” characters (Larson, 2006).

The most common image associated with Latinas continues to be the “Mexican spitfire” (Cortes, 1997, p. 84). This stereotypical character, made famous by actress Lupe Vélez, is hot-tempered, explosive, lusty, and a slave to her passions. Spitfires in these films are “easy, super-sexed, or violent and vulgar Latinas who fume and fornicate, without substance, and without much intelligence” (Larson, 2006, p. 61). Films with spitfire characters include *Mexican Spitfire’s Baby* (Goodwins, 1941) and more recently, *Six Days Seven Nights* (Reitman, 1998). Spitfires in contemporary films are sometimes harlots, or prostitutes who “like the work,” as seen in the character of Kit in *Pretty Woman* (Marshall, 1990).

However, some contemporary film versions of the Mexican spitfire paint her in a more favorable, feminist light; Latina characters in newer films often assert themselves and question their place in the world. Films such as *Real Women Have Curves* (Cardoso, 2002) and *Tortilla Soup* (Ripoll, 2001) explore Latina cultural and social identity as their female protagonists (in leading, not supportive roles) struggle with decisions affecting their future lives. Facing issues of body image, family expectations/roles, socioeconomic conditions, and educational opportunities, Latina characters in these films exhibit characteristics of multicultural competence as they cross the figurative “border,” navigating two cultural worlds.

Assimilation and Hegemony

American films promote ideas about how Latinos are to view and assimilate to social and political systems. By using stereotypes to tell certain types of stories, social systems (or

institutions) such as law enforcement, schools, and other public organizations are often absolved of scrutiny, and assumed to need no reform. Latinos cast in criminal, promiscuous, or simpleton roles are often blamed for their difficulties in films; good things happen to those that assimilate, or conform to the Anglo way of life, and bad things happen to those that rebel against the hegemonic “system”: bandits are captured or murdered, spitfires get their comeuppance, and simpletons remain forever at the mercy of their European American counterparts. Films also frequently reward passive traits in Latinos (and other minorities), such as cooperation and loyalty, and punish aggressive ones such as ambition and competitiveness (Larson, 2006).

The victim and villain stereotypes indicated in this section locate both the causes and the solutions of Latino problems with the individual. Films that show both “good” and “bad” Latinos demonstrate that they are essentially flawed, come from bad families, or are in a position of cultural deficit (González, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Social problem films such as *The Young Savages* (Frankenheimer, 1961), *American Me* (Olmos, 1992), and *Star Maps* (Arteta, 1997) blame dysfunctional families for Latino violence. Poor Latino mothers are pitied for being abandoned, and blamed for fostering dependency and Anglo resentment in their sons. Young Latino males are therefore “social misfits and personally inadequate victims, and social institutions are not responsible for their rebellion (Larson, 2006).

Whereas this rationalization individualizes “the problem,” an assimilation narrative individualizes the solution. Exceptional Latino individuals in films celebrate the “American Dream” of financial success by giving up cultural identity to assimilate to American culture. However, some of these films offer mixed messages: the cost may be too high. In *La Bamba* (Valdez, 1987), young musician Ritchie Valens’ short life was transformed from poor Latino teen to middle-class (and rising) American rock star (after assuming an Americanized name from

his family name, Valenzuela). *Selena* (Nava, 1997) depicts a female singer's initial success as due to her remaining close to her Mexican roots, and her fame with European American audiences ends shortly after her death. Tragically, each of these films features an individual that may have paid the "ultimate price" for trying to assimilate.

Cultural Border Films

Contemporary American films have begun to address the complex issues of cultural identity and conflicted cultural loyalty in Latino characters. These "cultural border films" present characters that reside on the "border" of American and Latino culture; films in this category typically feature young protagonists (often second or third generation immigrants) who struggle to maintain a link to their family heritage while participating in American life and culture. Questions of responsibility and personal agency often lie at the center of these dramas that ring universally true to youth of all cultures: Where does my family end and I begin? What are my rights as an individual to define myself? What elements of my family's traditions will I take with me into my adult life?

Cultural border films present a variety of messages regarding assimilation; some construct the lives of Latino families as socioeconomically disadvantaged and destined to remain so, hence the need for "escape" to a better life in American culture. An example of this can be seen in *Real Women Have Curves* (Cardoso, 2002), the story of a young Latina who has traveled alone across town by bus to pursue a better education at Beverly Hills High School. Although a Latino teacher at the predominantly European American, upper class school helps Ana to apply for (and receive) a full scholarship to Columbia University, her family – especially her traditional, non-English-speaking mother - is adamant that she will remain at home like all the rest of her siblings to work alongside the other females in a garment shop. She tries to make

herself content with her work, and feels empathy for the women around her, yet she becomes even more desperate to “escape.” The youth eventually wins the reluctant approval of her father, but is never able to gain her mother’s blessing. The film ends on a bittersweet, hopeful note as the young woman strolls the streets of New York, but contains an overarching sense of sadness and sacrifice: assimilation (or participation in American opportunity) implies a turn from home, a betrayal of culture, and possibly even the loss of family (her mother is unable to support her decision).

Lone Star (Sayles, 1996), previously discussed in Chapter 2, offers a striking example of the border as both a physical and psychological place of cultural conflict and negotiation. The film weaves a complex tale of struggles with power, cultural identity, and relationships in a border town of Mexican Americans and European Americans striving (to various degrees) to coexist with each other. Physically, the border represents different things to those in the story, as evidenced in how it is referenced. According to Dennis and Joan M. West of *Cineaste* (1996), “the other side” is an oft-repeated phrase by characters in the film, used by both Anglo and Mexican American residents regarding the *Mexican* side of the border. To the Anglo population, the phrase suggests an experience that is foreign, different, perhaps even threatening or dangerous; to some of the Mexican American characters, it represents a fondly regarded past history of family and home. However, to others such as Mercedes Cruz (Míriam Colón), “the other side” represents a past (and cultural identity) that she refuses to acknowledge. Eager (until the last scene) to present herself as “Spanish” instead of Mexican (a presumably more socially acceptable designation (Mercedes is evasive regarding her cultural origins, and shows no sympathy for her third generation grandson who wants to trace his Mexican roots across the border (West & West, 1996).

Tortilla Soup (Ripoll, 2001) is a cultural border film that depicts the negotiation of identity in second generation Mexican immigrants. In this film, three single adult Latina women struggle with their feelings of allegiance and responsibility to their Mexican American father's cultural traditions, while pursuing careers and relationships outside of their Latino heritage. "Here we go with the immigrant story," the middle daughter complains when her father wishes to once again recount his hard earned upward journey to success as a chef in the United States at their weekly family dinner. The father, Martin, disapproves of mixing languages, and laments his daughters' combination of English and Spanish, insisting that they "cut the Spanglish" around him and speak either Spanish or English. Martin also wrestles with his daughters' increasingly Americanized choices related to gender roles, such as dating European American men, living together outside of marriage, choosing not to marry, or behaving in an assertive, intelligent manner in the presence of men. In contrast, Martin himself becomes involved in a romantic relationship in the film with a stereotypical "spitfire" Latina who behaves and dresses in a seductive and flirtatious manner.

Yet regardless of their more Americanized enactment of gender, the daughters in *Tortilla Soup* still to some extent represent Latina stereotypes frequently seen in film and television. The oldest daughter portrays a pious, innocent female similar to the character of Maria in *Westside Story* (Wise, 1961) in her role as a teacher who adheres to the patriarchal values of her Mexican heritage, but eventually becomes less "traditional" and more "Americanized" (or perhaps "Westernized") as she heeds the advice of her sisters. The middle daughter plays a somewhat promiscuous, outspoken (yet Americanized) "spitfire" in her role as a high-powered career woman. The youngest daughter, however, presents the most hybrid character, portraying an Americanized, modern young woman who rebels against her father's pressure to adhere to

cultural traditions, yet wants to please him nonetheless. In a manner similar to *Real Women Have Curves* (Cardoso, 2002), the film conveys an ideology of the inevitability of assimilation, juxtaposing the longing of the father for their cultural lives (at least at home) to remain traditionally Mexican with the longing of the daughters to create their own versions of Mexican American as they enter American life, language, and culture.

Cultural border films also illustrate issues of hybridity. As suggested by Kraidy (2005) in Chapter 2, hybridity is best approached as an individual, specific, and personalized phenomenon of cultural combination and re-formation rather than as a standardized, uniform enactment of cultural blend. In each of these films, generational and familial loyalty factors heavily into the characters' feelings of conflict, yet all ultimately choose to navigate (and constantly negotiate) an individual, hybridized mode of living that mixes their Mexican heritage with a more "Westernized" American lifestyle to varying degrees. As demonstrated by the individual, unique mix of language and culture that each character exhibits in films such as *Real Women Have Curves* (Cardoso, 2002) and *Tortilla Soup* (Ripoll, 2001), hybridity involves a constant, ongoing negotiation of cultural affiliation.

According to Bhabha (1994), conceptions of hybridity must also be rearticulated from the perspective of the minority culture in order to prevent the translation and appropriation of culture for a colonial purpose. In both *Tortilla Soup* and *Real Women Have Curves*, the Mexican American characters exhibit personal agency as they develop their own enactments of hybridity; their struggles, thought process, and decisions regarding cultural identity are articulated from a Mexican American perspective rather than from the position of the hegemonic European American majority.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the increasing availability of Spanish language television networks in the United States such as Telemundo and Univision. As expected, Latinos within this niche market programming are portrayed in a less stereotypical fashion in comparison with English language programs (Mastro & Ortiz, 2008), yet I was interested to note that Spanish language programs also reflect some subtle degrees of hegemony within Latino culture, favoring some social groups over others: men still hold more professional positions than women (reflecting the continuing patriarchy of Latino society); light skinned characters (regardless of gender) hold positions of higher status than dark skinned characters. However, these programs are consumed primarily by Latinos – not European Americans – and therefore do not serve to shape or reinforce the opinions of mainstream American society regarding the representation and assimilation of Latinos.

Implications for Text Analysis

Although a complete overview of Mexican American roles in television and film would rightfully merit an entire study, this general overview provides a point of reference for how this group is represented in American culture. As I examine the sample novels, I will be interested to see how the selective tradition as evidenced in film and television may compare to the representations and ideology contained in the young adult novels, as well as how this tradition may (or may not) be resisted. Based upon this overview, several themes and characterizations emerge that are of interest to my analysis of young adult novels. As Mexican Americans have largely been typecast into background or supportive roles that often reflect stereotypical images, such as bandits, simpletons, dark ladies, Latin Lovers, female spitfires, harlots, drug runners, and sidekicks to European American characters, I will look for how representations in the novels may compare. Although there has been some improvement in recent years regarding the quality

and quantity of roles for Latinos in television and film, the limited portrayal of Latinos remains a persistent issue (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Therefore, I am also interested in how these images may change over time, and how these changes (if any) may correlate with those previously discussed in this chapter regarding television and film.

As evidenced in some of the television programs and films discussed in the chapter, the trope of the border is a frequent theme. Early films and television programs - generally set in the American West - use the image of the border as a site of threat and for the defense of American values. Beginning in the 1980s, many contemporary dramas moved the border trope to urban settings such as East Los Angeles and San Francisco, exchanging the criminal bandit character for that of drug runner and gang member. I will also be interested to note the possible use of the border trope over time (both physically and psychologically) to reinforce (or refute) the selective tradition, especially in light of the more recent Latino Threat Narrative (Chavez, 2008) regarding Mexicans as criminal, dangerous, and threatening to the wellbeing of the United States.

Although the purpose of this chapter is to examine the selective tradition regarding Mexican immigrants in American history and entertainment media, issues of hybridity also arise from this examination that inform my study. As this overview reveals, contemporary films have begun to address the complexity of navigating the *cultural* border, featuring characters who struggle with issues of identity, agency, and loyalty as Latinos in American society. Hybridity is strongly linked to issues of cultural identity, a frequent theme in films such as *Tortilla Soup* (Ripoll, 2001) and *Real Women Have Curves* (Cardoso, 2002). Fojas' (2008) conception of the border trope as a "repository of threatening ideas" (p. 2) will therefore also be of interest as I explore how the novels may discuss issues of hybridity and struggles along *cultural* borders.

CHAPTER 5

Studies in Children's Literature

Academic studies addressing Latino representations in children's literature are challenging to classify for several reasons. First, there is a wide variety of terminology in research associated with persons of Latino origin, including *Spanish American*, *Hispanic*, *Latin American/ Latino*, and *Chicano*. The first three all serve as large, umbrella terms that encompass many diverse cultures and peoples, and focus upon common Spanish ancestry. *Spanish American* has been used in reference to those who share common ancestry with Spain, the earliest European American group to reside on the continent (1565). However, the term has generally lost favor, as it does not sufficiently encompass those with indigenous ancestry in countries once occupied by Spain, such as Mexico. *Hispanic*, the term still currently used by the U.S. Census Bureau, refers to those of "Spanish and Latin American descent" (*Random House*, 2010, np). *The World English Dictionary* (2010) defines *Hispanic* as "relating to...or derived from Spain or Spanish-speaking countries" (np), again problematic for those whose primary ancestry is not related to Spain. *Latin American*, and the more recently favored *Latino*, are also terms currently used to describe the culture and people of a wide range of regions, including South and Central America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean. *Random House* (2010), brings the issue of language into the definition, describing *Latino* as of "Latin-American or "Spanish-speaking descent" (np). Yet this too is potentially erroneous: Latinos speak a wide variety of languages, some of which are derived from languages other than Spanish, as is the case of those descended from the various indigenous peoples of Mexico and other countries.

Chicano/a, however, refers to a specific group of people – Americans of Mexican descent. The term came into use during the Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 1970s as a demonstration of cultural identification and pride, as previously discussed in Chapter 3. The term was also favored due to its respectful inclusion of indigenous peoples into the cultural heritage of Mexican Americans (Samora & Simon, 1993). Yet even the more culturally specific term *Chicano/a* is not all-inclusive – there is also a wide variety of Mexican American cultural heritage and intermixture in the United States, displaying varying degrees of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), an important point to consider in my analysis of the sample novels. Beyond the work of the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1975), the term *Chicano/a* rarely appears in research of children’s literature, replaced over the past two decades by *Mexican American*. Given the various terms for people of Mexican heritage in the United States used both in research and in the larger culture (including entertainment media), I will be interested to note the terms used by authors to reference Mexican immigrants in the sample novels, how these terms may relate to the representation of the characters, and how these terms (and representations) may change over time.

Secondly, studies of Latino representations in children’s literature are challenging to classify because there is a tendency to group many diverse cultures together as one monolithic unit, regardless of the distinct differences between (and within) various cultures. According to John Kibler (1996), the U.S. seems to demand generic terms for large and varied groups of people, and these potentially generalizing categorizations refer to highly diverse, geographically dispersed groups of people hailing from countries and regions such as South America, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Caribbean, Mexico, and other Central American countries. Third, research surrounding Latinos is difficult to categorize due to the mixing of genres within individual

studies. Samples often combine picture books, adolescent fiction, young adult fiction, historical fiction, contemporary fiction, poetry, biography, and nonfiction titles in one study for purposes of analysis. And finally, Latino characters are frequently discussed within larger literature groupings that combine those of Latino and non-Latino origin, such as *multicultural* (Gillespie, Powell, Clements, & Swearington, 1994; Taylor & Napier, 1992), *immigrant* (Lamme, Fu, & Lowery, 2004; Lowery, 1998, 2000; Yau, 2003) or *migrant* (Beck, 2009). Although a few commendable and important studies exist in the field of Latino children's literature, issues such as these often make it difficult to compare results or draw generalizable conclusions across the various studies.

Regardless of categorization issues, several landmark studies exist in the field of Latino/Chicano/Hispanic children's literature. In the following section I will discuss current scholarship regarding this group, beginning with the work of the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1972, 1975). For the purpose of this study, I will use the term "Latino" in reference to persons of South American, Puerto Rican, Caribbean, or Central American heritage, unless otherwise noted in the literature. With the exception of the Council's work, I will reserve discussion of studies examining specifically Mexican American children's literature for a subsequent section of this chapter, as well as studies that address immigrants as an individual group.

In previous chapters, I have presented the theoretical framework for the present study, and reviewed the selective tradition regarding Mexican immigrants in the United States as evidenced in the work of historians and the entertainment industry. In this chapter, I will identify and discuss existing studies involving Mexican immigrants as represented in books for children, and address gaps in this body of research. Following a brief introduction to the development of

research in multicultural children's literature, I then review pertinent and related studies in the field of children's literature, and discuss how immigrants are addressed within this body of work. I conclude with an examination of studies that focus specifically on Mexican immigrants, with suggestions for types of studies necessary to close any gaps in the present body of scholarly work.

Issues of race, class, and gender have become frequent and important topics of discussion over the past few decades in the field of children's literature. There is a similar pattern of representation over time across various marginalized groups (ethnic, gender, sexual orientation) in both children's literature and larger culture. Portrayals prior to the 1960s-70s are largely stereotypical, reflecting the lower status and lack of power experienced by these groups within society. However, representations gradually improve as minority groups demand greater inclusion and authentic representation in American society, thereby recreating and redefining how these groups are viewed. Multicultural studies within the fields of education and children's literature continue to critically examine representations of marginalized and oppressed groups, providing a means of cultural critique, an examination of power and privilege within and outside of the dominant culture, and an offer of emancipatory opportunities for resistance. Seeking to "cultivate and nurture a more inclusive canon" (Taxel, 1997, p. 418), scholars in children's literature often address the representation and portrayal of groups considered outside of mainstream dominant culture, such as African Americans (Aldridge, 2006; Sims Bishop, 1982, 2007), Asian Americans (de Manuel & Davis, 2006; Levy, 2000; Yamate, 1997), Native Americans (Reese, 1997, 2007), Latinos (Barrera, Quiroa, & West-Williams, 1999; Beck, 2009; Naidoo, 2007, 2008), gays/lesbians (Hermann-Wilmarth, 2007; Jenkins, 1993, 1998), people with disabilities (Ayala, 1999; Jackson, 2009), and women (Anderson, Broaddus, Hamilton &

Young, 2006; Taylor, 2003; Tsao, 2008). As mentioned in Chapter 2, some draw upon William's concept of a selective tradition to explore the perpetuation of or resistance to dominant societal beliefs and myths regarding marginalized groups or historical representations within children's literature (Adkins, 1998; Taxel, 1980).

Setting the Stage for Multicultural Children's Literature

In 1965, three notable events strongly influenced the future of multicultural children's literature. The often violent struggle for the civil rights of women and minorities in the United States commanded the attention of the nation, and provided the context for the rise of the multicultural movement in the 1960s. As issues of equity in schools and other institutions were increasingly scrutinized, Nancy Larrick alerted the American public via an article in the *Saturday Review* that the world of children's books was essentially "all-white" (1965, p. 63). Citing her research-based discovery that only 6.7 percent of the 5,206 children's books published between 1962 and 1964 included even one Black child in either text or illustration, Larrick asserted that the situation is harmful to both Black and White children alike. That same year, Congress passed the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, providing \$1.3 billion to schools and libraries, and creating a newfound market for books about children of color. Finally, the Council on Interracial Books for Children was established by writers, editors, educators, illustrators, and parents "to promote a literature for children that better reflects the realities of a multi-cultural society" (CIBC, 1975, vii). This organization conducted various landmark critical surveys and analyses of books representing marginalized groups in the United States, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and women. Findings of these evaluations, distributed via *The Bulletin of Interracial Books for Children*, indicated the presence of gross stereotyping, lack of cultural authenticity, low publication statistics, and limited native

group authorship. CIBC guidelines for the evaluation of culturally conscious children's literature continue to inform scholarship in children's literature, including the field of Latino studies (Barrera & de Cortes, 1997; Beck, 2009; Cobb, 1995), a point explored later in this chapter.

Relevant Studies in Children's Literature

Several scholars have explored the representations of various marginalized groups in children's literature that establish and/or reify a selective tradition. In addition to the previously discussed work of Taxel (1980) and Adkins (1998) regarding the selective tradition in children's literature as discussed in Chapter 2, the studies below also inform my examination of Mexican American children's literature. In this section, I will briefly review relevant studies in children's literature that address representations of marginalized groups.

Studies in African American children's literature provide many solid, scholarly examples of critical inquiry regarding representations and the selective tradition. Dorothy Broderick's groundbreaking, comprehensive study, *Image of the Black in Children's Fiction* (1973) examines a sample of books published prior to 1968 for major roles assigned blacks, how slavery is described, and personal characteristics attributed to blacks. Broderick found her sample books to fall within the description of "condescendingly racist," or "traditionally liberal, do-gooder" books (p. 177). Although her findings leave "little to be happy about" (p. viii), I find her statement of reflexivity compelling, and pertinent to my own work. Her study is "written by a white for other whites – those whites Malcolm X talks about...when he says there is a place for whites to help – with each other" (p. viii). I too am researching outside of my own culture, and like Broderick, I primarily hope to broaden the understanding of those outside Latino/Mexican American culture as I critically examine representations and ideology in books containing Mexican immigrant characters.

Rudine Sims Bishop's landmark work, *Shadow and Substance* (1982) also continues that of Broderick work by surveying and analyzing 150 works of contemporary realistic fiction appropriate for children (preschool through eighth grade) for images of black representation. Sims' work is highly recognized for her developed categorization of the sample books into three groups - "social conscience," "melting-pot," and "culturally conscious" (1982, pp. 14-15). *Social conscience* books essentially imply that racial differences (and racism itself) can be overcome by a greater understanding of the "other." Oversimplified issues addressed in the books often neglect the larger effects of individual and institutional racism. Books in this category, such as *Iggie's House* (Blume, 1970), *Words by Heart* (Sebestyen, 1968), *Souder* (Armstrong, 1969), and *The Cay* (Taylor, 1969) are written by Whites, to instruct Whites on getting along with Blacks, and are often heavily moralizing and patronizing (Sims, 1982, p. 31). *Melting-pot* books imply that "we are all the same." Books within this category, such as Ezra Jack Keats' *Snowy Day* (1962) do not address discrimination, prejudice, or conflict, but focus on integration and homogeneity; however, picture books rarely make textual references to race or ethnicity, but identify these through illustrations. Finally, *culturally conscious* books recognize and celebrate the "distinctiveness of the experience of growing up Black and American" (Sims, 1982, p. 49). Unlike the previous categories, books in this group directly address racism and oppression, often focusing upon the courage, determination, and resistance of their African American protagonists. Works by African American author Mildred Taylor such as *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1976), *Let the Circle Be Unbroken* (1981), *The Gold Cadillac* (1987), *The Friendship* (1987), and *The Road to Memphis* (1990) poignantly demonstrate cultural consciousness as they chronicle the saga of the resilient Logan family in the 1930s rural South.

In another important work, *Free Within Ourselves: the Development of African American Children's Literature* (2007), [Sims] Bishop critically traces the development of African American children's literature from its early roots to the present. Along with her earlier analysis of children's fiction, Sims Bishop expands her scope to discuss African American children's books and periodicals of all genres and age groupings chronologically, as well as the developing impact of African American illustrators on children's literature. Sims Bishop's categorization of books as social conscience, melting pot, or culturally conscious were adopted by Jenkins in her 1993 study of gay/lesbian young adult literature, and this categorization is also of interest to me as I read and analyze my sample. Although using these categories as a method of classification to group and analyze my sample does not meet the needs of my study (see Chapter 6), these ideas will nonetheless inform my discussion of the representation of Mexican Americans in the novels.

In addition to studies of African American children's literature, researchers have also explored characterizations, stereotypes, and issues of authenticity regarding other marginalized groups. Native American scholar Debbie Reese (1997; 2007) notes the frequent tendency of children's authors to place Native Americans in historical settings, and underscores the importance of the presentation of contemporary perspectives in children's literature that place Native Americans in modern, present-day settings as seen in *Jingle Dancer* (Smith, 2000), *The Heart of a Chief* (Bruchac, 1998), and *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Alexie, 2007). Citing the need for cultural specificity and authenticity of detail, Reese claims that popular children's books such as McDermott's *Arrow to the Sun: a Pueblo Indian Tale* (1974) often fail to include details that are specific to the Native tribe mentioned in the book, and frequently generalize across many diverse groups of Native peoples. These books, Reese maintains, may present details of cultural life and practice that are inaccurate, or inconsistent

with the traditions of all tribes. Reese also finds children's books to frequently stereotype Indians as savage, unrealistically heroic, simple, ignorant, or animal-like (2007), as evidenced in Newbery winner *Caddie Woodlawn* (Brink, 1936). These stereotypes are reminiscent of those often used in reference to African American characters (Broderick, 1973; Sims, 1982), and are strikingly similar to those ascribed to Mexican American characters in television and film as discussed in Chapter 4.

Levy (2000), de Manuel & Davis (2006), and Yamate (1997) each examined Asian American children's literature, finding Asian Americans to remain highly underrepresented in children's literature in relation to all published books. In a similar manner to Reese, Yamate also noted the tendency of books to present Asian Americans as foreign, stereotypical, or other-worldly, and expressed a need for literature that places Asian Americans in contemporary, culturally specific settings in addition to settings of fables and folklore such as Young's Caldecott winner, *Lon Po Po* (1989). De Manuel & Davis (2006), however, note an improvement in Asian American representation in the authentic voices of children's authors such as Allen Say and Lawrence Yep.

The work of Reese and Yamate is of particular interest to my study, as they each recognize the wide diversity within the Native American and Asian American populations (respectively), and address the tendency of children's literature to monolithically represent these groups in single, nonspecific, or even inaccurate cultural portrayals. Mexican Americans (and all Latinos) are also a richly diverse cultural group, often experiencing the same sorts of limited representation. Reese and Yamate also discuss the need for realistic, contemporary portrayals of Native Americans and Asian Americans in children's literature – another point of interest to me as I examine novels involving Mexican Americans.

Issues of gender, sexual identity, and disability have also gained the attention of children's literature scholars. Tsao (2008) determined gender bias in children's literature to be "still as prevalent as in past decades" (p. 108). Anderson, Broaddus, Hamilton and Young (2006) concur: a comparison of top selling children's books published from the 1980s to 2006 revealed the persistence of sexism and gender stereotyping. Females also continue to be underrepresented in children's books; male characters appeared 53% more often in illustrations, and twice as often in title and main characters. As Tsao and Anderson, et al observe regarding changes in gender bias and stereotyping over time, I will also note how representations of Mexican American characters may change over time as I also compare novels from multiple decades in my sample.

Jenkins (1993) discusses representations and portrayals of gay/lesbian/queer characters in young adult novels, noting a predictable reinforcement of social stereotypes, such as the generic gay, urban, middle-class, white, educated male who enjoys the arts. In a subsequent study extending publication dates through 1997 (Jenkins, 1998), the researcher noted a slight increase in the inclusion of characters of color in this body of work. Jenkins observed the books to be "rooted in the assumption that young adults are, by their nature, homophobic," fearing disruption to gender conformity – gay bashing was largely approached as normal adolescent behavior. Overtly gay characters continue to be largely excluded from novels, in favor of the more "straight" gay/lesbian character (Jenkins, 1998, p. 324). Sexual orientation is also presented as "permanent and unalterable" in the novels (p. 325), leaving little room for multiple identities or inconclusive endings. Hermann-Wilmarth (2007) discussed the importance of using children's literature with gay/lesbian characters and themes in teacher education, citing books such as *Holly's Secret* (Garden, 2000) as positive examples of gay/lesbian family representations.

Jenkins' discussion of social stereotypes is of interest to my analysis. As evidenced in Chapter 4's examination of Mexican American representations in entertainment media, Mexican American characters are often cast (both literally and figuratively) into predictable and often stereotypical roles in a similar manner to the gay/lesbian characters in Jenkins' sample novels. Jenkins also asserts that social stereotypes limit the possibility of multiple identities or unresolved, inconclusive endings to novels – another important consideration as I consider issues of transnationalism and hybridity in my novel's Mexican immigrant characters.

The Council on Interracial Books for Children

In 1972, the Council on Interracial Books for Children performed the first scholarly content analysis of Hispanic children's literature, examining 80 fiction and 20 nonfiction titles with Puerto Rican characters and themes published between 1932-1972 for gender representations and historical accuracy. Findings indicated gender, race, and class "bias," and the omission of "events unfavorable to the United States" (Nilsson, 2005, p. 537). Three years later, the Council extended the ethnic scope of their research to Chicano in a landmark examination of 140 fiction and 60 nonfiction titles published between 1940-1973 for racism, stereotypes, and historical discrepancy. Findings revealed that the Chicano people (of mostly Mexican, but sometimes unspecified origin) were largely depicted as rural, poor, migrant laborers – an observation later supported in the work of Sonia Nieto (1982) and Scott Beck (2009). The Council also noted that racism and stereotypes largely characterized the sample, but occurred less frequently in nonfiction than in fiction titles. Although newer works did acknowledge Chicano contributions in the American Southwest, facts were discrepant, and sexism was evident throughout the body of work. Significantly, the Council developed a checklist for evaluating

Chicano literature for children regarding the presence of stereotypes, historical accuracy, and cultural authenticity.

Other Studies in Latino Children's Literature

Following the Council's landmark work, researchers largely concerned themselves with *quantifying* the occurrence of Latino characters in selections of children's books. Nilsson's (2005) survey of 21 content analysis studies from 1966-2003 addressing various issues of Hispanic character portrayal reveals scholarly studies ranging from those tallying the number and ethnicity of characters (Agosto, Hughes-Hassell, & Gilmore-Clough, 2003; Garcia & Pugh, 1992; Gillespie, Powell, Clements, & Swearington, 1994; Higgins, 2002; Klein, 1998), to a few critical examinations of gender roles, historical accuracy, and stereotyping (Cobb, 1995; Fruendlich, 1980; Nieto, 1982; Ramirez & Dowd, 1997; Rocha & Dowd, 1993). Nilsson's overview also offers suggestions for future research in Latino children's literature, including the need to refine and specify cultural focus to avoid making generalizations and assumptions across various groups, as well as the need to address genres in an individual manner. Nilsson also suggests the need to isolate literature appropriate for particular ages of children within genres for the purpose of study and analysis. These refinements of sample selection and cultural focus, she asserts, may ultimately yield more reliable, conclusive findings.

Several researchers have focused upon counting the number of available books and/or the occurrence of Latino characters within various contexts, generally noting the small percentage of available titles featuring Latino characters and/or themes. Agosto, et al (2003) reviewed a staggering 4,255 middle school fiction books published from 1992 to 2001 to determine the extent to which Hispanics appear as protagonists or secondary characters. The researchers determined Hispanics to be the least represented group, composing only 10% of all characters.

Gillespie, et al (1994) examined ethnicity in 73 Newbery Medal books from 1922-1994, also noting that Hispanics compose 10% of all characters. The researchers also note that the first appearance of a Latino character (1927) emphasized the individual's illegal activity.

More recently, Jamie Naidoo (2007, 2008) examined the visual and textual representation of various Latino subcultures in *Américas* and Pura Belpré award-winning picture books, determining that the books do not represent "the social and cultural mosaic of the Latino people" (2008, p. 32). Naidoo notes that books about Mexican culture dominate the sample, with Cuban and South American cultures largely underrepresented. However, studies focusing upon counting offer limitations, as they do not address quality: although these and other similar studies perform the important task of surveying the topography of the Latino children's literature landscape, they offer little critical analysis of the literature's content (with the exception of Naidoo's work), nor do they examine the larger issues of ethnocentrism or hegemony that may contribute to the presentation or exclusion of Latino characters.

Following the work of the Council in the early 1970s, only a handful of content analysis studies have critically examined issues of race, class, or gender in Latino children's literature. Freundlich (1980) studied the portrayed images of Puerto Ricans in a sample of 22 young adult novels published between 1950 and 1980, revealing portrayals of uneducated slum dwellers, the desire to emulate Anglos, and no commentary regarding issues affecting Puerto Rican adjustment. Sonia Nieto (1982) also examined fiction books about Puerto Ricans, although her sample included titles for multiple age levels. Nieto concluded that all but 8 of her 56-book sample published between 1972 and 1982 exhibit essentially the same flaws as those reviewed by The Council on Interracial Books for Children a decade earlier (1972); settings remain largely urban ghettos, Puerto Ricans are viewed as responsible for their own oppression, and whites

often solve their problems. Similar to Freundlich's discussion of Puerto Rican adaptation and Anglo-emulation, Nieto also identifies assimilation as a major goal for characters in many of the sample novels – a point of interest to my present study.

Medina & Enisco (2001) examined a sample of 31 works of Latino children's fiction to explore the "aesthetic expression" of sociopolitical themes present in the novels (p. 35). The researchers identified four main themes central to the literature of adult Latino/a authors, and used these to analyze their children's book sample portraying a variety of Latino heritages for meanings associated with the following: 1) border crossing, 2) conceptions of home, 3) shaping and being shaped by language, and 4) healing, community and spirituality. Medina & Enisco assert that these themes are closely interrelated and interdependent, and are often expressed through "specific representations and analyses" involving race, class, and gender (p. 37). For the purpose of their study, however, the researchers chose to focus upon literary elements such as the use of metaphor, reflection, description, language, poetic representation, and testimony to interpret sociopolitical themes.

In addition to the above mentioned themes, Medina & Enisco also identified other recurring themes in Latino/a literature, such as cross-generational perspectives on Latino/a identity, schooling experiences as oppressive or transformative (also discussed by Lamme, Fu & Lowery, 2004), and gender identities and tensions. Perhaps most importantly, Medina & Enisco urge educators to "mediate" these books with children, as they "embrace the breadth and complexities of shaping a Latino/a identity in a society that highly values assimilation to European, English, middle class, and masculinist norms" (2001, p. 36). I will be especially interested in the expression of these and other themes through representations of race, class, and gender in my sample novels, as issues and representations of home and cultural identification, the border,

language, family relationships, and gender each affect ideologies of assimilation. Medina & Enisco's reference to society's standard for assimilation as European American, middle class, and largely male-oriented harkens back to the words of Bercovici (1925), who observed assimilation to be the "acceptance and imitation of Anglo-Saxon civilization" (np).

Mexican Americans in Children's Literature

In response to the significant rise in the U.S. Mexican American population over the past decade, a few scholars have critically focused on issues in children's literature surrounding this particular immigrant group, with topics such as migrancy, race, gender, historical accuracy, and cultural authenticity appearing in contemporary research. Beck (2009) recently addressed the portrayal of migrant farm workers in picture storybooks, critically examining a 26-book sample of biographies, memoirs, fiction, and poetry. Although Beck's sample also includes African American (2) and European American (4) migrant stories, Beck also explored characterizations of migrancy as a frequent Mexican American stereotype in children's literature. Stating that our society "dehumanizes the poor" (p. 124) by overrepresentations that defame cultural ethnicity, Beck notes that many existing books tend to present Mexican Americans in two extremes: "superhumans...or helpless victims...who largely reside in urban barrios or rural migrant camps" (cited in Escamilla, 1992, p. 3). According to Beck, the image of the rural migrant farm worker is largely over represented in children's literature about Mexican Americans given the small, disproportionate number of books about Latinos in relation to all children's publications.

Rocha & Dowd (1993) and Ramirez & Dowd (1997) each examined the portrayal of Mexican American females in realistic fiction books for young children published over several decades, citing excerpts of sample texts that demonstrate the role of females in celebrations, religious observations, home life, superstitious beliefs, problem solving, and occupations.

Although there are improvements over time, findings show Mexican American females to be generally presented in stereotypical (colorful dress, dancing), limiting (homemakers, religious) and potentially demeaning ways (evil, promiscuous, uneducated, diminutive).

Children's literature is often discussed in relation to educational context or classroom pedagogy. In *Latino Voices in Children's Literature*, Kibler (1996) outlines strategies for integrating Mexican American children's literature into the classroom. Stressing authenticity and accuracy as key components for the evaluation of literature, Kibler's essay offers a rubric to guide book selection based upon the work of both The Council on Interracial Books for Children (1975) and Rudine Sims Bishop (1982), and offers a discussion of the publication history and evolution of children's literature written by Mexican American authors. Interestingly, Kibler notes the lack of available Mexican American young adult fiction as of 1992, with the exception of the work of author Gary Soto – a situation that has improved somewhat in the past decade (Nilsson, 2005). However, although Kibler notes the importance of power and positionality to the issue of stereotyping, he takes a softer approach to the discussion of texts: racism is described in the milder, more passive terms of prejudice and bigotry.

Perhaps the most comprehensive critical assessments of solely Mexican American children's literature since the Council's 1975 study can be attributed to the work of Barrera, de Cortes, and colleagues. These researchers continued to observe and compile negative stereotypes (bandidos, buffoons, dark ladies, dirty Mexicans, happy laborers), and frequent shortcomings (ethnocentrism, romanticism, cultural overloading) associated with Mexican American children's literature (Barrera & de Cortes, 1997). Barrera & de Cortes (1997) examined a mixed-genre sample of 67 Mexican American-themed children's books published in the United States between 1992 to mid-1995, noting a "discernible, albeit slow, move toward much-needed

authenticity in text and pictures, particularly in fiction, buoyed by inclusion of insider perspectives” (p. 148). In a throwback to the Council’s findings, the sample literature continues to suggest that Mexican Americans are a) an “exotic and foreign people” (due to emphasis on holidays and foods), and b) a “readily identifiable group within a narrow segment of society” (due to emphasis on migrants and immigrants) (Barrera & de Cortes, p. 135). The authors also noted the tendency of Mexican American content and themes to “fit ‘mainstream’ perceptions” (p. 148), indirectly raising ideological questions regarding how the Mexican American experience is presented and discussed in literature according to a selective tradition. Barrera & de Cortes also note that the Mexican *immigrant* experience is the subject of only five of the 67 books studied (one nonfiction, four contemporary fiction), with Mexican immigrant characters working as undocumented maids for Anglo families, engaging in prostitution, or crossing the border illegally to reside in the United States.

Barrera, Quiroa and West-Williams (1999) examined Mexican American children’s literature published between late 1995 and late 1998, expanding their research to include intermediate and young adult fiction. Their 92-book sample included 54 fiction titles, with 28 specifically indicated as middle and upper grade works – a departure from other studies in Mexican American children’s literature. Findings reveal the emergence of young adult fiction books “which combine gripping content, cultural authenticity, and skilled writing” (Barrera, et al, p. 322), citing the work of authors such as Gary Soto (*Buried Onions*, 1997) and Francisco Jiménez (*The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*, 1997). Intermediate and younger grade fiction works were described as a “mixed bag,” with some noted incidences of didactic text, stereotypical artistic and textual depictions, shallow characters, and uneven overall quality. The researchers also note the lack of variety in Mexican American authorship, citing that the majority

of intermediate and young adult books are written by only a handful of Mexican American writers such as Soto, Mora, Cisneros, and Anaya. However, this situation is an improvement over the primarily European American authorship and illustration of Mexican American literature noted by the Council in 1975.

Immigration in Children's Literature

Within the field of multicultural children's literature, *immigrant* characters and themes have appeared infrequently over the past several decades. Sonia Nieto (1997) notes that "in spite of our largely immigrant heritage, until recently, the world of children's books maintained a curious silence about who we really are and about the past that has shaped us" (p. 349). However, immigrant-themed children's literature has experienced a distinctive, emergent classification among some publishers, scholars, and librarians in the past several years. Newer works such as Marina Budhos' (2006) *Ask Me No Questions*, a tale of an undocumented Bangladeshi family, join existing texts such as Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Esperanza Rising* (2000) in this new category of literature. Once grouped primarily according to character ethnicity or country of origin, some previously "multicultural" texts are now considered "immigrant" literature based upon the extent or manner in which the topic of immigration is addressed. Determining where a particular text may fit is not always clear, as all multicultural books (or nearly any book, for that matter) may arguably contain characters with past or present family experiences of immigration. However, books deemed "immigrant" bring those experiences to bear directly upon the story. An excellent example of immigrant literature is Mary Hoffman's *The Color of Home* (2002), a poignant tale of a Somali refugee child's grief, fear, and hopefulness as he adjusts to American life. Although Hoffman's work certainly falls within the category of multicultural literature, its focus upon the family's immigrant status and adjustment also locates it within the immigrant literature group.

The topic of immigration in children's literature has also received increased attention in the literacy and library media community over the past two decades. Annotated bibliographies of books with immigrant characters have begun to surface in publications such as *School Library Journal* (Marton, 2003), *Library Media Connections* (Hopkinson, 2005), and *The Reading Teacher* (Nilsson, 2005); large book jobbers catering to the educational market such as Follett and Bound to Stay Bound have also begun to feature suggested book lists, indexing, and online search capabilities for the topic of immigration in children's literature. Book selection guides used by librarians and educators such as *The Best Children's Books of the Year* (Bank Street College of Education, 2008), *Children's Catalog* (H.W. Wilson, 2009), and *Best Books for Young Teen Readers: Grades 7-10* (Gillespie, 2000) all feature multiple entries or sections dedicated to books with immigrant themes. An annotated volume entirely devoted to U. S. immigrants in children's fiction appeared in 1994 (Anderson), listing 705 titles suitable for grades K-9. However, this volume is in need of an update - many of the listed titles are currently out of print, and no young adult titles are included.

Academic studies of Immigration in Children's Literature

Despite increasing attention to the topic of immigration in children's literature, there are only a handful of scholarly studies on the topic. In addition to previously examined works, the following is a brief discussion of dissertations, journal articles, and books that focus upon immigrant representations in children's literature. Boatright (2010) examined how immigrant experiences are represented in the narratives of three graphic novels published within the last decade. Citing the need to dispel the notion of a monolithic immigrant experience, Boatright seeks to critique the combination of images and text presented in the works of Tan (*The Arrival*, 2007), Kiyama (*The Four Immigrants Manga*, 1999), and Yang (*American Born Chinese*, 2006)

to explore the perspectives of immigration presented in each work. Notably, all of these graphic novels are largely Asian in focus, although Tan's work also suggests European affiliation.

Lamme, Fu, & Lowery (2004) examined the depiction of immigrant families and their experiences in 60 children's picture books. Selecting 27 of the 60 books as best representative of authentic aspects of immigrant experience based upon the personal immigrant experiences of authors Fu and Lowery, the researchers categorized the books according to the three common immigrant experiences depicted in the texts – “making the transition” to the United States, “making the connection” with home culture through maintaining traditions and visiting the homeland, and “becoming American” by bridging cultures and developing a new identity (Lamme, Fu, & Lowery, p. 126). Notably, only three of the books featured a Mexican (or Latino) immigrant character - *Tonio's Cat* (Calhoun, 1996), *Going Home* (Bunting, 1998), and *Home for Navidad* (Ziefert, 2003) – and *none* were Latino-authored.

Lamme, Fu & Lowery assert that schools play a major role in the process of acculturation, or becoming American. The researchers note that many of the books deal with issues related to schooling, such as the use of Americanized versus authentic names in *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001), or the struggle with writing and speaking in English, as seen in *My Name is Yoon* (Recorvits, 2003). The researchers also found identity to be a central issue for young immigrant protagonists as they seek to affiliate with American culture; characters often resist or feel shameful regarding the language, dress, and customs of their family's home culture, as seen in young Indian protagonist Nadia's concern that her hands, painted in honor of her aunt's wedding, would bring ridicule at school in *Nadia's Hands* (English, 1999). Other immigrant characters, having grown up in the United States, are less connected to the home culture of their parents, as seen in Bunting's *Going Home* (1998), Tran's *Going Home, Coming Home* (2003), and Ziefert's

Home for Navidad (2003). Lamme, Fu & Lowery also acknowledge that many immigrant children act as cultural brokers for their family, translating and attempting to bridge home and school cultures: *Rivka's First Thanksgiving* (Rael, 2001) features a young Jewish girl who campaigns to convince her devout family to celebrate what they perceive to be a Gentile holiday; *Apple Pie, Fourth of July* (Wong, 2002) depicts a Chinese girl who helps her restaurant-owner parents to understand that Americans may not want to eat Chinese food on the Fourth of July.

Lamme, Fu, & Lowery's discussion of the immigrant experience in picture books will be useful as I consider how Mexican immigrants are represented within these and other experiences in young adult novels. For the purpose of my study, I am most interested in their third area of classification according to immigrant experience – becoming American. Although theories of transnationalism and hybridity discussed in Chapter 2 were not used in Lamme, Fu & Lowery's study, the young immigrant characters in the study's books strongly evidenced these concepts in their various navigations and negotiations of life in the United States. A further examination of these books through the critical lens of hybridity theory would provide an evocative look at how (and from what perspective) assimilation, adaptation, and/or acculturation are constructed. As previously mentioned, issues of hybridity are especially important to my examination of immigrants are presented in young adult novels as "becoming American."

Two dissertations to date have specifically addressed issues of immigration in children's literature. Ritchell Yau (2003), under the direction of recognized bilingual educator and children's author Alma Flor Ada, analyzed a sample of 22 picture storybooks for young children published since 1970 noted for "artistic merit" to determine the portrayal of immigration experiences in books with characters of "varying geographic regions" during what she terms the "three broad time periods" (p. 178) of U.S history -1776-1879, 1880-1969, and 1970 – present

(np). In a manner similar to Lowery, Yau also attempts to span and generalize across several immigrant group categories, examining a limited number of titles per group in her 22-book sample. Yau's sample includes five titles under the larger category of "Latin America" (2003, p.237), yet all but one address poor, migrant or illegal *Mexican* immigrants, a frequent stereotype for this group (Beck, 2009).

Yau's sample selection also presents other potential limitations. Although she seeks to examine the "differences and similarities" that may exist in the "experiences of immigrants arriving during different historical eras" (Yau, 2003, p. 53), her sample does not include any titles published prior to 1983, nor does she articulate her reasons for excluding titles prior to that date. Yau also does not provide any factual or historical information with which to compare the experiences of the immigrants in the sample books, as seen in the work of Lowery (2003) and Lamme, Fu, & Lowery (2004). It is also notable that the time periods Yau delineates for analysis are very broad, and do not correspond with the three generally acknowledged waves of U.S. immigration history (1820-1899; 1900-1964; 1965-present). Additionally, some scholars acknowledge the presence of a fourth "wave," encompassing the recent surge of predominantly Latino immigrants since the mid-1990s (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Perhaps a more focused and articulated range of publication would add some clarity to her sample selection process.

Yau sought to locate a total of 12 books from each of the three previously stated eras, and at least two titles from each of the "four broad geographic regions: Asia, Europe, Middle East, or Latin America" (p. 53) for a maximum total of 36 books. However, she was only able to locate a total of 22 books, leaving some regions and eras underrepresented. Yau's broad geographic grouping of regions and countries is also quite problematic, as each of these regions

encompasses a hugely diverse array of peoples, each with their own particular set of issues surrounding immigration to the United States. Additionally, Yau's work is grounded in theories of "transnational migration" and "transformational education" (2003, np) discussing the portrayal of the coping strategies and developed social networks of transnational immigrant families. Although her stated research focus does not include a critical examination of race, class, or assimilation, it seems important to question the relationships of immigrants to the dominant culture of the receiving community, and the influence of race, ethnicity, and class upon these relationships.

Ruth Lowery (1998) reviewed seventeen children's novels spanning 1820 to the 1990s to determine how American immigrants from 1920 to the 1990s are represented, with particular emphasis on how issues of race and class influence representation. Focusing heavily upon historical information regarding immigrants' experiences during the three generally recognized waves of U.S. immigration (1820-1899; 1900-1964; 1965-present), Lowery examined representations of race and class as well as the portrayals of historical context in the novels. However, Lowery's small sample of 17 historical fiction titles was quite limited in scope: publication dates range from 1918 to 1993, with a notable absence of *any* texts published between 1920 and 1970 – a 50-year gap in her sample selection. Although Lowery did divide the sample into texts that *addressed* each of the three waves, she did not examine texts that were actually *published* during those eras of history.

Lowery addressed all groups of U.S. immigrants collectively, choosing to only briefly discuss the differences between cultural groups in her analysis of immigrant representation by era. Also, only a few individual immigrant groups were included for each era, with a single title for each group. Including only one Latino title in the sample - Paulsen's *The Crossing* (1987) -

Lowery concludes that “Hispanic” immigrants are depicted as “poor” and having to “sneak into the country,” straining government resources (1998, p. 227). “The Mexicans have contributed a lot to America,” Lowery states. “In fact, some of the vast American lands today...were actually gained from wars...they [Mexicans] have contributed greatly to architecture, foods, business, and all sectors of American culture” (p. 246). She later concludes (from only one sample text) that “the Hispanic immigrants seem to confirm California’s hysteria that illegal immigrants are draining the states’ welfare system” (p. 251). Such ideas demonstrate an adherence to the first tier of Banks’ (1994) model of curricular reform, viewing the Mexican American experience from a “contributions” perspective (p. 31). Perhaps the author does not perceive or intend the potential Anglo-centricity and superiority embedded in these statements; regrettably, Lowery’s statements inadvertently demonstrate the selective tradition at work.

As Lowery’s stated purpose was to examine issues of race and class, it would seem difficult and potentially erroneous to draw generalized conclusions across the various cultural groups throughout American history, as well as to analyze results from such a small sample. It is also problematic for the researcher to draw conclusions regarding the historical accuracy of the novels in comparison to the events of each era, as the sample texts are works of *fiction*. These concerns, along with possible weaknesses in sample selection, critical perspective, and data analysis lead to questions of validity in such a broad study, despite its admirable scope and intent.

Concluding Thoughts

Based upon this review of scholarship regarding immigration and Mexican Americans in children’s literature, it seems evident that there are some significant gaps. Beyond the work of the Council for Interracial Books for Children (1975) and the work of Barrera and her colleagues

over a decade ago, there appears to be no recent critical analyses of race, class, and gender in Mexican American contemporary children's fiction for the adolescent and young adult audience. Additionally, there also appears to be little research exclusively addressing the Mexican *immigrant* experience in contemporary fiction for children of any age group (with the possible exception of Beck's study of migrancy), nor do any studies specifically address the issue of assimilation in children's literature.

The present critical study seeks to fill a gap in the research by specifically examining the Mexican American immigrant population in the under-researched area of young adult fiction for representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and assimilation ideology. Focusing exclusively on contemporary fiction titles involving the Mexican immigrant experience published in the United States over the past six decades, I will examine the presence and evolution of representations and ideology in literature for young people. I strongly concur with Nilsson's (2005) recommendation for strong, valid research in Latino children's literature that narrows the focus of genre and subgenre, publication range, cultural group, and targeted age level of children's literature, and it is my hope that this study will serve to answer this call.

CHAPTER 6

Methodology

Scholars have used a wide variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives to analyze literary texts over the years, providing a rich resource of approach and technique. Examining literature through political, historical, sociological, cultural, psychological, and educational lenses, researchers have employed a diverse range of theories and modes of analysis. Some have quantitatively assessed the occurrence of characters, settings, themes, or stereotypes in literature (Agosto, Hughes-Hassell, & Gilmore-Clough, 2003; Klein, 1998); others have addressed literary elements such as form and structure (Higonnet, 1987). Still others have examined the historical accuracy of text (Kohl, 1995; Loewen, 2007), the representations of marginalized groups (Beck, 2009; Naidoo, 2008; Reese, 2007), or the presence of surface or underlying ideology (Overstreet, 1994; Taxel, 1980).

Scholars have also used multiple literary theories in their approach to text, including those that emphasize the importance of the reader in making meaning (Fish, 1980; Rosenblatt, 1938/1978), those that suggest the texts' construction of readers (Eco, 1992; Iser, 2000), and those that allow for transaction between the two (Rosenblatt, 1978). Some have taken a more critical approach to literary analysis, interrogating the inherent ideology of text, its potential impact upon readers, and the possibility of resistant reader response (Beach, Thein, & Parks, 2008; Hollindale, 1992). Text analysis methodology has varied as well, with studies ranging from those that primarily count, list and quantify textual elements (Agosto, Hughes-Hassell, & Gilmore-Clough, 2003; Garcia & Pugh, 1992; Higgins, 2002) to those that rely upon techniques

of detailed and specific comparison and inference to discuss multiple texts and draw conclusions across the sample (Adkins, 1998; Aldridge, 2006; Overstreet, 1994; Taxel, 1980).

Text Analysis Methodology

My method of text analysis is strongly influenced by the work of several scholars who have used critical theories to examine ideology and the selective tradition in novels for young people. Although my research involves contemporary fiction rather than historical fiction or textbooks, the methods of literary content analysis used by Aldridge (2006), Adkins (1998), and Overstreet (1994) each inform my study, as they examined ideology and the selective tradition in texts through a lens of critical Marxist cultural and educational theory, comparing the content of their sample texts with historiographical information. These scholars also claimed validity for their readings and conclusions based upon the support of findings through concrete textual examples, comparison of their findings to historical information as primary source material, and sensitivity to their own social and cultural researcher stance.

Derrick Aldridge (2006) examined six high school history textbooks for the presence of master narratives surrounding Martin Luther King, Jr. Using the technique of *literary analysis*, Aldridge read source material, noted themes, discussed these themes, and supported his conclusions with excerpts of text. To analyze the textbooks, Aldridge chose widely adopted textbooks that are recommended and authored by highly respected historians. He then reviewed scholarship surrounding the use of master narratives to package and present historical information, as well as historical accounts of Dr. King's life and work. Aldridge identified the use of three main master narratives relating to King in his historiographical review, and used these three master narratives to categorize, analyze, and discuss the presence of master narratives in the six sample textbooks. Aldridge's findings support the presence and perpetuation of a

selective tradition surrounding Dr. King in history textbooks that potentially “obscures important elements in King’s life and thought” (p. 662). In a manner similar, I will use the various conceptions of immigrant assimilation in U.S. history as discussed in Chapter 2 to compare, contrast, and discuss the ideologies of assimilation that may be present in my sample novels.

Chandra Power Adkins (1998) examined historical fiction for adolescents written about the medieval era for occurrences of readerly and writerly presentism. Using Williams’ (1977) concept of the selective tradition and ideology in content and narrative, Adkins used a self-constructed method of text analysis that involved analyzing both book reviews and her novels. Reading book reviews to better understand the accusations of presentism levied against the books in her sample, Adkins used items the reviewers found “troubling” (p.70) to develop a chart of categories by which to group accusations of presentism. She then read the novels, coded passages in them based upon the same categories she developed from the reviews, and analyzed the passages within category. Finally, Adkins analyzed her data in comparison to historiographical information about the medieval period to determine what versions of the past are preserved or legitimized by claims of authenticity or accusations of presentism. For purposes of discussion, Adkins grouped the novels based upon how they fell into the previously established categories derived from her examination of the book reviews. Adkins’ work is of particular interest to me, as she analyzed both book reviews and her novels. My study, as evidenced in the background material presented in Chapters 2 (conceptions of assimilation), 3 (historical representations) and 4 (media representations) also involves the examination of additional material for both context and comparison. The information derived from my discussion of the selective tradition regarding Mexican immigrants as represented in U.S. history

and the entertainment media provides a basis for comparison, contrast, and discussion of the selective tradition in the young adult novels.

Deborah Overstreet's (1994) study of representations of the Vietnam War in adolescent novels from 1966-1993 also presents a parallel and useful model for my study of adolescent and young adult fiction. Adapting her text analysis methodology from that of Walsh (1987), Overstreet rejects quantitative and structural analysis, using instead a "structured system through which to choose portions of texts to examine and discuss" (Overstreet, p. 57). Overstreet compared excerpts of sample novels to the various historiographical interpretations of the Vietnam War as a "primary source background" (p. 57) for the evaluation of the novel's content. Describing her method as a "simple and straightforward" means of providing a "systemic method for extracting significant passages from the novels from which to draw inferences about each novel in particular and about the sample as a whole" (p. 57), Overstreet stresses that her reading and analysis of text is not objective, but filtered through her own particular researcher stance.

My own method of text analysis draws upon elements of each of these studies. As Aldridge, Adkins, and Overstreet each used historiographical data to develop research categories and analyze data, I also began my research with a review of the historical and contemporary conceptions of immigrant assimilation in the United States over the past two and a half centuries as outlined in Chapter 2, and use this information as primary source material with which to compare and evaluate ideological conceptions of Mexican immigrant assimilation in the novels. As identified in Chapter 2, I will link past and contemporary views of immigrant assimilation such as the Americanization movement, the melting pot, and transnationalism to conceptions of assimilation noted in the sample texts for analysis and discussion.

As my study is also a critical analysis of representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender, I also draw upon the past and present selective tradition surrounding Mexican Americans. As previously mentioned, drawing upon the work of historians and media scholars helps me to understand *what* information about Mexican Americans is presented in textbooks, historical accounts, and the entertainment media, as well as *how* this information is presented. This background data was categorized and used to critically analyze the representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender present in my sample according to how these representations reify or refute the selective tradition. The work of Aldridge (2006) and Overstreet (1994) was particularly helpful here, as they also used information about the historical and social construction of Dr. King and the Vietnam War respectively to categorize and analyze findings regarding representations in texts. Although my study does not include historical fiction, it is still important to note how the selective version of Mexican American history in the United States may surface or bear upon underlying assumptions in contemporary fiction.

My analysis is also informed by the work of others in the area of Latino and Mexican American children's literature, and especially that of the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1975) and the work of Barrera and colleagues (1997, 1999). Each of these researchers developed a list of categories with which to select and classify portions of text, and from them I appropriated the categories of language, ethnicity (race), gender, socioeconomic status (class), setting, and historical reference. For the purpose of my particular study, I chose to add categories that addressed issues of cultural identity, agency, and references to the Mexican immigrant experience.

Reading

All of the previous studies reviewed provide us with exhaustively documented readings of texts that argue for the validity of their readings. However, following Rosenblatt (1978), and given the nature of response, I do acknowledge that these are my own individual readings: I do not suggest that others may read these texts in the same manner. Nonetheless, I stand by my reading as plausible and valid, as it is extensively documented with references to textual passages to support my conclusions.

Following my historiographical review of assimilation ideology and the selective tradition surrounding Mexican immigrants in the United States, I then read my sample texts. I first began seeking an aesthetic approach to all the texts, in order to have a *lived experience* with the novels (Rosenblatt, 1938). As reading falls within an aesthetic/efferent continuum (Rosenblatt, 1978), I recognize that a reading free of my own prior knowledge and understandings is not entirely possible. However, this initial round of reading provided a general sense of the settings of the novels and the topics or issues addressed. Subsequent readings came from a more efferent perspective, as I sought to isolate specific passages related to my research questions that indicate beliefs about assimilation, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender. During these systemic readings, I chose passages from the sample texts for discussion according to the categories established during the reviews of historiographical information regarding assimilation and the selective tradition.

Research Questions & Categories

As outlined in Chapter 1, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What ideologies of assimilation are suggested in young adult contemporary fiction involving the Mexican immigrant experience? How do they change (or not change) over time?
2. How do the intersections of assimilation ideologies and representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender in young adult contemporary fiction change (or not change) over time?

I began data collection by noting basic bibliographic information for each book, as well as the ethnicity and gender of the author and protagonist/s. After multiple readings of each sample text, I then isolated and placed phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and passages of any necessary length from the texts into one of the following general categories:

1. Setting, plot, narration, and focalization
2. Representations of ethnicity (physical descriptions, characterizations, relationship to those outside of culture)
3. Representations of socioeconomic status (occupations, living conditions, activities, attitudes regarding class)
4. Representations of gender (physical and behavioral characteristics, cultural roles, attitudes regarding gender)
5. Issues of language (treatment in text, accuracy of terminology, institutional/community attitudes toward language)
6. References to the Mexican immigrant experience (education, community life, family relationships, ties to home country, legal status, journey to America)

7. References to agency and position (community involvement, relations with institutions, how and by whom immigrant's problems are resolved)
8. Issues of cultural identity (identification with American culture, identification with Mexican heritage, conflicts of cultural affiliation)
9. References to Mexican American history

For the above categories involving representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender, I sought passages that indicated representations of Mexican immigrants *and* passages that indicated representations of those of European American dominant culture. I also looked for multiple perspectives on these issues – how Mexican immigrants describe and experience European Americans, how Mexican immigrants describe themselves, how European Americans describe and experience Mexican immigrants, and how European Americans describe themselves. For categories involving conceptions of cultural identity, the Mexican immigrant experience, and issues of agency, I also sought to identify the perspectives of both the Mexican immigrant and those of European American dominant culture as potentially presented in the novels.

In order to answer my specific research questions regarding assimilation ideology and the intersections of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender with this ideology over time, I drew upon textual passages from each of these categories in various overlapping combinations. Although issues of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender are more obviously supported by textual passages, the issue of assimilation is often more embedded, and required a merging and interrelating of essentially all categories. Views regarding language, for example, often supported both assimilation ideology and representations of ethnicity, yet both language *and* ethnicity were influential components of assimilation ideology. Similarly, references to the

selective tradition of Mexican American history also supported the ideology of assimilation, as well as conceptions of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender. Issues of cultural identity from the perspective of an immigrant and those of European American dominant culture strongly indicated assimilation ideology, as well as examples indicating the agency and positioning of immigrants and European Americans in the story. Although the amount of data for each category varied within each sample text – some made no reference to Mexican American history, for example - the overall corpus of data for each category was great enough to gain a sense of the representations and perspectives over time.

To address the first research question, I isolated and discussed passages from the sample novels that suggest the following ideological approaches and/or attitudes toward immigrant assimilation, based upon my historiographical review of assimilation ideologies in U.S. history:

- Assimilation as Unattainable (due to ethnicity, racism, poverty, legal status) – conception of “unmeltable” others (Warner & Srole, 1945)
- Assimilation as Conformity (to values of dominant culture) – related to *e pluribus unum*, Americanization, melting pot
- Assimilation as Adaptation and/or Bicultural Practice (maintenance of home culture/navigation of new) – related to multiculturalism
- Assimilation as Hybridity (evolution of a new cultural way of being) – related to transnationalism, hybridity

As Taxel (1980) discovered in his analysis of novels involving the Revolutionary War, I also determined that relying solely upon the reduction of data to binaries regarding assimilation such as possible/impossible, pro/con, or denial/inclusive of home culture was not sufficient for a rich and complex analysis across the entire sample. Although these binaries worked for some

novels, they ultimately began to break down for many of the later novels in the sample. Additionally, the texts often reference multiple (and at times conflicting) ideological positions regarding assimilation within the same book; a single categorization for most of the novels within the four conceptions of assimilation mentioned above would not sufficiently account for the varying perspectives in the texts. For the purpose of discussion, I therefore identified the primary ideology of assimilation conveyed throughout the book (usually via the protagonist/s or narrator), as well as any secondary ideologies that appeared (via secondary characters or narration). Passages gleaned from the novels within and across all nine of the aforementioned *general* categories – ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, cultural identity, agency, etc – were selected and compiled to indicate and support the relation of each novel to the four conceptions of assimilation ideology.

To address the second research question, I draw upon the past and present selective tradition regarding Mexican immigrants as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 to examine the intersections of ideologies of assimilation and representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender, and how these may change over time. As previously mentioned, examining the work of historians and media scholars helps me to understand *what* information about Mexican Americans is presented in textbooks, historical accounts, and the entertainment media, as well as *how* this information is presented. This background data was also used to critically analyze the representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender present in my sample according to how these representations reify or refute the selective tradition. The work of Aldridge (2006) and Overstreet (1994) was particularly helpful here, as they also used information about the historical and social construction of Dr. King and the Vietnam War respectively to categorize and analyze findings regarding representations in texts. Although my study does not include historical fiction,

it is still important to note how the selective version of Mexican American history in the United States may surface or bear upon underlying assumptions in contemporary fiction.

The Sample

The topic of *immigration* in children's literature is broad, complex, and not easily searched in traditional databases and print selection guides. Several issues affect the classification of literature containing immigrant characters and themes, including country of origin, immigrant legal status (documented, undocumented), reasons or circumstances surrounding immigration (refugee, asylum, colonization, economic hardship), and the political or societal labeling/naming of immigrant groups (Latino, Hispanic, Asian, etc.). Although the subject terms "immigration" and "immigrants" are now used in current anthologies such as those by Bank Street College of Education (2008) and Wilson (2009), publisher catalogs (Bound to Stay Bound, 2010; Follett, 2010), and library reference databases (*Children's Literature Comprehensive Database*, 2010), literature containing immigrant characters is still predominantly catalogued under specific listings by the country of origin.

Regarding my specific focus on literature containing Mexican immigrants, there are also various umbrella labels occurring in reference materials, selection guides, and databases that include this group, as seen in our earlier examination of terminology: Spanish, Hispanic, Chicano, and more recently, Latino. In addition to Mexican immigrants, each of these larger categories may also involve literature about immigrants from Puerto Rico, Central America, or South America. All of the countries and territories falling under these headings are culturally diverse, making general terms of classification intrinsically problematic. As a result, I found it necessary to use all of the possible search terms discussed to locate sample books for my study.

I began my search with a review of the *Children's Literature Comprehensive Database*, a subscription database available through the University of Georgia Libraries. This extensive, frequently updated reference source contains over 1.4 million entries of children's literature intended for readers ranging in age from preschool through young adult, with publication dates spanning the late 1800s to 2009. This database yielded 82 entries of fiction (of all genres) for the search term "Mexican immigrants," and nearly 800 entries under the term "Mexican Americans." I also used these terms, as well as the aforementioned general terms of "Hispanic," "Chicano," and "Latino" to consult Follett Corporation's product database, *Titlewave*, which also provided a list of older and recent publications currently available for purchase by school libraries. Several print selection guides were consulted, including *Immigrants in the United States in Fiction* (Anderson, 1994), *Across Cultures: A Guide to Multicultural Literature for Children* (East & Thomas, 2007), *Children's Catalog* (Price, 2006), *Children's Catalog* (Wilson, 2009), *Middle and Junior High School Library Catalog* (Price, 2005), and *Best Books for Middle School and Junior High Readers* (Gillespie & Barr, 2006). Awards lists that focus upon Mexican or Latino literature provided an additional source of information to assist in the selection: the Pura Belpré Award, initiated in 1996 by the American Library Association to honor Latino authors and illustrators; the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature (sponsored by the national Consortium of Latin American Studies), and the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award, established in 1995 by Texas State University. Finally, I consulted the purchasing catalogs of smaller independent publishing houses and imprints (smaller sections within larger publishing companies) exclusively featuring multicultural titles such as Children's Press, Jump at the Sun, Lee and Low, Arte Público, and Piñata Books. The last two publishers specifically focus on Latino literature, and yielded several titles of interest to my study, such as

Trino's Choice (Bertrand, 1999) and *The Girl from Playa Blanca* (Lachtman, 1995) each published by Piñata Books. A few of these new titles involving Mexican or Latino/a characters fall within the category of "pop culture," resembling paperback fiction currently popular with teen readers, such as the seven titles in Gloria Velásquez's *Roosevelt High School Series* (1994-2006), and the two *Honey Blonde Chica* titles by Serros (2006, 2007).

As my research centers upon the issue of assimilation ideology, with representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender informing that issue, I eliminated some excellent books that deal only with crossing the border. *Crossing the Wire* (Hobbs, 2006), *La Línea* (Jamarillo, 2006), and *The Crossing* (Paulsen, 1987) each chronicle the passage of Mexican youth across the border, but the story essentially ends with the protagonists' crossing in the United States. These books are important to better understanding the Mexican immigrant experience in children's literature, but do not lend themselves to an analysis of assimilation ideology, as beyond an occasional reference to the reasons for immigration, they do not situate characters within American culture. However, there are some novels with border crossing themes that involve going *back* to Mexico to address questions of cultural identity that meet the criteria for inclusion in the sample, as they involve immigrant experiences in the United States. Novels in this category include *Border Crossing: A Novel*, by Maria Cruz (2003) featuring a protagonist of European and Mexican heritage who crosses from California into Mexico to better understand her Mexican immigrant father's experiences, and *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico* (Alegría, 2007), the story of a Mexican American female teen stopped at the border while attempting to return to the U.S. from a party in Mexico, only to learn that her green card is false.

Purposeful sampling

My study will focus on young adult contemporary fiction involving the Mexican immigrant experience, and it is encouraging to see the growing number of titles involving Mexican immigrant characters and themes that have appeared over the past few years. For the purpose of narrowing the sample, I have eliminated books that are identified as graphic novels, historical fiction, poetry, novels in verse form, and collections of short stories from consideration. I have chosen not to restrict the sample to a range of publication dates, as I am interested in how representations and conceptions of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender and assimilation may change over time in novels available to school libraries. Additionally, I have chosen not to exclude older titles that may be currently out of print, as these books may still be present in school libraries, and are currently available for purchase through online vendors such as Amazon.

As I seek to look across a wide range of texts for young adults involving the Mexican immigrant experience (currently over 80 titles) to examine representations and ideology as they change over time, it is necessary to reduce the sample to a manageable size. In order to focus upon these issues in literature, I used the non-random method of *purposeful sampling* to select “information-rich” texts from which I might “learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). Although this method of sampling regrettably excludes many excellent books from the present study, I have attempted to select a representative group of novels that includes a variety of authors. In order to gain such diversity, I have included only one title per author, even though several authors had multiple

titles meeting the selection criteria. Novels considered for this sample therefore meet the following criteria:

- Involve the Mexican immigrant experience in the United States
- Are categorized as young adult contemporary or realistic fiction
- Are organized in narrative, chapter format

As it is important to look historically, I chose to select novels published within each decade beginning with the 1950s. The sample includes all books published in the 1950s and 1960s (only two each), two of the five published in the 1970s, both books published in the 1980s. Eight novels were chosen from the 1990s from the 22 meeting the criteria, and sixteen novels were chosen from the largest group of novels published in the 2000s (46 as of June 2010), for a total of 32 books. Additionally, in order to have both insider and outsider perspectives represented in the sample, the list of novels for the study includes books that are both European American authored (16) and Latino authored (16) for all decades when available. However, the number of European American and Latino authored books is not even for each decade, as the largest percentage of Latino authored books occurs in the 2000s, corresponding with increased Latino authorship during this decade. The increased availability of Latino authored texts in later decades is influenced by several factors, including 1) the formation of publishing houses specifically devoted to Latino literature, such as Piñata Books (an imprint of Arte Público Press), devoted entirely to children's and young adult literature focusing on "U.S. Hispanic culture" ("About Piñata Books," 2010), and 2) the institution of annual awards recognizing Latino children's literature, such as the Pura Belpré Award (1996), the Américas Book Award (1993), and the Tomás Rivera Children's Book Award (1995).

My sample includes young adult novels that have received the three above mentioned Latino awards or commendations, as well as novels that have received other awards such as the Newbery, the Jane Addams Award, or state book awards. I also include novels listed in Best Book lists such as those published by Wilson, Bank Street College of Education, and YALSA, and books that have received positive reviews from Kirkus, Booklist, or Hornbook. However, there are a few of the earlier titles such as *Chicano Girl* (Colman, 1973) and *A Long Time Coming* (Whitney, 1954) that have no reviews available, but are nonetheless included in the sample due to content and publication date.

Using these search procedures, I have purposefully selected the following titles meeting the sample criteria:

Date	Author	Title	Awards/Commendations**
1953	*Krumgold, J.	<i>and now Miguel</i>	Newbery
1954	*Whitney, P.	<i>A Long Time Coming</i>	
1967	*Bishop, C.	<i>Fast Break</i>	
1969	*Summers, J.	<i>You Can't Make It by Bus</i>	
1973	*Colman, H.	<i>Chicano Girl</i>	NCTE Books for You
1973	*Taylor, T.	<i>The Maldonado Miracle</i>	Newbery author (<i>The Cay</i>)
1981	*Beatty, P.	<i>Lupita Mañana</i>	Jane Addams Honor; NCTE
1984	Cisneros, S.	<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	Wilson Best Books
1993	*Paulsen, G.	<i>Sisters/Hermanas</i>	NCTE Books for You
1994	Velásquez, G.	<i>Juanita Fights the School Board</i>	NCTE Books for You
1995	Lachtman, O.	<i>The Girl from Playa Blanca</i>	Benjamin Franklin Award
1996	Martinez, V.	<i>Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida</i>	Pura Belpré; Américas; National Book Award
1996	Soto, G.	<i>Buried Onions</i>	Américas commended
1998	*McGinley, J.	<i>Joaquin Strikes Back</i>	Booklist Review
1998	*Olson, G.	<i>Joyride</i>	Society of Sch. Librarians Honor
1999	Bertrand, D.	<i>Trino's Choice</i>	Texas winner; Tomás Rivera finalist
2001	*Johnston, T.	<i>Any Small Goodness</i>	John & Patricia Beatty Award
2001	Saldaña, R.	<i>The Jumping Tree: A Novel</i>	Américas
2002	*Murphy, B.	<i>Miguel Lost & Found in the Palace</i>	Center for Child. Bks review
2003	Cruz, M.	<i>Border Crossing</i>	Bank Street Best Books
2003	*DeFelice, C.	<i>Under the Same Sky</i>	Bank Street Best Books
2004	Ryan, P.	<i>Becoming Naomi León</i>	Tomás Rivera; Pura Belpré Honor; Américas commended
2005	Canales, V.	<i>The Tequila Worm</i>	Pura Belpré
2005	*Whitney, P.	<i>The Perfect Distance: A Novel</i>	Wilson; Bank Street
2006	López, L.	<i>Call Me Henri</i>	Américas commended

2006	*Resau, L.	<i>What the Moon Saw: A Novel</i>	Colorado State Winner
2007	Alegría, M.	<i>Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico</i>	Society of School Librarians Honor
2008	de la Peña, M.	<i>Mexican Whiteboy</i>	YALSA Best Book
2008	Martinez, C.	<i>The Smell of Old Lady Perfume</i>	Américas commended
2008	*Nails, J.	<i>Next to Mexico</i>	Wilson's Best Books 2009
2008	Sáenz, B.	<i>He Forgot to Say Good-bye</i>	Américas Honor
2009	Alvarez, J.	<i>Return to Sender</i>	Pura Belpré

*European American author

** Includes only primary listed awards or commendations for each title

CHAPTER 7

Ideologies of Assimilation in Children's Literature

In this chapter, and the one to follow, I will report the findings of my analysis of a selected sample of thirty-two recommended works of young adult contemporary fiction involving the Mexican immigrant experience. This chapter examines the predominant ideologies of assimilation that manifest in the novels. Grouped within four basic, self-constructed categories derived from my historiographical examination of assimilation ideology in U.S. history, I will analyze the manner in which assimilation is conceptualized in the novels, including representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and narration that contribute to the conveyance of these ideologies in the texts.

Assimilation is a complex, multifaceted, and value-laden conception. As seen in Chapter 2, immigrant assimilation has been viewed throughout American history from various perspectives, often related to the country's current economic and political climate. Ideologies of assimilation have included those that frown upon the maintenance of home language and culture (e pluribus unum, Americanization, melting pot), those that suggest a separate-yet-equal approach to cultural practice (multiculturalism), and those that recognize the evolving, fluid nature of mixing and remixing cultures (transnationalism, hybridity). Some have even suggested that assimilation is not possible for all, particularly those deemed *unmeltable* due to ethnicity and/or socioeconomic status (Warner & Srole, 1945). Based upon my review of assimilation ideologies in U.S. history, I will group and discuss the ideologies of assimilation in the novels as they fall within four general perspectives: *assimilation as unattainable* (immigrants as

unmeltable “others”), *assimilation as conformity* (e pluribus unum, Americanization theory), *assimilation as adaptation* and/or *bicultural practice* (multiculturalism), and *assimilation as hybridity* (transnationalism, hybridity theory).

As outlined in Chapter 2, my analysis of assimilation ideology is strongly influenced by several theoretical ideas. Raymond William’s conception of the *selective tradition* is important to the understanding of how school curricula (including novels) include representations that may establish or reify the naturalized, obvious beliefs regarding how Mexican immigrants are perceived - and how they are to live in American society. A selective tradition regarding Mexican immigrants as distinct (and often undesirable) “others” is especially evident in the novels with ideologies of assimilation as an *unattainable* impossibility for those deemed ‘unmeltable’ (Warner & Srole, 1945). In these novels (e.g. Bishop, 1967; Olson, 1998; Whitney, 1954), representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender support this ideology via the words and actions of characters, casting Mexican immigrants as different, separate, undesirable, and essentially unacceptable to European American society. Additionally, the distancing commentary of omniscient narration in some of the novels also serves to reinforce the natural separation of Mexican immigrants from mainstream American society.

This perspective of Mexican immigrants as an undesirable “other” is also evident in novels with ideologies that view assimilation as *conformity* to the norms of American (and specifically European American) society. Novels presenting this ideology (e.g. McGinley; 1998; Nails, 2008; Summers, 1969) and also emphasize the distinct differences related to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender that separate Mexican immigrants from others, yet suggest that immigrants may “become American” (Nieto, 2002, p. 111) by turning away from home culture to emulate European American practices and values. This ideology reflects early conceptions of

assimilation in U.S. history such as *e pluribus unum* and *Americanization*, wherein immigrants were considered assimilated if they surrendered their own cultural practices to “imitate the Anglo Saxon order of things” (Bercovici, 1925, np). As seen in the writings of John Quincy Adams, immigrants within this ideology are encouraged to “cast off” home culture, “never to resume it” – looking “backward” to Mexican culture is therefore implicitly un-American (Sollors, 1986, p. 4).

My analysis of the novels is also strongly influenced by Homi Bhabha’s (1994) theory of *hybridity*. As Bhabha suggests, issues of power exist at the many junctures of culture, and it is important to consider *whose* histories, stories, and experiences are included (or privileged) in the evolving, hybrid “mix” – and whose are not. In many of the novels, the manner and degree to which an immigrant is deemed “American” is often conceived and presented from the perspective of those with hegemonic control over “the rules of the game” rather than from that of the immigrant themselves, as evidenced in novels suggesting assimilation as conformity or an unattainable impossibility.

Other novels, particularly those conveying ideologies of adaptation and hybridity (e.g. Cisneros, 1983; Ryan, 2004; Soto, 1997), represent Mexican immigrant characters as possessing a greater sense of agency in their lives and decisions, resisting the powerful and seemingly unavoidable pull of poverty and crime, and claiming the right to determine how they will live in the United States as Mexican Americans. Many of these characters also struggle with issues of identity, feeling displaced or unmoored - neither here nor there – neither “Mexican” nor “American, ” and frequently display resistance to the implicit expectations of both European American *and* Mexican culture as they struggle to overcome the many obstacles often facing immigrants and navigate life in the United States. As the novels clearly indicate, methods of

adaptation and manifestations of hybridity are unique, individual, and evolving – there is no standard, “hybrid” immigrant; we are *all*, in fact hybrid Americans.

Ideas of *multiculturalism* are also evidenced in ideological views of assimilation, as seen in the novels suggesting assimilation to involve *adaptation* and/or *bicultural practice*. Multiculturalism supports the coexistence of *parallel* and dominant cultures (Hamilton, 1993, p. 363); this suggests that Mexican immigrants may simultaneously maintain their home practice of Mexican culture *and* adapt to the requirements for participation in the largely European American customs and institutions that constitute life in mainstream U.S. culture. Novels with this ideology feature Mexican immigrant characters that view Mexican culture (and/or language) as private, separate, and specific to their homes and communities, yet also adapt by doing what is necessary (such as speaking English, wearing popular clothing, or familiarizing themselves with local laws and customs) to survive and participate in American life. Unlike an ideology of conformity that suggests the desirability of cultural surrender, a perspective of assimilation as adaptation and/or bicultural practice takes an additive position (Krashen, 1985), allowing for the maintenance of an immigrant’s home culture *and* the addition of American cultural elements. Disparaging representations and stereotypes (such as criminality, drunkenness, or promiscuity) continue to appear in novels with this ideological perspective via the words and deeds of secondary characters, but stand in contrast to the authentic, respectful approach to Mexican immigrant culture and experience reflected in portrayals of the novel’s protagonists.

However, unlike novels in the previous categories, texts in the category of adaptation also bear strong themes of perseverance, resistance, and survival (e.g. Bertrand, 1999; Soto, 1997). Although home language and culture is important to many of book’s characters, novels in this category shift the focus from issues of cultural identity to the urgent need for perseverance and

survival, emphasizing the dire, desperate, and seemingly hopeless circumstances of violence and poverty facing Mexican immigrant characters. These texts poignantly (and often tragically) describe the struggles of Mexican immigrant characters to navigate their way through the many challenges of life in the United States, including issues of language, educational opportunity, employment, racism, and the maintenance of family both home and abroad. Characters in this group of novels act with a greater sense of agency and resolve than those seen in the previous categories to resist succumbing to the sad destiny of those around them, making decisions (though often difficult) that assure their wellbeing or offer a sense of hope for the future, despite the implicitly unchangeable circumstances in which they live.

Mexican culture is viewed through multiple lenses within an ideology of assimilation as adaptation. One perspective sees Mexican culture as inextricably linked to the crime and poverty that limits opportunity, as we will also see in novels within the first two categories. Novels with this view of Mexican culture – especially those by Soto (1997) and López (2006) - suggest that immigrants have no option but to physically leave the barrio or community in order to escape the fate of those that remain. Other texts suggest that immigrants may remain, but should pursue educational success as a means of eventual escape. In contrast, some texts present an opposite perspective of cultural affiliation, suggesting the immigrant's Mexican cultural identity (and strong family ties) to be vitally important for perseverance and survival in the unfamiliar environment of American life. Books by Beatty (1981), Cisneros (1983), and Martinez (1996), among others, all convey the need for immigrants to stand strong – and united - in the wake of difficulty.

Finally, some of the sample novels display an ideological perspective of assimilation as *hybridity*. These novels suggest that all cultures – both home and new - work together in the lives

of immigrant characters to produce a fluid and ever-evolving manifestation of “hybrid” identity. “Becoming American” in these novels does not involve giving up cultural identity as suggested in perspectives of conformity, nor does it involve a “binary” separation of cultural life as seen in ideologies of adaptation and/or bicultural practice. As we will see, characters in novels with conceptions of assimilation as hybridity often experience struggles with issues of cultural affiliation; some even embark upon an identity quest by visiting Mexico or rebelling against parental wishes for cultural “loyalty.” The lines are simply more “blurred” within this ideology: the binaries of here/there and home culture/American culture no longer apply, the characters are more conflicted, the endings are not as resolved, and the “answers” to the immigrant’s questions or problems are not as clear.

However, the novels do not all cleanly fall within these categories of assimilation, and it would be erroneous to suggest such. Although several of the novels are obviously laden with overt expressions of ideology, others express multiple ideologies of assimilation in the text (see *Table 7.1*). These multiple perspectives often come from characters representing contrasting positions regarding immigrant assimilation or cultural identification, as seen in novels such as *Buried Onions* (Soto, 1997); although assimilation is seemingly unattainable for the “poor, ignorant, unemployable” (p. 2) people of his barrio, Eddie displays adaptation by resisting the lure of crime to enter the military as a means of survival. However, for the purpose of clarity and facility, I will group and discuss the novels according to what I have determined to be the overarching perspective of assimilation in the texts. To provide support for my analysis, I include examples from the texts involving issues of ethnicity (physical appearance, language, behavioral characteristics, demeanor), socioeconomic status (occupations, dependency upon institutions, living conditions), and gender (behaviors, appearance) that intersect with the various ideologies.

Additionally, I also include sections that examine *issues of story* (narration, author/protagonist ethnicity and gender, setting, and issues of *power and position* (racism, Anglo benevolence, epithets, Americanized names) in order to gain a fuller perspective of how ideologies of assimilation are conveyed in the texts.

Assimilation as Unattainable – the “Unmeltable Others”

Assimilation is represented as unattainable and impossible for Mexican immigrants in several of the novels. In these texts, Mexican immigrants are represented as unmeltable “others” (Warner & Srole, 1945), inevitably, naturally, and inalterably separate from European Americans and/or mainstream American society due to issues of ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and/or gender. Circumstances surrounding this separation - including issues of racism - are portrayed as unchangeable (though admittedly unpleasant) facts of life for which there are no ready solutions. Additionally, unequal relationships of power and privilege between Mexican and European American characters contribute to an inevitable delineation of “us” and “them,” thus rendering assimilation (or even reasonable coexistence) with American society impossible.

Nearly one fourth of the sample novels (7) display evidence of this ideology as overarching throughout the text. In addition to *and now Miguel* (Krumgold, 1953), six other novels indicate an ideology of natural separation, including *A Long Time Coming* (Whitney, 1953), *Fast Break* (Bishop, 1967), *The Maldonado Miracle* (Taylor, 1973), *Joyride* (Olson, 1998), *Under the Same Sky* (DeFelice, 2003), and *Return to Sender* (Alvarez, 2009). Each of these texts set Mexican immigrants apart from mainstream American society via setting and narration, as well as through representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic situation, gender, or immigrant status.

Krumgold's Newbery-winning novel, *and now Miguel* (1953), offers an excellent example of this ideological perspective. In this text, immigrants are physically isolated from mainstream American society on a sheepherding ranch in New Mexico; segregation is presented as the natural, obvious, and desirable way for past, present, and future generations of Mexican Americans to live. The family's sole contact with a European American character reflects their position of lower status in relationship to those of the mainstream dominant culture as they rely upon the approval and permission of a "Ranger" to cross the ironically named "U.S. Hill" for their flock's annual grazing (Krumgold, 1953, p. 232). Miguel and his family implicitly understand that there are no other viable options for Mexican immigrants to live and work beyond the mountain – they have always been there, and will remain so. Although Miguel's older brother, Gabriel must temporarily leave the ranch to serve in the U.S. military, he will ultimately (and happily) return home to a continuing life of manual labor, subjection to European American authority, and poverty. In addition to the naturalness of physical separation, immigrant characters are represented as ethnically different by their "dark" (p. 133) features, purportedly simpleminded and contented dispositions, dishonest or lazy natures, and linguistic deficiencies. Gender roles are traditional, and family structure is largely patriarchal – a long standing tradition in Latino culture; Mexican immigrant men are providers, cast in the role of manual laborers, and women are solely domestic caretakers: "that's for Mama and the girls to figure out," Miguel's father tells him when he offers to help his mother with supper; "what we got to worry about is the flock" (p. 126). However, despite their virtual isolation from European American society, the immigrant characters favor an implicitly "common" European American culture, choosing to Americanize their names ("Mickey" for Miguel), sing American songs (*On Top of Old Smoky*), and eat traditionally American foods (apple pie).

Issues of Story

Elements of story contribute to an ideology of natural separation. Many of the novels use the literary element of setting to convey the idea that Mexican immigrants should live and work apart from European Americans and/or mainstream American society: all but one (Bishop, 1967) portray immigrants as manual laborers living and working in an isolated manner on sheep farms (Krumgold, 1953) or migrant camps (Alvarez, 2009; DeFelice, 2003; Olson, 1998; Taylor, 1973; Whitney, 1954). Although Bishop's (1967) Bracero silversmith is represented as living in a nice home and area, his circumstances are presented as a temporary and unusual anomaly – an exception to the “rule” for Mexican immigrants, as the narrator informs us: “the few youths of Mexican ancestry he [protagonist Sam] knew did not come from wealthy homes” (Bishop, 1967, p. 29).

To reinforce an ideology of natural separation, Mexican immigrant characters are often advised to remain safely (and physically) within the cultural fold. In some instances, leaving is construed as an unwise decision that could result in unhappiness, disconnection, or even demise. Krumgold weaves the metaphor of lost or orphaned sheep to underscore this idea: observing a stray, Miguel wonders “why they [sheep] go off...by themselves...why are sheep not so smart?” (p. 52), and notes that a separated sheep “can't be very happy...he never becomes part of the regular flock” (p. 66). Miguel's grandfather affirms his assessment of straying as an unwise decision, assuring him that even many men do not “understand this simple [and obvious] thing” (p. 52). Leaving the fold is also considered dangerous for immigrants, especially those with no legal documentation. Many of the novels feature characters living in constant fear of discovery by “la migra” (immigration officials), and some have family members who have been deported as the result of leaving the safety of the home or community: Mari's mother was kidnapped by

human traffickers on a return visit from Mexico to visit her mother (Alvarez, 2009); Luisa and her family are deported following an INS raid of protagonist Joe's family farm (DeFelice, 2003).

However, these novels also suggest that undocumented immigrants choosing to leave Mexico bring hardship upon themselves. European American farmers bear no responsibility for protecting their employees, nor do they receive any punitive consequences for hiring undocumented workers: while sympathetic to the plight of their employees, they view the use of cheap undocumented laborers as a business decision, and maintain a detached stance when they are deported. This sentiment is aptly expressed by Joe's father following an INS visit to the family farm: "you always have work here. But I can't protect you from the border patrol...there's nothing I can do to help you...If you want to stay...that's up to you. We'd hate to lose you, but we'll manage somehow" (DeFelice, 2003, p. 110-111). Alvarez's novel also references this issue: although Tyler's parents feel guilty for "enabling a sad situation" for the Cruzes (p. 147), the protagonist informs us that it was necessary for the wellbeing of his family: "Even Dad has had to employ Mexicans without papers to keep his farm" (Alvarez, 2009, p. 187). Statements such as these are reminiscent of the earlier American perspective of immigrants as "capital" - a useful commodity for the benefit of the largely European American society.

Remaining physically within the fold is also represented as an inevitable part of life for Mexican immigrants in some of the novels; characters may go off to work or to war, but must always return - leaving permanently is not an option. Miguel's older brother, Gabriel would like to leave the mountain "just for a while, to see an ocean" but knows he must "come back here and go on like always" (Krumgold, 1953, p. 196). Gabriel implies that leaving the fold (or wishing to do so) is against the laws of nature: "You can't go around making wishes [to

leave]...gravity...pulls things together....everything that goes up must come down, and everybody's got to obey it" (p. 200-201). According to Christie's camp foreman, Mexicans are "only fit for field work...that's all they know how to do" (Whitney, 1954, p. 121). There are no other options for the immigrant workers in this scenario – they are at the mercy of their employers, with no choice but to remain in the fold.

Methods of narration and protagonist ethnicity also distance immigrants from mainstream American society. The majority of novels within this category give little or no voice to Mexican immigrants themselves with which to relay their own experiences: only Krumgold's (1953) novel offers a first person perspective of a Mexican immigrant protagonist. The remaining six texts employ the distancing literary technique of omniscient narration to convey (and comment upon) the thoughts, feelings, and actions of immigrant characters from the perspective of an outside (yet questionably neutral) narrator. Within these omnisciently narrated novels, only Taylor (1973) features a Mexican immigrant protagonist: the remaining five novels (Alvarez, 2009; Bishop, 1967; DeFelice, 2003; Olson, 1998; Whitney, 1954) offer European American protagonists who *include* immigrant characters within the story of their own experiences. Although I expected to see older publications position immigrant characters in these ways, it was surprising to see recent publications such as those by Alvarez (2009) and DeFelice (2003) largely convey the Mexican immigrant experience from the perspective of those other than the immigrants themselves – a phenomenon perhaps attributable to the controversy regarding issues of Mexican immigration in recent years.

Issues of *authenticity* also arise when considering authorship. Some concerned with the complex issue of authenticity debate the desirability (or even possibility) of an author writing from a perspective outside of their own cultural group or experience, asserting the need for

culturally conscious representations in children's literature (Bishop, 1990). Others allow for authorship beyond one's own sociocultural heritage, but call for authors to sit "at the table" of those about whom they may write (Woodson, 1998, p. 38). Still others express their desire (and perhaps even right) to author texts addressing issues and perspectives beyond their own culture in order to "mirror human experience," maintaining that they must always come "humbly to the page" to learn about others (Paterson, 1994, pp. 89-91). Although a thorough examination of the relation between the novels' authors to Mexican immigrant culture would be both fascinating and informative to the question of authenticity, I have chosen to narrow my focus for the purpose of this study to the recognition of the author's ethnicity as indicated in public documents such as websites and author biographies.

Novels within this category are primarily authored by European Americans: only the most recent publication (Alvarez, 2009) was written by a Latina (see *Table 7.8*). This suggests a possible association with perspectives of assimilation as unattainable for Mexican immigrants and European American authorship. However, the presence of Alvarez's (2009) novel in this category debunks the idea of a strict correlation between author ethnicity and ideology – a point further demonstrated over the course of this sample and across ideologies. Additionally, the publication range of these novels spans six decades – also refuting the possible assumption that European authorship – and exclusionary ideologies – are limited to earlier decades.

Representations of Ethnicity

Issues of ethnicity strongly underscore ideological conceptions of assimilation as unattainable. As noted by Warner & Srole (1945), those of dark skin and non-European heritage are often deemed essentially *unmeltable*, making assimilation an unstated yet "obvious" (Althusser, 1986) impossibility. Representations of ethnicity in the sample novels mirror those

previously seen in the work of historians and the entertainment media that establish and/or reinforce a selective tradition (Williams, 1977) regarding Mexican immigrants as distinct and often undesirable “others.” Within this perspective, those of Mexican heritage are represented as lazy, dirty, unintelligent, overly sexual, exotic/foreign, dishonest, and/or a potential threat to the wellbeing of mainstream American society. Additionally, Mexican immigrants are also represented as contented to remain segregated from others, and to assume a subordinate position in relationship to European Americans. In the following section, I will briefly discuss several issues associated with ethnicity in the novels that suggest an ideology of “natural” separation, including physical appearance, attitude or demeanor, language, and perceived integrity or intelligence.

Physical Appearance, Essentialization & Suggestions of Ancestry

Warner & Srole’s (1945) conception of dark-skinned, non European “unmeltables” continues to manifest in the physical descriptions of Mexican immigrants in the novels. Features such as dark hair, eye, and skin color are specifically referenced, and often contrasted with the lighter features of Anglo characters. Many of these descriptions also include adjectives with obvious or implied negative connotations: European American teenager Joe observes the migrant workers on his family’s New York farm to be “dark-skinned, dark-haired, raggedly dressed people with hats or bandanas” (DeFelice, 2003, p. 15). Sheep shearer Melchior is described as having a “dark face” and “little pointy beard,” evoking the traditional image of a devil (Krumgold, 1953, p. 133). Rene Alvarez has “gleaming dark eyes” and a “dark, shaggy head” (Bishop, 1967, p. 21). 14). Young Jose is “wiry” and “black-haired,” with a “sharp and bony” face (Taylor, 1973, p. 5): other characters are represented as “stubby” (Taylor, 1973, p. 100), “hulking” (Taylor, p. 113), or “scrawny” (Bishop, 1967, p. 14).

Whitney's (1954) text overtly articulates the conception of Mexican immigrants as dirty, dangerous, undesirable, and "problem people" through the words of Christie's Aunt Amelia: "it's not their ancestry...it's the dirt, the smells, the ignorance, the disease...Mexican boys hanging around on the street...girls with their flashy colors and loud laughs..." (p. 74-75). Notably, the townspeople do not consider providing more sanitary working and living conditions for the immigrants living in "that eyesore of a Mexican slum" (p. 39), nor paying them a reasonable wage for their labor. The solution to the "migrant problem" (p. 76) lies with the compliance of the Mexican immigrants to rules of segregation established by the European American townspeople: Mexican immigrants are to be mindful of their "place" by not appearing on the streets "until washed and dressed in clean clothes," showing "the Anglos what true courtesy could be" (Whitney, 1954, pp. 218-219).

The physical contrast of Mexican and European American characters is also articulated within this ideology – a tendency that diminishes in subsequent ideologies. European American characters are often shown to have a pleasing appearance with positive attributes such as "attractive" (Bishop, 1967, p. 32) or possessing "even, white teeth" (Bishop, 1967, p. 17). European Americans are also represented as having *lighter* features, contrasting with the darker features of Mexican immigrants, with "blonde," "bright," or "fair" hair (Olson, 1998, p. 13; Taylor, 1973, p. 69; Whitney, 1954, p. 29) and "startling blue" eyes (DeFelice, 2003, p. 5; Whitney, p. 29).

Some of the novels essentialize Mexican immigrants with the monolithic implication that they all look alike. Tyler notes that the three Mexican American girls on his family's farm "look a lot alike....very tanned with black hair and big dark eyes....like those dolls Aunt Roxie once gave Sara: one inside the other" (Alvarez, 2009, p. 43). The sisters share a family name, and he

refers to them collectively (rather than individually) as “the three Marias” (p. 117), considering it “ridiculous” that they are all named “Maria Something...even the cows without names get their very own ear-tag numbers” (p. 43). Joe’s friends see “three Mexican-looking guys” from a restaurant window, determining that they “all look alike” (DeFelice, 2003, p. 42). Joe responds to this essentialization by suggesting that European Americans may also appear similar to Mexicans: “Maybe we all look alike to them. Did you ever think of that?” (p. 42). However, he does not oppose the idea that all Mexican immigrants “look alike,” nor assert the unique individuality of persons of Mexican heritage; the disparaging comment is therefore accepted as an “obvious” fact, and allowed to remain unchallenged. Although somewhat didactic, Olson’s (1998) text also attempts to offer a counter to this essentialization: Macario tells Jeff that he is “tired of the American idea that all Mexicans look the same and talk the same or are lazy or good workers. We are all different people” (p. 85). However, as seen in DeFelice’s text, Jeff listens – but does not acknowledge the presence of this monolithic perspective.

Physical features of Mexican immigrant characters are occasionally linked to the suggestion of Native American or Spanish ancestry. European American protagonist Tyler (Alvarez, 2009) notes that the Mexican immigrants employed on his family’s Vermont farm have “brown skin...black hair” and “look like the American Indians in his history textbook” (p. 3).

Stereotypical representations of Native Americans as proud, untamed, or stoic occasionally surface in the texts when referencing possible indigenous ancestry: Whitney’s (1954) omniscient narrator observes that Rafael’s mother carries herself “in the erect, proud-headed manner characteristic of her people...her dark features had the high cheekbones of possible Indian ancestry” (p. 157). Jose’s friend, Giron is described as having a “sharp and bony,” “red-brown” face, with “blood” that was “Spanish and Indian” (Taylor, 1973, p. 4). Occasional references are

also made to the possibility of Spanish heritage, often considered a superior bloodline to that of Mexican as seen in Chapter 4. In *Fast Break* (Bishop, 1967), Rene's friend, Sam, observes his father to be an "impressive looking man" with "bushy white hair, snowy mustache and beard, and bright beady blue eyes....his sister had guessed that Rene came of Castillian stock rather than Indian parents. The background was aristocratic, no doubt of that" (p. 67).

Attitude & Demeanor

Representations of immigrant attitude and demeanor can also support the ideological conception of assimilation as unattainable. Characters of Mexican heritage are often represented as happy, contented, quick-tempered, cocky, or uncooperative in relationship to their Anglo peers. In a manner reminiscent of the happy, contented slave discussed by Broderick in her landmark work, *Image of the Black* (1973), Krumgold (1953) describes the sheep-shearing Marquez brothers as "always happy," despite their constant, backbreaking labor (p. 133). Christie, protagonist of *A Long Time Coming*, observes that "these people of Mexican descent were naturally happy and gay," despite living in squalid conditions on the family farm (Whitney, 1954, p. 251). Bishop (1967) also presents a contented (yet mistreated) Mexican immigrant character, Rene, as "delighted with each and every one" of his racist teammates, despite his team's expressed intention to "break" him to "team harness" (Bishop, 1967, pp. 184-185).

To further indicate contentment, Mexican immigrant characters often smile, grin, and speak in segments of emergent English in a manner similar to earlier African American and Native American representations in children's literature, as seen in the simple-minded, monosyllabic, grunting Indians of Brink's *Caddie Woodlawn* (1935). In Olson's *Joyride* (1998), a Mexican migrant worker "grinned" and "gave several quick nods" in response to an admonition by the farm owner's daughter, Alexa to lighten the load of berries per container. Jeff,

the European American protagonist, later notes that “the Mexican workers...did a lot of grinning and smiling...he’d decided it was their way of responding when they didn’t understand...” (p. 109).

Mexican immigrants are also described as having a quick temper, cocky attitude, or oppositional disposition - especially if they challenge Anglo superiority. Whitney’s (1954) omniscient narrator describes feisty runaway teen Aurora as “prickly” (p. 46) and immature, “behaving like a little girl” (p. 21) when Christie accompanied her back to the agricultural labor camp. Christie generalizes Aurora’s assertive disposition to all Mexican immigrants as she also observes young Lopez to have “the quick temper of the Latin...proud, as all his people are” when retaliating against a European American child’s bullying (Whitney, 1954, p. 91). In *Fast Break* (Bishop, 1967), Rene Alvarez’s European American teammates are threatened by his skill on the basketball court, calling him names such as “little Showboat” (p. 185), “cock of the walk” (p. 40), and “bantam rooster...with a chip on his shoulder” (Bishop, p. 14). Teammate Miller further supports these descriptions by suggesting that Rene is not a team player because he “won’t work with the team” or “try to learn” – Rene therefore won’t bend to expectations, and “can’t carry his weight” (p. 173). As seen in Chapter 4, this representation of Mexican characters as violent and aggressive continues to be perpetuated in films for children: the popular film, *Beverly Hills Chihuahua* (Gosnell, 2008) even suggests “Mexican” to be *synonymous* with aggressive behavior as a feisty little dog threatens to “go all kinds of Mexican” on another character in order to teach him a lesson.

Intelligence & Integrity

Some representations within this ideology adhere to the stereotype of Mexican immigrants as ignorant, simpleminded, uneducated, or unskilled. Young Lopez is presumed

incapable of understanding the “subtleties” (Whitney, 1954, p. 90) of his racist mistreatment at the hands of local boys. Rene Alvarez is unconcerned about his potentially contested U.S. citizenship, choosing not to worry about “matters too complex for him to understand” (Bishop, 1967, p. 152), and fails to understand the rules of American basketball, telling his teammates that things are “so complicated in this country” (Bishop, 1967, p. 58). Jeff’s father also suggests that Mexican immigrants cannot understand American sports as his son contemplates taking them to his tennis competition: “What are you thinking? The Mexicans won’t even know what’s going on” (Olson, 1998, p. 187). Even facial expressions can suggest a lack of mental sharpness or focus: Joe observes Luisa’s “long, dark braid” and “daydreamy expression” (DeFelice, 2003, p. 44).

Mexican immigrants are also represented as characters of questionable integrity. As seen in previous chapters, historians and the entertainment media frequently represent those of Mexican heritage as dishonest (thieves, gangs, illegal immigrants), immoral (harlots, Latin lovers) or slovenly (lazy, drunken), and often use the image of the bandit to suggest criminality or dishonesty. Krumgold’s novel suggests banditry to be a natural part of Mexican character and history: Miguel and his friends play a game of “The Bandits Robbing Schaeffer’s Drugstore” (Krumgold, 1953, p. 37); shearer “Johnny” asks Miguel what his “bandit of a father” pays him to help with the sheep (p. 135). The character of Giron in Taylor’s *Maldonado Miracle* (1973) also displays trickery and dishonesty, reminiscent of the lovable (but sneaky) bandits of television and film such as Frito Bandito or Speedy Gonzalez: Giron teaches young Jose to use items in a store such as an electric razor, then leave without buying them: “It’s a good game...to see how many things are free in this country” (Taylor, 1973, p. 81). Illegal immigrants are also presented as criminals who “sneak” into the country: “Tyler knows it’s not Mari’s fault that her parents

snuck her into this country. He doesn't like being mean to her, but he also doesn't want to be friends with someone who is breaking the law" (Alvarez, 2009, p. 77).

Other novels suggest the perceived thievery, criminality, and dishonesty of Mexican immigrant characters to be a threat to the wellbeing of the community, alluding to Chavez's (2008) Latino threat narrative. A local cab driver informs Christie that the Mexican migrant workers are untrustworthy and dishonest: "they [immigrants] work the crops...here today, gone tomorrow, and the silverware with 'em, if you don't watch out" (Whitney, 1953, p. 27); "Vandalism goes on constantly...the trouble stems from that ...Mexican slum," Christie's Aunt Amelia assumes (p. 39). Characters in Olson's novel, *Joyride* (1998) overtly articulate contemporary concerns regarding Mexican immigrants in the United States: Jeff's father gives him "speeches" about the "rising number of Mexicans in the police reports...on welfare...in the schools...and unionizing against farmers" (Olson, p. 16); friend Danny's father also contributes to the threat narrative: "everyone knows wetbacks will steal you blind...next thing you know, they'll be after my job" (p. 55).

Issues of Language

The approach to language in the novels also reinforces an ideology of assimilation as unattainable. Attitudes expressed through characters or narration suggests the Spanish language to be an insurmountable "barrier" (Whitney, 1954, p.95) to full membership in an English-speaking European American society. Anglo missionary Marge suggests language to be the greatest of many limitations for Mexican immigrants: "All their lives, the language barrier is the biggest one against them" (p. 95). However, Marge states that even learning to speak English is not enough – an immigrant must also use English for their personal, internal thoughts: "Even when they learn the language, most of them don't learn it young enough to be able to *think* in

English.” Ironically, despite the appalling conditions under which the agricultural workers live, Christie’s primary observation of the camp children relates to language: “these children...haven’t been taught to speak English,” she notes following a rare visit (p. 130). Marge also reiterates this obvious deficit, noting that “some of these children are third- and fourth-generation Americans and they can’t speak English” (pp. 94-95), yet she does not consider that the immigrant families are not able to learn the language of a society with which they are never allowed to associate. Other texts indicate a deficit perspective regarding language: Tony claims that the Mexican immigrant workers on his family farm “don’t belong here. They don’t even talk English” (DeFelice, 2003, p. 141). Jeff’s father suggests that immigrants are unwilling to learn English (or assimilate): “Why don’t these people learn English? If I went to Mexico, I’d have to learn Spanish” (Olson, 1998, p. 32). Notably, issues of literacy are not mentioned in this or other texts with ideologies of assimilation as unattainable; it is implicitly understood to be less important that immigrants read and write – but they must speak appropriately in order to communicate with those of the dominant culture.

Improper pronunciation and use of English grammar may also suggest the “unmeltability” of Mexican immigrants. In a similar manner to the often stereotypical representations of Mexican characters in television and film, some novels feature characters that incorrectly use or mispronounce English words – a technique of “othering” also common for African Americans. Miguel narrates Krumgold’s novel with improper English grammar: “I could never have got up by myself” (1953, p. 117). Aurora greets her mother upon returning to the camp: “There is the mama!” (Whitney, 1954, p. 24). Jose asks to talk with a priest: “Speak the padre” (Taylor, 1973, p. 156). Macario describes his employer, Mr. Hampton, as “very busy...making everything to work” (Olson, 1998, p. 23). “Water is no free!” Miguel’s mother says (Murphy, 2002, p. 15); “I

love you read me” she later tells him (p. 40). Manuel tells Joe that he keeps trying to call a friend, “but she is no answer” (DeFelice, 2003, p. 182).

A few characters speak in an exaggerated, almost stereotypical manner reminiscent of television and film characters such as Speedy Gonzales: “Mees! Mees!” the camp children call as they “scurried out to surround Marge” (Whitney, p. 103); “Mees Tichur” a young girl later calls Christie (p. 248). Others speak emergent English: Macario tells Jeff that “most of time, he [Mr. Hampton] is talking to the telephone...” (Olson, 1998, p. 23). Although inaccurate use of grammar and articulation may indeed be common in English language learners, these few representations of immigrant speech may serve to reinforce the implicit ideology that they are less intelligent, incapable of learning or successfully mastering the English language, deficient due to limited English proficiency, and therefore ultimately separated from mainstream American society.

As evident in theories of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), issues of power exist at the intersection of cultures; those of the dominant culture often judge the extent to which an immigrant may be deemed assimilated, as well as whose stories or histories are included in the cultural mix. In a few of the novels, English proficiency – with little trace of Spanish inflection – often wins the explicit approval and favor of European Americans: Whitney’s narrator observes Mrs. Olivera to speak “clearly, without the slightest Spanish accent” (p. 160). Sam notes Rene to speak English “flawlessly,” despite being “Mexican born and reared” (p. 22). However, even speaking English well isn’t always enough for full societal membership – Sam later leads the team campaign to put the skilled, talented youth “in his place.” Ironically, Bishop refers to Rene as a *paisano*, but uses the term inaccurately: the term does not mean “roadrunner” in the Spanish language, as suggested by Bishop, but “compatriot, or fellow countryman” (Merriam-Webster,

2003, p. 200): Rene's experience as a "member" of the European American team is far from that of a "fellow countryman" – the talented youth is ostracized by his teammates and coach for drawing the crowd's attention away from the European American players. Mrs. Olivera also continues to remain on the outside of European American society; despite her English skills, the townspeople limit the participation of all Mexican immigrants in the life of the community.

Some novels within the ideology of assimilation as unattainable display a disrespectful or patronizing approach to the Spanish language by using potentially derogatory descriptive terms. Those speaking Spanish are sometimes described as "babbling" (Olson, 1998, p. 47), "chattering" (Whitney, 1954, p. 82), or "shrilling" (Whitney, 1954, p. 83). Terms such as these carry a possibly negative and demeaning connotation: "babbling" and "chattering" each suggest meaningless, trivial, and implicitly annoying sounds that are incomprehensible (and foreign) to English listeners. "Shrilling" suggests the Spanish language to be sharp or harsh (to the ears of English speakers), standing in contrast to the implicitly smoother English language – an idea countered in later descriptions of the Spanish language in novels falling within other ideologies of assimilation. Mexican immigrants are also referenced as speaking rapidly, expressively and therefore unintelligibly in some of the novels: Joe observes Luisa speaking in "rapid Spanish" (DeFelice, 2003, p. 95); Santiago also tells a story in "rapid-fire Spanish...using his hands in time with his voice" (Olson, 1998, p. 119). Alexa Hampton claims that she cannot understand Mexican immigrants "when they get going that fast" (Olson, 1998, p. 119).

From a literary standpoint, the means by which the Spanish language is represented or incorporated into the English text may also reflect how Mexican immigrants are regarded or positioned in relation to European American society. Novels with ideologies of assimilation as unattainable approach language in a limited and separating manner: some novels minimize the

Spanish language (and culture) by including only a few words into the text; others inform readers when Spanish is spoken, but do not allow characters to actually speak; still others omit Spanish entirely. Several of the novels feature narrators who inform readers when Spanish is spoken, but include few (or no) actual Spanish words: Krumgold's narrator tells readers that Miguel's grandfather "started to talk...in Spanish, fast, with a stern face" (p. 58), then proceeds to tell us what he said in English. Whitney's narrator also informs readers when characters are speaking Spanish with phrases such as "explaining in Spanish," but includes no Spanish words at all in the text (1954, p. 82). Taylor's (1973) novel also includes a small handful of Spanish words such as "amigo" and "Americano" (though the protagonist speaks limited English); the narrator alerts readers when a character is speaking in Spanish. Bishop (1967) largely omits the Spanish language from his text: none of the Mexican immigrant characters speak Spanish in the novel, despite their recent immigrant status: only the omniscient narrator is allowed to use a few Spanish words to describe foods (mole) or characters (Rene – "paisano").

A few of novels use the Spanish language incorrectly. The treatment of a culture's language in a text – including attention to specific details related to that language - is often indicative of how the culture is valued and viewed in relationship to the dominant culture and language. As previously noted, Bishop (1967) uses the term "paisano" incorrectly, as well as the word "mole" (not a meat, but a chocolate-based *sauce*). The word "sabbe" is also misspelled – the correct phrase should be "quién sabe" – meaning "who knows" (Bishop, p. 43). Taylor (1973) also commits grammatical errors with the Spanish language: "senor" is frequently written omitting the tilde (señor is correct), and "Americano" is inconsistently capitalized. Krumgold neglects details specific to the Spanish language such as proper accenting (*vámonos*, not *vamonos*), and uses Spanish words in improper context, such as "padre" (used in reference to

clergy) instead of “papá” when referring to a family member. Krumgold also includes other Spanish words in an incorrect manner: the novel’s narrator describes sharecropping as “a way of working called *partido*” (p. 58), yet Merriam-Webster’s *Spanish–English Dictionary* defines this term as “game,” “match,” or a “political party” (Merriam-Webster, 2003, p. 203).

Although incorrect Spanish grammar does not necessarily imply ideology in a text, there appears to be a correlation in the sample novels: texts with language errors such as these are European American authored, omnisciently narrated (with the exception of Krumgold), and fall within ideologies of assimilation as unattainable (or conformity). As we will see in later discussions, novels with ideologies of assimilation as adaptation/bicultural practice or hybridity tend to represent Mexican immigrants in a more *culturally conscious* (Sims, 1982) manner that attends to details of language – regardless of author ethnicity. Novels in these latter categories also more frequently employ first person narration, giving greater voice to Mexican immigrant characters.

Issues of Power and Position: Cultural Superiority, Racism, & Anglo Benevolence

American (and specifically European American) culture is often represented as the naturally desirable standard to which all should aspire: Jose admires a European American boy in the migrant camp where he works while searching for his father in the United States: “Jose sat on the edge of the bed [in the boy’s room], smiling and nodding, touching something now and then...he now thought he’d like to have white skin and red hair...speak English and live in a house” (Taylor, 1973, p. 73). Miguel’s family sings American hymns in English, despite their complete isolation in the mountains of New Mexico: “it was good, singing hymns. They all sounded so important...more important...than ‘On Top of Old Smoky,’ which everyone can understand and is all right for every day” (Krumgold, 1953, p.111). Macario asks Jeff about his

“important” tennis competition, despite the fact that his family back in Mexico is suffering from a drought on their farm (Olson, 1998, p. 72). And as we will see later in this chapter, emulating Anglo language can also be viewed as a source of pride: Mexican immigrant children Luisa and Gilberto are “proud and happy” to take English lessons from European American teacher Ginny each week (Olson, 1998, p. 94).

Issues of Racism: Epithets, Nicknames, and Minimization

Issues of racism are especially evident in texts with perspectives of immigrants as “unmeltable” others. Some of the novels include ethnic epithets and essentializing insults regarding Mexican immigrants. Typically levied by European American characters, these comments serve to establish or highlight an unequal relationship between those of Mexican heritage and others in the texts, and situate Mexican immigrants as marginalized, disadvantaged, oppressed and/or mistreated. Some epithets or comments in the novels distinguish those of Mexican heritage according to their diet, such as the term *beaner* (Olson, 1998, p. 7); others refer to appearance or ethnic group, such as *greaser* and *spic* a slang term derived from “Hispanic” (DeFelice 2003, pp 13-14). Still others, such as “wetback” (Olson, 1998, p. 130; Taylor, 1973, p. 12) refer to legal status. Notably, ethnic epithets regarding Mexican immigrants do not appear in novels prior to 1970: characters are instead described in more specific and disparaging ways – and with greater detail.

Although more common in novels with ideologies of conformity, a few novels within this category also contain insults and epithets regarding European Americans that reinforce the separation (and possible animosity) regarding Mexican immigrants and their Anglo counterparts. These epithets occur in different contexts: some are directed toward European Americans by Mexican immigrants; others are directed toward characters of Mexican heritage by *other*

Mexican immigrant characters that perceive them to be disloyal to Mexican culture. In some instances, European Americans use epithets in a fond, self effacing manner in reference to themselves or other European American characters. The most common derogatory term used for European Americans (either by Mexican American characters or an omniscient narrator) is *gringo* – a Spanish slang term used to identify foreigners. However, *gringo* can also carry a strongly “disparaging” connotation, especially when used in reference to Mexican immigrant characters who “associate or assimilate into foreign (and particularly U.S.) society and culture” (American Heritage Dictionary, 2009, np). This latter connotation is especially evident in books with ideologies of conformity focused upon the Chicano Movement, particularly those by Summers (1969) and Colman (1973); gringos are not only European Americans in these novels, but also Mexican immigrant characters perceived to be “sellouts” to the materialism of American culture (Summers, 1969, p. 21).

Texts within an ideology of unattainability use the term *gringo* sparingly, but those that include the term do so in various ways. Some feature immigrant characters using the word in a playful, fond, or affectionate manner to describe their European American friends or employers: Tyler’s Spanish teacher refers to her European American spouse as her “gringo” (Alvarez, 2009, p. 165); immigrant agricultural workers laugh at Jeff’s “gringo clothes” (Olson, 1998, p. 10). Others such as DeFelice (2003) suggest a more derogatory connotation: Joe is concerned that the immigrant men are “laughing at how stupid I looked with my *gringo* face all sunburned” (p. 38). Notably, novels with the strongest suggestions of ethnic separation and “unmeltability” (e.g. Bishop, 1967; Krungold, 1953; Whitney, 1954) do not use the term *gringo* at all: the limited interactions between European American and Mexican immigrant characters in these novels do not allow for relationships between ethnicities – especially not for playful interchanges.

Additionally, European American characters in these novels do not consider (or care) how they are perceived by Mexican immigrants; the immigrant characters are of no importance to their daily lives beyond how they may affect or disrupt the status quo.

Although Americanized names and nicknames are typically assigned to immigrant characters by European Americans, I was interested to see that characters in the unattainable category do this to themselves and others within Mexican culture. Jose introduces himself to a European American boy as “Jose Maldonado,” then follows with an Americanized version of his already short name - “Joe” (Taylor, p. 72); although not explicitly stated, it is implied that Jose felt it necessary to translate his name into an Anglo name to establish a common bond (or perhaps a means of acceptance) with the boy. Characters of Mexican heritage in Krumgold’s (1953) novel also choose to Americanize their own names and the names of others: despite the fact that Miguel’s sheepherding family lives an isolated life in the mountains of New Mexico with no virtually no European American contact, Miguel’s sister often calls him “Mike,” and his father calls him “Mikey” (p. 155). Miguel refers to his younger brother, Pedro, as “Pete” (p. 151), and occasionally calls his older brother, Gabriel “Gabby” (p. 206). The family even assigns Americanized names to the Mexican immigrants who annually help with the shearing: “one is Juan, who we call Johnny....the other is Salvador, who we call “Salph” (p. 133). The family’s use of European American names (even though they do not participate in mainstream American society) suggests a perception of European American culture as superior or more desirable than Mexican heritage. However, as we will see in subsequent ideologies, characters may also choose Americanized names for purposes of adaptation or cultural identity, although they use (and often prefer) their Mexican names when associating with others within their home culture.

Characters in some of the novels excuse racism by claiming to mean no harm: Coach Preston tells his team (but not immigrant character Rene) that he doesn't "mean any insinuation against his race" when he calls Rene a "skinny little Mexican kid...we welcome all colors here, even the two Chinese boys on the B team" (Bishop, 1967, p. 180); Sam mocks Rene's short stature, but tells Rene when challenged that "we don't have stuff like that [racism] at Riverside - and you know it" (p. 13). Other texts suggest that characters should respond to acts of racism by tolerating or ignoring the behaviors: "Most of the times, you just live with it, pretend it is not there," Marcario tells Jeff following a rash of racial epithets from local townspeople (Olson, 1998, pp.130-131). DeFelice's (2003) novel also minimizes (and excuses) acts of ethnic hatred: "Some drunken fool took a blind shot through the wall at a migrant camp and killed one of the workers in his sleep...there were incidents of harassment all over this area...it died down after a while" (p. 69). This sort of response is also typical of many books about African Americans and other minority groups – racism is represented as poor behavior on the part of one or a few, rather than a structural and institutional issue. According to Hade, "silence is the oxygen of racism and bigotry" (Hade, 1997, p. 237); the lack of response to these ideas therefore allows them to remain unchallenged.

Anglo Benevolence

Many of the novels position European American characters with greater advantage or authority over those of Mexican heritage. European American characters often act as "Anglo benefactors" to needy (and grateful) families, assisting implicitly disadvantaged or powerless Mexican immigrant characters who are unable to solve their own problems with employment, immigration, or the acquisition of basic necessities. Some share used clothing or unwanted possessions: Tyler's aunt gives clothing to the Cruz family: "Did you see their little faces when

they saw that bag of clothes?” (Alvarez, 2009, p. 114). Joe gave the immigrant children (housed in trailers “out back”) an “old swing set” that he and his siblings “had outgrown” (DeFelice, 2003, p. 19). Others help in other ways: Jeff’s mother works with Mexican immigrant children who look at her with “big, trusting brown eyes” (Olson, 1998, p. 19). European American characters are also positioned as “saviors”: Tyler’s family hires “a free lawyer from Burlington” who wants to “defend the rights of oppressed people from the impoverished Americas” (Alvarez, 2009, p. 160). Joe acts as a hero, feeling that no one else could perform the dramatic rescue of migrant worker Luisa following her pickup by the INS: “I had to do something...it’s me, or nobody” (DeFelice, 2003, p. 184).

Mexican immigrants are sometimes regarded from a perspective reminiscent of benevolent slave ownership. Olson’s (1998) novel particularly demonstrates this mentality: Alexa Hampton boasts that their strawberry farm’s Mexican immigrant workers are afforded many privileges and treated well: “some of *these people* are like family...they’ve been to our birthday parties and weddings....taught me to play soccer...named their babies for my dad and my grandpa...” (Olson, 1998, p. 31). Mrs. Hampton also refers to the immigrants as “these people,” assuring a local townspeople that “they are honest folks trying to earn a decent living” (p. 55). However, the “privileges” afforded Mexican immigrants in the novel are tainted by the power relationship between employer and worker: immigrants are “allowed” to participate in the activities of the owners, to teach the owner’s children things they wish to know (soccer), and to extend gratitude by naming their own children after their benefactors – a scenario that strongly recalls the era of African American slavery in the United States. The Hamptons also view themselves as benevolent to lesser-positioned, marginalized persons in their white collar, professional occupations: Mrs. Hampton is described as an elementary teaching who works with

“cute little Mexican children”; Mr. Hampton, a local dentist, graciously includes a “number of black and Hispanic patients” in his practice (p. 19). I was interested to see that European American author Olson was a berry farmer – and employing Mexican immigrants - at the time of this novel’s publication.

DeFelice’s (2003) novel also suggests the positioning of immigrants as slaves with direct reference to the term: Joe complains when asked to help on the farm that none of his friends “have to do slave labor”; this angers his mother, who responds that “we certainly don’t treat our workers like slaves” (p. 21). However, the family does not provide bathroom facilities near the fields, and when young Luisa is violently attacked by bees while squatting to urinate in the fields, Joe’s mother simply tells the girl that “from now on, when you go through the hedgerows you’ll have to be extra careful, okay?” The family later discusses “how lucky Luisa was that Mom was there and knew what to do” (p.54), reinforcing the family’s position as caretakers for the less fortunate (and perhaps less capable) immigrants.

Whitney (1954), however, offers perhaps the most egregious images of Anglo benevolence (and superiority) regarding Mexican migrant families: “Brown-eyed little Mexican-Americans are fascinated by pretty blond Anglo ladies...you can teach them some English words. They’ll love it,” missionary Marge tells young owner, Christie (p. 94). It is the responsibility of European Americans to teach Mexican immigrants how to be “American”: “During all their generations in this country, no one has gone to the trouble to teach these people about flies and disease carriers. How can they learn American ways if no one shows them anything?” the local townspeople ask (p. 102). If Anglos do not teach Mexicans how to live, they will simply “grow up confused” and “not always know what they are” (p. 191). Comments such as these, although possibly construed as helpfulness and generosity, implicitly suggest an attitude

of condescending paternalism. As we will see, novels with ideologies of assimilation as adaptation and/or hybridity feature immigrant characters who take it upon themselves to sort out their own issues of identity, rather than waiting for others (including those of European American culture) to do this for them.

Representations of Socioeconomic Status

Representations of socioeconomic status also contribute to ideologies of assimilation as unattainable in the texts. Descriptions of the occupations and living conditions of the novel's characters, as well as other circumstances such as educational level or reliance upon public assistance often reveal how immigrant characters are positioned in relation to those of European American culture. The types of occupations assigned to both Mexican immigrant and European American characters in the novels reveal a tremendous difference in the representation of these groups: Mexican immigrant characters are largely represented as blue collar or manual laborers – a trend that continues across the entire sample (see *Table 7.4*). Agricultural farm workers occur most frequently within this category, appearing in all but two of novels: Krumgold's (1953) characters are shepherds; Bishop's (1967) immigrant family is headed by a Bracero silversmith. In contrast, European American characters are overwhelmingly white collar and professional (see *Table 7.5*): four of the seven novels in this category feature European American families as owners of agricultural farms employing Mexican immigrants (Alvarez, 2009; DeFelice, 2003; Olson, 1998; Whitney, 1954). Other European American occupations include judge, attorney, dentist, minister, ranger, and police officer: females adhere largely to traditional roles such as teachers, housewives, or missionaries (Whitney, 1954). Notably, all of the above occupations place European American characters in a position of authority over Mexican immigrants: judges, attorneys, and police officers assist with issues of legal status; the Ranger of "U.S. Hill" allows

access to grazing fields (Krumgold, 1953, p. 232); minister Alan Bennett seeks to solve the “migrant problem,” though admittedly for the benefit of the townspeople, not the Mexican immigrants (Whitney, 1954, p. 76). European American teachers, missionaries, and medical providers also try to “help” the less fortunate immigrant children of their respective community.

Although housing arrangements across the sample vary, Mexican immigrants generally live in substandard or lesser conditions in comparison to their European American counterparts (see *Table 7.6*). Novels in the ideological category of assimilation as unattainable offer particularly extreme examples of this difference: five of the seven novels feature immigrant families living in agricultural labor camp housing provided by their European American employers (Alvarez, 2009; DeFelice, 2003; Olson, 1998; Taylor, 1973, Whitney, 1954). The conditions of this housing improves with date of publication, ranging from Whitney’s (1954) barrack style quarters with “no hot water” (p. 20) to Alvarez’s (2009) “trailers” (p. 91) with full utilities placed at the back of the property: however these improvements do not necessarily imply the same degree of progress regarding how immigrant characters are viewed (and sometimes treated) by their European American employers, as evidenced in the attitudes expressed toward Luisa’s need for a bathroom out in the fields in DeFelice’s (2003) text. Krumgold’s novel also locates immigrants in a substandard setting: Miguel’s shepherding family lives in a small house with no running water along an “irrigation ditch” in a remote, mountainous “village” (Krumgold, 1953, p. 29). As previously mentioned, Bishop’s (1967) novel offers an exception to this trend: Rene and his father live in a middle class home and community, a fact that comes as a surprise to protagonist Sam, who ponders via an omniscient narrator that “few youths of Mexican ancestry he knew” came from “wealthy homes” (p. 29).

Lack of education is also represented as a separating (and limiting) socioeconomic issue for Mexican immigrants. Characters are often presented as less educated than their European American peers: Rene Alvarez “rather proudly” tells his high school peers that “this is only my third year of school” (Bishop, p. 30). Miguel reflects on the unimportance of making good grades in school to his life as a shepherd, noting that he “never found it made so much difference from one day to the next what kind of letter you had on the [report] card” (Krumgold, 1953, p. 14). Post secondary education is not suggested as an option for Mexican immigrant characters in any of the novels with ideologies of assimilation as unattainable: although Miguel’s brother, Gabriel is drafted, no mention is made of educational opportunities available to him during his military service. Whitney’s novel overtly states that education is unnecessary for Mexican immigrants due to their social station and role within society, suggesting a Marxist perspective of labor and power: “what would you be educating them for?” asks local minister Bennett. “These people are working at the level at which they are *needed*” (1954, p. 68). Ideological statements such as these, both surface and underlying (Hollindale, 1992) reinforce the separation (both natural and imposed) of Mexican immigrants from mainstream society.

In contrast, a few Mexican immigrant characters aspire to improve their lot through education or English language skills despite their transitory lives from camp to camp; “I don’t want to work like this all my life...in one school in Texas, I learn about computers” Luisa tells European American friend Joe (DeFelice, p. 95). Another camp worker is “proud and happy” to study with “the lady” who comes out to the farm for “English lessons” so he can “get to be better job. Bigger, more important” (DeFelice, p. 94). However, these portrayals are rare within this ideology: most are resigned to (or content with) their destiny as manual laborers, their limited

opportunities to change their lives, and/or their position beneath their European American employers.

In addition to Whitney's (1954) text, other novels also suggest Mexican immigrants to be a work force for others - and particularly well-suited to field work or manual labor. In a similar manner to the views expressed by McWhirter (1884) regarding the fitness of African Americans for field labor, farm owner Mrs. Hampton tells Jeff that Mexican immigrants are well suited for agricultural work: "...their background...makes a difference. Those from the mountain areas of Jalisco...handle ladders well. The people from Guanajuato...are used to field crops" (Olson, 1998, p. 135). Alexa Hampton furthers this idea of Mexicans as economic capital: "We only need three Mexicans per acre...that's a compliment. They're good pickers...it takes five American adults to pick the same acre...that's hardly racist" (Olson, p. 31). By this latter statement, Alexa suggests that her family employs the more productive Mexican immigrant workers over (European) "American" workers, but does not discriminate against the immigrants. However, the family may not be "racist" in its hiring practices, but it disregards the poverty and homelessness of many of their immigrant workers: Carmen and Enrique Gómez are allowed to "sleep in their car someplace on the property" as long as they are "parked on Bethel Road every morning" before the other pickers arrive (p. 107). As previously seen in the Pederson family's (DeFelice, 2003) lack of attention to the conditions under which their agricultural laborers work when young Luisa is stung while squatting in the fields to urinate, Mexican immigrants are often viewed essentially as uneducated, poorly compensated workers, and given only as much as is needed for productive labor. Notably, Alexa implies that the Mexican immigrant employees are not "American," perhaps due to their assumed status as migrant laborers, although this is not stated in the text.

Representations of Gender

Physical descriptions of females in some of the novels mirror the essentializing (and often demeaning) television and film representations of Mexican women as promiscuous harlots or flamboyant and feisty spitfires, and underscore the superficial and subservient role of women in a patriarchal society. Women are described (and valued) in terms of physical beauty and implicit sexuality: rebellious runaway Aurora has “big, dark eyes” and “thick black hair” worn “in a pompadour,” in contrast to the “wisp of fair hair” worn by European American Christie (Whitney, 1954, pp. 9-14); Aurora dresses colorfully, looking “gay and a little coquettish” (p. 270). Rene’s sister Janet was “all female charm in flaming red” (Bishop, 1967, p. 128). Christie references the spitfire stereotype in her assessment of the immigrant women in her camp: “they’re dragons for sure, these Mexican mamas!” (Whitney, 1954, p. 158).

However, most women in this group’s texts remain nondescriptly in the background (or completely invisible), silently maintaining roles that align with patriarchal expectations as they cook, raise children, keep house, and serve their men. These characters have few (if any) lines, and their feelings and perspectives are generally not relayed in the text: Miguel’s mother and sisters “wait to eat until after the men finish, and so do the children” (Krumgold, 1953, p. 153); an unnamed, homeless immigrant woman offers European American protagonist Jeff a hot tortilla from her “small propane stove” (Olson, 1998, p. 104). Women are also portrayed as incapable of caring for themselves: “Manuel feels very responsible for Luisa, because she’s... a girl” (DeFelice, 2003, p. 55).

Alvarez offers the only glimpse of deviation from traditional gender roles within this category: Mr. Cruz feels that his family would be happier in Mexico, but he also has dreams for his daughters, hoping for them “to study and become professionals and live in the United States”

(2009, p. 314). His daughter Mari also exhibits assertiveness in her bold letter to the President of the United States asking for permission to stay in America, regardless of her family's legal status: "we are all citizens of one planet...Long live the United States of the World!" (Alvarez, 2009, p. 72). However, Alvarez also inserts some currently controversial beliefs regarding immigration policy into Mari's letters: her sentiments suggest that it is the compassionate duty of the United States to allow all into the country that may need or want to be here, regardless of the impact this may have on the United States – an unpopular perspective with those such as Huntington (2004) who favor tougher immigration laws.

Physical descriptions of Mexican immigrant males in some of the novels also align with stereotypical representations seen in the entertainment media such as that of the Latin lover: Rene is very popular "among the girls...so handsome, so courtly, so graceful," especially when wearing his "elaborate" dance costume with "tight-fitting breeches" (Bishop, 1967, p. 128). Whitney's (1954) novel casts the boys from the migrant camp as potentially dangerous sexual predators: the townspeople admonish all Mexican male youth not to lurk "suspiciously" on the streets, as they make the (European American) women uncomfortable. Mexican males are also distinguished as being of short stature: basketball player Rene is described as a "slight," "scrawny," "human edition of a paisano, or road runner," who appears to be "right out of Little League" (Bishop, 1967, pp. 6-12). Joe notes that agricultural worker Manuel "wasn't tall...in a wiry kind of way ...most of the guys were shorter" (DeFelice, 2003, pp. 40-45). In contrast, European Americans are described as "tall" (Taylor, 1973, p. 93) and "rangy" (Bishop, 1967, p. 22). In the following section, I will examine representations and issues of story in other sample novels that suggest an ideological perspective of assimilation as *possible* – rather than impossible – for Mexican immigrants.

“Sellout” or Surrender: Assimilation as Conformity

The second category I will discuss includes novels with an overarching ideological perspective of assimilation as *conformity* to European American society. Although these novels bear overtones of “unmeltability” and natural separation as seen within the previous ideology, they are placed within the present grouping due to their implication that assimilation is *possible* (though not always desirable) for immigrants through conformity to European American culture. One fourth of the sample novels (8 of 32) fall within this category: *You Can’t Make It by Bus* (Summers, 1969), *Chicano Girl* (Colman, 1973), *Juanita Fights the School Board* (Velásquez, 1994), *Joaquin Strikes Back* (McGinley, 1998), *Miguel Lost and Found* (Murphy, 2002), *What the Moon Saw* (Resau, 2006), *The Perfect Distance* (Whitney, 2005), and *Next to Mexico* (Nails, 2008). Surprisingly, the majority of these novels, published from 1994-2008, occur well after the multicultural movement began: only Colman’s (1973) and Summers’ (1969) texts - published during the Chicano Movement (1960s-1970s) - occur before this period (see *Table 7.9*). The novels within this ideology are divided into two general groups based upon their cultural perspective: those that implicitly *favor* the emulation of European American culture for Mexican immigrants (McGinley, Murphy, Nails, Whitney, Velásquez) and those that *reject* conformity and *vilify* European American culture (Colman, Resau, Summers).

The first group of novels implies conformity to European American society to be an obvious and desirable way of living in the United States. Strongly related to the historical ideas of *e pluribus unum* and the *Americanization* theory, novels with this first perspective suggest conformity to European American culture - and the subsequent rejection or minimization of Mexican culture - to be necessary and/or desirable for successful life within the United States. Novels with this perspective limit or omit Spanish words and phrases from the text: immigrant

characters and their families minimize their affiliation with Mexican culture, choosing instead to eat American foods, keep European American friends, and to practice few Mexican cultural traditions. Gender roles remain traditional (women as domestic caretakers, men as breadwinners), and material gain or socioeconomic success is equated with (attributed to) assimilation – or emulation of Anglo culture - and fulfillment of the “American Dream.” Finally, racism is viewed as an inevitable, essentially unchangeable fact of life to be accepted and endured; relationships with European Americans, especially those in positions of authority, are implicitly deferential, with the responsibility of playing by the hegemonic rules falling upon the shoulders of the immigrant.

McGinley’s (1998) *Joaquin Strikes Back* offers an example of this ideological perspective. Choosing not to challenge or resist the “mean and unfair” ethnic epithets and racist behaviors levied by Joaquin’s European American soccer coach in California, the Lopez family makes a fresh start in Wisconsin following a job transfer (p. 49). Joaquin’s family exclusively speaks flawless English in the novel - both at home and in the community. The omnisciently narrated, European American-authored novel includes no Spanish words or phrases beyond references to foods (taco, burrito) or isolated displays of culture (fiesta, piñata). Additionally, there is no mention of any relationships with Mexican/Mexican American family members or friends in either California or Mexico in the text. Although Joaquin’s family puts on a stereotypical “Mexican fiesta” to share their “food and customs” with new European American friends, the family incorporates none of these practices in their daily lives (p. 51), living an essentially idyllic, middle class, European American life on a farm outside the small Wisconsin town. Joaquin attends the predominantly European American Willowdale High School, Mrs. Lopez stays at home and keeps house, and Mr. Lopez works “a white collar job as a computer

technician” with his “degree from a technical college” (p. 9). The Lopez family has implicitly achieved the “American Dream” of economic success and prosperity, and has chosen to virtually erase any practice of their Mexican culture and language - despite Mr. Lopez’s first generation immigrant status.

The second (and resistant) perspective of assimilation as conformity is well demonstrated in Summer’s (1969) *You Can’t Make It by Bus*. The ideology in this novel is overtly and often didactically conveyed, advocating cultural solidarity for Mexican immigrants through adherence to the tenets of the Chicano Movement. Summer’s text asserts that allegiance to Mexican culture – and *rejection* of European American culture – is the only desirable (and perhaps possible) way for those of Mexican heritage to live: immigrants that choose to assimilate to European American culture are deemed “sellouts” (p. 18), disloyal to their heritage, and unworthy of membership in Chicano society. European American characters in this novel are regarded with suspicion and contempt, and described with negative terms and epithets such as “pig” (p. 181), “pattie” (p. 161) and “honkie” (p. 12). Anglo characters and culture are also implied to be shallow and superficial, and are often associated with greed and materialism: “your father believes that a Chicano can be transformed into an Anglo by a name, a language, a set, and a Chevrolet” (p. 27), Brown Beret Aguilita tells protagonist Paul. Although this text is an extreme example of resistant ideology, these sentiments favoring (or romanticizing) Mexican culture reappear in other texts within this category.

Issues of Story

As seen in the previous category, issues of story narration and author ethnicity may also influence ideology. Novels with ideologies of conformity are also largely European American authored (7 of 8), and half are omnisciently narrated (see *Table 7.3*). However, unlike the

previous category, all but one of the protagonists are Mexican American – only Nails’ (2008) novel tells the story from the perspective of a European American protagonist. Perhaps the most surprising novel in this group is that of Velásquez (1994): this Mexican American authored novel, with first person narration from the alternating perspective of the Mexican immigrant protagonist, Juanita and her Latina psychologist, Dr. Martinez, still suggests conformity to European American society to be the desirable route for an immigrant. Mexican immigrant’s problems are portrayed as insurmountable (barrio life, poverty, racism), and solutions to these issues are suggested in the form of marrying an Anglo (Dr. Martinez), enduring or ignoring racist behavior, speaking English, and rejecting the “backwards” culture of one’s Mexican family (both Dr. Martinez and Juanita). Although Dr. Martinez does demonstrate an improved life for herself via her education and a good job, she attributes her success and wellbeing to her marriage to European American husband, Frank, whom she describes as “the best thing that has ever happened to me” (p. 59). Notably, Velásquez’s novel underscores the fallacy of simplistically assuming that we can predict what - and how - an insider (or outsider) to a culture will write.

Representations of Ethnicity and Cultural Identity

Although representations of ethnicity show some improvement over those in the previous category, a few continue to perpetuate stereotypes regarding physical appearance, demeanor, and culture associated with those of Mexican heritage. Some suggest characters to be volatile and aggressive: Juanita is noted to be in “some sort of blind rage” and obviously “out of control” as she retaliates against a bully (Velásquez, 1996, p. 82). Others suggest exoticism and flamboyancy: Miguel’s mother dreams of becoming a “naturalized citizen – her big hope – but her *heart would always be red hot*, like her colorful, gorgeous native country” (Murphy, 2002, p. 50). Some even reference stature and traditional dress: Mexico Mendoza is a “very

short...foreign student” wearing a “flowered dress and white straw sandals” who appears to have “taken a magic elevator to get here” (Nails, 2008, pp. 5-8).

Some texts suggest that immigrants are less intelligent than their European American peers – even those advocating resistance to assimilation: “sometimes Donna felt that the Anglos were right” Colman’s narrator informs us; “maybe the Mexicans were...not very bright” (1973, p. 30). A history textbook was “confusing” to young Miguel, but “even he got through it...like the rest of the kids” (p. 34). Notably, this young immigrant does not recognize the Eurocentric perspective of the text, the omission of the Mexican American War, the acquisition of U.S. lands, nor the stereotypical portrayals of Mexican culture in his school textbook: “The Mexican Period [in Santa Fe] didn’t last long, but it must have been a lot of fun,” Miguel reflects; “Fiestas and fancy horse races and pretty women and dances” (Murphy, 2002, p. 100).

However, regardless of the continued stereotypical representations of ethnicity, there is also a notable shift in focus regarding ethnicity in this group of novels. In addition to descriptions of physical appearance, characteristics, and behaviors, novels in this category also begin to address the more complex issue of cultural identity. Although these novels do not address the many struggles experienced by immigrant characters regarding cultural affiliation and assimilation as extensively as those in subsequent ideologies, they do recognize that immigrants have a choice: unlike the “unmeltables” of the previous category, assimilation within this ideology is possible, but requires a decision - to cross the cultural border, or to remain “loyal” to home culture by refusing to assimilate. However, the choice is an either/or binary: cultural blend is not a viable option. As Roosevelt expressed, “there can be no divided allegiance here...any man who says he is an American but something else also, isn’t an American at all” (1919, np).

Novels with ideologies of conformity vary in their perspective of Mexican culture. A few of the texts take a superficial, “heroes and holidays” approach to Mexican culture (Banks, 1994): Mexican language and culture is viewed as an enhancement to the larger, mainstream European American culture. Some do this via the treatment of language, isolating Spanish words as vocabulary to be learned for enrichment, or primarily using Spanish words in reference to celebrations (fiesta, piñata) or foods (tortillas, tacos, enchiladas). To this end, some of the novels also “flavor” their texts with brief, isolated displays of Mexican culture, presenting Mexican immigrant protagonists participating in or showcasing their culture in a stereotypical fashion: Joaquin’s family invites their Anglo friends over for a “traditional Mexican fiesta” to show them “food and customs” of Mexico; Mr. Lopez brings out his guitar to sing *La Bamba* and *El Condor Pasa*, they break a piñata, and dance to “*La Cucerach*” [incorrect term] (McGinley, 1998, p. 51). However, this is the only reference to the family’s practice of Mexican culture: the Lopez family lives an otherwise European American life, speaking perfect English, watching American television, and moving out to a nice rural home outside town. Cultural identity is not presented as a complex issue for the characters – they “perform” for the visitors, but are able to resume their American lifestyle with little reference to and virtually no inclusion of Mexican culture.

Some novels briefly allude to mixed feelings of cultural allegiance, yet maintain a patronizing view of Mexican culture. Miguel’s mother longs for Mexican traditions, yet feels that these must be sacrificed in order to gain access to American opportunity (Murphy, 2002). In a chapter entitled “*Fiesta!*” Miguel’s (European American) teacher takes the immigrant family to experience their own culture (rather than them going themselves) at a “grand” and “wild” festival with “rattles,” “clackers,” and “costumes strange and mysterious” (p. 51). Although Miguel’s

sister, Rosa also revels in what is portrayed to be an experience of Mexican culture, her fondness is short lived: the rest of the novel is devoted to the family's desire for Americanization.

Others recognize the conflicted pull of two identities, yet clearly favor Americanization. Francie wants to blend in with her European American peers, and not distinguish herself as Mexican American: "Francie Martinez...I cringed at the sound of my name being blurted out across the room...I just wished I was just Francie Martin..plain, old, white, Francie Martin...with my dark skin and funny last name, I stuck out..." (p. 132). Francie's father attempts to Americanize Francie by not visiting Mexico or discussing relatives living there: "He never liked to talk about my grandmother....it was like he wanted to keep that ...from me" (p. 117). Yet Francie recognizes that she has two sources of cultural identity: "When I was with Dad or any of the other grooms, I was Mexican. I could banter with them in Spanish...it was like hovering between two worlds" (p. 42). However, this is the *only* mention in the 246 page novel of her recognition of Mexican heritage: Francie continues to conform to European American society by maintaining exclusively European American friends, engaging in equestrian activities, speaking flawless English, and pursuing college study in New York City.

Velásquez's (1994) protagonist, Juanita, also rejects her Mexican heritage to emulate European American life, and looks down upon family members who identify with Mexican culture: "Apá is so old fashioned...that's the way people from Mexico are. I'm sure glad I wasn't born there" (p. 14). Dr. Martinez, who married a European American "gabacho" (p. 53), also expresses a desire to leave behind both her Mexican family and heritage, expressing no sense of responsibility to her people: "I hated going back there [to the barrio]...nothing seemed to change in that dead town...same old faces...all that pain" (p. 52). This stands in direct contrast to the sense of obligation to help those "left behind" expressed by characters that leave the barrio for a

better life in subsequent books such as Cisneros' *House on Mango Street* (1983) and Canales' *The Tequila Worm* (2005). Although characters within this ideology express isolated incidences of pride in their Mexican heritage - Juanita feels "really proud of being a Mexican" during a church service (p. 101) - they rarely incorporate Mexican culture in their daily lives.

Additionally, cultural pride does not motivate immigrants to advocate for their people: Dr. Martinez wants to "save" Juanita from school expulsion (p. 25), yet does not address the institutional hegemony within the school system that continues to ignore the racist behaviors of students, staff, and administration.

Nails (2008) also attempts to address the complexity of cultural identity. Although she has only lived in the United States for a few weeks, Mexico Mendoza draws a portrait of herself with the state of Arizona as her body, and "where it's heart should be was a tiny drawing of Mexico, the country" (p. 206). "Mexico" claims that her "favorite place means who is there, not where it is" (p. 25). However, the immigrant character does not really appear to be conflicted in the novel: Mexico speaks perfect English, associates primarily with European American protagonist Lylice, maintains a consistently happy demeanor, pursues an Anglo boyfriend, and expresses no sense of longing for her Mexican home or culture - despite the fact that her father remains there indefinitely due to issues of legal status.

Resistance to Conformity

Some of the sample texts acknowledge assimilation as conformity to European American culture, yet reject this choice for Mexican immigrants. Novels suggesting conformity as undesirable portray European Americans as greedy, materialistic, and oppressive to Mexican Americans: "Anglos" are described as "pigs" (Summers, 1969, p. 171) "honkies" (p. 12), "gringos" (Colman, 1973, p.188) and "patties" (Summers, p. 161) that oppress the Mexican

American (or Chicano) people. “They’re not nice; they’re greedy, and they step on us like their own cockroaches,” activist Romero tells Donna (Colman, 1973, p. 127). In these texts, loyal Chicanos are compelled to resist European American hegemony, even sacrificing themselves if necessary: Donna Martinez’s father is “struck down by the gringo police” during a demonstration (Colman, p. 188); Paul is shot (and implicitly killed) as he fled the scene of a riot at the end of the novel by a cop who “took deliberate aim” (Summers, p. 171). Unlike the previous novels in this category, conformity to European American culture does *not* bring material comfort or social acceptance to the immigrant - it ultimately brings death, either psychologically (through loss of Mexican identity) or physically. However, Colman’s (1973) protagonist, Donna Martinez is able to resist conformity through education, maintain her Mexican cultural identity, and not succumb to her father’s destiny of dying for the cause.

The protagonists in Colman’s (1973), Summers’ (1969) and Resau’s (2006) novels experience a pronounced evolution of cultural identity. Although Paul is described as a “man, a chicano” possessing a “strength” that was “full-formed,” his sense of cultural identity also changes in the novel (Summers, 1969): Paul visits Mexico with a group of Spanish language students from the ironically named Polk High School (U.S. President Polk initiated the Mexican-American War in 1845), and experiences the country’s “miserable hovels...naked children...littered yards,” and “strange smells” for the first time (p. 120). He returns to the United States with a new resolve to fulfill his “destiny” (p. 169) and become a part of the Brown Berets. However, the character does not live to fulfill his goals: the young track star tragically sacrifices his life for the cause as he throws fire bombs into windows during a riot, only to be shot by a “honkie cop” as he flees the scene.

Colman's (1973) protagonist, Donna Martinez also experiences a transition of cultural identity. Initially aspiring to conform to European American society, Donna feels frustrated at the rejection she experiences: "what was the use in trying to be a different kind of Mexicano, one who didn't hate the Anglos, who didn't care about defending her Mexican ways, who was more than willing to accept the Anglos, to be one of them, if they didn't give her a chance?" (p. 62). Colman's (1973) omniscient narrator tells readers that Donna does not feel an "attachment" to Mexico; "she was born in the United States, and she wanted everything that the country had to offer...pretty clothes...her own television set...beautiful modern appliances that Anglo women had" (pp. 15-16). She tries to get along with and please Joe, her boss, "because he was an Anglo" (p. 68), and tells Mrs. Ortega, a family member, that "if we make friends with Anglos and live like them, we'll be better off" (p. 102); differences "would disappear," she argues, if immigrants "didn't worry so much about being Mexicano...everyone would be the same, and everyone would get along" (p. 103). However, Donna's desire to get along with Anglos changes radically when she is assaulted on a date with a European American boy. Young Chicano Romero also opens her eyes to some perspectives of Mexican American history omitted from her history textbook from: "I've learned the things they don't teach you in their gringo schools...our land was invaded...they took over our fields...and tried to destroy our culture...the Americans were the foreigners; her people had been here in America first" (pp. 102-103). Donna shifts from perceiving Mexican culture as "backward...in the dark ages" (p. 90) to rejecting American culture: "Chicanos must "protect our culture...our values that ignore gringo materialism and unite our people; becoming "more American," Donna states, would cause her to "lose the most precious thing we've got – our identity as Mexicanos" (pp. 127-129). Clinging solely to Mexican traditions and language is a matter of life and death, Donna maintains: "our Mexican

ways...have kept us alive” (p. 128). Sadly, Donna’s father is killed in a riot, further solidifying her resolve to reject European American society.

Resau’s (2006) protagonist Clara also experiences an evolution of cultural identity that favors Mexican culture. The daughter of a European American teacher and a Mexican American landscaper, Clara questions the depth of her middle class, “Americanized” life in a Maryland suburb. Although she often wishes for a “father like Samantha’s, who left for the office every weekday...in a silvery four-door car with plush seats” instead of her Mexican American father who “came home from work in a red truck with LUNA LANDSCAPING stenciled on the door” and “soil under his fingernails” (p. 98), Clara begins to wonder if “there is something more real than this, something deeper” (p. 2). Comparing herself to a plastic figure in a model of her European American neighborhood, she “does something crazy” and pulls the glued down “plastic girl” free from the idyllic model neighborhood (p. 4), wanting “to run...until she gets to the edge” of “what is real” (p. 2). Clara chooses to visit her grandmother in Mexico (whom she has never met), sensing that “something was calling” to her that she must “follow” in Mexico (p. 7). In Mexico, Clara meets her grandmother, and other indigenous peoples - including a stereotypically dressed local boy, Pedro - and finds a magical “spirit waterfall”; experiencing it’s “wild power,” Clara muses that perhaps everyone must “make this trip...to know who we really are” (p. 239). Clara returns home to speak more Spanish, and maintain her newfound spiritual connection with the spirit waterfall and the natural world.

Although Clara’s character indicates elements of hybridity in her incorporation of Mexican culture into her previously European American life upon her return home, her strong favoring of Mexican culture as “good” and “right” (p. 57), and her constant and intense longing return to “feel the mountains in my bones...the warmth of hot chocolate...the smell of goats” (p.

249) indicates a strong favoring of Mexican culture as genuine and pure. To further support this idea, American culture is presented as materialistic in Resau's novel. Pedro's father left the family for the lure of prosperity in the U.S., but never returned: "I know all about your country," he tells Clara; "big apartments, giant TVs...wealth...distracts us from important things...money in your country distracted my father...the rich treat us like ants...doing backbreaking work for the people lucky enough to be born with money" (p. 110).

Clara's regard of Mexican culture as "real" in Resau's (2006) novel is similar to Colman's (1973) and Summers' (1969) contrast of Mexican culture with Anglo materialism. Donna chooses to leave her job with an Anglo employer who mistreats her to join the Chicano Movement, finally realizing that "material things did not make people happy...love and affection counts for more than television sets and new cars" (Colman, p. 169). Summers' (1969) omniscient narrator even equates being Chicano with being a human being: "it was a need inside his [Paul's] soul – to be a Chicano at last, a person in his right, not a Mexican, not a Yankee. A person..." (p. 142).

Issues of Language

Regardless of how conformity is viewed within this category, the novels continue to represent the Spanish language in an incorrect or limited manner – or omit it entirely from the text. Texts advocating conformity as desirable make little more than passing reference to the Spanish language, and feature characters who favor the exclusive use of English over Spanish, even in their home life: Joaquin's second generation Mexican immigrant family claims to be "proud...descendants of Mexican ancestors" (McGinley, 1998, p. 13), yet they include no Spanish words in their daily lives beyond those describing foods (taco, jalapeño) or celebrations (fiesta, piñata). Spanish is also essentially invisible in Whitney's (2005) novel; the text includes

few Spanish words, and these are spoken by supporting characters in the novel rather than by the protagonist and her father.

Characters within perspectives of conformity as desirable favor English over Spanish, and even express shame regarding their use of the Spanish language: Francie and her father (notably, a first generation immigrant) use English only at home; “Dad and I always spoke English,” Francie tells us; her father “hated it when people tried to talk Spanish to him” (p. 39). They also encourage others to use English only: when other groomsman spoke Spanish “we answered him in English” says Francie (p. 22). Juanita finds her parent’s Spanish to be “embarrassing” and vows to “stay in school” to “learn English real good” (Velásquez, 1994, p. 9). Miguel is self conscious and ashamed of his “Mexican accent” [an incorrect term – “Mexican” is not a language] when speaking to Anglos, noting that he makes “too many mistakes” (Murphy, 2002, p. 74). Murphy’s novel also suggests an English-only approach to language: Miguel’s mother, Rosa attempts to eradicate Spanish from the family’s home by insisting that “everyone...speak English...all the time in the house” (Murphy, 2002, p. 16). However, Murphy does occasionally “flavor” her mostly English text with Spanish words, phrases, and expressions: Miguel’s feisty (spitfire) mother utters italicized words and phrases such as “*Ayy!*” (2002, p. 15) and “*Muchas gracias!*” in moments of emotion (p. 78). The author also intersperses descriptive terms or phrases for Mexican immigrant characters such as “*Mexicanos*” (p. 62) and “*la familia Rivera*” (p. 136) throughout the text via the novel’s omniscient narrator.

Latina author Velásquez (1994) also includes very little Spanish language in the text. Protagonist Juanita uses the Spanish terms “*Apá*” and “*Amá*” to refer to her Mexican American parents, but uses few other words or phrases in the novel - even at home. She strongly favors

English over Spanish, and resents her parent's inability to speak English. Juanita admires her friend Maya's second generation parents who speak only English in their home, and implies a relationship between English proficiency and intelligence: "her [Maya's] parents are *smart*...I wish my 'Amá and 'Apá were more like them. I have to talk to them in Spanish all the time...it's embarrassing" (1994, p. 9). Yet later in the novel she claims to "really love Spanish," telling her bilingual psychologist, Mrs. Martínez (who has a Ph.D., but is not addressed as "Dr."), that she would "someday" like to "be a Spanish teacher" (p. 32). In a similar manner to Murphy's novel, Velásquez "sprinkles" Spanish sparsely throughout the text, with many of these related to traditions or foods: "Amá's *tamales* are the best...sometimes...we have a big fiesta or *tamalada*" (p. 102). Once again, this approach to language underscores the fallacy of using author ethnicity as a predictor of a novel's ideology or approach to culture.

Although Nail's *Next to Mexico* (2008) includes many more Spanish words and phrases than the other novels in this category, the approach remains distant and somewhat patronizing: Spanish words in the text are mostly presented as vocabulary words or phrases to be memorized and practiced within the isolated context of a school Spanish class – ironically taught by a European American teacher. Protagonist Lylice describes a class assignment to act out Spanish vocabulary words, incorrectly adding "ed" endings to the Spanish verbs: "Tony...*bebered* a soda...*comered* Cheese Chomps...and *saltared* up and down" (p. 63). Mexico Mendoza, a newly arrived Mexican immigrant student to whom she is assigned as an "English buddy" (p. 33), speaks perfect English in Nail's text, aside from her exaggerated pronunciation of the European American protagonist's name, "Leelas" (p. 230). However, Lylice acts as an Anglo benefactor, correcting Mexico's schoolwork: "it was very easy to fix some of the grammar," says the European American protagonist (p. 25). Although the novel does include a few instances of

Spanish being spoken by Mexico's Aunt Maria, she too only inserts a bit of Spanish into her predominantly English speech: "Hola...I'm Maria...Mexico's auntie" (p. 27).

Although slightly improved from the previous ideological category, the Spanish language is still conveyed with varying degrees of grammatical and contextual accuracy. Although Velásquez (1994) minimally includes the Spanish language in her text, she does so in an accurate matter, and clarifies most terms for the reader: Juanita's brother, Carlos, calls her "*fea*, ugly" (p. 41). Nails' terms are also generally accurate: aside from Lylice's addition of "ed" suffixes to her Spanish vocabulary words, the Spanish language is also portrayed and written in a grammatically correct fashion. However, other texts make glaring mistakes similar to those in novels with ideologies of unmeltable immigrants: Joaquin's father, Mr. Lopez, strums the "familiar opening chords" to the song, "La Cucerach" (correct term is "Cucaracha") on his guitar (McGinley, 1998, p. 54). Murphy's text also includes inaccurate preceding words for Spanish terms that do not grammatically agree: Miguel feels like "*an estúpido*" (idiot) in school - the correct Spanish word for "an" is *un* (p. 21). Whitney's rare inclusion of Spanish also features an inaccurate and arguably implausible combination of English and Spanish: groomer Camillo uses accurate English – with the exception of one inserted Spanish word - to tell Francie that he wants to "thank you and you [sic] *papá*" for concealing his illegal status (2005, p. 206). Although it is possible that a newcomer may combine the English word "you" with the Spanish word "papá," it is more likely that the speaker would either use the Spanish "tu" to proceed "papá," or continue with the preceding pattern of flawless English and use the grammatically correct "your" instead of "you."

However, novels by Colman (1973) and Summers (1969) verbally advocate the use of Spanish for cultural solidarity, yet continue to exclude and misrepresent the language. Although

Summers' (1969) novel equates speaking Spanish with loyalty to Mexican culture, there are ironically no actual Spanish words included in the text beyond an isolated – and grammatically inaccurate – declaration of unity. An omniscient narrator informs readers when Spanish is spoken, and the text contains many inaccuracies: Brown Beret member Umberto strangely declares that fellow activist Ramona “se cree la divina Garza,” meaning that she believes herself to be the “divine heron” – a statement incongruent with the context of the conversation (p. 65). Umberto challenges Paul to speak in “Mexican” rather than English – another inaccuracy, as “Mexican” is a nationality, not a language (p. 65). Spanish words are also virtually omitted from Colman's (1973) text. Like Summers' novel, Colman's omniscient narrator informs readers when Spanish is spoken: “The Ortega family ate and laughed and talked in their native Spanish” (p. 42). The few Spanish words inserted into the text are italicized, and typically refer to celebrations (*quinceañera*), expressions (*Muy bien!*), or foods (*enchilladas* – correct spelling is *enchiladas*). Errors such as these are possibly attributed to the European American authors' lack of familiarity with the Spanish language, or a limited understanding of the Mexican American culture and people about whom they write. Additionally, we may also infer that there are a shortage of qualified editors to assist authors who choose to write outside of their own language and culture.

Novels opposing conformity describe the English language (and European American culture) in negative terms, in contrast with the more positive adjectives associated with Spanish: Summers' narrator tells us that “Mrs. Guevara [Paul's mother] lapsed often into the delicate Spanish syllables...the harsh Anglo gutturals did not easily fit her soft mouth” (pp. 24-25). Mr. Guevera – an implicitly “sellout” character in the novel – had learned English with such skill that he had known the *iron tongue* [my emphasis] with scarcely an accent” (p. 25). Donna Martinez

describes “the babel of voices” of European Americans speaking “in their gringo language” that “grated on her ears and made her own Spanish seem much softer and more melodious” (Colman, 1973, p. 170). Aguilita challenges Paul’s cultural loyalty based upon his use of English: “How can you be a Chicano and not a sellout Mexican American...you speak only the language of the honkies” (p. 10). Paul’s friend, Lura observes him to be “American in every way” because “you talk like one” (p. 131). Within this perspective, issues of language and cultural allegiance are inextricably linked – an idea later challenged by conceptions of hybridity.

Issues of Power and Position: Racism, Epithets, and Anglo Benefactors

As seen in the previous category, European Americans remain the gatekeepers to society, and their hegemonic culture is the implicit standard to which all must aspire in order to gain social membership. Immigrant characters are acknowledged as separate, “other,” and perhaps lesser than their European American counterparts, but may gain admission to society through conformity – and cultural surrender. Mexican culture is regarded as colorful and entertaining, yet unimportant (and perhaps limiting) to American success. In contrast to the previous category, remaining within the cultural fold is discouraged: immigrants must detach themselves from their Mexican heritage, or as John Quincy Adams suggested, “cast off” the “skin” of home culture in order to assume a new American identity (quoted in Sollors, 1986, p. 4).

Immigrant characters continue to be portrayed as powerless and incapable of solving their own problems, and many frequently (and gratefully) rely upon the assistance of Anglo benefactors. However, the “help” remains paternalistic in tone, and offered due to the implicit neediness and powerlessness of the immigrant characters. European American benefactors are often portrayed as “saviors”: Clara’s European American mother “rescued” her Mexican immigrant father (and landscape employee) from illiteracy by tutoring him in English: “She

looked at the burs stuck to his pants...every Saturday he showed up at her door, freshly showered” (Resau, 2006, p. 99); a European American lawyer “saves” Juanita from expulsion following her retaliation against a white bully by: “He’s white, but he’s real nice. I hope he makes them let me go back to school” (Velásquez, 1994, p. 43). Ironically, the attorney gains readmission for Juanita, but not justice – the racist behavior of the perpetrator remains unchallenged. Murphy’s (2002) novel also conveys the need for Anglo benefactors, and the lower positioning of Mexican immigrants in relationship to these characters: Miguel and his mother idolize his European American teacher: “Mr. Springley was his friend...Miguel...gazing at Mr. Springley, appreciating everything about him” (p. 32); “I like your Mr. Springley. He so good to us” (p. 59). Mexico Mendoza’s aunt expresses gratitude to 11-year-old Lylice and her European American school principal: “Oh, Leelas...Principal Harrington...I can’t thank you enough. You’ve both taken such good care of Mexico, and now me...she dabbed her eyes with her tissue” (Nails, 2008, p. 192). These representations of Anglo benevolence, though improved from the previous category, still convey the lower status of immigrant characters – even to European American children. As seen in Chapter 4, Anglo benefactors also appear in television and films, especially those featuring ‘good guy’ Anglos defending or advocating for “helpless” or needy Mexican characters as seen in *The High Chaparral* (Dortort, 1967-1971) and *The Magnificent Seven* (Sturges, 1960).

Issues of Racism

Issues of racism are often minimized in novels with ideologies of conformity as desirable for Mexican immigrants. The responsibility for getting along with those of the dominant culture rests with the marginalized immigrant, who must endure, accept, and change to fit cultural expectations. As seen in novels within the previous category, displays of racism are viewed as

isolated and individual acts of discrimination or cruelty rather than as an institutional or systemic issue. This attitude can be seen in Velásquez's (1994) text, as Juanita's counselor (surprisingly, a Mexican American) suggests that she develop strategies to deal with European American Sheena's racist bullying: "maybe we can come up with some alternatives...if someone were to start bothering you...what could you do to avoid a fight?" (1994, p. 57); notably, Sheena's cruel (and even violent) behavior is not questioned by school authorities. Juanita's attorney, Sam, also places the burden of getting along upon the shoulders of the marginalized character, stressing the importance of showing the school board "that Juanita is getting rehabilitated" in order to "help our case" (p. 61). The concurrence of all the novel's adults (both the Mexican and European American) that Juanita should conform to Anglo expectations serves to reinforce the hegemony of European American society.

Mexico Mendoza (Nails, 2008) also endures racist treatment at school. Despite the protests of European American protagonist Lylice, Mexico Mendoza tells her friend that she should not pursue the aggressor when Tony and others call her a "beaner": "you can just ignore someone like that," she tells Lylice (pp. 71-72). Lylice addresses the incident with her teacher, Mr. Springley, who simply admits that Tony was "out of line," and suggests the solution to such behavior to be "more [adult] chaperones at lunch...it's plain silly to have only two" (p. 73). However, the two chaperones that *were* present during Tony's taunting of Mexico did nothing to prevent or stop the incident. Just as Sheena is allowed to bully Juanita in Velásquez's (1994) novel, and Juanita is admonished to "control" her "temper" (p. 73), Tony's behavior is also not addressed: the focus instead falls upon how Mexico, the victim, may "handle" the abuse (Nails, 2008, p. 74).

Racism is also minimized in Murphy's (2002) novel. European American teen Sam Anderson rescues young Miguel from the physical abuse and ethnic taunts of local boys as he is dumped from a park bench, but despite witnessing the aggression, he minimizes and excuses their poor behavior: "the kids in the plaza were prejudiced against you, right? Those guys picking on you...were showing off...they figured you were Mexicano, that's all..." (p. 105). European American teacher Mr. Springley even directly cites the ideology of *e pluribus unum*, suggesting that a community dance can solve issues of racism: "Look how people from every place come together in one dance! It makes friends of strangers. Friends of enemies. *E pluribus unum*, Mr. Springley said to Miguel's father" (p. 55). Notably, Mr. Springley identifies European Americans and Mexican immigrants as separate by describing them as implicitly natural "strangers" and "enemies" - yet only the European Americans are the aggressors in the community. Miguel enjoys the dance, and appreciates his "wonderful teacher" who was "trying to be friendly" to his father (p. 55).

Epithets and Americanized Nicknames

Ethnic epithets also continue in novels with ideologies of conformity. As seen in the previous category, many relate to food, such as the term "beaner" (Nails, 2008, p. 69). Coach Sommers threatens Joaquin with removing his "taco allowance for the rest of the semester" if he does not put the team balls away properly (McGinley, 1998, p. 10). The coach also implies that Joaquin is ignorant, telling the boy that he has a "jalapeno-sized brain" (p. 35). Bucky invites Miguel to his house, proudly telling him that "I made tortillas just for you. It's your staff of life, right?" (Murphy, p. 72).

Some epithets relate to issues of legal status, and not surprisingly, occur mostly in books published within the past two decades, likely corresponding with increased national attention to

issues of Mexican immigration. The term “wetback” (Murphy, 2002, p. 6; Velásquez, 1994, p. 32) is used to imply that an immigrant may have illegally entered the United States by swimming across the Rio Grande: this term is derived from a 1954 initiative through the Department of Immigration and Naturalization Service entitled *Operation Wetback*, whose purpose was to remove illegal immigrants from the southeastern United States (García, 1980). Murphy’s text also uses the Spanish term “mojado” to refer to those that swam across the river (Murphy, 2002, p. 6); however, this term is used by Mexican rather than European American characters.

In addition to ethnic epithets and comments, Mexican immigrants also experience disparagement by having their given names Americanized or altered, or being assigned nicknames without their consent in the texts - typically by European American characters. Coach Sommers never calls Joaquin by his given name, choosing instead to call him “Jock-Queen” (McGinley, 1998, p. 7). Other novels also feature characters whose names are Americanized without their permission: Juanita tells Dr. Martinez, her counselor, that “everyone at school calls me Johnny” (Velásquez, 1994, p. 30). Lylice’s dad is entertained by her Mexican immigrant friend’s name when first introduced: “What a great name! Mexico Mendoza...we should start the Double M club...” (Nails, 2008, p. 45). Rosa’s Anglo employer does not want to pronounce – or even learn – her sister’s full name: “Donna Isobel Martinez...Wow, that’s a mouthful. I’ll call you Donnie” (Colman, 1973, p. 160). Murphy’s narrator suggests that Mexican names (and heritage) are a potential source of shame: European American Albert “offered to call Miguel Mike so the other kids wouldn’t know for sure he was from Mexico” (2002, p. 74) This naturalizes the idea that Miguel must be ashamed of standing out due to his heritage and ethnicity, and would welcome the opportunity to fit in (assimilate) by adopting an Americanized name. Notably, none of the immigrant characters mentioned above resists these Americanized names, or expresses a desire

to be called by their correct names: within texts suggesting assimilation as unattainable (or as conformity), immigrants do not resist the requirements or impositions of the dominant culture.

Representations of Socioeconomic Status: the “American Dream”

Some novels suggest socioeconomic prosperity as an access point for admission to American society. We see this conception of the “American Dream” in McGinley’s novel: Mr. Lopez works a “good job” in a “big office” with a “higher salary,” providing a “better house” for the family and “college for the kids” (1998, pp. 8-9). Murphy’s narrator tells readers that “three years after [immigrating to the U.S.]...the dreams of Miguel’s family were coming true...his father had been hired” in a “garbage-collecting job,” his mother “started a small business sewing,” and they “found an apartment with both a furnace and plumbing” (2002, p. 14). Mexico Mendoza’s aunt lives in a “pink house,” and gets a job (with Lylice’s help) as a school secretary (p. 108). Juanita Chávez’ also “comes from a large family struggling to find the American Dream” (Velásquez, 1994, p. 120).

However, conformity to European American culture does not always guarantee immediate economic prosperity. Regardless of a character’s pursuit of the “American Dream,” occupations of Mexican immigrants in the novels with ideologies of conformity remain largely blue collar (see *Table 7.4*). Both Miguel’s (Murphy, 2002) and Juanita’s (Velásquez, 1994) fathers are agricultural workers: Francie’s father is a horse groomer (Whitney, 2005); Mexico Mendoza’s aunt is a housekeeper for a European American family, and later a school secretary. However, two novels in this group portray Mexican immigrant characters in white collar occupations: Joaquin’s father is a computer technician (McGinley, 1998); Dr. Martinez is a psychologist with a Ph.D. (Velásquez, 1994). Notably, each of these “successful” immigrant characters indicate extreme conformity to European American culture, and maintain no ties to

their Mexican families, as evidenced in Dr. Martinez's disinterest in returning to her barrio – even to visit her mother.

Novels with ideologies of assimilation as conformity rarely include characters that pursue post secondary education; when they do so, it is usually focused upon a specific trade. Only three of the novels in this category reference higher education of any kind for Mexican immigrant characters: Joaquin's father "had to get his degree from the technical college" instead of a university (McGinley, 1998, p. 9); Francie attends Skidmore College in New York, competing in equestrian events after leaving her employer's equestrian center residence - though the novel does not explain how this happens. Dr. Martinez obviously attended a university, yet all but attorney Sam Turner call her "Mrs." or "Ms. Martinez" (Velásquez, 1994, p. 55).

Representations of Gender

As seen in the previous ideological category, representations of gender remain largely traditional. Female characters lie in the background in a diminutive, submissive and/or subservient manner within a patriarchal hierarchy: Juanita's mother, a homemaker, does not have the authority to decide if her daughter can enter counseling with Dr. Martinez: "Amá says she'll have to talk to Apá about it...she thinks he won't mind" (p. 19). Joaquin's mother and sisters serve the needs of the family's male members: "Do you want me to get your supper?" his mother asks her son when he comes home (McGinley, 1998, p. 42). "Maria, grab a cold soda out of the refrigerator for him," Joaquin's father instructs his sister (p. 43). Rosa Rivera is described by an omniscient narrator as "gentle" with Miguel's father, "cooing like a lovebird over him" (Murphy, 2002, p. 65). The character of Dr. Martinez offers a more assertive option for women, yet even she is concerned with "politely" addressing a European American male school board that is "not

accustomed to being questioned by a woman, let alone a woman of color” (Velásquez, 1994, pp. 25-26).

Male roles in novels with ideologies of conformity remain patriarchal and dominant, yet these representations are notably more subdued and favorable than those of the previous category. In contrast to portrayals of Mexican immigrant men as simpleminded, immoral, lazy, or criminal, male characters in these are intelligent, hardworking, and thoughtful – traits often associated with European American characters. In McGinley’s (1998) novel, Mr. Lopez is described as “normally quiet and rather subdued about expressing his feelings” (p. 8). His son, protagonist Joaquin is also a thoughtful and hardworking youth who “prided himself on always giving his best effort in school” (p. 76) and avoids associating with “gang-bangers” like those he encountered back in California (p. 88). Francie’s father, Juan, is also hardworking and responsible: “Dad didn’t drink...he’d seen too many grooms turn to drinking to cure their loneliness...drinking could ruin a groom’s chance of making a life himself” (Whitney, 2005, pp. 124-125). Murphy’s novel presents Miguel’s father as acting responsibly on behalf of his family: “I had no choices...so I get fake ID papers so we can come here to work,” Mr. Rivera tells his son (Murphy, 2002, p. 58). “They had no education that would allow them to enter the United States legally,” the narrator tells readers; “they were leaving Mexico to begin a new life...Miguel’s parents could not find work in their country” (p. 9). This portrayal stands in direct contrast with those of immigrants as sneaky, deceitful, and criminal as seen in the previous category.

Therefore, regardless of whether the novels in this category suggest conformity to European American society to be undesirable and/or a betrayal of Mexican culture (Colman, 1973; Resau, 2006; Summers, 1969) or a positive and obvious standard for Mexican immigrant

life in the United States (McGinley, 1998; Murphy, 2002; Nails, 2008; Velásquez, 1994; Whitney, 2005), *all* of the novels acknowledge conformity as a means of assimilation to American society. As previously discussed, overtones of assimilation as unattainable also exist within this ideological perspective: immigrants are naturally “other,” but may gain admission to mainstream culture if they are willing to heed the words of John Quincy Adams, and “cast away” the “skin” of their home culture to fully (and exclusively) embrace the new (Sollars, 1986, p. 4). As we will see in the remaining two ideologies of assimilation, overtones of both conformity and “unmeltability” will continue to surface in the novels via secondary characters and/or narration.

Assimilation as Adaptation and/or Bicultural Practice

The third category of novels I will discuss – and thus far the most complex and compelling - reflects the ideological perspective of assimilation as *adaptation* and/or *bicultural practice* (see *Table 7.10*). Nine of the 32 novels (over 25% of the entire sample) ranging in publication date from 1981-2008 primarily fall within this ideological perspective: *Lupita Mañana* (Beatty, 1981); *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1983); *Sisters/Hermanas* (Paulsen, 1993); *The Girl From Playa Blanca* (Lachtman, 1995); *Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida* (Martinez, 1996); *Buried Onions* (Soto, 1999); *Call Me Henri* (López, 2006); and *The Smell of Old Lady Perfume* (Martinez, 2008). In contrast with the largely powerless characters of the previous categories, novels in this group bear strong themes of self preservation, perseverance, and survival: Mexican immigrant characters act with greater agency to resist and overcome tremendous obstacles in order to survive and thrive. Methods of adaptation to life in the United States vary in the texts: relating to ideas of multiculturalism, some texts suggest assimilation to be the maintenance of parallel (and separate) cultural identities and practices, and view the addition of American language and customs to those of home (Mexican) culture as necessary for

the navigation of life in the United States. Novels with this perspective (e.g. Beatty, 1981; Bertrand, 1999; C. Martinez, 2008; V. Martinez, 1996) generally represent Mexican culture and family relationships in a positive light, emphasizing cultural maintenance and family cohesion as vital to survival and success in the United States. Characters in these novels choose to resist the difficulties they encounter by staying in the community, remaining close to the family and home culture, and/or by excelling educationally.

Other novels within this ideology view Mexican culture from a more negative perspective, associating life in the “fold” of the barrio with hopelessness, crime, and poverty. Characters in these texts, such as Eddie in *Buried Onions* (Soto, 1997) and Enrique in *Call Me Henri* (López, 2006) also choose to resist the continuing (and seemingly insurmountable) challenges of life in the U.S., but do so by *leaving* the barrio to pursue military service or education. Although she does not actually leave in the novel, Cisneros’ (1981) Esperanza also dreams that “one day” she will “go away,” leaving “the house I belong but do not belong to” because she is “too strong for her to keep me here forever” (p. 110). Finally, one novel in the category suggests the desperate, downward pull of poverty to be too great to overcome for some immigrants: Paulsen’s (1993) young Mexican immigrant protagonist, alone in the United States, turns to prostitution as her only means of support, and is ultimately arrested and deported.

The present ideological category bears some resemblance to that of the previous category of conformity: assimilation is conceptualized as an “either-or” situation in each, wherein an immigrant must choose between home culture and “American” culture. However, characters within the adaptation category of novels are not implicitly or overtly compelled to relinquish one for the other, as those in the previous category such as Joaquin’s family in *Joaquin Strikes Back* (McGinley, 1998) or young Paul in *You Can’t Make It by Bus* (Summers, 1969): novels within

this category imbue immigrants with the “unalienable right” to maintain home culture if so desired. Characters therefore maintain agency and power of choice over their lives, and may decide when, where, and how they will observe, enact, or participate in cultural practices.

The Smell of Old Lady Perfume (Martinez, 2008) offers an example of the ideology of assimilation as adaptation and/or bicultural practice that favors the maintenance of Mexican family and culture. Protagonist Chela and her close-knit family live in a home built by her Apá (father) in a modest, working class El Paso community. The two-parent Gonzalez family primarily identifies with their Mexican heritage by speaking Spanish at home, eating Mexican foods, playing soccer together, reading Spanish language newspapers, visiting extended family members, and watching Spanish *telenovelas*. The family also adapts their behavior through the addition of language and customs to participate in American culture and societal institutions; they celebrate the Fourth of July, work on their English by reading television subtitles, engage in activities available through the public schools, speak English when necessary for navigation within the community, and wear American clothing purchased at second hand stores. Chela’s family is traditional and patriarchal: her mother married young, does not drive, and exclusively cares for the home and family; her construction working father makes all the family’s decisions and is the acknowledged head of the household. Although devastated by the loss of their beloved Apá following a stroke, the Gonzalez family – now headed by son, Angel - draws strength from their bonds with each other (as they have always done) to face adversity, and the children are encouraged to continue to excel in school in order to secure a better future. Martinez’ (2008) novel maintains a tone of hope for the family, despite their difficult circumstances, and suggests economic security – not crime – to be the family’s greatest challenge.

In contrast, Gary Soto's novel, *Buried Onions* (1997) offers an example of a novel in the adaptation category that deemphasizes the importance (or necessity) of cultural maintenance, suggesting that an immigrant must leave family and community (or the cultural "fold") in order to survive. Although Soto's novel also offers hope for the Mexican immigrant protagonist, the tone of this novel is notably more dismal and desperate than those previously mentioned. Teen protagonist Eddie lives in a crime-ridden and impoverished barrio in Fresno, California where gangs and guns rule the streets. Soto likens the underlying sadness and hopelessness of the barrio to the rising vapors of a "huge onion" metaphorically buried beneath the ground (p. 2). Eddie's Mexican American aunt and mother urge him to participate in the barrio's criminal activity by avenging his cousin's death, but the youth tries desperately to resist. Tired of "always running" (p. 124) from gangs, police, and the temptation to become a criminal, Eddie ultimately chooses to maintain his integrity by leaving the barrio (and subsequently his family and friends) to join the military for education, employment, and escape.

Soto's novel does not present identification with Mexican American culture in the barrio in a positive light, nor as helpful to Eddie's situation. Although members of his community "retreated inside" daily to watch "Mexican soap operas – *telenovelas*" (p. 5), wore "thong shoes" identifying them as "raza" (p. 11), and kept "Mexican yards" with vegetable gardens (p. 130), they also married young, dropped out of school, served time in prison, and ran with gangs. Eddie must escape this sort of identity in order to live a successful and implicitly honest and honorable life. A stereotypical perspective of Mexican immigrants as lazy, dishonest, violent, sexual, and unintelligent is evidenced in the behaviors of most secondary characters, but the responsible behavior and success of protagonist Eddie and his recreation center mentor, "Coach" offer an alternative view of Mexican immigrant characters that choose another path. Notably, each had to

leave to succeed, as the hopeless situation of the barrio is represented as overwhelming and presently inalterable: however, Coach, an “ex-gang banger,” returns to the barrio to help those from whence he had come (p. 69). This desire to leave, but return to help, stands in direct contrast to the disregard and near contempt expressed by the character of psychologist Dr. Martinez for her Mexican immigrant family remaining in the barrio in Velásquez’ (1994) novel within the category of conformity.

Issues of Story

In contrast to the largely European American authorship of novels with ideologies of assimilation as unattainable (6 of 7) or as conformity to European American norms (7 of 8), the texts in the adaptation category are largely Latino/a authored (7 of 9). Although females continue to author the majority of texts in all three categories regardless of ethnicity, it is encouraging to note the increasing contributions of Latinas in the current category (4 of 9). Notably, there are *no* male authors of Latino heritage in the first two ideological categories, but one third of the novels in the adaptation category (3 of 9) are authored by Latino men (see *Table 7.7*).

The ethnicity of protagonists gradually shifts from European American to Mexican immigrant as we move across ideological categories. As previously seen, the “unattainable” group featured mostly European American protagonists (5 of 7), and the conformity category featured mostly Mexican immigrant protagonists (7 of 8). Novels in the present category continue this positive trend, featuring all Mexican immigrant protagonists (9 of 9). However, though the number of Mexican immigrant protagonists has remained essentially the same in the last two categories, a real change may be seen in the authentic *representations* of those protagonists and their experiences – a phenomenon possibly related to increased Mexican American authorship.

Protagonist gender also shifts from the predominantly European American male characters of the first category, to a relatively even balance of largely Mexican immigrant male and female characters in both the conformity and adaptation categories. Surprisingly, there is little change in methods of narration across these first three categories: the novels' narration continues to be fairly balanced between omniscient and first person within and across ideologies, with only a slight favoring of omniscient narration in both the unattainable (4 of 7) and adaptation (5 of 9) categories. Although a thorough examination of the relationship of author ethnicity, gender, method of narration, and character portrayal in each of the novels would be worthy of an entire study, it is nonetheless informative to consider these how factors may correlate to the ideologies across the sample.

Representations of Ethnicity

Representations of ethnicity are more varied within this ideological category, offering alternative (and increasingly human) perspectives of immigrant life and culture. Unfavorable (and arguably stereotypical) representations of Mexican immigrants still appear in the novels, but are mostly associated with secondary characters rather than the protagonist or main character, and stand in contrast to the more responsible, moral, and ethical behavior of the immigrant protagonists. Several of the novels unsympathetically portray drunken fathers, stepfathers, or boyfriends from the protagonist's disapproving perspective: Enrique knew before his abusive stepfather, Juan "slurred another word" that he was "drunk again" (López, 2006, p. 124). Enrique's grandmother (portrayed as a chain-smoking, unemployed gambler) defends her son's behavior, telling Enrique that "men drink" - a man must be "free in his home" to do as he pleases (p. 132). Trino describes his mother's boyfriend, Gus as lying "on the faded brown sofa" with "red, swollen eyes," taking "swigs off a can of beer" while his mother works at the tortilla

factory (Bertrand, 1999, p. 15). Manuel's father loses his job as a "translator for the city because he'd drink beer...and slur his words": Manuel tells us that he now sits "on the living room couch, drinking a can of beer and nipping little gulps of tequila from a pint bottle" (Martinez, 1996, p. 33): when Manuel's teacher gives him money, his dad takes it for his "drinking bankroll" (p. 49). However, Beatty's (1981) and Martinez' (1996) novels offers a more sympathetic portrayal: Lupita's Uncle Hermilio, "broken" by years of manual labor, poverty, and hopelessness, goes out daily to drink, despite the family's reliance upon public assistance: "he went out again last night...his eyes were red and bloodshot...Hermilio is nothing now," Aunt Consuelo tells Lupita: "He has trouble with his back and lungs" (Beatty, 1981, pp. 120-123). Regardless of the perspective, each of these representations provides an image of the type of immigrant character (drunken, broken) – and destiny (powerless, hopeless) - the young main character chooses to resist.

Representations of criminality and violence also occur in all but one of the novels (Martinez, 2008), serving to underscore the positive character and/or aspirations of the protagonists. As previously mentioned, Soto's (1997) protagonist, Eddie, strives to resist the pull of crime and desperation in his Fresno barrio: "I wanted a job like other people had, wanted to shake off the homies like Angel and the gangsters at Homes playground (p. 25). López' omniscient narrator tells readers that protagonist "Enrique didn't belong to a gang, but the fact that he lived on a certain street identified him with the tough guys who ruled his neighborhood" (2006, p. 30). Manuel first succumbs, but later resists pressure to run with a gang when he witnesses the violent mugging of a woman: "in that instant...everything changed. It was like I'd finally seen my own face and recognized myself...who I should really be" (Martinez, 1996, p. 210). Bertrand's omniscient narrator tells us that Trino also fears gangs: "Rosca could be

there...waiting...older and meaner...Rosca's rep was well know in the *barrio*...Trino knew he didn't want to be the next guy wearing black to his own funeral" (1999, p. 14). Notably, these characters all express the desire to resist the overwhelming tide of crime around them, refuting a selective tradition (and essentialization) of Mexican immigrants as criminals.

Some representations of ethnicity seen in the previous ideological categories of assimilation such as ethnic epithets, stereotypical displays and/or fiestas, traditional clothing, "dark" physical descriptions, and Americanized names have largely disappeared from the present category. However, a few remnants appear that suggest previous ideologies. Ethnic epithets directed toward Mexican immigrants are infrequent in this group of novels: in contrast to the "beaners," "greasers," and "spics" of previous novels, only the terms "wetback" (Martinez, 1996, p. 13) and "mojado" (meaning "wetback") (López, 2006, p. 6) occur in the present category of texts. Notably, each of these terms is used by Mexican immigrants to describe themselves or others, in contrast to the frequent use of epithets by European Americans in novels falling within previous categories. Only Beatty's (1981) novel features a character choosing to Americanize his own name: 3rd generation immigrant Lucio wants to distance himself from Mexican culture, playing only "gringo songs" on his guitar; "he doesn't like the name Lucio...he asked me to call him Lucky from now on" Lupita's brother tells her (p. 142). Although the novel primarily chronicles Lupita and her family's desire to maintain their cultural heritage in addition to participating in American society, this secondary character's sentiments also suggest an ideology of conformity.

Issues of Language

Although the approach to language in the current category of novels contains a few elements from previous ideological categories, there is an overall shift toward a more respectful,

authentic, and fluid incorporation of the Spanish language in this group of texts. However, some contain grammatical errors in the text, or negatively refer to the English language. In a similar manner to the frequent misuses of Spanish previously evidenced in novels with the ideologies of conformity such as McGinley's (1998) and Whitney's (2005), Bertrand's (1999) novel is the only one in the adaptation category containing awkward and/or grammatically incorrect combinations of English and/or Spanish words: Nick tells Trino that his mother is "with the niños" (p. 80) instead of using the grammatically correct term *los niños*. Some also favor the sound of Spanish over English as reflected in novels by Summers (1969) and Colman (1973): Lupita hears voices "talking the harsh-sounding yanqui language" (Beatty, 1981, p. 27); Esperanza describes Mamacita's fearful disappointment as her "baby boy" begins to sing American television commercials "in the language that sounds like tin" (Cisneros, 1983, p. 77); Enrique resents his ESL classes and the sound of English where he must "study an ugly language like English...to his ear nothing sounded worse" (López, 2006, p. 17). Others favor the sound of Spanish: Montoya delivers a poem in Spanish described as "musical, like gentle tunes on a guitar" (1999, p. 39); Chela's Spanish "popped through" her English speech "like little slices of sunshine" (Martinez, 2008, p. 14). However, these few references are the only incidences where a character (or narrator) places value on one language over the other.

The amount and type of Spanish words and phrases included in the novels is also significantly different from those in the previous categories. In contrast with the more superficial inclusion of Spanish for celebrations (fiesta, piñata), foods (taco, burrito), or family relationships (papá, mamá), texts in this group weave less common words and complex phrases into the English text; readers may infer the meaning of words within the context of the passage, rather than through an immediate, explicit translation. Soto (1997) offers an excellent example of this

fluid intermingling of English and Spanish: “we scratched our *placas* [names] in wet cement,” Eddie says as he describes an outing with his junior high friends long ago (p. 58). Although Soto’s text (and Eddie’s speech) is predominantly English, the authentic inclusion of Spanish into Eddie’s daily conversation suggests a mixing of Mexican and European American cultural identity. However, Eddie adapts his use of language to his environment, using only English with European American employer Mr. Stiles. López (2006) also includes contextual Spanish phrases: “qué lindo!” (“how handsome”) Enrique’s grandmother exclaims, observing her grandson after a long absence (p. 117).

Lack of English language proficiency is not represented as a deficit in this category’s novels, but rather as a temporary obstacle to be overcome in order to secure better employment opportunities or to otherwise navigate American society. Lupita wants to learn English so she can “get out of the fields...find work as a waitress...earn more money,” and be “lone and independent” until she has “enough money to get home to Mexico” (Beatty, 1981, p. 184). Elena informs her brother, Carlos that he is “going to have to learn English” in the United States (Lachtman, 1995, p. 24). Chela’s parents pressed her “to learn more and more English,” encouraging her participation in ESL classes at school (Martinez, 2008, p. 14). Each of the above characters and families speak Spanish at home, but learn English for their lives outside their cultural doors.

Only one of the novels across the entire sample is written in an entirely bilingual manner, and it happens to fall within the ideological category of assimilation as adaptation and/or bicultural practice. Paulsen’s (1993) heartbreaking novel, *Sisters/Hermanas* is the omnisciently narrated, alternating story of European American teen Traci and Mexican immigrant teen Rosa. Although the novel can be read in English, or turned upside down to be read in Spanish, there are

no Spanish words incorporated into the English text (nor any English words incorporated into the Spanish version). Additionally, only Soto's (1997) novel includes a glossary of Spanish terms, in addition to the contextual clues offered in the novel.

Issues of language within this category also overlap with those of novels in the next group that primarily conceptualize assimilation as hybridity. Despite their family's maintenance of Spanish at home, several of the protagonists and other characters in this category specifically acknowledge their often subconscious and inadvertent blending of languages: "I wanted to kick myself for thinking in Spanish and answering in translation," Chela says (Martinez, 2008, p. 110). Chela suggests that those who "spoke mostly English at home" were in the "A" bilingual classes, and had a much easier time with language in school (p. 107). Lachtman's (1995) narrator tells us that American-born Mario and Mexican-born Carlos "were talking that half-English, half-Spanish they use now" (p. 185). Bertrand's narrator informs readers that "in his [Trino's] neighborhood, Spanish and English words mixed together like mud and water" (1999, p. 11). (This analogy is notable: the terms "Spanish" and "mud" precede "English" and "water" – one is clear, one is not). However, as Chela suggests above, this blending of languages also causes trouble for Trino at school: "pieces of two languages often got him into trouble with schoolwork, especially with the gringo teachers" (p. 11).

As mentioned above, a few of the novels feature families that continue to speak Spanish at home (indicating bicultural practice), choosing to maintain their ties to Mexican heritage for reasons of cultural allegiance or the comfort of familiarity. With the exception of Paulsen's (1993) young character, Rosa, all the young protagonists (and many of their family members as well) speak English with proficiency, associate with European American peers, and participate in school and community activities. Novels in this group do not feature characters with emergent

English or exaggerated pronunciations, nor do they grin and nod to communicate as seen in the novels with ideologies of assimilation as unattainable. With the exception of Lupita's cousin "Lucky" (Beatty, 1981, p. 142), no one seeks to Americanize their names (or lives) in this category's novels. Clearly, the respectful, accurate and more inclusive treatment of language in these novels supports the ideology of assimilation as adaptation to life in the United States, recognizes the inherent complexity of assimilation, and honors the maintenance of an often separate cultural life with home and family.

Issues of Power and Position

Immigrant characters assume positions of greater agency over their lives within this ideological perspective. Unlike novels within the category of conformity, one culture is not set as the implicit standard for all, nor represented as more desirable than another: immigrants instead feel free to seek education and employment to better their lives in the United States regardless of cultural affiliation. Characters within ideologies of adaptation have options and freedoms that are both overtly and subtly denied to them with ideologies of assimilation as unattainable and as conformity.

In contrast with novels in the previous two categories, issues of racism and Anglo benevolence are less frequently addressed within this group. The texts are largely focused upon the interactions of Mexican immigrants with each other as they struggle to survive and thrive: characters rarely seek Anglo help to solve their problems, relying instead upon the support and resources available to them within their own families and communities. Notably, none of the novels in this group includes ethnic epithets, and only one - *Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida* (Martinez, 1996) - portrays characters who act as Anglo benefactors or depict incidences of racism levied at Mexican immigrants.

Struggle and Survival: Representations of Socioeconomic Status

In contrast to the fairly comfortable, middle class lifestyle of characters depicted in some of the novels within the conformity category (McGinley, 1998, Nails, 2008, Resau, 2006), characters in the adaptation category generally struggle to make ends meet. Protagonists in this group of novels live in apartments, private homes, trailers, motels or housing projects located in urban barrios, and their families are often supported by the meager earnings of a female head of household, despite the presence of a male figure in the home: only two novels – *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1983) and *The Smell of Old Lady Perfume* (Martinez, 2008) feature a father serving as primary bread winner. Lachtman's (1995) novel offers the only exception to this rule: set in an opulent mansion owned by millionaire villain Dr. Montalvo, Lachtman's novel focuses primarily upon the mysterious disappearance (and subsequent relocation) of lost Mexican treasure. However, protagonist Elena's father (for whom she is searching in the story) is a carpenter.

Occupations of Mexican immigrants continue to be predominantly blue collar within this category. With the exception of occasional part time work in the agricultural fields by teens Manny and Nardo in Martinez' (1996) novel, characters in this group of novels are largely employed in clerical, factory, or manual labor positions including housekeeper (Beatty, 1981; Bertrand, 1999), store clerk (Cisneros, 1983), parking attendant (Martinez, 1996), construction worker (Martinez, 2008), factory worker (López, 2006), and curb painter (Soto, 1997) (see *Table 7.10*). Issues of hunger, transportation, health care, employment, and crime in the barrio take a more central position in these characters' lives; unlike novels in the previous two categories, these novels graphically represent the day to day realities of many Mexican immigrants living in American society. Characters in this group are less focused upon issues of cultural identity and

heritage than some in the previous category, instead seeking to meet their most immediate (and urgent) needs for food, shelter, medical care, and safety.

The divide of poverty is seemingly insurmountable for the protagonists and their families, separating Mexican immigrants from mainstream American society: Lupita's Aunt Consuelo relies upon public assistance to survive: "without la ayuda [welfare] we could not live. I cannot earn enough to feed all of us" (Beatty, 1981, p. 122). "Getting ahead" through a traditional job or educational track is an unlikely option for immigrants: Sr. Fidencio tells Salvador that boxing is "one good way for a [Mexican] kid to get ahead. Joining the United States Army or Navy is another" (p. 132) – an option later taken by Eddie in Soto's (1997) *Buried Onions*. Esperanza tells us that she must go to school "with a rice sandwich because we don't have lunchmeat" (Cisneros, 1983, p.44). López' narrator tells us that Enrique, like "most students...qualified for the free lunch program" (2006, p. 23): Enrique wonders if he could ever reach the "other United States, the one on television, by running far enough in the right direction...he would offer to cut the grass...even wash cars...in exchange for food and shelter" (p. 30). Bertrand (1999) also paints a picture of poverty: heartbreakingly, Trino's three young brothers sit on "the torn red rug in front of the TV, sharing a head of cabbage between them" (p. 15). As previously noted, the economic hardships of Mexican immigrant life are vividly represented in this category, in contrast to the more general references to living conditions and poverty made in novels within the unattainable and conformity category. Difficulties and challenges are also more personalized through these realistic and specific descriptions, bringing our gaze from the larger (and more impersonal) panorama of immigrant life to the daily struggles of real human beings: it is easier to disregard the situation of those living in "typical low income housing" (Velásquez, 1994, p. 113)

or on the less desirable “side of the tracks” (Whitney, 1954, p. 24) than it is to look squarely in the face of Trino’s young brothers sharing a cabbage.

Immigrant characters within this ideology pursue socioeconomic success in a variety of ways. Some encounter a “glass ceiling” due to issues of poverty, language, education, or legal status; others “break free” of the above limitations to make a new life for themselves. However, unlike novels with ideologies of conformity, these novels more fully acknowledge the presence of “traditional” Mexican cultural identity in the lives of the characters, and incorporate this identity into their experiences in the United States. Some choose education in hopes of overcoming the obstacles of crime and poverty. Unlike Mexican immigrants in the previous categories of assimilation, immigrants within this ideology are encouraged (and have the option) to pursue many educational experiences - including a university education – in order to improve their chances for the future. Latino poet and literature professor Montoya urges Trino to improve his literacy skills: “if you can be smart about reading, nobody’ll ever take what’s yours out of your hands, cause you’ll know more than they do” (Bertrand, 1999, p. 47). “You got to take opportunities to help yourself,” Trino’s (European American) adult friend, Nick tells him: “not just in work, but in stuff like school...so you won’t have to scrub other people’s toilets for the rest of your life” (p. 115). Bertrand’s omniscient narrator informs us that “Trino went back ...to school, feeling like maybe it was a place where he belonged” (p. 124). Esperanza in Cisneros’ (1983) novel observes that barrio neighbor Alicia “is young and smart and studies for the first time at the university...because she doesn’t want to spend her whole life in a factory or behind a rolling pin” (p. 31). Esperanza’s mother urges her daughter not to follow in her footsteps: “I could’ve been somebody....you go to school. Study hard....got to take care all your own” (pp.

90-91). Chela's Apá encourages her to "work hard...no matter what" (Martinez, 2008, p. 19) in order to "make the most of opportunities he'd never had" (p. 60).

Other characters choose to leave the barrio to escape the pull of crime and poverty. Enrique's drama teacher tells his mother that leaving home to study French in Montreal is "a chance for him to experience a new life away from danger, away from fear...you want him to learn" (López, 2006, p. 223). Soto's (1997) protagonist, Eddie, leaves the barrio to enter the military: "I saw the stripe on his [friend's] sleeve...I realized it was military...I was suddenly filled with hope" (p. 57); "I had to get out of town, and signing up was the only way out" (p. 143). Cisneros' (1983) Esperanza perseveres, comparing herself to skinny trees that seem to be out of place in the barrio: "their strength is secret. They send ferocious roots beneath the ground...and never quit their anger. This is how they keep" (p. 74). However, she also plans to leave: "one day I will pack my bags of book and paper...say goodbye to Mango...I am too strong for her to keep me here forever" (p. 110). A friend encourages her to remember from whence she came: "when you leave you must always remember to come back...for the others...who cannot leave as easily as you...you will always be Mango Street...you can't erase what you know...who you are" (p. 105).

However, stories of adaptation do not always involve clear solutions or happy endings on the horizon: Paulsen's text offers a disturbing exception to the more empowered characters seen in this category. Fourteen-year-old Rosa works alone to support herself as a prostitute, yet her choices are limited by her age, level of poverty, and legal status: "she was not legal and the police might come and she would be sent back to Mexico where she could not live" (p. 35). However, regardless of her dire circumstances, the character retains a sense of agency over her life: Rosa refuses to assume a victim stance, and chooses to detach herself emotionally from her

“work” while aspiring to one day use her appearance for gain through fashion modeling “on the cover of magazines and perhaps in movies” (p. 8).

Representations of Gender

Representations of gender are more explicitly and complexly portrayed within this group of novels. Greater personal agency over their lives affords some immigrant characters (both male and female) an opportunity to challenge the traditional patriarchal arrangement. However, most families and communities in this group of novels remain largely patriarchal, with females relegated to lesser positions, marrying young, and relying upon men (and even boys) for their security and wellbeing. In Beatty’s (1981) novel, it is understood that Lupita’s teenage brother Salvador will assume responsibility for the family upon his father’s death: “Salvador! He was the head of the family now...she [Lupita] would have to look up to him and obey him...he was almost a man now...as such, he was the one to tell her what to do” (pp.19-43). Lachtman’s (1005) protagonist, Elena also depends upon males: “she had never lived a day without the protection of her father” (p. 64). Soto’s (1997) protagonist, Eddie, also confirms the natural order of patriarchy: “the good life is one where you go to work...return home to your family...you’re the daddy...mountains rise from your shoulders, coins jingle in your pocket, and the food on the table is your doing” (p. 35). Patriarchal ideas also continue well into the 2000s: Martinez (2008) portrays deference to male leadership: Chela tells us that her father was a “strong still oak...we hid under his branches like shadows” (p. 178). Upon his deathbed, Apá whispers to his son, Angel Jr. to “take care of us” (p. 26).

However, the patriarchal arrangement can also affect women in a negative manner. Some novels portray Mexican immigrant men as abusive or irresponsible, yet female characters are essentially powerless (or unwilling) to resist this behavior. In Paulsen’s (1993) heartbreaking and

disturbing novel, 14-year old prostitute Rosa worries that her pimp, “one Tooth” would steal the money she hopes to send home to her mother in Mexico – “he was, after all, a man” (p. 8).

Lupita also assumes responsibility by sending money home to her mother, despite brother Salvador’s irresponsible behavior and rough treatment: “she continued to send what money she could, chiefly her own earnings...he [Salvador] grabbed Lupita by the wrist and pulled her” (Beatty, 1981, pp. 175-178). Manny’s mother feels that opposing her abusive husband is futile: “she figures she could scold him for starving us...about the unpaid rent...but it would only thicken his stubbornness” (Martinez, 1996, p. 35). “Nothing surprised my mom,” Manny tells us: “she expected people to treat her mean” (p. 150). Enrique’s mother also succumbs to the abuse of her husband, and does not protect her son from stepfather Juan’s drunken cruelty: López’ (2006) omniscient narrator tells us that Enrique’s mother “wouldn’t look in Enrique’s eyes...she seemed like a stranger to him” (p. 50). Even after Juan physically assaults her son, his mother stays with him, telling Enrique that “we belong together, all of us...your brothers need their father” (p. 185).

Unlike female characters in the previous ideological categories, some in this group break with patriarchal tradition to exhibit resistance and agency over their situation. Cisneros (1983) offers a female character that consistently chooses to oppose the patriarchal arrangement of Mexican culture in order to improve her life. Esperanza observes her barrio peer, Sally - a virtual prisoner to her husband - sitting at home “because she is afraid to go out without his permission...he doesn’t let her look out the window...nobody gets to visit her unless he is working” (p. 102). She also contemplates the fate of her great-grandmother, “a wild horse of a woman,” literally captured by her great-grandfather: “she looked out the window her whole life...I have inherited her name, but I don’t want to inherit her place by the window” (p. 111).

Esperanza vows to live differently: “I have decided not to grow up tame like the others who lay their necks on the threshold for the ball and chain....I have begun my own quiet war” (p. 88).

Others indicate the desire to resist male bad behavior and express regret for their past decisions, but do not persevere in taking a stand. Trino’s mother finally rejects the poor behavior of her live-in boyfriend, Garces: “all I see is a fat drunk...doing nothing to help his family...I want you out of here, Garces” (Bertrand, 1999, p. 51). Yet no sooner than Garces is out of the house, she quickly seeks another man to fill his spot, foregoing her usual house robe for a “red-flowered shirt” and “black shorts” with “loose” hair as she “slid her hand across...the shoulder” of new boyfriend Nick (p. 28). Manny’s mother warns sister Magda not to follow in her footsteps: “don’t make the same mistake I did, Magdalena...don’t ruin your life...your father and I ran off together when I was sixteen. You were already big in my belly” (Martinez, 1996, p. 104).

Although she allows the police to arrest Manny’s father for yet another violent alcoholic episode, she later apologizes to him for her actions, promising not to “embarrass him in front of his friends” again (p. 72).

As seen in previous categories, women are also valued for their physical appearance and submissive behavior in several of the novels in the present category, and must use these features to achieve the understood goal of attracting a suitable mate. Lupita’s Aunt Consuelo buys her a new dress: “look pretty in it...perhaps some nice boy will see you...and want you for his *novia*” (p. 167). Dr. Montalvo’s wife tells Elena that she is “a very pretty girl...so feminine” (Lachtman, 1995, p. 66). Manny tells us that his sister Magda “worked hard for her beauty, teasing her hair high...blushing pink on her cheeks...smearing her lips dark as pomegranate syrup” to “smooch” (and later become pregnant by) her “secret boyfriend...by the maple trees” (pp. 92-93).

Paulsen’s (1993) character, Rosa also uses her appearance to attract men for purposes of security,

but for a very different reason; Rosa is too young for regular employment, speaks limited English, and sees no other option but prostitution. She heartbreakingly decides that she must adapt to the harsh reality of her situation in order to survive and sell herself, but maintains a conscious sense of resistance to her experiences, viewing prostitution as necessary to send money home to Mexico: “she took a shower...earlier in the morning when she finished work – because a shower made her feel clean...every night...she felt the money...it made the work easier to do” (pp. 13, 48). Rosa emotionally insulates herself by retreating to her motel room alone: “the bed was a kind of nest for her. Sometimes...when the men hurt her she would come back...and curl into the center of the bed” (p. 7).

Several of the novels feature a seemingly “broken” male character, implicitly defeated by the toll of physical labor and/or the struggles associated with economic hardship. As previously noted in my discussion of ethnicity within the novels of this category, Lupita’s Uncle Hermilio, who stays home each day and goes out drinking on the welfare money at night, has a “long, bony face...thinning hair...and heavy lids, red and bloodshot” his years of field work: “have you ever worked in the fields?” he asks Lupita and Salvador: “once you do, you won’t forget what it’s like. I never will...his voice trailed off into a coughing fit” (pp. 123-125). Manny’s father once worked for the city, but now stays in bed often “moaning from pain...from years of cranking tools and lifting sacks” (Martinez, 1996, p. 156). Manny’s father’s eyes are “dead and black” (p. 47), and he believed that “weasely guys already owned the world...anything you could do...was useless...people were like money...to my dad, we were pennies” (p. 25). Cisneros (1983) image of her great grandmother and friend Sally despondently sitting by the window also invokes an image of a “broken” character.

A few novels in this category also offer positive representations of Mexican immigrant men. Bertrand's (1999) text includes Montoya, an articulate Latino college professor, poet, and inspirational mentor to Trino. Martinez (2008) presents a loving, responsible, family-focused male in the character of Chela's father, Apá. Soto (1997) gives us "Coach," a former gang banger turned community center director who takes Eddie under his wing. Unlike novels in previous categories, these positive role models, though few, offer the protagonists a "way out" of their seemingly hopeless lives – and an alternative way of being for Mexican immigrant men. However, against the predominant backdrop of dependent and/or powerless females, broken men, and a largely patriarchal social order, the four male and five female Mexican immigrant protagonists each adapt by leaving for better opportunity, or remaining to persevere. The novels' young protagonists are able to observe and comment upon the aforementioned gender issues present in their lives, leaving readers to conclude that the characters may not repeat the same dynamics of patriarchy, traditional roles, and power relationships between the sexes that they witness at home in their own lives. These more dynamic roles within families echoes the changes in American society, as traditional gender roles in American continue to break down and evolve.

Concluding Thoughts

As we move through the ideological categories, a natural progression becomes evident. The "unattainable" category suggests the impossibility of immigrant assimilation, primarily due to issues of ethnicity; the conformity category suggests the need to choose, implying assimilation as a turn (and in some cases, betrayal) from home culture to exclusively embrace American culture; the present category of adaptation implies that assimilation may involve the addition of American culture to home culture as a separate expression in the lives of Mexican immigrants. However, the concept of assimilation becomes increasingly (and appropriately) complex within

this category: assimilation is not only an issue of culture, but also of survival, and characters within this group of novels must make some difficult decisions in order to escape or overcome the seemingly inevitable and insurmountable pull of crime and poverty. As we will see in the following (and final) ideological category of assimilation as hybridity, this complexity continues to evolve as immigrants more fluidly combine elements of culture as they explore the issue of identity.

Perhaps the most surprising revelation thus far is the wide range of publication date within each of the ideological categories: the “unattainable” category spans 1953-2009; the conformity category ranges from 1969-2008; the adaptation category more narrowly extends from 1981-2008; and as we will see (and discuss) in the next section, the hybridity group narrows even further to a range of 2001-2008. Although I expected to find ideologies of assimilation as unattainable or as conformity in the older publications, I did not expect to encounter these ideologies as frequently and pervasively as I did in some of the more recently published titles such as those by Alvarez (2009) or Nails (2008). As previously noted, the complexity of assimilation ideology increases as we move through each ideological category, and this is evident in the adaptation category. However, we are not simply moving from negative to positive representations over time, but through the more complicated intersections of ideology and representation.

“In Between” Culture: Assimilation as Hybridity

The fourth and final category of novels I will discuss includes those that primarily reflect an ideology of assimilation as *hybridity* (see *Table 7.11*). Eight of the 32 sample books (one fourth of the total) with a notably more narrow range of publication date fall within this group: *Any Small Goodness* (Johnston, 2001), *The Jumping Tree* (Saldaña, 2001), *Border Crossing*

(Cruz, 2003), *Becoming Naomi León* (Ryan, 2004), *The Tequila Worm* (Canales, 2005), *Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico* (Alegría, 2007), *Mexican Whiteboy* (de la Peña, 2008), and *He Forgot to Say Goodbye* (Sáenz, 2008).

As noted above, the publication range of novels reflecting an ideology of hybridity (2001-2008) is significantly narrower than that of the three preceding categories. These more recent dates are likely associated with the inclusion of contemporary concerns regarding Mexican immigrants in the texts, such as the dangers of illegal border crossing or the representation (or omission) of Mexican American history in school curriculum as evidenced in the recent dispute over Texas textbooks and ethnic studies programs (Noboa, 2003). The Mexican immigrant experience continues to be vividly personalized (as seen in the adaptation category), and stories are largely told from the perspective of Mexican immigrant characters, as opposed to European American characters or omniscient narrators. Protagonists and other characters in this category display a hybrid expression of culture, constantly mixing and remixing elements of Mexican and European American culture and language to form a completely new and evolving identity as they navigate life in the United States. Mexican immigrant characters also reflect a great deal of agency over their own lives, making decisions about how they will (or will not) assimilate, what particular elements of culture will be retained, adopted, or altered, and how they may resist the negative pull of crime or poverty. In contrast with the adaptation categories' protagonists who often sought to separate their cultural lives inside and outside the home or to simply survive the hardship of poverty and crime, many of the protagonists and their families in this group live a uniquely "remixed" cultural life, searching for their own identities, maintaining close family ties, and contributing positively to their communities and to American society. Although issues of crime and poverty remain an ever-

present concern in these characters' lives, the young protagonists in this group focus intently upon issues of personal, individual identity: hybridity, as previously discussed in the work of Homi Bhabha (2004), is conceptualized as a unique and continuously evolving expression (or rearticulation) of culture for each individual and family.

Johnston's *Amy Small Goodness* (2001) offers an example of a novel within this category. Arturo's strong, loving family lives in a dangerous Los Angeles barrio, yet actively resists and rejects the "measly types" (p. 86) of gang members around them to form a protective "ring of Rodriguezes" containing "all that matters in the whole world" (p. 99). The Rodriguezes demonstrate a strong sense of agency by assimilating to American life on their *own* terms rather than those of others, deciding how they will identify themselves, what elements of both cultures they will embrace or retain, and how they will include (or perhaps repurpose) elements of these to form their own personal Mexican American identities. The family speaks both Spanish and English, often remixing the languages into what Arturo terms "full pocho...an English Spanish mix" (p. 10). Arturo's teacher attempts to Americanize his name, and although he is tempted to embrace the name "Arthur" to fit in, his family encourages him to retain his Mexican name. The Rodriguezes enjoy elements of both American and Mexican culture, watching the Lakers play basketball (p. 43), eating Mexican foods (tamales, chile rellenos), and listening to both Elvis Presley (p. 120) and Mega Mango (p. 84). Holidays are also a combination of cultural affiliation: the family's "Day of the Dead altar" features "sugar skulls" as well as "two small flags, American and Mexican" (p. 95).

However, the happy family also experiences the all-too-real trauma of life in the barrio: a drive-by shooting terrifies the Rodriguezes, especially 6-year old Rosa, and destroys the feeling of security they once knew. The family refuses to be victimized by the gang, and counters the

barrio violence with their own acts of kindness by delivering trees and food to needy families in the community despite their own economic difficulties. Arturo's father powerfully expresses his philosophy of living, telling his son that "in life there is *bueno* [good] and there is *malo* [bad]. If you do not find enough of the good, you must create it...any small goodness is of value" (p. 103). Johnston (2001) immerses readers into the hybridity of the Rodriguez family's barrio life by fluidly, intricately and extensively weaving Spanish into the English text, clarifying words and phrases within the context of the novel, and offering an extensive glossary as well.

Other novels in the sample also feature close-knit, two parent households: *The Jumping Tree* (Saldaña, 2001) and *The Tequila Worm* (Canales, 2005) each reinforce the centrality of family in the lives of Mexican immigrant characters. Canales' (2005) protagonist, Sofia, leaves the safety and comfort of her Mexican American home to attend a prestigious (and primarily European American) boarding school on scholarship along with another school peer. Although the young teen speaks fluent English and enjoys American music, foods, and popular culture, she also feels drawn to adhere to her Mexican heritage, and carries a few religious icons along with her to school. Saldaña's novel portrays a family living a *transnational* life of "here and there" (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 4), remaining emotionally connected to family in Mexico, and crossing back and forth across the Mexican border from Texas on a regular basis to visit extended family members and shop at an open air market. Although Ryan's (2004) protagonist, Naomi León and her brother live with extended family members rather than their parents, they too live in a close and loving environment. Each of these texts calls upon the strength of family ties – both in and outside of the United States - to stand strong against difficulty, as well as to serve as a home base for the formation of new and evolving cultural identities.

However, some novels present protagonists with fewer chances and choices, echoing the themes of survival presented in novels within the previous category such as those of Soto (1997) and Paulsen (1993). Sáenz' text features a Mexican immigrant male protagonist, Ramiro Lopez, who struggles with the absence of his Mexican American father. Living in an essentially segregated community that he calls "Dizzy Land" on the poor side of El Paso, Ramiro helplessly watches as his younger brother descends into a life of gangs and drugs, eventually overdosing (Sáenz, 2008, p. 303). Yet Ramiro turns to friends Jake (European American) and the feisty and hopeful Alejandra for comfort; this unlikely group forms a tight bond with each other, adopting elements of each culture into their friendship: "there were so many words I wanted to get rid of," Jake says, "and so many words I wanted to learn" (p. 321). The character of Alejandra presents a particularly compelling image of hybridity, moving easily among European and Mexican American friends, fluidly mixing languages, refusing to accept limitations associated with her gender or economic condition, and claiming assertively that "the world belongs to those who take it...the world belongs to everyone" (p. 178-179). Alejandra also rejects ethnic categorization: "I'm not sure what people mean when they say 'You're thinking like a Mexican' or 'You're thinking all white' ...I think I am somewhere in between...I live on the border...in between two countries...in between everybody's rules" (p. 57)

Issues of Story & Representations of Ethnicity

Issues of story are similar to those seen in the previous category of adaptation, and their combination provides rich opportunities for cultural exploration in the texts. Novels in the present group are predominantly authored by an even division of Latino and Latinas; only Johnston (2001) is European American, yet her 15-year residence in Mexico and her subsequent life in California lend authenticity to her author's voice, allowing her to "sit at the table"

(Woodson, 1998, p. 38) of both Mexican *and* Mexican American culture. Protagonists are entirely Mexican immigrant (and also evenly divided between male and female), with one incidence of dual (European and Mexican American) protagonists (Sáenz, 2008). Notably, first person narration (6 of 8) is predominantly used for story conveyance: only two novels (Alegría, 2007; de la Peña, 2008) convey the story through the voice of a distanced observer (see *Tables* 7.3 & 7.7). All of these issues combine to provide rich opportunities for the exploration of cultural identity and hybridity through the frequently vivid and poignant voices of the immigrants themselves.

As seen in the previous category, physical differences between Mexican and European Americans are generally less delineated in these texts. However, physical features cause concern for some characters as they struggle with a disparity between their outward appearance and their internal cultural identities: Danny Lopez is “Mexican, because his family’s Mexican, but he’s not really *Mexican*. His skin is dark like his grandma’s sweet coffee, but his insides are as pale as the cream she mixes in” (de la Peña, 2008, p. 90). Born in Mexico, but raised in the United States, California teen Sofi Mendoza does not like being the “different-looking one” in a school where “all her friends were white” (Alegría, 2007, p. 122). Multi-ethnic, American-born teen Cesi, whose parents are Mexican and European American, also connects her physical features to cultural identity, stating that if her “skin were darker” and her “hair browner” perhaps she would “be more Mexican” (Cruz, 2003, p. 47). Cesi’s peers often speculate about her heritage based upon her appearance: “your features are interesting...where did you say your parents are from? Portugal? Spain?” they ask (p. 47).

Also similarly to ideologies of adaption, Mexican immigrant protagonists are represented as responsible, moral, and ethical characters who seek to live successfully and lawfully within

American society. Secondary characters often display negative attributes such as drunkenness or criminality that serve as a contrasting backdrop for the protagonists struggling to live a good life. Rey's friend Chuy robs a local store: "he was all drugged up...they expelled him from school and arrested him" (Saldaña, 2001, p. 134); Danny's (now incarcerated) father and uncles "got in a lot of trouble...some pretty violent stuff. Fights and assaults" (de la Peña, 2008, p. 124); Ramiro's brother Tito sinks into crime and addiction: "those eyes [Tito's] are stone. And they hate...he takes...anything he can get his hands on...to sell them and try to score some dope" (Sáenz, 2008, p. 24).

However, immigrant families are portrayed as strong, unified, and loving. Arturo contemplates his family's "strong as stones" bond with each other: "in L.A. there's bad. Druggies. Gangs. Thieves...then there's this... 'love each other. Help each other...*yeah*, I think" (Johnston, 2001, p. 63). Canales (2005) also portrays a strong and loving Mexican immigrant family: Sofia thinks of her family's commitment to sharing and supporting each other following an accusation that she did not seek enough individual notoriety on her school soccer team: "I thought about how much I missed my family...even [sister] Lucy would have passed the ball...that was how teams worked...that was what I'd been taught" (p. 144). Although Sofia speaks English laced with Spanish words, and enjoys her American friends, clothing, participation in school activities, she still feels that her Mexican American family's rituals such as the Novena (nine days of rosaries to get a deceased family member's soul to heaven) remains at the center of her life, connecting her to "something higher" (p. 193). Rey admires his tough-yet-tender male family members and friends, who fearlessly defend loved ones, persevere despite adversity, yet also express emotion: "There had to be more to being a man than acting tough and getting into trouble...Felipe [friend] had it. Apá and Tío Angel had it. I wanted it...I know for

certain that I admired them more for their ways than I looked up to [friend] Willy for his danger factor” (Saldaña, 2001, p. 154).

References to traditional ethnic clothing are infrequent and isolated in this group of novels; the incidences of characters wearing traditional clothing typically reflect ethnic pride upon visiting Mexican family. Only one of the novels in the present category mentions a character wearing traditional ethnic clothing: American-born, multi-ethnic Naomi (European American mother, Mexican father) embraces her Mexican heritage when she wears Mexican clothing for the first time during a visit to the country seeking her father. “I admired the Mexican girl looking back at me. I wore a new white peasant blouse with puffed sleeves....a pair of slide-in sandals called huraches...I knew I fit in with all the other brown girls in the barrio” she tells us (Ryan, 2004, p. 169). However, Naomi is an exception: most Mexican immigrant characters, regardless of cultural blend or affiliation, choose to wear American clothing.

Living on the Border: Issues of Cultural Identity

Particular cultural observances or ways of living are represented in personal and vivid detail from an “insider” perspective. However, some protagonists struggle with issues of cultural loyalty regarding these traditions. Sofia’s strong, religious, and ethnically traditional family enjoys making cascarones (decorated eggs), celebrating quinceañeras (15th birthday celebrations for girls), honoring deceased relatives on the Day of the Dead (November 1st), and participating in the Christmas Nacimiento (nativity scene). The more Americanized young protagonist, Sofia, however, does not want to be entirely defined by these cultural traditions: “I want to see new things...go to college, make money...maybe become a lawyer” (p. 45). Sofia feels an uncomfortable pull of cultural ties as she enters a private Episcopal boarding school: “part of me just wants to go, go, go – from Saint Luke’s [boarding school] to college to medical school...but

when I talk to Mama, I feel that I need and want to stay close...it's confusing" (pp. 159-160).

Johnston's (2001) protagonist, Arturo, also struggles with issues of loyalty, cultural identity and assimilation to American culture regarding his traditional family name: "my parents hate that I'm Arthur...with such a name as Arthur, I'll fit in at this school...American names are cool...tough tortillas. I'm going gringo" (pp. 9-11). Yet Arturo later feels his that his heart is "squeezed out" by Americanizing his name: "to give up my name" is to "give up my family," he reflects (p. 18). Each of these characters demonstrates the often conflicted feelings and struggles of characters who attempt to negotiate a hybrid identity that incorporates both Mexican and American culture.

Some protagonists struggle with issues related to their multicultural ethnicity and feelings of cultural displacement: Danny Lopez has a European American mother and a Mexican American father, yet lives an Americanized life in the United States, attending a private school on scholarship, and living with his mother in a San Diego barrio (de la Peña, 2008). Feeling "whitewashed" (41) like a "fake Mexican" (p. 188), Danny longs to "be real" (p. 188) and know more about his absent father. He decides to spend the summer with his Mexican father's family in National City, yet soon feels like an "outsider" there as well due to his light skin and lack of Spanish. Although he is disappointed to learn that his father is in prison for assault – and not living in Mexico as he previously thought - he resolves to become a successful ball player in the United States. His mother tells him that his quest for identity will be an endless and lifelong process: "it never stops, you know...even when you get old like your mom and dad. You're still trying to figure out who the heck you are...sometimes it all gets so confusing you don't know which way to turn" (p. 194).

As seen in previous novels, some embark upon an identity quest to explore issues of cultural identity, and return with a new sense of hybridity. Americanized, multiethnic teen Cesi

Alvarez sets out to her grandmother's house in Mexico to "figure out" who she is (Cruz, 2003, p. 4). Cesi's prior exposure to Mexican culture was limited to a "heroes and holidays" approach to multiculturalism via her European American mother or school: "Most of what I knew about Mexico I learned from Mom or school...stuff about holidays and music...we ate a lot of Mexican food" (p. 36). Cesi returns home enamored with "the green and brown, and corn, and laughter, and music...and good stuff" (p. 117) of Mexico, eagerly seeking to learn Spanish and to incorporate her newfound Mexican heritage into her life. Ryan's protagonist, Naomi León (2004) also travels to Mexico, but for a slightly different (and more urgent) reason: given over at birth to her great-grandmother, Naomi is now in jeopardy of being returned to her recently resurfaced alcoholic mother, Skyla. Naomi and "Gram" find her loving father, Santiago, and Naomi learns that she shares his wood carving skills. Although Naomi returns to California without Santiago, her relationship with him is renewed, and she feels that she is finally "becoming who she was meant to be" (p. 246) – a strong, assertive Mexican American youth.

Alegria's (2007) Sofi Mendoza also experiences a transformation following a visit to Mexico. Unexpectedly detained in Mexico following a party across the border (her green card was expired), the youth meets her Mexican relatives, and returns to the U.S. with a new sense of identity. Moving from a "normal" life of "becoming more American" (p. 8) to an unsettled feeling of cultural displacement, Sofi feels "removed from everyone around her...as if she were inside a bubble, watching all this [life in the United States upon her return] with her Mexican eyes" (p. 274). Sofi claims to now finally "know who she was...a border girl. Not fully American or Mexican...a bridge between cultures, the best of both worlds...she'd always belong to both sides of the fence" (p. 276). Although expressed through different circumstances, each of

these largely Americanized protagonists awaken their sense of Mexican identity, and will implicitly incorporate this new discovery into their lives in the United States.

However, some immigrant characters appear generally comfortable and confident in their own sense of “remixed” cultural identity. Sáenz’s (2008) feisty Alejandra is perhaps the best illustration of hybridity in the entire sample: in contrast with protagonist Ramiro’s insecurity regarding cultural identity, Alejandra asserts that “the world belongs to those who take it” (p. 178). Ram [Ramiro] recognizes Alejandra’s sense of agency and identity: “Alejandra is the only person I know who knows who she is...I don’t even think I even want to know who I am. What would be the point?” (p. 209). Ram feels unmoored by his lack of full identification with either “white” or Mexican culture: “I think I am somewhere in between...I live on the border...in between two countries” (p. 57). Ram hesitates to explore the possibilities of moving beyond his social group, and seeks the comfort and safety of “hanging out with his own kind,” a tendency Alejandra rejects as “provincial” (p. 123). However, an unexpected (and unconventional) friendship with affluent European American school peer Jake, and his growing camaraderie with Alejandra, soon pulls Ram forward into an increasingly confident sense of identity, both Mexican and American. Visiting a restaurant on the Mexican/Texas border, Ram, Jake and Alejandra order a “bowl of menudo” that “only real Mexicans” ate, and Ram observes that even the European American “Border Patrol guys” ate menudo too - “we all lived in the same world,” he concludes (p. 261).

Issues of Language

The eight sample novels with primary ideologies of assimilation as hybridity generally display a more fluid incorporation of Spanish into the English text. Two of the books (Alegría, 2007 & Johnston, 2001) include glossaries of Spanish words and phrases, and all offer

clarification of Spanish terms within the body of the novel. Unlike some of the novels in previous categories, all of the novels correctly use punctuation, spelling, and Spanish terminology within the text. Although the extent to which Spanish is woven into the English text varies, most typically include the Spanish language on every page of the novel: only Cruz's (2003) book offers very few Spanish words. As seen in novels within the previous three categories, Spanish terminology is generally italicized: only Saldaña's (2001) novel does not set apart Spanish words with italics, perhaps underscoring the natural blend and flow of the Spanish and English languages in the lives and conversation of his characters.

The Spanish language is also infrequently described in this group of novels. In contrast with the specific "outsider" descriptions of Spanish seen in the first group of novels with ideologies of assimilation as unattainable (chattering, rapid-fire, unintelligible), only Ryan's (2004) novel offers an observation of Spanish through the eyes of American-born Naomi León: "Fabiola spoke in Spanish, the words racing off her tongue" (p. 35); "Bernardo started talking fast and excited in Spanish" (p. 189). Cruz's (2003) American-born protagonist, Cesi comments upon the accented speech of Mexican-born immigrants: "Tony had the slight accent particular to kids whose parents were from Mexico...perfect English with a slightly richer sound" (pp. 26-27). The rest of the novels, regardless of narration, feature characters speaking Spanish (and blending it with English) in a natural manner, and do not provide commentary upon the sound, qualities, or intelligibility of the language from the perspective of others.

The approach to language by characters and their families varies within this group of novels. Some novels such as those by Canales (2005), Johnston (2001), and Saldaña (2001) feature immigrant protagonists who display a hybrid remix of language and culture, yet their families demonstrate a more adaptive or bicultural approach to their lives. Some family and

community members resist using English in a similar manner to Mamacita in Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* (1983): bilingual protagonist Rey's Ama "never learned English" (Saldaña, 2001, p. 29). Conversely (yet also resistant), Rey's neighbor, Edwin "never learned Spanish" despite being the "patriarch of the only family in all of the barrio made up of whites and Mexicans" (p. 29). Arturo's grandmother clings to the comfort and cultural identification of her home language, using "Spanish only" and strongly opposing the Americanization of Arturo's name (Johnston, 2001, p. 17). His parents, however, encourage him to "have Eenglish [*sic*] in your pocket...for the dirty doubts" (p. 8). Arturo notices the changes in his language habits with the blending of languages: "my Spanish's a little crippled from pouring the English on" (p. 12), yet he enjoys using combined expressions such as "*muy* cool" (very cool), slipping into what he terms "full *pocho*, an English Spanish mix" (p. 10).

Although the protagonists display hybridity, several of the novels reflect elements of conformity regarding the parent's approach to language or culture. Characters in these novels express concern that the use of Spanish (and/or lack of English) will limit opportunities for themselves and their children. Sofi's Mexican American parents equate assimilation with acquisition (and good execution) of the English language: they speak Spanish at home, but also aggressively pursue English by listening to "Follow Me to America" tapes. Sofi is placed in "English-only" kindergarten classes out of concern that "two languages would be too difficult for her to master" due to her lisp (p. 19), and consequently faces chastisement from Mexican American friends in high school due to her imperfect Spanish. However, Sofi's parents are proud of her poor Spanish, "bragging about her crappy Spanish verb conjugations as if it were a sign of their assimilation" (p. 40). Cesi's Mexican American father also chooses to speak only English at home, although her grandmother "wouldn't speak English even though she understood it" (Cruz,

2003, p. 7). Cesi “didn’t like to speak Spanish” because it set her apart from her European American peers, yet changes her mind after an “identity quest” to Mexico (p. 8).

Issues of power, position, and resistance are also evidenced in relation to language. Saldaña’s (2001) novel contains overtones of the Chicano Movement, and alludes to the often inaccurate or incomplete representations of Mexican American history in school textbooks. Rey’s father instills cultural pride in his son: “no matter what they teach you in school...don’t forget where you come from, and don’t ever be embarrassed about speaking Spanish. It’s the language of our people” (p. 51). Saldaña’s novel also briefly references the tenets of multiculturalism when Rey encounters opposition to his use of Spanish. A bigoted European American counselor at a Baptist summer camp chastises Rey and his friend, Juan for using Spanish in his presence: “Don’t you talk in Spanish! It’s rude when there’s others who don’t understand...we’re in the United States of America, and you will speak English,” he says (p. 166). However, another European American counselor (and perhaps an “Anglo benefactor”) responds in the boy’s defense: “yes, we are in America, but we are bicultural and bilingual...you are in the minority here and should behave accordingly” (p. 170). However, despite changes within recent years, America is *not* a bicultural and bilingual nation: the previous quote is an unusually bold and unprecedented statement in this sample - especially in light of the current controversy surrounding bilingual education and ethnic studies programs in the United States.

Bhabha’s (1994) suggestion that hybridity involves issues of power at the intersections of culture seems evident in the above textual excerpt. Clearly (and perhaps somewhat didactically) the European American counselor wished to control how language was used among his multiethnic campers, seeking to censure and control Rey and Juan’s use of Spanish words and phrases in the group. Issues of power are also present in the resistant behaviors of those who

refuse to (or reluctantly) learn another language, such as Cesi's grandmother (Cruz, 2003) and Rey's mother (Saldanã, 2001). However, characters in this category of ideology such Saézn's (2008) strong and assertive Alejandra challenge those who may seek to limit the opportunities of Mexican immigrants, refusing to allow themselves to be culturally cast in a certain position.

In summary, language is a means of expressing cultural hybridity for many of the protagonists in this group of texts. Novels seamlessly and naturally weave Spanish into the English text through the voices of their young protagonists, accurately represent the Spanish language, and pull readers into the flow with clarifying language and informative glossaries. Spanish is not often specifically described in these texts, but is instead incorporated into the language of the novels' characters. Mexican immigrant protagonists and others combine elements of English and Spanish to form individual, unique, and hybrid renditions of language and expressions of culture. Issues of power occasionally arise regarding the use of language via the desire of European Americans to restrict the use of Spanish (Saldaña, 2001) or the reluctance of some to use English as a sign of perceived conformity or surrender of cultural loyalty.

Issues of Power and Position: Racism, Epithets, and Anglo Benefactors

Similar to those of the adaptation category, the novels do not possess overtones of cultural supremacy. Neither European American nor Mexican culture is portrayed as more desirable: the emphasis instead is upon cultural "re-creation." Although incidences of Anglo benevolence are rare in this category, European American characters occasionally act to assist immigrants by intervening in bullying (Canales, 2005; Saldaña, 2001), or anonymously endow barrio libraries with books (Johnston, 2001). However, with the exception of Canales's text, the tone of these interventions is helpful – not paternalistic.

Although incidences of racism are minimally addressed in the previous category, novels displaying ideologies of hybridity take up these issues. Representations of racism often take the form of ethnic epithets, and are typically levied by secondary European American characters: siblings Naomi and Owen Outlaw are taunted by a European American boy who preys upon their last name to invoke a stereotype: “Hey! It’s the Outlaws, and one looks like a Mexican *bandido*. Steal anything lately?” (Ryan, 2004, p. 67); young “A-group” protagonist Reynaldo (Saldaña, 2001, p. 136) escapes ethnic taunting (perhaps due to his academic success and/or many European American friends), yet his first generation immigrant father bears painful memories: “I remember working in the fields...people at school and in the barrios called us *mojaditos*...wetbacks, here for money. On the news, white people always complained about how wetbacks took jobs away from American citizens” (pp. 49-51). Canales’ (2005) protagonist, Sofia experiences ethnic teasing during lunch at school: “some kids call all Mexican Americans *beaners*...Taco head! Taco head!...I was surrounded by kids chanting” (Canales, 2005 p. 37). The incident is minimized, and the perpetrators are not addressed, as previously seen in Sheena’s bullying of Juanita in Velásquez’s (1994) novel within the category of conformity: European American Coach Clark blows her whistle to disperse the crowd, telling Sofia not to “pay attention to them [the bullies]. They’re just being mean and silly” (p. 38). Although the coach intervenes and helps Sofia, the behavior of the perpetrators is never addressed. Sofia also experiences ethnic bullying at her private boarding school, as European American peer Terry repeatedly takes Sofia’s saint statues from her dorm room: “everything from Mexico...has worms...why don’t you and your morbid saints wiggle back across the border” Terry writes to Sofia (p. 146). Like Coach Clark, Sofia’s friend Brooke also minimizes the incident, and does

not indict the perpetrator: “I’m really sorry...it was Terry’s idea of a cool prank...but it was just as dumb as she is. Don’t take it personally. She is just mean” (p. 146).

Alegría’s (2007) text takes a didactic approach to epithets. Sofi Mendoza ironically recoils at being called a “wettie” by American tourists while trapped in Juarez, remembering her own use of that word in the past: “they were making fun of her...and they were using her word: wettie...heat rose in her chest. She was no wetback. That word was just plain racist and mean” (Alegría, 2007, p. 247). Sofi stands up to the perpetrators: “Shame on you...who do you think you are, judging me because of the way I look?” (p. 248). “It felt good to defend herself and her country,” Sofi thought; “it stirred within her a strange but comfortable sense of belonging” (p. 248). She returns to the U.S. a changed (yet somewhat “displaced”) person: “Mexico chewed up her old self and spit out a new and improved Sofi...there were things she hadn’t noticed before, like the Mexican delivery boy...on an old bike...a dark-skinned woman...pushing a shopping cart full of laundry...she felt removed from everyone around her” (pp. 269-274).

Representations of Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status continues to be represented through several means in this category’s novels. Descriptions of immigrant characters’ occupations, living conditions, relationships to European Americans or others with more privileged circumstances, and the emotional impact of their circumstances upon them all contribute to this representation. As seen in the majority of novels across the entire sample, Mexican immigrant families are frequently represented as employed in blue collar, clerical, retail, or other service-related (and often subservient) positions: Sofi Mendoza’s father is a carpet layer (Alegría, 2007); Ram’s mother is an “assistant nurse to a doctor,” and his absent father worked construction (Sáenz, 2008, p. 21); Arturo’s father is a salesman in a Mexican furniture store (Johnston, 2001); Rey’s father is an

asphalt paver (Saldaña, 2001). Naomi's European American great grandmother, which whom she lives, is a retired seamstress, but her Mexican father is a fisherman and skilled wood artisan in Mexico (Ryan, 2004). Although Cruz (2003) does not specifically mention the occupation of her protagonist's family, Cesi notes the "unfairness" of agricultural workers' wages and working conditions as she and her mother purchase produce from a roadside vendor: "a lot of Mexican-American people" who "worked on farms...didn't get paid very much...and were not treated well" (Cruz, 2003, pp. 19-20).

Also consistent with the many of the sample novels in previous categories, Mexican immigrant families largely live in lower working-class or impoverished barrios. Only Alegría (2007) portrays an immigrant family living in more comfortable circumstances: Sofi's Americanized family resembles others seen within the ideology of conformity such as those portrayed in novels by Resau (2006) and McGinley (1998), owning a townhome in a "private gated community" in Los Angeles - although in a less desirable "bottom of the hill" location (Alegría, 2007, p. 7). Four of the novels feature families living in houses, though none clearly delineate ownership: Rey's family lives in a "flat-roof stucco house" with an outside "shed" for laundry (Saldaña, 2001 pp. 21-24) located near the border, "a stone's throw from Mexico" (p. 3); the street in front of Rey's house is "paved with only loose rocks" (p. 83). His friend, Chuy and his family are agricultural workers, move seasonally with the crops, and live in a "pickup with a camper" (p. 5). Cesi describes her neighborhood as "literally on the wrong side of the [railroad] tracks" that divide her town, but also tells us that "it was not a really bad neighborhood," just poorer in contrast with the "other side": "there were a lot of houses that could use a new paint job, or a new car, or a nicer lawn...houses on the other side...had fresh paint, cars for everyone sixteen and over, beautiful green lawns...and big blue swimming pools" (Cruz, 2001, p. 12).

Although extensive descriptions are not offered, Canales (2005) and Johnston (2001) also feature families living in barrio houses. Sofia (Canales, 2005) contrasts her neighborhood community with those across town: describes trick or treating with her friends on “the other side of town...where she got whole chocolate candy bars and quarters” at a “white brick mansion” with a “lit-up button” and an “enormous door” with a “gold handle” (p. 31). Ram lives in an “ordinary” house on the “poor side” of El Paso in what he describes as “Dizzy Land” (Sáenz, 2008, p. 217). Echoing the sentiment expressed in the previous adaptation category by Enrique in *Call Me Henri* (López, 2006), Ram asserts that “Hollywood screenwriters didn’t know about how we [Mexican Americans] lived,” citing frequent film and television representations of Mexican Americans living in “houses that were all graffitied [*sic*] and full of rats” (p. 217). Ram calls his European American friend, Jake’s more affluent side of town the “Oh-Wow West Side” (p. 53), noting Jake’s eighty-dollar shorts...one-hundred-dollar jeans and straight paid-for teeth” (p. 54). Ram notes that “poor...working-class Mexican-American” kids attend the public school, Jefferson High, while the “good, intelligent pre-med” students attend classes in a “separate facility” (pp. 47, 53). Ironically, despite Ram’s expressed contempt for the elitist attitude of the magnet school’s largely segregated student body (“what are we gonna do to those kids...infect them with Mexican ways of thinking?”), Ram’s mother sends him to the magnet school in hopes of better opportunities (p. 53).

Two families live in trailers or apartments, as also seen in previous categories of novels. Naomi León lives with her brother and European American great grandmother in a small Airstream trailer dubbed “Baby Beluga” (Ryan, 2004, p. 3), wearing “Gram’s homemade clothes and clothing from the “Second Time Around Shop” (p. 46). Danny’s Mexican relatives live in an impoverished and implicitly dangerous barrio reminiscent of that described by Soto’s

protagonist, Eddie in *Buried Onions* (1997): de la Peña's omniscient narrator tells us that Danny "stares out the window at...the faces of broken-down apartment complexes...houses with bars on every window...graffiti on garage doors...a few boarded up, weeds high as mailboxes" (de la Peña, 2008, p. 64). And as discussed in a previous section, Johnston's (2001) Rodriguez family also lives in a dangerous barrio, experiencing the devastation of a drive-by shooting into their otherwise peaceful home. The family is poor, yet positively approaches their situation by focusing heavily upon the value of family: "our family follows the Rodriguez Policy of Navidad, of one person giving a present to only one other person...you have to give a part of your heart...like something you make or write or do" (p. 117).

Perhaps the most poignant representations of socioeconomic status in these novels are those that convey the emotional impact of poverty and barrio life upon the lives of the characters. As previously seen in *House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1983), *Sisters/Hermanas* (Paulsen, 1993), and *Buried Onions* (Soto, 1997), characters often suffer losses, make difficult and painful decisions, and/or act in ways they would prefer not to in order to adapt and survive. Saldaña (2001) offers another such incident: young Rey and his father are forced to abandon their mangle-ridden family pet on the "lonely road that led back from the town dump" because they cannot afford a veterinary visit. "We had to do it, Rey. He was too sick...I tried not to think that he'd been run over...or beaten to death... or suffered from hunger...and died a painful, lonely death" (pp. 47-52). Canales also conveys the shame felt by Sofia as she searches the bins of "Johnson's Ropa Usada" for dresses to take to private school: "if you bought something here, you also acquired the dubious honor of wearing a shirt or dress that everyone else in the entire country had rejected...even those who got their clothes at secondhand stores" (2005, p. 98). These and other representations underscore the often harsh reality of the characters' lives and

circumstances, yet also indicate the resilience and hopefulness of the characters in the wake of such difficulty.

In addition to some novels' comparisons of neighborhoods and barrios on opposite sides of town, a few of the novels also contrast life in the United States with living conditions in the country of Mexico. Sofi Mendoza's Mexican grandmother, Benita lives in "a peeling pink shack," surrounded by a "metal fence" with "big rips" and a "neglected yard" (Alegría, 2007, p. 115). Sofi observes young Mexican children at the border "with sad gazes," selling "gum, wooden snake toys...beaded jewelry," and "indigenous women with long thick braids and dark shawls" pushing "vending carts under which babies slept" (p. 27). Upon reentering the United States following a dispute over her green card, Sofi notes the "freeway...lined with trees...even the sky was clear...the smooth ride, like rolling on silk...nice and well organized houses...Sofi knew she was blessed" (p. 268). Naomi León also compares her Mexican surroundings to that of her home in the United States as she travels to the country to locate her father: "we headed down a road that was nothing more than a dirt path lined with ramshackle houses...the size and condition of some...make Baby Beluga [her Airstream trailer home] look like a mansion" (Ryan, 2004, p. 174).

Cruz (2003) also references Mexican poverty versus American prosperity. Cesi contemplates the poverty of children begging at the Mexican border: "the kids were wearing raggedy clothes...two sizes too small...my friends and I...had no idea what 'poor' really meant" (p. 49). However, Cesi's cousin, Tony describes Mexico's living conditions in a more favorable manner: "Mexico is green and brown...little villages with big farms...lots of grass...and towns where electricity is something not everyone has" (p. 67). Saldaña (2001) echoes this perspective of Mexican life as simple and rural rather than backwards or

impoverished: Rey observes that “just across the border...people still walked to work, there was still a milkman, a water truck brought drinking water,” and “fruit and vegetable vendors walked up and down streets” (p. 67).

Representations of Gender

Although traditional representations of gender continue to appear to some extent in the actions and words of secondary characters, the Mexican immigrant protagonists (and in most cases, their families) in this ideological category largely display resistance to these cultural norms and expectations. Several feisty, assertive, and strong female characters appear in this group of novels, including the aforementioned Alejandra (Saéñz, 2008), Ram’s responsible, “pushy” aunt, Tía Lisa (Saéñz, 2008, p. 106), Arturo’s outspoken grandmother, Abuelita (Johnston, 2001), and Sofia’s legendary “kicking mule” great-great-grandmother, Mama Maria (Canales, 2005, p. 2). Although the representations of these characters may echo the image of the Mexican spitfire popularized in films and television as discussed in Chapter 4, they exhibit a sense of agency, responsibility, and maturity that did not accompany the earlier images of Mexican American women as hot-headed, demonstrative and emotional.

Two of the novels refer to the sexuality of Mexican immigrant females. Sofi’s European American boyfriend, Nick calls her his “Latina caliente” – a moniker she does not appreciate (Alegría, 2007, p. 55). Alejandra is also harassed by European American Abe, whom she suspects “thinks I’m easy just because I’m Mexican” (Saéñz, 2008, p. 222). She later asks protagonist Jake if he is one of those [European American] guys that just wants to lay a Mexican girl” (p. 244). In contrast with the representations of females in previous categories, these girls are approached as “harlot” stereotypes (also seen in film and television) by European American boys, yet actively resist this categorization through their words and behaviors.

Although secondary female characters are represented as domestic homemakers, largely uneducated and lacking ambition beyond marriage and family, the young female protagonists in this group of novels generally want more for themselves. Sofia's Mama tells her she should be "more like [friend] Berta...planning her *quinceañera*" (p. 65), but Sofia tells her that she does not want the traditional coming out party: "I want to see new things...go to college," she says (p. 45). "You're the one breaking the mold," Berta tells her: "Almost all the women in our family got married and settled down before finishing high school" (p. 164). Although marriage is part of her "American dreams," Sofi places education and financial success ahead of finding a man: "after she graduated [from college], she'd be sure to make tons of money" before beginning her life with boyfriend Nick (p. 6). Danny's mother eventually rejects her wealthy lifestyle with European American boyfriend Randy – a "beautiful, well-established man" (p. 93) – and returns to San Diego: "I'm tired of chasing after all these men...no man can make it better. 'All better' isn't something you can find in a man" (de la Peña, 2008, p. 193). Each of these female characters acts in opposition to traditional conceptions of patriarchy, wherein females are submissive to (and dependent upon) males for their survival and wellbeing. Unlike the often abused and/or helpless female characters seen in previous novels such as Enrique's (López, 2006) or Trino's mother (Bertrand, 1999), these girls and women act with agency to provide for themselves, take care of their own needs, or procure an education to ensure their future opportunities. Ryan's novel, *Becoming Naomi León* (2004) also features a female character who defies traditionally prescribed gender roles. Young Naomi discovers that she possesses her Mexican father's talent for wood carving, and proudly carries on the family tradition by returning to participate with family members in a festival in Mexico each year – a role traditionally filled by male family members.

Although things have improved, remnants of patriarchy and gender stereotyping do continue to surface in the novels as we would expect: Ram's mother later proves herself to be "fierce and beautiful" (Saézn, 2008, p. 309) following his brother's death, but Ram views her early in the novel as inevitably needing (or wanting) a man. Pondering the possibility of his mother dating again in the absence of his father, Ram muses that "if my mom ever got interested in another man" it "wouldn't necessarily mean she was looking for a father for me and Tito...women don't like being alone" (Saézn, 2008, p. 20). It is not conceivable (or perhaps culturally acceptable) to Ram at this point that women may choose to live independently, happily, and successfully without male companionship.

Although their mothers, aunts, and family friends keep the home and family running and largely perform domestic duties, the young female protagonists look beyond these roles to imagine different sorts of lives for themselves. Sofi's Mexican cousin, Yesenia informs her that "Modern [Mexican] guys are like Americans. They think a woman should go to college, work, and pay for her own drinks" (Alegría, 2007, p. 185). This "American" mentality regarding female gender roles has taken root in the female protagonists in this category, and contributes to the hybridity of the characters. The young Mexican immigrant women (and some older characters as well) are increasingly empowered by the opportunities for independence, agency, and self sufficiency available to women in American culture, and use these to their advantage.

Representations of Mexican immigrant male characters also differ from many of those seen in previous ideological categories. Although family structure and relationships do continue to revolve around a patriarchal arrangement in many of the novels, male heads of household in novels by Johnston (2001), Saldaña (2001), Cruz (2003) and Canales (2005) are increasingly gentle, compassionate, and attentive to their families. This stands in contrast to previous images

of Mexican immigrant men as irresponsible, drunken, or hopelessly “broken” as seen in novels by Beatty (1981), Martinez (1996), and Soto (1997). The traditional image of the “macho” male is redefined: “My father’s the kind of person who removes his hat in a restaurant and blesses his plate of tacos. Not prime gang material,” says Arturo (Johnston, 2001, p. 13)...“He’s the real macho...strong enough to be gentle” (p. 82). Saldaña’s (2001) protagonist, Rey also observes his father’s brand of “macho” as compared to his uncle, Tío Santo and friend Chuy (both of whom are eventually killed): “there had to be more to being a man than acting tough and getting into trouble...Apá and Tío Angel had it. I wanted it...I admired them for their ways than I looked up to [friend] Willy for his danger factor” (p. 154).

Secondary characters often portray stereotypical or negative representations of Mexican immigrant males that stand in contrast to those of the protagonist and/or his family. Rey’s friend, Chuy encourages him to “become a man” by drinking, gambling, and playing pool in a local establishment, but Rey declines, remembering his commitment to mow the lawn (Saldaña, 2001, pp. 11-12). His Tío Santo later informs him that “a real man would drink” at a birthday party in nearby Mexico (p. 14). He urges Rey’s father to drink as well: “Are you too good for a shot with your brothers,” he taunts, “or has this religion business made you soft like a woman?” (p. 15). However, Rey’s father demonstrates real power by resisting the urge to return the insult, and “just shook his head” as Tío Santo “challenged his manhood” (p. 16).

Ramiro, though abandoned by his father at a young age, also resists the traditional macho role for Mexican boys and men through his relationship with his brother Tito. Ram watches Tito slowly descend into the world of drugs and crime, choices that lead to his shooting and eventual death. Ram reads *Great Expectations* (Dickens) to Tito in the hospital to show his brother [and perhaps remind himself] that “men can be kind, you know? They can be” (Saézn, 2008, p. 128).

Men, Ramiro hopes to demonstrate, do not have to place themselves in dangerous situations in order to prove their cultural machismo. Therefore, in a similar manner to female immigrant characters in this category of novels as discussed in this section, male characters are also allowed to develop new interpretations of gender roles for themselves and their families.

In summary, the young “hybrid” protagonists (and many of their family members) in this final ideological category demonstrate increasing challenges to traditional gender roles and stereotypes as seen in previous groups of novels. Females are willing to act assertively and with greater agency to imagine different sorts of lives for themselves than their mothers or family members may have experienced. Young males also question traditional Mexican (and other) male cultural behaviors, seeking a less aggressive, more respectful approach to others. Although patriarchy remains the primary standard of Mexican American family life, there is a sense of possible future disturbance to this model as evidenced in the redefinition of “macho.” In contrast to the “broken” and defeated representations of some male characters in previous novels, older male characters in the present category provide positive role models for young protagonists as they begin to enact a new sort of strength through gentleness, compassion, responsibility, and evenhanded behavior. Notably, both male and female protagonists and young secondary characters engage in male/female platonic relationships, with less emphasis on romantic issues.

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter, I have examined and discussed the sample novels as they fall within four ideological categories: assimilation as unattainable, assimilation as conformity, assimilation as adaptation and/or bicultural practice, and assimilation as hybridity. As evidenced in this chapter’s analysis, representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and issues of story contribute to the conveyance of these various ideologies within the texts. Although the ideologies

of assimilation themselves progress in a somewhat linear fashion through the four categories (from unattainable to hybridity), the dates of publication for the texts within each group do not necessarily follow suit: several categories feature a wide range of publication dates ranging from the earliest published novels to the most recent. This recurrence of exclusionary ideological perspectives in recent publications of children's literature is a cause for concern – especially in light of the 11.5 *million* Mexican immigrants (and their children) presently residing in the United States. In the final chapter, I will conclude my analysis, and offer some suggestions for continued research.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions, Limitations, and Implications for Further Research

I began this dissertation with the assertion that Mexican immigrants are often viewed in American society according to an essentializing and frequently disparaging discourse of social assumptions – a situation exacerbated in recent years by increased public and political controversy surrounding issues of Mexican immigration. Although there is some improvement, I have demonstrated that representations of Mexican American ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and history continue to circulate within entertainment media, historical accounts, and school curriculum that fuel these assumptions, overtly or subtly suggesting Mexican immigrants to be irrevocably “other,” potentially detrimental to the nation’s wellbeing (Chavez, 2008), and ultimately unable – or unwilling (Huntington, 2004) - to assimilate to European American society. I have also established that immigrant assimilation has been (and continues to be) conceptualized in various ways throughout U.S. history that underscore all manner of social and political discourse regarding our society’s newest members. Recognizing the inherent ability of schools and other societal institutions to actively “shape” culture and “legitimize knowledge” through the inclusion – and exclusion - of certain perspectives via textbooks, trade books (such as novels), and the “social relations of schooling” (Taxel, 1980, p. 1), I specifically sought to explore the perspectives of Mexican immigrant assimilation that may be conveyed in young adult novels available for inclusion within the American school curriculum.

Ideologies of Assimilation in Children's Literature

My review of historical and contemporary ideologies of assimilation in the United States revealed several approaches to immigrant reception, ranging from those requiring conformity and cultural surrender (e pluribus unum, Americanization, the melting pot) to those that allow for cultural maintenance or blend (multiculturalism, transnationalism, hybridity). My findings reveal that the 32 sample novels selected for this study run the gamut of historical and contemporary theories of assimilation, displaying various ideologies over their sixty years of publication that both open and close the door to full membership in American society. Based upon my analysis of representations (ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, Mexican American history) and the positioning of immigrant characters in the texts (issues of story, cultural identity, relationship to those of dominant culture), I found the novels to ideologically fall within four broad, self-constructed categories: assimilation as *unattainable* for Mexican immigrants; assimilation as cultural surrender and *conformity* to European American life; assimilation as bicultural practice and/or *adaptation* to European American culture; assimilation as *hybridity*, or the fluid and evolving blend of cultures. The first two ideologies (unattainable, conformity) are more exclusionary in nature (unless one surrenders and conforms), and relate to the historical theories of e pluribus unum, Americanization, or the purportedly “inclusive” melting pot; the latter two ideologies (adaptation, hybridity) are more respectful of the individuality of immigrant life and cultural expression, and relate to the more contemporary theories of multiculturalism, transnationalism, and hybridity.

However, the ideologies and their associated representations do not necessarily progress in a linear manner from “bad” to “good” in the novels: surprisingly, nearly *half* of the sample novels (15 of 32) – ranging in publication date from the oldest (Krumgold, 1953) to the most

recent (Alvarez, 2009) - suggest assimilation for Mexican immigrants to be unattainable (7), or possible only through cultural surrender and conformity to European American ways of living (8). Although I had expected to see restrictive or exclusionary ideologies in older publications (e.g. Bishop, 1967, Krumgold, 1953, Whitney, 1954), I did not expect to find them in more contemporary texts (e.g. Alvarez, 2009; DeFelice, 2003; Murphy, 2002). Discouragingly, despite the efforts of the Chicano Movement (1960-1970s) and the subsequent rise of multiculturalism (1980-1990s), essentializing and stereotypical representations and limiting ideologies continue to surface in children's literature involving the Mexican American experience. This recurrence of restrictive ideology and disparaging, monolithic representation may be attributable to the recent public concern (and controversy) regarding issues of Mexican immigration.

The study also reveals a strong association between representations of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender and ideologies of assimilation. Representations of Mexican immigrants as dark, dirty, uneducated, criminal (including illegal), overly sexual, and volatile support ideologies of assimilation as unattainable in the novels. Within this ideology, Mexican immigrants are suggested to be "unmeltable" others (Warner & Srole, 1945), and "incapable of imitating Anglo Saxon civilization" (Bercovici, 1925, np). This ideology also includes the monolithic suggestion that those of Mexican heritage "all look alike" (Alvarez, 2009; DeFelice, 2003; Olson, 1998), and possess many "deficits" preventing assimilation including issues of language, educational level, legal status, and appearance. Although later publications within this category do occasionally (yet infrequently) offer glimpses of immigrant humanity through the portrayal of personal feelings, family relationships, work ethic, integrity, or ties to home culture, these representations are eclipsed by the perspectives of the European protagonists that convey the story: regardless of these moments, the novels continue to echo stereotypes, and place

Mexican immigrants inalterably on the “outside” of European American society. These essentializations and stereotypes continue to mirror those observed by previous scholars of Mexican American children’s literature, including the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1975) and more recently, Barrera, Quiroa, and West-Williams (1999).

Novels with ideologies of unattainability also position immigrants as powerless to act in their own behalf. Acts of racism and epithets are often levied against Mexican immigrants in these novels, yet the characters are encouraged by European Americans to minimize or dismiss these acts. The Spanish language, implied to be a barrier to assimilation, is often described as “broken,” exotic, or unintelligible (to European Americans): Mexican immigrant characters are frequently assigned (or choose to assume) Americanized names for the greater ease of Anglo characters. Texts in this group also inaccurately represent the Spanish language, and include very few Spanish words. This positioning supports Bhabha’s (1994) suggestion that issues of power exist at intersections of culture: those of the dominant culture act as gatekeepers, determining if, and how, an immigrant may participate in society. The implication that immigrants are naturally separate and different from those of European American culture also reinforces Williams’ (1977) idea of hegemony, and Althusser’s (1976) “obviousness” of European American cultural supremacy.

Other texts allow for the possibility of assimilation – provided the immigrant is willing to “cast off the skin” of home culture in favor of European American life (John Quincy Adams, quoted in Sollors, 1986, p. 4). Novels with ideologies of conformity and cultural surrender are similar to those reflecting perspectives of assimilation as unattainable: both views regard immigrants as inherently “different” from their European American fellows - and “unmeltable” in their natural state. These texts also employ stereotypical representations of Mexican

immigrants to reinforce ideology (the need for conformity), yet shift the focus of the novel from the implicitly undesirable (and exclusionary) differences of immigrants to the desirability of European American culture. Novels that subtly advocate sole adherence to European American culture may implicitly establish or reinforce ideas of cultural superiority by detailing the successes and happiness of those that align themselves with the dominant culture. As Kelly suggests, children's literature may serve to "make a particular way of life attractive to those considered to lie outside the boundaries of a group" (1974, p. 154) – a point strongly evidenced by the character's actions and behaviors favoring European American culture in the novels. Although Rosenblatt (1978) says that we cannot judge how *readers* may respond to (or transact with) these texts, the novel's characters are certainly shown to favor European American culture – and the accompanying social inclusion and economic success that implicitly follows conformity.

Within an ideology of conformity, immigrant culture is often trivialized in a "heroes and holidays" (Banks, 1994) manner, as seen in the "traditional Mexican fiesta" held by Joaquin's family for their European American friends (e.g. McGinley, 1998, p. 51). Similarly to the previous category, immigrants continue to be positioned beneath European American characters: racism is minimized and endured, and those of Mexican heritage must often rely upon the assistance of Anglo benefactors to solve their problems (e.g. Murphy, 2002; Nails, 2008). Notably, these texts also vary widely in date of publication (1969-2008), indicating that ideologies of conformity continue to circulate in children's literature. Novels within this ideology also reflect Bhabha's (1994) theory of cultural hybridity: immigrants are conditionally allowed admission to American society, and implicitly deemed assimilated, if their naturally "unmeltable" attributes are altered (and revoked) to reflect European American standards.

I was interested to see that a few novels attempt to offer a resistant perspective of immigrant conformity, yet fall short of a realistic, insider perspective of immigrant life and experience. Novels in this group present conformity as disloyal to Mexican culture: immigrants who conform are considered to be “sellouts” (e. g. Summers, 1969, p. 21). Within this perspective, some texts center upon the Chicano Movement (e.g. Colman, 1973; Summers, 1969): however, the novels continue to portray the immigrant characters in a stereotypically disparaging manner as extremely volatile/violent, lazy, irresponsible, or drunken. Notably, these characters do not survive in the novels, suggesting that the successful maintenance of cultural loyalty is essentially impossible for an immigrant in the United States – and results in death, both spiritual and physical. Other novels also attempt to present a resistant view of conformity: texts by Nails (2008), Resau (2006), and Murphy (2002) offer a romanticized view of Mexican culture (though sometimes brief), contrasting the implicitly “real” (Resau, p. 2) simplicity of Mexican culture with the suggested materialism of European American society. However, these texts represent (or display) Mexican immigrant people and culture in a patronizing, stereotypical manner: protagonists (both European and Mexican American) appreciate the colorful, festive aspects of Mexican culture, yet acknowledge that these stand in stark contrast to the implicit normalcy of European American culture.

My findings also indicate that issues of story such as author/protagonist ethnicity, narration, or setting may also correlate to exclusionary ideologies of assimilation as unattainable or conformity in the novels. Although not necessarily a predictor of a novel’s ideological perspective, I nonetheless noted a tendency toward European American authorship in this group (13 of 15), with only two Latinas writing novels with perspectives of assimilation as unattainable (Alvarez, 2009), or involving conformity and cultural surrender (Velásquez, 1994). I was also

interested to see that *all* of the texts with solely European American protagonists (6 of 32) occur within ideological perspectives that restrict or place conditions upon the assimilation of Mexican immigrants: with the exception of Nails' (2008) novel, all reflect ideologies of assimilation as unattainable for Mexican immigrants. The use of European American protagonists to speak about – and for – Mexican immigrant people and culture in these novels illustrates Bhabha's (1994) theory of hybridity regarding issues of power at the intersection of culture: Mexican immigrant history and experience is interpreted – and reinterpreted – according to the views of the dominant culture. The manner in which Mexican immigrants may subsequently relate to American society, and “become American” (Nieto, 2002), is determined by those in power – not the immigrants themselves.

Issues of story conveyance and setting also underscore Bhabha's theory. Over half of the novels with restrictive ideologies (8 of 15) employ the distancing perspective of omniscient narration, speaking about and for immigrant characters from the perspective of an unseen (though rarely neutral) narrator. Although not always linked to exclusionary ideology (some novels with ideologies of adaption and hybridity also employ this technique), omnisciently narrated texts with ideologies of unattainability or conformity (e.g. Murphy, 2002; Whitney, 1954) convey a strong sense of naturalization and “obviousness” (Althusser, 1986, p. 7) regarding ethnic differences and cultural separation: these texts implicitly suggest that although immigrants may outwardly conform to the customs of European American society, it is obvious and natural for them to remain just outside of mainstream culture. Story setting also separates immigrants from mainstream society: immigrants in novels with exclusionary ideologies often live in communities and conditions removed from those of mainstream society. Although Krumgold's (1953) novel provides an extreme example of this natural separation, others also

segregate immigrants in agricultural camps or impoverished barrios: notably, only those who completely surrender their Mexican culture are shown to live near European Americans (e.g. McGinley, 1998; Resau, 2006). Several of the novels (e.g. Alvarez, 2009; DeFelice, 2003; Olson, 1998; Whitney, 1954) portray immigrants living and working in agricultural labor camps – an image noted by Beck (2009) to be largely over represented in children’s literature (including picture books) about Mexican Americans especially in light of the small, disproportionate number of books about Latinos in relation to all children’s publications.

The use of distancing commentary and setting also support Bhabha’s (1994) suggestion that those of the dominant cultural majority hold the key to intercultural relations: minority groups may associate with European Americans - according to their standards and interpretations of immigrant assimilation. Again, it is especially disturbing to see more recent publications (e.g. DeFelice, 2003; Resau, 2006) convey perspectives that suggest the need for cultural surrender to gain membership to American society – or suggest that no matter what an immigrant might do, he or she may never be fully “one of us.”

However, many of the novels confirm Alba & Nee’s (2003) observation of exclusive, limiting conceptions of assimilation as an “ideologically laden residue of worn-out notions” (p. 1) that no longer applies to the experiences of many U.S. immigrants. In contrast to the exclusionary ideologies and disparaging representations that prevail in the sample prior to 1980 (and disappointingly resurface in more contemporary novels), many texts published after 1980 begin to display more inclusive, respectful, and increasingly complex representations of Mexican immigrant life in the United States that suggest the influence of multiculturalism and theories of hybridity. This revisited perspective of assimilation is evidenced in nearly half of the sample novels: seventeen (of 32) texts display a more inclusive (and arguably humane) perspective of

Mexican immigrant life through ideologies of adaptation and/or bicultural practice, or cultural hybridity. Possibly correlating with an increased focus upon issues of multiculturalism in children's literature and school curriculum, perspectives of adaptation and hybridity may also be fostered by the advent of bilingual education and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programs introduced to address issues of language (and inadvertently, culture) in school. Though often controversial, programs and perspectives such as these strive to position students of all cultures as equal learners by honoring the practice – and recognizing the importance - of parallel language and culture for the development of many students (especially new immigrants), while also encouraging the acquisition of English for the navigation of American society.

Texts within this group (e.g. Cisneros, 1983; Martinez, 1996; Saldaña, 2001) offer compellingly rich and human portrayals of characters who struggle to survive and thrive in the United States despite the often overwhelming odds against them. Novels displaying ideological perspectives of adaptation and hybridity demonstrate Bhabha's (1994) assertion that cultural identity, expression, and evolution is not generalizable or static, but fluid and highly individual: counter to the frequently essentialized immigrant characters within novels reflecting ideologies of conformity or unattainability, Mexican Americans within ideologies of adaptation and hybridity are not viewed as a monolithic group, but a collection of human beings who exercise their cultural lives (both in and out of the home) in very personal ways. Due to this complexity (and gritty realism), novels displaying these ideologies are more poignant and disturbing to read than those with exclusionary ideologies of assimilation. Additionally, I was interested to see that although these novels generally contain hope for the future of the immigrant protagonists, they do not attempt to offer tidy, generalized "solutions" to larger problems, nor suggest that

European Americans should solve them. Soto's (1997) text offers an example: Eddie leaves the troubled barrio, yet his Mexican American family and friends remain in the seemingly hopeless cycle of crime, poverty, and hopelessness. The novel realistically represents the poor conditions of life in the barrio, but avoids discussion of systemic issues, suggesting an individual solution to structural issues.

Some novels progressively suggest that an immigrant may not only retain home culture in the United States, but also actively participate in that culture across the border, as seen in theories of transnationalism (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). Although television and films often represent the U.S./Mexican border as a site of division and/or danger (e.g. *Traffic*, Soderbergh, 2000), a few novels resist those representations by referencing the border (both geographically and figuratively) as a familiar, friendly, and neutral site that connects rather than separates them from family and friends. Immigrant characters in these novels are not isolated from their families and culture, as seen in texts with ideologies of unattainability (e.g. Krungold, 1953; Olson, 1998) or conformity (McGinley, 1998; Velásquez, 1994), but rather maintain an interconnected, transnational, "here and there" relationship with extended family and friends in Mexico (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002, p. 4). Saldaña's *The Jumping Tree* (2001) offers an excellent example of this sort of fluid definition of family and place, as young Rey and his parents literally cross the border on a regular basis to visit and shop. Ryan (2004) also demonstrates transnationalism and presents a favorable perspective of the border as protagonist Naomi and her grandmother set out to Mexico to locate her father: Naomi returns to the United States without him, yet remains closely connected to her Mexican culture, returning annually to carve wood with her father and other family members.

Several characters in the novels also display tremendous cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Kraidy, 2005; Pieterse, 2004) in their constant remix of language and culture. As opposed to the notably narrow, more one dimensional immigrant characters represented in novels with ideologies of unattainability or conformity, characters in texts displaying adaptation and hybridity are interesting, imperfect, and constantly evolving. In an exemplary expression of cultural hybridity, protagonists Ram and Jake are greatly influenced by each other in *He Forgot to Say Goodbye* (Sáenz, 2008): both teens adopt – and *adapt* – aspects of Mexican and European American culture to their create their own unique, individual expressions of identity. As noted by Bhabha (1994), issues of power are important to theories of hybridity: the negotiated relationship between European American Jake and Mexican American Ram indicates a suspension of power inequalities that are typically associated with dominant and marginalized cultures. As clearly evidenced in the ability of each youth to freely experiment with language and other aspects of culture, this sort of “ceasefire” at the cultural border may indeed be what is required to navigate the often rocky terrain of cultural intersection. Notably, these sorts of hybrid representations were not observed in the television and film representations reviewed for this study – including the more recent productions. It is commendable that this model is offered up in children’s literature: perhaps larger American culture will follow suit.

Television, Film, Literature, and History: A Synergic Relation

As social perspectives of a marginalized group are established, perpetuated, and resisted across many mediums to comprise a selective tradition, I sought to compare representations of Mexican immigrants in American entertainment media and historical accounts with those found in the sample novels. This study reveals a synergic relation between entertainment media, historical accounts, and children’s literature regarding ideologies of assimilation and

representations of Mexican immigrants: all work together in American society to establish, reinforce, and at times resist stereotypes and exclusionary perspectives of Mexican immigrants. Although there are some improvements, my findings suggest that all three mediums continue to reflect exclusionary ideologies of assimilation via stereotypical portrayals, subservient or lower positioning of immigrant characters in relationship to those of the dominant (European American) culture, and underrepresentation of Mexican immigrant people and culture.

All mediums reflect stereotypes of Mexican immigrants, and these are not necessarily associated with older publications or productions. Although overtly stereotypical representations of immigrants are common (and expected) in earlier novels (e.g. Bishop, 1967; Whitney, 1954), entertainment programming (e.g. *The Real McCoy's* guitar playing farmhand, "Pepino," Thomas, 1957-63; illegal "wetback" *Tony the Greaser*, Sturgeon, 1914; Warner Brothers' *Slowpoke Rodriguez* and *Speedy Gonzalez*, 1953-1965), earlier historical accounts also represent immigrant history and culture in a demeaning and patronizing manner: Maisel (1957) describes Mexican immigrants as "downtrodden...poverty-stricken peons" of "old Mexico" (p. 176), grateful for the opportunity to work for little pay in the new American - and formerly Mexican - Southwest.

Unfortunately, many later representations show little progress: stereotypes and exclusionary ideologies of assimilation appear in recent novels (e.g. Alvarez, 2009; Nails, 2008); Mexican immigrant characters largely remain in the background of television contemporary programs and films, silently serving as maids (*Will & Grace*, Burrows, 1998-2006), bellhops (*Payne*, Lyman, 1999), or sidekicks to European American protagonists (*Lizzie McGuire*, Rogow, et. al, 2001-04; *Nash Bridges*, Cuse, 1996-2001). Although a few castings have placed Mexican immigrant characters in positions of agency and authority (e.g. attorney Victor of *L.A.*

Law, Bochco, 1986-1994; explosives expert Nick of *Profiler*, Saunders, 1996-2000), these few representations are but a very small portion of all available roles. Popular television program *Will & Grace* (Burrows, 1998-2006) offers an example of unequal power relations and hegemony as friend Karen addresses her maid, Rosario in a demeaning and dismissive manner, raises her voice, and adds the letter “o” to the end of her English words. Reinforced by a frequent laugh track, viewers are reminded of Rosario’s lowly status: her language, behavior, and *life* is implicitly comedic – and outside of American society. Recent Hollywood films also encourage viewers to laugh at Mexican characters with stereotypical portrayals of feisty, hot-headed dogs that “go all kinds of Mexican” (*Beverly Hills Chihuahua*, Gosnell, 2008), sleeping peons (*The Mask of Zorro*, Campbell, 1998), dangerous drug lords (*Traffic*, Soderbergh, 2000), and human traffickers that caution us to fear and distrust Mexican immigrants. Clearly, Mexican immigrants (and other Latinos) continue to be stereotyped, caricatured, and “subject-[ed]” within a largely European American entertainment media – and society (Nericcio, 2007, p. 17).

Although a small number of television programs and films (e.g. *George Lopez*, Helford, 2002-07; *Real Women Have Curves*, Cardoso, 2002; *Tortilla Soup*, Ripoll, 2001) offer authentic portrayals of Mexican immigrant families that resist and refute stereotypes, they are few in relation to all available programming. Similarly, the sample novels with inclusive ideologies and favorable representations also occupy a small portion of the whole: while over half of the sample novels (17 of 32) represent immigrants as strong, capable Mexican Americans, they are only a handful of the over 5,000 children’s novels published annually in the United States (CCBC, 2010). This overall underrepresentation of Mexican Americans in entertainment media and children’s literature, coupled with the small number of favorable portrayals and inclusive

ideologies within the programming and texts that do exist, creates a situation conducive to the perpetuation of stereotypes and ideologies of exclusion and natural separation.

Historical accounts and school textbooks also continue to support exclusionary ideological perspectives of assimilation regarding Mexican immigrants. As seen in the work of historians Cruz (1994), Zinn (1999), Noboa (2003), and Loewen (2007), important details of Mexican American history are frequently presented from a European American perspective in textbooks, or in most cases, are simply omitted – especially information that “might lead to unacceptable conclusions” about the United States (Zinn, p. 8). This active “shaping” (Taxel, 1980, p. 1) of school knowledge suggests Mexican Americans – many of whom are arguably indigenous peoples of acquired Mexican lands - to be not only different from their European American fellows, but also unimportant to the formation of the United States. Within the patriotic and nationalistic perspectives of these texts, Mexican immigrants are implicitly represented as violent (they started the “Mexican War”), unskilled (most texts focus upon ranch or agricultural labor), and foreign “predecessors” who “eased the way” for subsequent English colonizers (Maisel, 1957, p. 173). Portrayals and omissions such as these reinforce ideologies of assimilation as unattainable, or possible with “acceptance and imitation of Anglo Saxon civilization” (Bercovici, 1925, np) through the positioning of Mexican immigrant people and history as outside of mainstream American culture. Texts offering these selective views favor the “interests” (Eagleton, 1983, p. 12) of the dominant, hegemonic (European American) culture, and perpetuate a Eurocentric view of American history that fails to fully recognize the influential and formative roles played by *all* of its citizens – an especially disturbing practice in the education of our nation’s growing population of culturally diverse immigrant youth. These incomplete and/or skewed conceptions of historical “facts” provide an important context for the

reception of children's literature by our youth: do stories and other texts perpetuate the secondary roles and European American supremacy implied in these historical accounts, or do they challenge these relationships and versions of history by offering alternative perspectives?

Although the sample novels are fictional stories of contemporary Mexican immigrant life (relative to the date of publication) rather than historical accounts, they nonetheless reveal ideological perspectives through references to Mexican American history and current events. Novels with ideologies of assimilation as unattainable or conformity often perpetuate the versions and aspects of history showcased in school textbooks through mention of the Bracero program (Bishop, 1967; Taylor, 1973), the various "ancient" native populations of Mexico (Coleman, 1973; Nails, 2008), the valiance of various "colorful" Mexican "heroes" (Bishop, 1967; DeFelice, 2003; McGinley; Murphy, 2002), or the "annexation" of Texas and other Mexican lands (Bishop, 1967). However, novels with ideologies of adaptation and hybridity often resist or refute these hegemonic perspectives: some mention issues such as the prior Mexican ownership – and American conquest - of U.S. lands (e.g. Beatty, 1981; Canales, 2005; Martinez, 2008), the minimal inclusion of Mexican American history in school curriculum (Bertrand, 1999; Cruz, 2003), and even the impact of immigration policy on undocumented immigrants (Alegría, 2007) – a controversial topic also addressed by Marina Budhos (*Ask Me No Questions*, 2006) regarding East Indian immigrants. Others such as Sáenz (2008) and Saldaña (2001) take a more direct and assertive approach: Ram critically observes both the ethnic and socioeconomic stratification of his school and community, and the disparity between representations of Mexican Americans in films and television and his real life in the "Dizzy-land" barrio (Sáenz, 2008, p. 217); Rey is challenged by his Latina teacher to question his school's practice of patriotic indoctrination to European American history (Saldaña, 2001) – a

challenge that rings strikingly appropriate for today based upon the titles of widely adopted textbooks such as *The American Way* (Bauer, 1979), *The American Pageant* (Kennedy, Cohen, & Bailey, 2006), and *Triumph of the American Nation* (Todd & Curti, 1986). These and other representations of resistance to the commonly circulated perspectives of Mexican American history and culture offer alternative versions of history that challenge the hegemony (and arguably, the integrity) of European Americans – an often futile (and even dangerous) prospect for members of a marginalized culture.

Gender Roles: Assertive Females and the “New Macho”

Although still operating within a largely patriarchal family and social order common to much of Latino society, I was especially interested to note the slight shift in gender representation in a few of the later publications. Some male characters are represented as “softer,” and a few women are portrayed as more independent and assertive. Male characters such as Ram (Sáenz, 2008), Trino (Bertrand, 1999), and Mr. Rodriguez (Johnston, 2001) display a new sort of “macho” involving calm restraint and a gentle, loving family presence similar to that seen in the television character of *George Lopez* (Helford, 2002-07) – portrayals that refute the stereotype of volatile (and violent) Mexican men. A few representations of women indicate resistance to male authority and traditional expectations: as seen in the character of Ana in *Real Women Have Curves* (Cardoso, 2002), novel characters such as Alejandra (Sáenz, 2008), Sofia (Canales, 2005) and Esperanza (Cisneros, 1983) all aspire to education, occupations, and lives that take them beyond their solely domestic cultural destiny of early marriage and children. In contrast with the more negatively construed and stereotypical Mexican “spitfire,” these and other strong, assertive females are regarded as “fierce and beautiful” (Sáenz, p. 309) as they make decisions for themselves and others. Importantly, these and other representations acknowledge

the cultural patriarchy of Mexican American culture, yet also offer alternative ways of being for contemporary Mexican immigrant men and women.

Limitations, Complications, and Implications for Further Study

Although this study attempts to exhaustively examine ideologies and representations, the analysis was complicated by the presence of multiple ideologies of assimilation in the texts. Several novels displayed overlapping and intersecting “secondary” ideologies of assimilation (typically presented via the voices and actions of supporting characters), making it challenging at times to determine the most predominant ideology at work, and impossible (if not confusing) to fully discuss all suggested perspectives within one study (see *Table 7.1*). For the purpose of clarity, I therefore determined the overarching ideological perspective to be that conveyed via the narrator of the text, either protagonist or unknown. Alvarez’s (2009) novel offers an example of this dilemma: although Mexican immigrant Mari reflects adaptation and/or hybridity through her letters to various people (including the “president of America”), the story is largely relayed from the more narrow perspective of European American protagonist Tyler and his family – and therefore grouped and analyzed according to the ideology of assimilation as unattainable.

It is also important to state that all may not agree with my particular analysis. Although I organized the novels according to what I determined to be the overarching perspective of assimilation (as supported by representations and methods of narration), others may argue differently: as previously stated, my readings are my own, and I do not suggest otherwise. However, as previous scholars of children’s literature (e.g. Adkins, 1998; Taxel, 1980) have done, I have worked hard to refer repeatedly to the literature to document my claims, therefore making my reading of the texts both supportable and plausible. Regardless of the “messy” nature of this sort of study, I feel it is nonetheless important to explore ideologies of assimilation, as

they lie at the core of all relationships between immigrants and those of the dominant “receiving” culture (Gordon, 1964) – including (and perhaps especially) those within educational institutions. It is imperative that we critique what is offered, how it is presented, and perhaps most importantly – how these and other “social relations of schooling” (Taxel, 1980, p. 1) may represent and position immigrants in American society based upon the implicit ideologies of assimilation present in school curriculum and practice. Perhaps this study can pave the way for future inquiries.

Issues of “readerly presentism,” or reading older novels with current sensibilities, also arose in my examination of the sample novels (Adkins, 1998, p. 29): should we “excuse” older novels with overtly stereotypical representations and exclusionary ideologies as simply reflective of a bygone era? Although Nodelman (2003) cautions us not to read ahistorically, Adkins (1998) suggests that the examination of ideology is important, both in texts and in readers: “what is at issue is not whether one is or is not viewing the past through a contemporary perspective, but the ideology of that perspective” (p. 20). Krungold’s (1953) novel offers an example of this issue: although written within another era and social context, this novel remains a part of standard, core school library collections due to its Newbery status – a compelling reason to encourage students to view perspectives of Mexican American people and culture in literature through the eyes of critical literacy. Notably, although the era of Krungold’s novel may be past, the sentiments regarding Mexican immigrants ring surprisingly true to those currently circulating in television, film, and contemporary society, as evidenced in the continued tendency toward stereotypical representations of amorous or volatile characters, criminals, and illegal individuals that set them apart from European American society: Mexican immigrants are largely represented as naturally “different” (and implicitly undesirable) others, residing in the margins of American society.

Suggestions for Further Research

Although this study of young adult novels specifically explores ideologies of assimilation in literature available for school curriculum, it also resides within a much larger – and yet unaddressed – area of inquiry: what ideologies of Mexican immigrant assimilation are conveyed within the context of American schooling? In order to gain a full perspective of how assimilation may be conceptualized in U.S. education, several other areas need to be explored. A specific examination of ideologies of assimilation in other curricular materials such as nonfiction texts, multimedia resources, and other curricular materials would broaden the context of school ideology. It would also be informative to explore school policies, programs and practices involving Mexican immigrants such as the approach to language (ESOL), the presentation of history and current events via social studies and political science coursework, and the inclusion of Mexican immigrant students (and staff) in the daily life of the school. Additionally, a full view of assimilation ideology in schools would also include a look at how Mexican culture and people may be positioned or viewed in relation to European American culture in the life of the school - whether acknowledged or “celebrated” via special events such as International Night, or fully included alongside others.

Finally, a comprehensive view of assimilation *must* include the voices and perspectives of the immigrants themselves. Studies such as this hopefully compel us to take what they reveal to the classroom: how might Mexican immigrant youth read these texts? European American students? Students from other cultures? Are these ideologies of assimilation evident to young readers? There is clearly a need for more reader response studies that explore how *all* readers respond to these and other texts involving the Mexican immigrant experience. It would be particularly compelling to critically explore ideologies of assimilation in literature with a

culturally diverse group of students using novels from this very sample in a similar manner to the work of Beach, Thein and Parks (2008) with students regarding issues of race, class and gender: such a study would not only reveal what students may think, but perhaps more importantly, how ideologies of assimilation may contribute to their evolving identities as participants in U.S. society. As Beach, Thein, and Parks noted, students are often able to challenge “status quo discourses and cultural models” (p. 276) when presented within a framework of critical literacy; conversations with students regarding the reception and perception of Mexican (and other) immigrants in American society are important not only for the immigrants themselves, but for European Americans, whose culture (and hegemony) is often invisible to them within a world of essentially “white privilege” (McIntosh, 1988). However, the perspectives of those in the margins are essential to a fuller view of the immigrant experience within American society. As seen in the limited perspectives and representations offered in the present study’s sample novels via distancing, omniscient narration and/or European American protagonists, an insider view through the eyes of immigrant students (and parents) is crucial to a more complete and critical understanding of how American schools may regard their largest group of young newcomers to the United States.

Finally, the ideological categories of assimilation revealed in this study may also prove useful for similar explorations regarding other immigrant or marginalized groups: how are others represented in relation to those of European American culture? How are they positioned within American society? How do issues of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and political relations affect ideologies of assimilation? Hopefully, inquiries such as these will continue to lead us as Americans – a nation of immigrants – to the true spirit of our founding fathers’ *e pluribus unum*, as we cast an eye not only to those who may come, but also to ourselves.

Conclusions

It is especially disheartening to see the continuing presence of exclusionary ideologies of assimilation in recent award winning or acclaimed novels and other texts. As this study reveals, half of the sample novels – all currently available for use within an American school curriculum offer some potentially disheartening and exclusionary views of Mexican immigrants in the United States: some suggest immigrants to stand just beyond full societal membership – regardless of legal status or attempts to participate in European American society; others offer conditional membership, based upon cultural surrender and conformity. Given this situation, it is pertinent for both teachers and students to adopt a stance of critical multiculturalism (May & Sleeter, 2010) as we approach novels and other curricular materials: we must critique not only representations of marginalized others, but also those of dominant European American culture. To my knowledge, this is the first study which specifically addresses ideologies of assimilation in children’s literature or school curriculum, and I hope it will not be the last: immigrants are here to stay, and will continue to come – regardless of public sentiment or policy. In light of the findings of this study regarding representation, underrepresentation, and ideology, there are several questions we as educators might ask ourselves as we structure language arts curriculum, consider school staffing, implement language programs, plan for parental involvement, adopt social studies textbooks, and/or choose literature for our libraries and classrooms:

- What (and whose) perspectives of Mexican immigrant assimilation are conveyed in curricular materials and the “social relations of schooling” (Taxel, 1980, p. 1)? How might our Mexican immigrant students and families perceive these representations and ideological implications?

- How might we reconcile the controversy of immigration policies and public rhetoric with the human faces of Mexican immigrant children in our classrooms and communities? Do we inadvertently (or overtly) impose issues of social controversy upon our young students and their families?
- How might theories of hybridity affect classrooms and/or curriculum?
- How might a reconsideration of Mexican American history affect our perspective of Mexican immigrant people and culture?

However, it is encouraging to see that alternative perspectives also exist: although the exclusionary ideology of assimilation suggested by Roosevelt in the opening lines of this dissertation (and echoed in several novels) implicitly underscores how “we” in American society may conform “them” to “our” ways of living, the ideologies of adaptation and hybridity displayed in many of the novels offer a sense of hope for all – if we can loosen our hegemonic grip upon the cultural reins. Within these latter, more inclusive ideologies, human and civil rights are honored, and all – both European *and* Mexican American - are changed as a result. As seen in novels by Sáenz (2008) and Canales (2005), theories of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Kraidy, 2005; Pieterse, 2004) allow for an interweaving of language and culture that surpasses the simple addition of new foods to a cuisine or new holidays to a calendar: hybridity disrupts the traditional balance of power between dominant and marginalized groups, resists or refutes gender roles, stereotypes and cultural expectations, and calls us to navigate the complex “borderlands” (Anzaldúa, 2007) of cultural coexistence, blend and reinvention.

As this study indicates, European American perspectives and ideologies of exclusion continue to permeate school curriculum via children’s literature. However, whether or not America wishes to acknowledge it, European American majority (and perhaps hegemony) is

quickly coming to an end: recent population projections by the Pew Research Center (Passel & Cohn, 2008) indicate that the majority of the U.S. population by 2050 will be nonwhite, with those of “Hispanic” origin (128 of 435 million) holding the greatest non European American share. It only stands to reason that today’s “minority” voices could well be tomorrow’s leaders making decisions for our nation - and our schools. Encouragingly, resistant voices in children’s literature, though few, offer many ways of being Mexican American in the United States. The fluidly hybrid, multiculturally competent immigrant youth of today may indeed lead the way for us *all* to become “American” in an increasingly diverse society, as they ironically turn their previously labeled “deficits” of language and culture into valuable capital – assets for an evolving cultural “economy” that we have only begun to imagine.

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APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

Sample Novels by Date of Publication

Date	Author	Title
1953	Krumgold, J.	<i>and now Miguel</i>
1954	Whitney, P.	<i>A Long Time Coming</i>
1967	Bishop, C.	<i>Fast Break</i>
1969	Summers, J.	<i>You Can't Make It By Bus</i>
1973	Colman, H.	<i>Chicano Girl</i>
1981	Beatty, P.	<i>Lupita Mañana</i>
1984	Cisneros, S.	<i>The House on Mango Street</i>
1993	Paulsen, G.	<i>Sisters/Hermanas</i>
1994	Velásquez, G.	<i>Juanita Fights the School Board</i>
1995	Lachtman, O.	<i>The Girl From Playa Blanca</i>
1996	Martinez, V.	<i>Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida</i>
1996	Soto, G.	<i>Buried Onions</i>
1998	McGinley, J.	<i>Joaquin Strikes Back</i>
1998	Olson, G.	<i>Joyride</i>
1999	Bertrand, D.	<i>Trino's Choice</i>
2001	Johnston, T.	<i>Any Small Goodness</i>
2001	Saldaña, R.	<i>The Jumping Tree: A Novel</i>
2002	Murphy, B.	<i>Miguel Lost & Found in the Palace</i>
2003	Cruz, M.	<i>Border Crossing</i>
2003	DeFelice, C.	<i>Under the Same Sky</i>
2004	Ryan, P.	<i>Becoming Naomi León</i>
2005	Canales, V.	<i>The Tequila Worm</i>
2005	Whitney, P.	<i>The Perfect Distance: A Novel</i>
2006	López, L.	<i>Call Me Henri</i>
2006	Resau, L.	<i>What the Moon Saw: A Novel</i>
2007	Alegría, M.	<i>Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico</i>
2008	de la Peña, M.	<i>Mexican Whiteboy</i>
2008	Martinez, C.	<i>The Smell of Old Lady Perfume</i>
2008	Nails, J.	<i>Next to Mexico</i>
2008	Sáenz, B.	<i>He Forgot to Say Goodbye</i>
2009	Alvarez, J.	<i>Return to Sender</i>

APPENDIX C

Tables

Table 4.1

Television Programs with Identifiable Mexican American Characters^a

Dates	Program	Mexican American Character	Setting
1950 - 65	<i>The Jack Benny Show</i>	stereotypical, comedic sidekick for Benny	
1950 - 56	<i>The Cisco Kid</i>	sidekick to Cisco Kid	"Old" American West
1951 -55	<i>The Adventures of Kit Carson</i>	sidekick of frontiersman	American West (1800s)
1954 - 62	<i>Father Knows Best</i>	gardener	Springfield, Missouri
1955 - 71	<i>The Lawrence Welk Show</i>	singer	
1955 -60	<i>Andy's Gang</i>	bandit	children's story/fable
1957 - 63	<i>The Real McCoys</i>	guitar-playing ranch farmhand (Pepino Garcia)	San Fernando Valley
1958	<i>The Nine Lives of Elfege Baca</i>	frontier sheriff	New Mexico/1880s
1958 - 59	<i>Mackenzie's Raiders</i>	bandits/marauders	American border/1870's
1959 - 66	<i>Rawhide</i>	cattle drover overseeing cowhands	Kansas, late 1800s
1961	<i>Dick Tracy</i>	detective/assistant to Anglo protagonist	
1962 - 63	<i>Empire</i>	ranch hand	Santa Fe, New Mexico
1963	<i>Redigo</i>	cook at cattle ranch	New Mexico
1963 -65	<i>The Bill Dana Show</i>	hotel bellhop	New York City
1967 - 71	<i>The High Chaparral</i>	heirss to land/married to Anglo cattle rancher	Arizona territory
1968 - 73	<i>The Doris Day Show</i>	housekeeper on a ranch	Northern California
1969 - 76	<i>Marcus Welby, M.D.</i>	nurse for Anglo doctor	Santa Monica, CA
1970 - 71	<i>Dan August</i>	police detective	California
1971 - 72	<i>The Man and the City</i>	mayor (Thomas Jefferson Alcalá)	a southwestern city
1971 - 72	<i>The D.A.</i>	investigator for Anglo D.A.	Los Angeles
1971 -72	<i>Cade's County</i>	assistant deputy sheriff	California
1972 - 77	<i>Emergency</i>	firefighter	Los Angeles
1974	<i>The Cowboys</i>	teenage orphan on ranch	American West (1870s)
1974 - 78	<i>Chico and the Man</i>	mechanic's assistant	East Los Angeles barrio
1974 - 1976	<i>Harry O</i>	police detective	San Diego California
1975 - 76	<i>On the Rocks</i>	incarcerated petty thief	Alamesa, California
1975 - 76	<i>Doctors Hospital</i>	chief resident at hospital	Los Angeles
1976	<i>Ball Four</i>	utility man for baseball team	Washington
1977 - 83	<i>CHIPS</i>	state patrol motorcycle officer	Los Angeles
1978 - 79	<i>David Cassidy - Man Undercover</i>	police officer	Los Angeles
1978 - 84	<i>Fantasy Island</i>	guardian of mysterious island; sidekick	tropical island
1978 - 91	<i>Dallas</i>	manservant/butler; maid	Dallas, Texas ranch
1980 - 81	<i>Freebie and the Bean</i>	plainclothes police officer	San Francisco, California
1981 - 82	<i>McClain's Law</i>	bar owner	San Pedro, California
1981 - 83	<i>The Great American Hero</i>	streetwise student in remedial classes	
1981 - 90	<i>Falcon Crest</i>	grape picker	Tuscany Valley, California
1982 - 87	<i>Fame</i>	singer/dancer(s)	New York City
1983	<i>Bay City Blues</i>	mascot/minority league baseball team	California
1983 -87	<i>The A-Team</i>	Hollywood special effects man	East Los Angeles
1984	<i>Legmen</i>	male working in bail bonds agency	Los Angeles
1984	<i>a.k.a. Pablo</i>	comedian	Los Angeles
1985	<i>Me and Mom</i>	police officer	San Francisco, California
1985	<i>I Had Three Wives</i>	police officer/minor character	Los Angeles

1986 -87	<i>What a Country!</i>	housekeeper attending citizenship classes	Los Angeles
1986 - 87	<i>Kay O'Brien, Surgeon</i>	head nurse	Manhattan, New York
1986 - 94	<i>L.A. Law</i>	male attorney in prestigious law firm	Los Angeles
1985 - 87	<i>Dynasty II: The Colbys</i>	business tycoon	California
1986 - 91	<i>Pee Wee's Playhouse</i>	cartoon hero/real life electrician repaired robot	
1987	<i>Down and Out in Beverly Hills</i>	maid	Beverly Hills, California
1989	<i>Knight & Daye</i>	cab driver	San Diego, California
1989 -2001	<i>Baywatch</i>	lifeguard, beach patrol	California
1990	<i>Grand Slam</i>	bounty hunter tacking bail-bond jumpers	Los Angeles
1990 -2000	<i>Beverly Hills 90210</i>	law student	California
1991- 92	<i>Davis Rules!</i>	chubby adolescent minor character	
1992	<i>The Hat Squad</i>	orphan adopted by Anglo family/assists detective father	
1992	<i>Freshman Dorm</i>	"lower-class" college student	Southern California
1992 - 93	<i>The Golden Palace</i>	chef in trendy hotel	Miami
1993 - 97	<i>The John Larroquette Show</i>	female assistant manager at bus terminal	St. Louis, Missouri
1993 -94	<i>Bakersfield, P.D.</i>	police detective	California
1993 - 94	<i>George</i>	housekeeper/hot tempered youth	
1993 - 94	<i>Second Chances</i>	coed engaged to Anglo law student	California
1993 -94, 1996	<i>Acapulco H.E.A.T.</i>	special agent; hotel owner	Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
1994	<i>Hotel Malibu</i>	female bartender, luxury hotel; overly protective father	California
1994	<i>Birdland</i>	head orderly in psychiatric hospital	California
1995	<i>Legend</i>	assistant to eccentric professor	Old West/1876
1996 - 2000	<i>Profiler</i>	explosives expert for Hispanic Bureau of Alch., Tob. & Fir.	Atlanta
1996 - 2000	<i>Pacific Blue</i>	security guard, becomes police officer	Southern California
1996 - 2001	<i>Nash Bridges</i>	police detective	San Francisco, California
1998-2006	<i>Will & Grace</i>	maid; former cigarette lady and illegal immigrant	New York City
1996	<i>L.A. Heat</i>	police detective	Los Angeles
1999	<i>Payne</i>	hotel bellhop	California coast
2000 - 2002	<i>Resurrection Boulevard</i>	boxer	California
2000 -02	<i>The Brothers Garcia</i>	11-yr-old boy	San Antonio, Texas
2001 - 2004	<i>Lizzie McGuire</i>	female best friend of blonde Anglo protagonist	California
2002 - 2003	<i>Greetings From Tucson</i>	15 yr-old; family moving to upper-mid. Class neigh.	Tucson, Arizona
2002 -04	<i>American Family/PBS</i>	barber	East Los Angeles
2002 - 07	<i>The George Lopez Show</i>	blue collar, loving family; manager in factory	Los Angeles
2003	<i>Kingpin (miniseries)</i>	Standford-educated male/runs drug cartel	

^aMexican heritage mentioned in the script

Table 7.1*Chronological Chart of Ideologies of Assimilation in the Sample Novels¹*

Year	Author	Title	Unattainable	Conformity	Adaptation	Hybridity
1953	Krumgold	<i>and now Miguel</i>	X	(x)		
1954	Whitney, P.	<i>A Long Time Coming</i>	X	(x)		
1967	Bishop, C.	<i>Fast Break</i>	X	(x)		
1969	Summers	<i>You Can't Make It By Bus</i>	(x)	X		
1973	Colman	<i>Chicano Girl</i>	(x)	X	(x)	
1973	Taylor	<i>The Maldonado Miracle</i>	X	(x)		
1981	Beatty	<i>Lupita Mañana</i>	(x)	(x)	X	
1983	Cisneros	<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	(x)		X	
1993	Paulsen	<i>Sisters/Hermanas</i>	(x)		X	
1994	Velásquez	<i>Juanita Fights the School Board</i> (x)		X		
1995	Lachtman	<i>The Girl From Playa Blanca</i>			X	
1996	Martinez, V.	<i>Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida</i>	(x)		X	
1997	Soto	<i>Buried Onions</i>	(x)		X	
1998	McGinley	<i>Joaquin Strikes Back</i>	(x)	X	(x)	
1998	Olson	<i>Joyride</i>	X	(x)		

1999	Bertrand	<i>Trino's Choice</i>		(x)	X	(x)
2001	Johnston	<i>Any Small Goodness</i>			(x)	X
2001	Saldaña	<i>The Jumping Tree: A Novel</i>		(x)	(x)	X
2002	Murphy	<i>Miguel Lost & Found in the Palace</i>	(x)	X		
2003	Cruz	<i>Border Crossing</i>				X
2003	DeFelice	<i>Under the Same Sky</i>	X	(x)		
2004	Ryan	<i>Becoming Naomi León</i>			(x)	X
2005	Canales	<i>The Tequila Worm</i>			(x)	X
2005	Whitney, K.	<i>The Perfect Distance</i>	(x)	X		
2006	López	<i>Call Me Henri</i>		(x)	X	
2006	Resau	<i>What the Moon Saw</i>		X		(x)
2007	Alegría	<i>Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost</i>				X
2008	de la Peña	<i>Mexican Whiteboy</i>		(x)		X
2008	Martinez, C.	<i>The Smell of Old Lady Perfume</i>			X	
2008	Nails	<i>Next to Mexico</i>	(x)	X		
2008	Sáenz	<i>He Forgot to Say Goodbye</i>			(x)	X
2009	Alvarez	<i>Return to Sender</i>	X	(x)		(x)

1. Secondary ideologies are indicated in parenthesis.

Table 7.2

Method of Narration/ Ethnicity of Author & Protagonist

Date	Author	Ethnicity/Gender	Mode of Narration	Protagonist
1953	Krumgold	EA/Male	First Person	MA Male
1954	Whitney, P.	EA/Female	Omniscient Narrator	EA Female
1967	Bishop	EA/Male	Omniscient Narrator	EA/Male
1969	Summers	EA/Male	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Male
1973	Colman	EA/Female	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Female
1973	Taylor	EA/Male	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Male
1981	Beatty	EA/Female	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Female
1984	Cisneros	MA/Female	First Person	MA/Female
1993	Paulsen	EA/Male	Omniscient Narrator	MA/EA/Fem.
1994	Velásquez	MA/Female	First Person	MA/Female
1995	Lachtman	MA/Female	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Female
1996	Martinez, V.	Latino	First Person	MA/Male
1997	Soto	MA/Male	First Person	MA/Male
1998	McGinley	EA/Male	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Male
1998	Olson	EA/Female	Omniscient Narrator	EA/M
1999	Bertrand	MA/Female	Omniscient Narrator	MA/M
2001	Johnston	EA/Female	First Person	MA/Male
2001	Saldaña	MA/Male	First Person	MA/Male
2002	Murphy	EA/Female	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Male
2003	Cruz	Latina	First Person	MA/Female
2003	DeFelice	EA/Female	First Person	EA/Male
2004	Ryan	MA/Female	First Person	MA/Female
2005	Canales	MA/Female	First Person	MA/Female
2005	Whitney, K.	EA/Female	First Person	MA/Female
2006	López	MA/Male	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Male
2006	Resau	EA/Female	First Person	MA/Female
2007	Alegría	Latina	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Female
2008	de la Peña	Latino	Omniscient Narrator	MA/Male
2008	Martinez, C.	MA/Female	First Person	MA/Female
2008	Nails	EA/Female	First Person	EA/Female
2008	Sáenz	MA/Male	First Person	MA/Male
2009	Alvarez	Latina	First Person	EA/Male & MA/Female

Table 7.3*Novels with Omniscient Narration by Assimilation Categories*

Date	Author	Author		Protagonist		Primary Ideology
1954	Whitney, P.	EA	female	EA	female	Unattainable
1967	Bishop	EA	male	EA	male	Unattainable
1973	Taylor	EA	male	MI	male	Unattainable
1998	Olson	EA	female	EA	male	Unattainable
1969	Summers	EA	male	EA	male	Conformity
1973	Colman	EA	female	MI	female	Conformity
1998	McGinley	EA	male	MI	male	Conformity
2002	Murphy	EA	female	MI	male	Conformity
1981	Beatty	EA	female	MI	female	Adaptation
1993	Paulsen	EA	male	both	female	Adaptation
1995	Lachtman	Latina (female)		MI	female	Adaptation
1999	Bertrand	Latina (female)		MI	female	Adaptation
2006	López	Latino (male)		MI	male	Adaptation
2007	Alegría	Latina (female)		MI	female	Hybridity
2008	de la Peña	Latino (male)		MI	male	Hybridity

Note. The terms *Latino* and *Latina* are used to encompass the multiple nationalities and ethnicities of the authors. The abbreviation *MI* is used to refer to Mexican immigrants, as the characters in the novels are all of this specific ethnicity.

Table 7.4*Occupations of Mexican Immigrant Characters*

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Year(s) of publication</i>
Agricultural Worker	M/F	Multiple ¹	1954-2009
Bus Driver (School)	M	Krumgold	1953
Carpenter	M	Lachtman	1995
Carpet Layer	M	Alegría	2007
Cashier	F	Soto	1997
Computer Consultant	M	McGinley	1998
Construction	M	Martinez, C.	2008
	M	Sáenz	2008
Dairy Worker	M	Taylor	1973
Dishwasher	M	Beatty	1981
Factory (tortilla)	F	López	2006
Groomer (Horses)	M/F	Whitney, K.	2005
Housekeeper/Maid	F	Multiple ²	1973-2008
Landscaper (Business)	M	Resau	2006
Laundry	F	Martinez	1996
Miner (Copper)	M	Colman	1973
Nurse (Assistant)	F	Sáenz	2008
Parking Attendant	M	Martinez, V.	1996
Paver (asphalt)	M	Saldaña	2001
Professor	M	Bertrand (Literature)	1999
	M	Lachtman (Geology)	1995
Prostitute	F	Paulsen	1993
	F	Cisneros	1983
Psychologist (Ph.D.)	F	Velásquez	1994
Salesperson (Furniture)	M	Johnston	2001
Sanitation	M	Saldaña	2001
Seamstress	F	Ryan	2004
	F	Saldaña	2001
Security Guard	M	Saldaña	2001
Silversmith	M	Bishop	1967
Shepherd	M	Krumgold	1953
Tile Setter	M	Taylor	1973
Translator	F	Cruz	2003
Waiter/Waitress	M/F	Lachtman	1995

1. Alvarez (2009), DeFelice (2003), Martinez (1996), Olson (1998), Saldaña (2001), Taylor (1973), Velásquez (1994), Whitney (1954).

2. Alegría, 2007, Beatty (1981), Bertrand (1999), Nails (2008), Sáenz (2008), Taylor (1973).

Table 7.5***Occupations of European American Characters in the Sample Novels***

Occupation	Gender	Author	Year of Publication
Attorney	M	Velásquez	1994
	M	Alvarez	2009
Coach	M	McGinley	1998
	M	Bishop	1967
Dentist	M	Olson	1998
Equestrian Stable Owner	M	Whitney, K.	2005
Farmer (Owner)	M	Alvarez	2009
	M/F	DeFelice	2003
	M/F	Olson	1998
	F	Whitney	1954
Judge	M	Bishop	1967
Librarian	F	Johnston	2001
Minister	M	Whitney, P.	1954
Missionary	F	Whitney, P.	1954
Nurse	F	Beatty	1981
Police Officer	M	Lachtman	1995
Ranger	M	Krumgold	1953
Teacher	F	Alvarez	2009
	F	Johnston	2001
	F	Olson	1998
	F	Resau	2006

Table 7.6

Types of Residences for Mexican Immigrant Characters

Date	Author	Title	Type of Residence
1953	Krumgold	<i>and now Miguel</i>	house in village (near ditch)
1954	Whitney, P.	<i>A Long Time Coming</i>	camp housing (“shanties”)
1967	Bishop	<i>Fast Break</i>	house (“nice” neighborhood)
1969	Summers	<i>You Can’t Make It by Bus</i>	house (barrio)
1973	Colman	<i>Chicano Girl</i>	house (stucco, “tiny”)
1973	Taylor	<i>The Maldonado Miracle</i>	homeless/camp housing
1981	Beatty	<i>Lupita Mañana</i>	apartment (barrio)
1984	Cisneros	<i>House on Mango Street</i>	apartment (barrio)
1993	Paulsen	<i>Sisters/Hermanas</i>	motel
1994	Velásquez	<i>Juanita Fights the School Board</i>	projects (barrio)
1995	Lachtman	<i>The Girl from Playa Blanca</i>	house (mansion)
1996	Martinez, V.	<i>Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida</i>	projects (barrio)
1996	Soto	<i>Buried Onions</i>	apartment (barrio)
1998	McGinley	<i>Joaquin Strikes Back</i>	house (nice neighborhood)
1998	Olson	<i>Joyride</i>	camp housing
1999	Bertrand	<i>Trino’s Choice</i>	trailer park (barrio)
2001	Johnston	<i>Any Small Goodness</i>	house (barrio)
2001	Saldaña	<i>The Jumping Tree</i>	house (stucco, “flat-roofed”)
2002	Murphy	<i>Miguel Lost and Found in Palace</i>	“illegal-immigrant house”
2003	Cruz	<i>Border Crossing</i>	house (poor neighborhood)
2003	DeFelice	<i>Under the Same Sky</i>	camp housing
2004	Ryan	<i>Becoming Naomi León</i>	trailer (Airstream)
2005	Canales	<i>The Tequila Worm</i>	house (barrio)
2005	Whitney, K.	<i>Perfect Distance</i>	“little cottage”
2006	López	<i>Call Me Henri</i>	apartment (barrio)
2006	Resau	<i>What the Moon Saw</i>	house (EA neighborhood)
2007	Alegría	<i>Sofi Mendoza’s Guide to Getting</i>	townhouse (“gated community”)
2008	de la Peña	<i>Mexican Whiteboy</i>	apartment (barrio)
2008	Martinez, C.	<i>The Smell of Old Lady Perfume</i>	house (barrio)
2008	Nails	<i>Next to Mexico</i>	house (“pink - on Hawaii street”)
2008	Sáenz	<i>He Forgot to Say Goodbye</i>	house (in “poor side” of El Paso)
2009	Alvarez	<i>Return to Sender</i>	camp housing

Table 7.7*Author, Protagonist, and Method of Narration by Assimilation Category*

	Unattainable (7)	Conformity (8)	Adaptation (9)	Hybridity (8)	Total
<u>Author</u>					
EA Male	3	2	1	0	6
EA Female	3	5	1	1	10
Latino	0	0	3	3	6
Latina	1	1	4	4	10
<u>Protagonist</u>					
EA Male	4	0	0	(1) ^b	4
EA Female	1	1	(1) ^a	0	2
MA Male	2	3	4	4	13
MA Female	0	4	5	4	13
<u>Narration</u>					
Omniscient	4	4	5	2	15
First Person	3	4	4	6	17

^aPaulsen's novel alternates between EA and MA female protagonists

^bSáenz' novel alternates between EA and MA male protagonists

Table 7.8

Assimilation as Unattainable –Narration, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, Language, & Gender

Date	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1953	Krumgold EA ^a male	FP ^b	MI ^c male	shepherd (father) house/village	citizen	dark; bandits; simple; contented; uneducated; religious	few Spanish words inaccurate Spanish Americanized names emergent English	patriarchy domestic females education for males women serve men
1954	Whitney, P. EA female	O ^d	EA female	agricultural (migrant workers) “shanty”	work permit	dark; dirty; smelly; Indian ancestry; contented; dishonest; proud; volatile; simple; uneducated; “riffraff”	few Spanish words emergent English; unintelligible barrier; deficit	coquettish females prickly females peasant dress “dragon” Mex. mothers women must marry
1967	Bishop EA male	O	EA male	silversmith (father) house/middle class neighborhood	bracero	dark; shaggy; delighted; slight; scrawny; cocky; unintelligent; volatile	few Spanish words inaccurate Spanish English at home	Latin lover image charming females
1973	Taylor EA male	O	MI male	agricultural (migrant workers) homeless/ camp housing	illegal	dark; short; wiry; dishonest; bony; sharp; hulking; sleepy; wetback	emergent English Americanized name inaccurate Spanish	drunken men patriarchy spitfire female sexualized males

Date	Author	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1998	Olson EA female	O	EA male	agricultural (migrant workers) camp housing	illegal/ work permit	contented; ignorant; simple; all look alike wetback; thieves; beaner; dependent upon social svcs.	deficit; emerg. English incomprehensible; babbling; refuse to learn English	sexualized males patriarchy domestic females
2003	DeFelice EA female	FP	EA male	agricultural (migrant workers) camp housing	illegal	dark; simple; wiry; greaser; spic; beaner; all look alike; grateful; sneaky	deficit; emergent English; proud to learn English incomprehensible	patriarchy powerless women value of female appear. “daydreamy” females men respon. for females
2009	Alvarez Latina (female)	FP	EA male	agricultural (migrant workers) trailers “out back”	illegal	black/brown features; American Indian ancestry; all look alike; dishonest; hard-working	deficit; rattling; incomprehensible; Spanish at home; Amer. born children bilingual	patriarchy rules of courtship “hot tamale” female

^aEuropean American.

^bFirst person narration.

^cMexican immigrant.

^dOmniscient narration.

Table 7.9

Assimilation as Conformity –Narration, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, Language, & Gender

Date	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1969	Summers EA male	O male	MI	manual labor house/barrio	citizen	Dark; proud; flamboyant; excel in baseball; short; love color; passionate; nationalistic	”rapid Spanish” no Span. in text; Spanish is “delicate”; Span. = loyalty; lang. indicates assim.	sexually aggr. males harlot females; domestic females; lazy/romantic females; “broken” man; violent/ militant man
1973	Colman EA female	O	MI female	miner (copper) “tiny” stucco house	citizen 2 nd gen.	illiterate/uneducated; lazy; family oriented; dark; unintelligent; nationalistic; militant	inaccurate Spanish; Americanized names; Span. soft & melodious Sp. only at home; bilingual protagonist; Sp. name a “mouthful”	macho males; “hot & sexy” females; females must marry; domestic females; education for males; patriarchy
1994	Velásquez Latina (female)	FP	MI female	agricultural	citizen 2 nd . gen.	epithets; poor home life; troublemakers; irresponsible/late; uneducated	glossary; Span. = loyalty; bilingual prot. Americanized names; Sp. at home; non-Eng. speaking parents	patriarchy; domestic females; women must marry; abusive males; polite females; Ph.D. female; virginal female; value of fem. beauty

Date	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Socio- economic status	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1998	McGinley EA male	O	MI male	computer consultant; house/middle class neighbrhd.	citizen 3 rd . gen.	epithets; dishonest; unintelligent; hardworking; good student; cultural display for visitors	no Span. in text beyond fiesta, piñata; misspelled Sp.word;	subdued male; patriarchy; domestic women; value on female appearance
2002	Murphy EA	O	MI male female	agric. Laborer; disadvantaged; “illegal- immigrant house”	illegal	wetback; ignorant; uneducated; volatile exotic fiestas; eat tortillas; colorful; wild; guitars; easily “confused by history books	emergent Eng./poor grammar; Eng. for “success”	spitfire female; gentle female; women serve men; patriarchy
2005	Whitney, K. EA Female	FP	MI female	horse groomer “little cottage” on horse farm	citizen	spicy foods; gardening; dog named “Bandit”; hardworking; contented; dual identity	Americanized name; Engl. only; Eng. for success; “rattling” in Spanish; exaggerated/ incorrect English (groomers)	patriarchy; forbidden cross- cultural marriage; value on female appearance; male boss

Date	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Socio- economic status	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2006	Resau EA female	FP	MI female	landscape house/middle class neighbrhd.	citizen	rough; solid; “odd”; colorful; drunken; guitar- playing; traditional dress; “brown” Americans are materialistic; Mex. is “real”; uneducated	glossary; Sp. at home; ashamed of Spanish; words & phrases in text	EA/Mex. marriage; patriarchy; powerful “abuela” – healer; EA mother encourages cultural identity; absent/irresponsible males (Pedro’s father); subdued male (Clara’s father)
2008	Nails EA female	FP	EA female	housekeeper/ secretary “pink” house	green card	short; colorful; spicy foods; “foreign”; beaner; deformed; exotic; otherworldly; traditional dress; illegal; Anglo benef.	Anglo-assigned nickname; exagg. speech (“Leelas”); few Sp. words in text; EA Spanish teacher	unassertive MA female (protag.); ambitious female (Aunt Maria); assertive EA protag.; father in Mexico unable to provide for family

^aEuropean American.

^bFirst person narration.

^cMexican immigrant.

^dOmniscient narration.

Table 7.10

Assimilation as Adaptation/Bicultural Practice –Narration, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, Language, & Gender

Date	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1981	Beatty EA ^a female	O ^b	MI ^c female	housekeeper (aunt) apartment/ barrio	illegal	dark; dirty; trad. dress; juv. delinquent; welfare dependent; drunken; irresponsible; hopeless; sneaky; uneducated; religious resist/favor Americanization homesick for Mexico; responsible (remittances); drug abusers	deficit Spanish smooth/ English harsh; Eng. for better job/to evade INS; Americanized name (Lucio - “Lucky”)	“broken man”; patriarchy – brother in charge of sister; fem. must attract males; abusive males; women endure abuse
1983	Cisneros Latina	FP ^d	MI female	photo shop clerk house/barrio	citizen	large families; single mothers; uneducated; brown; religious; hopeless/hopeful; criminal; separated families victimized by EAs resist Americanization	fear of cultural loss; English harsh “like tin” Spanish only; bilingual; Spanish radio; learn Eng. on TV; Eng. lang. & educ. as “way out”	broken, hopeless, imprisoned females; harlots; young mothers; female with agency; abusive men; absent fathers; patriarchy rebellious female; macho males in gangs

Date	Author	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1993	Paulsen EA male	O	MI/EA female	prostitute motel	illegal	religious; powerless; disadvantaged; hopeless; illiterate; uneducated; cursing; family separation; responsible (remittances); outsider; victim of poverty	<i>bilingual text</i> ; no Spanish words in Eng. text; Spanish television	appearance as capital; forced into prostitution victimized by men; powerless female
1995	Lachtman Latina	O	MI female	carpenter (father) mansion (with uncle)	citizen (but has moved to Mexico)	greedy; powerless; criminal; colorful dress; helpless/weak ignorant; dependent	deficit; Eng. is power; bilingual; emergent English; Eng. preferred; poor grammar; in text; Spanish linked to cultural identity	helpless/confused female; male villain; sexually agg. males; patriarchy; women valued for appearance; pious; marriage is goal for females; men protect women
1996	Martinez, V. Latino	FP	MI male	parking attendant projects/ barrio	citizen (3 rd gen.)	drunken; wetbacks; violent; gangs; apathetic; hoodlums; uneducated; victim/disadvantaged; oppressed in system; intelligent; proud; cultural solidarity; integrity	Spanish woven into text; bilingual prot.; emergent English; Eng. & education as “way out”	“broken” man; macho men; dependent females/patriarchy; promiscuous/harlot; females misused by EA men; female goal to find man women endure men’s bad behavior

Date	Author	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1997	Soto Latino	FP	MI male	painter (curbs) apartment/ barrio	citizen	hard working; criminal/gangs; apathetic; violent; uneducated; drugs; drunken; lazy; powerless/poor; must escape to survive; "raza"; reformed role model	bilingual; fluid incorp. of Span. in text used to evade EAs; Spanish <i>telenovelas</i> ;	helpless women; patriarchy; marry young/have children; macho men; absent/abandoning fathers
1999	Bertrand Latina	O	MI male	housekeeper (mother) trailer park/ barrio	citizen	intelligent; reformed role model; educated blk hair/brn face; hardworking; honest/integrity; gangs/criminals; lazy/drunken; uneducated	awkward comb. of Eng. & Span. in text; poor grammar Engl. only at school; Span. is "musical" Educ. & literacy is "way out"	patriarchy; woman must have a man; assertive female; lazy men; absent father; educated man

Date	Author	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2006	López Latino	O	MI male	factory-tortilla (mother) apartment/barrio	citizen (born to illegal mother)	“mojado” (wetback); drunk; irresponsible; lazy; educated/uned.; coffee-brown; short; poor; plump; social svcs; gangs/criminal/violent; powerless due to legal status; culture not rep. on TV. must leave to survive	Span. at home; Span. “comfortable”; ESL student; parents do not speak English; prot. wants to learn French; Eng. “ugly” children language brokers; Amer. born Mexicans have poor Spanish; <i>telenovelas</i>	patriarchy; girls marry young; women endure male abuse; violent, lazy men; absent father
2008	Martinez, C. Latina	FP	MI female	construction (father) house/barrio	citizen (2 nd gen.)	olive skin/blk hair; Mexican foods; uses free clinics; Amer.-born favored over Mex.-born; hardworking; centrality of family; plays soccer; telenovlas; Span. newspaper/music; proud of heritage	Spanish only at home; bilingual prot.; parents - limited Eng.; ESL student; learn Eng. from TV;	patriarchy; strong men; submissive female; “cholas”/harlots; mother does not drive; macho – “men don’t cry”; females marry young;

^aEuropean American.

^bOmniscient narration.

^cMexican immigrant.

^dFirst person narration.

Table 7.11

Assimilation as Hybridity –Narration, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, Language, & Gender

Date	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2001	Johnston ^a EA/female	^b FP	^c MI male	salesman house/barrio	citizen	strong family; hoodlums (minor characs.); respectful; gardening; spicy/ethnic foods; enjoyment of Amer. sports & music; Latin music; celebrate Mex. & Amer. holidays	Sp. included. fluidly; glossary; Eng. needed for survival; younger gen. mixes languages; Americanized names; Sp. for comfort & ties to family; using both Amer. & Sp. names	loving/gentle father; spitfire Abuela; 'macho' as strong/ gentle; 'machismo'; domestic women; patriarchy
2001	Saldaña Latino	FP	MI male	paver "stucco" house	citizen	criminal; lawabiding; drunken/sober; good student; pancho villa moustache; reliance on social services; violent; Amer. & Mex. music & TV; crossing border to Shop; Chicano pride colorful houses	Sp. infused in text; subversive use of Sp.; bilingual characters; Sp. at home; Sp. is comfort; Sp. assoc. with cultural allegiance; hybrid remix of lang. by youth	macho males; sexual males; patriarchy; domestic females; quineañera

Date	Author	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2003	Cruz Latina	FP	MI female	(occup. unknown) house (“poor neighborhood”)	citizen	brown; slanted eyes; trad. dress; shaggy black hair; white teeth; thieves; religious; colorful houses; Americanized protag.; Identity conflict/quest; Mex. & EA parents Mex. is “homeland”; Sp. telenovellas (mom); Mex. father rejects M. Culture; trad. grandmother	Sp. at home; embarrass. by Sp.; few Sp. words in text; father punished for Sp. in school;	Domestic females; females keepers of culture & tradition; unassertive father; patriarchy (father’s wishes honored)
2004	Ryan Latina	FP	MI female	seamstress (retired) trailer park	citizen	brown; shaggy; short; happy; traditional clothing; skilled craftsman; American culture/television; Mex. roots empowering Mex. & EA parents	fast Spanish; chattering; no Sp./protag.; assumption of others based upon appear.	plump women; gentle/sweet man; domestic women; female head of house; patriarchy (in Mexico); female assuming previously male trade (Naomi – carving)

Date	Author	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2005	Canales Latina	FP	MI female	occup. unknown house (barrio)	citizen	close communities; cultural traditions; dark hair; curanderas/healers; religious; home altars; conflicted loyalties; importance of family epithets (“beaners”);	Sp. italicized; meanings incorp. into text; family speaks mostly Eng./infused with Sp.; fluid inclusion of Sp. in text; no glossary	female aspiring to be attorney – rejects trad. expectations; females keepers of tradition (comadres); domestic females; women marry young & have children; spitfire females
2007	Alegría Latina	^d ON	MI female	carpet layer/ power plant employee townhome (“gated”)	illegal (fake green card)	black hair; caramel-colored skin; conflicted identity; quest for roots; seeking ‘Amer. Dream’/econ. success; violence at border; Mexican culture “real” vs materialistic Amer. culture	fluid incl. of Sp; prot. speaks no Sp.: Eng. only at home; Mexs. view prot. as “sellout”; Eng. sign of assim.; Americanized names by choice	spitfire/assertive fem; fem. goal to marry; domestic females; patriarchy; sexual females

Date	Author	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2008	de la Peña Latino	ON	MI male	occup. unknown apartment (barrio)	citizen	EA & MA parents; father in prison; epithets (wetback); Indian ancestry; brown; conflicted identity; violent/drunken (Mex. family); success is “white”; feels “whitewashed” – an outsider to “real” Mex. culture	prot. Eng. only; father withheld Sp.; prot. learns of his Mex. fam.; few Sp. words in text	patriarchy; assertive, independent females; submissive females (Uno’s moth.); absent fathers; macho males
2008	Sáenz Latino	FP	MI male & EA male	nurse (asst.) & construction Worker house (“poor side”)	citizen	gangs/violence; religious; close communities; conflicted identity; hopeless/hopeful; “border” living; Mex. Ram is “real” to EA Jake; segregated schools	bilingual; Eng. is superior; Eng. for assim. & to avoid stereotyping; Ram & friends speak hybrid mix of languages	strong/spitfire females; youth defying cultural expectations/roles (gentle male, assertive female)

^a European American

^b First person narration

^c Mexican immigrant.

^d Omniscient narration.

Table 8.1

Chronological Overview of Sample Novels

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1953 U ^e	Krumgold EA ^a male	FP ^b	MI ^c male	shepherd (father) house/village	citizen	dark; bandits; simple; contented; uneducated; religious	few Spanish words inaccurate Spanish Americanized names emergent English	patriarchy domestic females education for males women serve men
1954 U	Whitney, P. EA female	O ^d	EA female	agricultural (migrant workers) “shanty”	work permit	dark; dirty; smelly; Indian ancestry; contented; dishonest; proud; volatile; simple; uneducated; “riffraff”	few Spanish words emergent English; unintelligible barrier; deficit	coquettish females prickly females peasant dress “dragon” Mex. mothers women must marry
1967 U	Bishop EA male	O	EA male	silversmith (father) house/middle class neighborhood	bracero	dark; shaggy; delighted; slight; scrawny; cocky; unintelligent; volatile	few Spanish words inaccurate Spanish English at home	Latin lover image charming females
1969 C ^f	Summers EA male	O male	MI	manual labor house/barrio	citizen	Dark; proud; flamboyant; excel in baseball; short; love color; passionate; nationalistic	”rapid Spanish” no Span. in text; Spanish is “delicate”; Span. = loyalty; lang. indicates assim.	sexually aggr. males harlot females; domestic females; lazy/romantic females; “broken” man; violent/ militant man

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1973 C	Colman EA female	O	MI female	miner (copper) “tiny” stucco house	citizen 2 nd gen.	illiterate/uneducated; lazy; family oriented; dark; unintelligent; nationalistic; militant	inaccurate Spanish; Americanized names; Span. soft & melodious Sp. only at home; bilingual protagonist; Sp. name a “mouthful”	macho males; “hot & sexy” females; females must marry; domestic females; education for males; patriarchy
1973 U	Taylor EA male	O	MI male	agricultural (migrant workers) homeless/ camp housing	illegal	dark; short; wiry; dishonest; bony; sharp; hulking; sleepy; wetback	emergent English Americanized name inaccurate Spanish	drunken men patriarchy spitfire female sexualized males
1981 A ^g	Beatty EA female	O	MI female	housekeeper (aunt) apartment/ barrio	illegal	dark; dirty; trad. dress; juv. delinquent; welfare dependent; drunken; irresponsible; hopeless; sneaky; uneducated; religious resist/favor Americanization homesick for Mexico; responsible (remittances); drug abusers	deficit Spanish smooth/ English harsh; Eng. for better job/to evade INS; Americanized name (Lucio - “Lucky”)	“broken man”; patriarchy – brother in charge of sister; fem. must attract males; abusive males; women endure abuse

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1983 A	Cisneros Latina	FP	MI female	photo shop clerk house/barrio	citizen	large families; single mothers; uneducated; brown; religious; hopeless/hopeful; criminal; separated families victimized by EAs resist Americanization	fear of cultural loss; English harsh “like tin” Spanish only; bilingual; Spanish radio; learn Eng. on TV; Eng. lang. & educ. as “way out”	broken, hopeless, imprisoned females; harlots; young mothers; female with agency; abusive men; absent fathers; patriarchy rebellious female; macho males in gangs
1993 A	Paulsen EA male	O	MI/EA female	prostitute motel	illegal	religious; powerless; disadvantaged; hopeless; illiterate; uneducated; cursing; family separation; responsible (remittances); outsider; victim of poverty	<i>bilingual text</i> ; no Spanish words in Eng. text; Spanish television	appearance as capital; forced into prostitution victimized by men; powerless female
1994 C	Velásquez Latina	FP	MI female	agricultural	citizen 2 nd . gen.	epithets; poor home life; troublemakers; irresponsible/late; uneducated	glossary; Span. = loyalty; bilingual prot. Americanized names; Sp. at home; non-Eng. speaking parents	patriarchy; domestic females; women must marry; abusive males; polite females; Ph.D. female; virginal female; value of fem. beauty

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1995 A	Lachtman Latina	O	MI female	carpenter (father) mansion (with uncle)	citizen (but has moved to Mexico)	greedy; powerless; criminal; colorful dress; helpless/weak ignorant; dependent	deficit; Eng. is power; bilingual; emergent English; Eng. preferred; poor grammar; in text; Spanish linked to cultural identity	helpless/confused female; male villain; sexually agg. males; patriarchy; women valued for appearance; pious; marriage is goal for females; men protect women
1996 A	Martinez, V. Latino	FP	MI male	parking attendant projects/ barrio	citizen (3 rd gen.)	drunken; wetbacks; violent; gangs; apathetic; hoodlums; uneducated; victim/disadvantaged; oppressed in system; intelligent; proud; cultural solidarity; integrity	Spanish woven into text; bilingual prot.; emergent English; Eng. & education as "way out"	"broken" man; macho men; dependent females/patriarchy; promiscuous/harlot; females misused by EA men; female goal to find man women endure men's bad behavior
1997 A	Soto Latino	FP	MI male	painter (curbs) apartment/ barrio	citizen	hard working; criminal/gangs; apathetic; violent; uneducated; drugs; drunken; lazy; powerless/poor; must escape to survive; "raza"; reformed role model	bilingual; fluid incorp. of Span. in text used to evade EAs; Spanish <i>telenovelas</i> ;	helpless women; patriarchy; marry young/have children; macho men; absent/ abandoning fathers

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
1998 C	McGinley EA male	O	MI male	computer consultant; house/middle class neighbrhd.	citizen 3 rd . gen.	epithets; dishonest; unintelligent; hardworking; good student; cultural display for visitors	no Span. in text beyond fiesta, piñata; misspelled Sp.word;	subdued male; patriarchy; domestic women; value on female appearance
1998 U	Olson EA female	O	EA male	agricultural (migrant workers) camp housing	illegal/ work permit	contented; ignorant; simple; all look alike wetback; thieves; beaner; dependent upon social svcs.	deficit; emerg. English incomprehensible; babbling; refuse to learn English	sexualized males patriarchy domestic females
1999 A	Bertrand Latina	O	MI male	housekeeper (mother) trailer park/ barrio	citizen	intelligent; reformed role model; educated blk hair/brn face; hardworking; honest/integrity; gangs/criminals; lazy/drunken; uneducated	awkward comb. of Eng. & Span. in text; poor grammar Engl. only at school; Span. is “musical” Educ. & literacy is “way out”	patriarchy; woman must have a man; assertive female; lazy men; absent father; educated man
2001 H ^h	Johnston EA female	FP	MI male	salesman house/barrio	citizen	strong family; hoodlums (minor characs.); respectful; gardening; spicy/ethnic foods; enjoyment of Amer. sports & music; Latin music; celebrate Mex. & Amer. holidays	Sp. included. fluidly; glossary; Eng. needed for survival; younger gen. remixes languages; Americanized names; Sp. for comfort & ties to family; using both Amer. & Sp. names	loving/gentle father; spitfire Abuela; ‘macho’ as strong/ gentle; ‘machismo’; domestic women; patriarchy

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2001 H	Saldaña Latino	FP	MI male	paver "stucco" house	citizen	criminal; lawabiding; drunken/sober; good student; pancho villa moustache; reliance on social services; violent; Amer. & Mex. music & TV; crossing border to Shop; Chicano pride colorful houses	Sp. infused in text; subversive use of Sp.; bilingual characters; Sp. at home; Sp. is comfort; Sp. assoc. with cultural allegiance; hybrid remix of lang. by youth	macho males; sexual males; patriarchy; domestic females; quineañera
2002 C	Murphy EA female	O	MI male	agric. Laborer; disadvantaged; "illegal- immigrant house"	illegal	wetback; ignorant; uneducated; volatile exotic fiestas; eat tortillas; colorful; wild; guitars; easily "confused by history books	emergent Eng./poor grammar; Eng. for "success"	spitfire female; gentle female; women serve men; patriarchy
2003 H	Cruz Latina	FP	MI female	(occup. unknown) house ("poor neighborhood")	citizen	brown; slanted eyes; trad. dress; shaggy black hair; white teeth; thieves; religious; colorful houses; Americanized protag.; Identity conflict/quest; Mex. & EA parents Mex. is "homeland"; Sp. telenovellas (mom); Mex. father rejects M. Culture; trad. grandmother	Sp. at home; embarr. by Sp.; few Sp. words in text; father punished for Sp. in school;	Domestic females; females keepers of culture & tradition; unassertive father; patriarchy (father's wishes honored)

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2003 U	DeFelice EA female	FP	EA male	agricultural (migrant workers)	illegal	dark; simple; wiry; greaser; spic; beaner; all look alike; grateful;	deficit; emergent English; proud to learn English incomprehensible	patriarchy powerless women value of female appear. “daydreamy” females
2004 H	Ryan Latina	FP	MI female	camp housing seamstress (retired) trailer park	citizen	sneaky brown; shaggy; short; happy; traditional clothing; skilled craftsman; American culture/ television; Mex. roots empowering Mex. & EA parents	fast Spanish; chattering; no Sp./protag.; assumption of others based upon appear.	men respon. for female plump women; gentle/sweet man; domestic women; female head of house; patriarchy (in Mexico); female assuming previously male trade (Naomi – carving)
2005 H	Canales Latina	FP	MI female	occup. unknown house (barrio)	citizen	close communities; cultural traditions; dark hair; curanderas/ healers; religious; home altars; conflicted loyalties; importance of family; epithets (“beaners”);	Sp. italicized; meanings incorp. into text; family speaks mostly Eng./ infused with Sp.; fluid inclusion of Sp. in text; no glossary	female aspiring to be attorney – rejects trad. expectations; females keepers of tradition (comadres); domestic females; women marry young & have children; spitfire females
2005 C	Whitney, K. EA Female	FP	MI female	horse groomer “little cottage” on horse farm	citizen	spicy foods; gardening; dog named “Bandit”; hardworking; contented; dual identity	Americanized name; Engl. only; Eng. for success; “rattling” in Spanish; exaggerated/ incorrect English (groomers)	patriarchy; forbidden cross- cultural marriage; value on female appearance; male boss

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2006 A	López Latino	O	MI male	factory- tortilla (mother) apartment/ barrio	citizen (2 nd gen./ illegal mother)	“mojado” (wetback); drunk; irresponsible; lazy; educated/uned.; coffee-brown; short; poor; plump; social svcs; gangs/ criminal/violent; powerless due to legal status; culture not rep. on TV. must leave to survive	Span. at home; Span. “comfortable”; ESL student; parents do not speak English; prot. wants to learn French; Eng. “ugly” children language brokers; Amer. born Mexicans have poor Spanish; <i>telenovelas</i>	patriarchy; girls marry young; women endure male abuse; violent, lazy men; absent father
2006 C	Resau EA female	FP	MI female	landscape house/middle class neighbrhd.	citizen	rough; solid; “odd”; colorful; drunken; guitar- playing; traditional dress; “brown” Americans are materialistic; Mex. is “real”; uneducated	glossary; Sp. at home; ashamed of Spanish; words & phrases in text	EA/Mex. marriage; patriarchy; powerful “abuela” – healer; EA mother encourages cultural identity; absent/irresponsible males (Pedro’s father); subdued male (Clara’s father)
2007 H	Alegría Latina	ON	MI female	carpet layer/ power plant employee townhome (“gated”)	illegal (fake green card)	black hair; caramel- colored skin; conflicted identity; quest for roots; seeking ‘Amer. Dream’/econ. success; violence at border; Mex. culture ‘real’	fluid incl. of Sp; prot. speaks no Sp.; Eng. only at home; Mexs. view prot. as “sellout”; Eng. sign of assim.; Americanized names by choice	spitfire/assertive fem; fem. goal to marry; domestic females; patriarchy; sexual females

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2008 H	de la Peña Latino	ON	MI male	occup. unknown apartment (barrio)	citizen	EA & MA parents; father in prison; epithets (wetback); Indian ancestry; brown; conflicted identity; violent/drunken (Mex. family); success is “white”; feels “whitewashed” – an outsider to “real” Mex. culture	prot. Eng. only; father withheld Sp.; prot. learns of his Mex. fam.; few Sp. words in text	patriarchy; assertive, independent females; submissive females (Uno’s moth.); absent fathers; macho males
2008 A	Martinez, C. Latina	FP	MI female	construction (father) house/barrio	citizen (2 nd gen.)	olive skin/blk hair; Mexican foods; uses free clinics; Amer.-born favored over Mex.-born; hardworking; centrality of family; plays soccer; telenovlas; Span. newspaper/music; proud of heritage	Spanish only at home; bilingual prot.; parents - limited Eng.; ESL student; learn Eng. from TV;	patriarchy; strong men; submissive female; “cholas”/harlots; mother does not drive; macho – “men don’t cry”; females marry young;
2008 C	Nails EA female	FP	EA female	housekeeper/ secretary “pink” house	green card	short; colorful; spicy foods; “foreign”; beaner; deformed; exotic; otherworldly; traditional dress; illegal; Anglo benef.	Anglo-assigned nickname; exagg. speech (“Leelas”); few Sp. words in text; EA Spanish teacher	unassertive MA female (protag.); ambitious female (Aunt Maria); assertive EA protag.; father in Mexico unable to provide for family

Date/ Ideol.	Author Ethnicity/ Gender	Narration	Protagonist	Family occupation & residence	Legal status	Issues of ethnicity	Issues of language	Issues of gender
2008 H	Sáenz Latino	FP	MI male & EA male	nurse (asst.) & construction Worker house ("poor side")	citizen	gangs/violence; religious; close communities; conflicted identity; hopeless/hopeful; "border" living; Mex. Ram is "real" to EA Jake; segregated schools	bilingual; Eng. is superior; Eng. for assim. & to avoid stereotyping; Ram & friends speak hybrid mix of languages	strong/spitfire females; youth defying cultural expectations/roles (gentle male, assertive female)
2009 U	Alvarez Latina (female)	FP	EA male	agricultural (migrant workers) trailers "out back"	illegal	black/brown features; American Indian ancestry; all look alike; dishonest; hard-working	deficit; rattling; incomprehensible; Spanish at home; Amer. born children bilingual	patriarchy rules of courtship "hot tamale" female

^aEuropean American

^bFirst Person

^cMexican immigrant

^dOmniscient Narration

^eUnattainable (Assimilation)

^fConformity

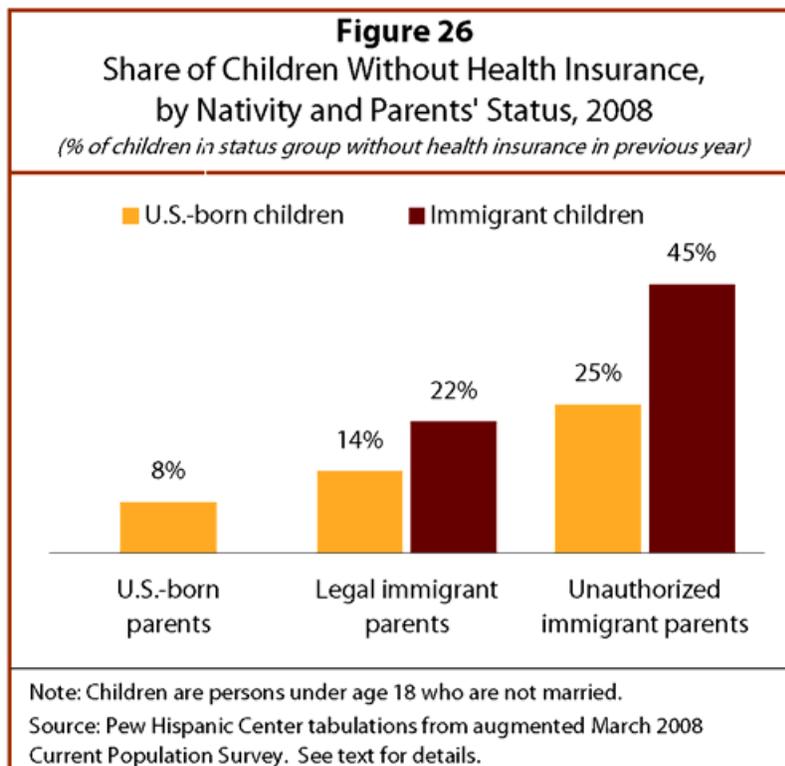
^gAdaptation

^hHybridity

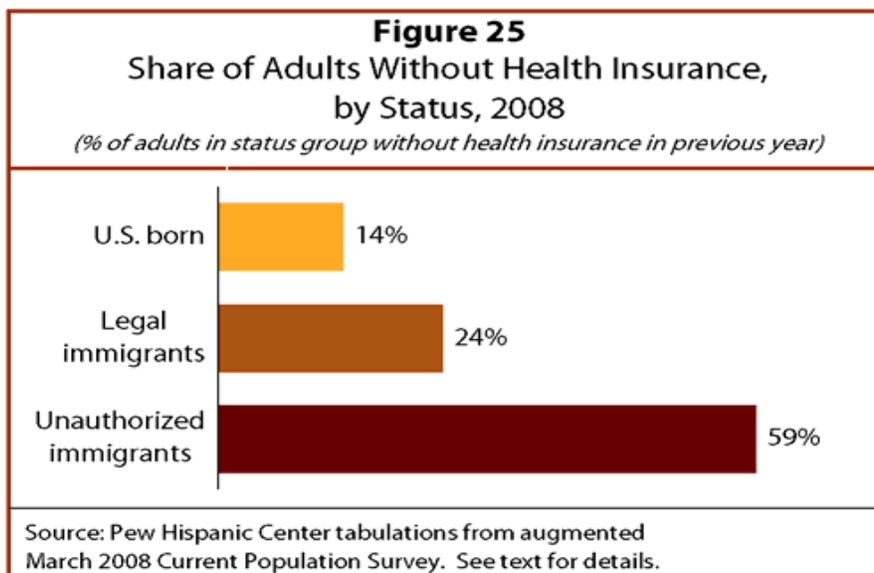
APPENDIX D

Figures

Figure 1.1

Children in the U.S. Without Health Insurance

Retrieved July 8, 2010, from <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf>

Figure 1.2*Adults in the U.S. Without Health Insurance*

Retrieved July 8, 2010, from <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf>

Figure 4.1*Mug-Shot Photo of Dora the Explorer*

Retrieved October 10, 2010, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/05/21/dora-the-explorer-illegal_n_584541.html