

# Possible Wor(l)ds: The Social and Literary Significance of Spanish to English Code-Switch Tags in Junot Díaz

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to establish a link between the code-switching in Junot Díaz's works and some formal resources of graffiti artists –in particular their emblematic *tagz*. These elements are taken attesting to a battle of the discursive sort being waged in the frontier lands of North America, as well as globally in the contact zones between cultures.

Keywords: Junot Diaz, Code-switching, bilingualism, graffiti

## RESUMEN

En este trabajo se analiza la relación entre el la alternancia de lenguas en las narraciones de Junot Díaz y ciertos recursos formales empleados por artistas del graffiti. Estos elementos revelan una batalla por el estilo discursivo que se libra en las tierras fronterizas de América del Norte, y globalmente en zonas de contacto cultural.

Palabras clave: Junot Díaz, alternancia de lenguas, bilingüismo, graffiti

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Any exploded society, like the Dominican Republic, in some ways you could say has multiple existences. It's funny how some people in the Dominican diaspora don't see any diaspora whatsoever—who believe that somehow, miraculously, at some imaginary level, that a nation exists as some sort of pure territorial space, and that therefore the insane level of connectivity that late modern capitalism brought and that international divisions of labor, which produced a lot of fucking waves of immigration – that all of these things don't exist.

Junot Díaz, 2009

Junot Díaz's stories emanate from a hybrid, translated linguistic landscape that politicizes language as the setting of a very real conflict. The Dominican-born author and his work do not fight to inhabit a nation of land, but rather to expand and enrich a nation of words. Via his short stories and novels, Díaz actively participates in a discursive battle taking place at the level of language, although it is effectively and operationally larger, intertwined with society itself. The conflict in question, concerned with what language(s) *may* be used, and in what world(s), is particularly heated in the author's country of residence, the USA. In fact, many will remember that Díaz's literary project was criticized for its overuse of "Spanglish" much before it was accepted, even renowned, as it is today. The academy's initial criticism of Díaz and his use of Spanish peppered English was just one battle in the war over (discursive) national boundaries under discussion. In essence, it is a conflict over the American lexicon which continues today, occurring at every level, from the personal to the political. In the idiosyncrasies of a Díaz text this conflict is expressed lexically, or formally, in the alternating use of English and Spanish popularly conceived of as his distinctive prose style. It has also been critically assessed as Díaz's particular brand of literary code-switching (see Eugenia Casielles-Suarez) different from the bilingual style of other authors like Giannina Braschi or Susana Chavez-Silverman. The goal of this paper is a dually linguistic and theoretical analysis of "lexical setting," or what I call "linguistic territoriality," in Díaz's short story collection *This is How You Lose Her* (2012). To clarify, the use of "setting" here should not be confused with the once conventional notion of setting as a mere backdrop where plot and conflict occur. Rather, this study prescribes to a postmodern notion of setting that is exceedingly aware of language and brings the linguistic component of narration to the fore. Ergo, more than the rivers and suburban compounds of New Jersey populate Díaz's short stories, it is within the language of the narration itself that the author's most heated and byzantine conflicts unfold.

Historically, it goes nearly without saying that the Earth's finite inhabitable land masses were the primary territory fought over by neighbors and enemies. For most of the history of civilization, the foreign foe's particular parlance, the language they happened to speak, seemed far less important than that key terrestrial asset. A select few, the Greeks among them, placed limited importance on the strange sounds made by foreigners as a means to distinguish between "us and them," between the citizens and the barbarians (who made nonsense sounds i.e. *bar bar*). More representative of history are the feudal societies, for example, which concentrated power in the landholding few, leaving the rest to squabble and tillage in poverty. Nevertheless, it can also go nearly without saying that in contemporary times, however, the majority of land and sea areas have been colonized and staunchly partitioned by the power invested in the modern nation-state and government. As a consequence, it is land that has finally succeeded to language as the territory up for dispute<sup>1</sup>. In Díaz's brief but pertinent analysis of the Dominican Republic above he provides us with a site-specific explanation as to *why the prevalence of language as disputed territory* is a consequence of our postmodern and postcolonial times.

Following Díaz, Dominican society is reeling from the social ramifications of globalization and is now fragmented, mobile, and unsettled. He goes so far in the quote as to insist that the Dominican Republic (furthermore the DR) be thought of as an "exploded society," selecting the particular adjective *exploded* in order to invoke a set of specific cultural characteristics caused by the explosive globalization process. Interestingly, those features are near equivalents to those described as "liquid" by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. In Bauman's theory of postmodernity, our current fluid experience of time and space is the result of the dismantling of modernity's solid promises by late capitalism. The overlap of their ideas is apparent when Díaz explains that "late modern capitalism" detonated the Dominican explosion via its globalizing effects and aftereffects. Espousing essentially the same argument as Bauman and many other social theorists of our time, Díaz asserts that late decadent capitalism is both an effect of, and cause for, the organization of society today. The same thought process informs Bauman's complex argument in his many published books on the subject (see *Liquid Modernity*, *Liquid Love*, and *Globalization: The Human Consequences*). Díaz moves a step further in concretizing this notion by ascribing it to a particular nation—the DR— and mimetically exploring the way modernity has altered the conventions and spaces of that society via the literary exercise. By asserting that the once island-inhabiting society is currently in a diasporic state—or "not a nation that exists as some sort of pure territorial space"—and that one would be crazy not to see it, he implies

another feature: that is, that the nation exists in the Andersonian sense of an imagined community wedded by a shared language and culture, but importantly in the case of the DR, not by a homeland. In other words the territory or island of the historical DR itself no longer solidly defines the Dominican nation having been cast into diaspora by liquid modernity. As a member of that diaspora and author, Díaz's literary project reflects this "homelessness" in that it emphasizes the search and fight for language as an attempt to construct a Dominican identity in diaspora.

Arguably, the explosion of Dominican society as a result of globalization intensified an emergent conflict over language to which Díaz was and is connected via live wire. By and large, it is not at all atypical for communities in diaspora to fight to maintain the use of their heritage language as a way to identify with their larger body politic, scattered as they may be. As a result language often becomes one of the dominant politicized features of those communities (and may radiate outwards, unsettling the lexical communities into which they arrive, as well). Therefore, for the Dominican community in exile, a subsequent effect of the aforementioned "explosion" has been the posterior development of a novel linguistic landscape outside of the DR. On the US side, this lexicon, we argue, took on "liquid" or "smooth" characteristics as they are described by Bauman and Deleuze and Guattari, respectively (explored later on in this paper). Ultimately, as a consequence we might anticipate that the confluence of these occurrences be displayed in novel and innovative language derivations, in particular, at the contact zones where the fight for rights to language and identity are underway—in literature as much as in the street. Such is the case with the work of Díaz. His texts represent and figure this "discursive battle" at the lexical level through the uninhibited use of code-switching between his native language, Spanish, and his second language, English. In addition, a further theoretical dimension of this analysis claims that in this discursive battle to occupy the cultural space of language and to dominate it, the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of language occurs so that what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to as a smoothening of striated space—in this case linguistic space—also takes place across Díaz's texts.

First see that, yes, language is a highly politicized cultural space. For centuries, the historical Jewish diaspora identified the Israelite nation not with a specific territorial space but in the declaration of themselves as "the people of the book," or, "the nation of the book."<sup>2</sup> This is to say that imagined communities territorialize and claim rights to language as much as to physical spaces, a tendency we have been arguing is exacerbated by the diasporic condition. In reality, today, in postcolonial America, hybridic-diaspora is the norm and not the deviation. A fact that, as pointed out by critic

and theorist Shirley Geok-Lin Lim,<sup>3</sup> carries with it an array of cultural consequences: the contestation of the notions of purity, of homeland, and the deterritorialization of language. The deterritorializing motion is away from singular, purist readings of language such as that of Octavio Paz<sup>4</sup> and towards reimagined contemplations of both novelistic and/or organic language that see it for what it has always been – the hybrid form that Bakhtin problematizes back in the 1930s, unpacking its double nature in *The Dialogic Imagination* (358-360). Contemporary society's preoccupation with what has been labeled "code-switching" is endemic to this cultural development, a feature of our postcoloniality.

"Code-switching" is on everybody's lips, a trend word fast turning into the quickest mediation for a fascinating socio-linguistic phenomenon: the hybridization of language. With its widening appeal, the sense of what it means to code-switch has transformed. For some scholars, to code-switch means to utilize any notable alternation in register even within a single language. According to other scholars of linguistics, code-switching rather designates "the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent," (Poplack 583). Qualifying code-switching as the alternation of *two distinct languages* by a speaker rather than as merely of two or more registers *in the same language* is essential when considering its relevance to the linguistic struggles pertinent to diaspora; clearly, the linguist's definition is the more viable for this analysis. Nevertheless, still further sub-categories exist within the linguistic notion of code-switching.

In the 1980s text of seminal importance to the theory and research of code-switching, Shana Poplack's *Sometimes I Start a Sentence in Spanish Y Termino en Español: towards a topology of code-switching*, Poplack presents research findings from a case study of twenty Puerto Rican heritage New Yorkers living in East Harlem. Poplack's sample is in fact not a distant linguistic match from Díaz's primary speaker in *This is How You Lose Her*, Yunior. The Díaz protagonist is, similarly, a first-generation Dominican American living in the New York metropolitan tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut during his later childhood and into adulthood. Returning to Poplack's linguistic study, the sample of heritage and immigrant Spanish/English speakers she analyzes is divided following the types of code-switches they perform. The two main types Poplack identifies are (1) "intra-sentential" and (2) "emblematic" code-switches. The first type, labeled as more intimate and complex:

- [I]nvolves a high proportion of intra-sentential switching as in (7) below.  
 (7) a. Why make Carol SENTARSE ATRAS PA' QUE [...] everybody has  
 to move PA' QUE SALGA [...]? (589)

According to Poplack, linguists agree that intra-sentential code switching is the “real” code-switching (589). Her definition and example cited above emphasize that “intra-sentential” code-switches involve alternations between two code systems that *must fit together grammatically*. Surely, that an intra-sentential switch displays greater grammatical complexity in comparison to the other code-switch forms contributes to the large interest it holds for linguists. Of more interest to our own argument are the second type, the “emblematic” switches that are also called “tag-switches,” or simply “tags.” They are referred to as being ‘emblematic’ in that they are considered a type of emblem of the speaker’s ethnic identification. They implicate a change in a single noun or noun group, giving them the name “tag,” and are considered to be grammatically less complex although more culturally charged:

Another [type] is characterized by relatively more tag switches and single noun switches. These are often heavily loaded in ethnic content and would be placed low on a scale of translatability, as in (8).

(8) a. Vendía arroz [...] ‘N SHIT.

b. Salían en sus carros y en sus [...] SNOWMOBILES. (589)

Poplack’s topology of code-switching affirms the social significance of its practice, especially to those who make use of “emblematic” switches, as in above. The definition of the emblematic code-switch (furthermore ‘tag’) provides us with the grounds to further along our argument about Díaz’s own use of code-switching: first off, based on the token sample and definition Poplack provides here (*Vendía arroz n’ shit*) it is apparent that Díaz exploits ‘tags’ or “emblematic” code-switches in his work more than any other type of code-switches. His strategy “goes from the sentence and even the phrasal level inwards down to the word level” (Casielles-Suarez 485). In the paragraph below, we provide examples of Díaz at work with tags for comparison. More importantly, Poplack also establishes that this code-switch type is most often performed as a kind of identity politics: she writes, tags are “heavily loaded in ethnic content” and “constitute an emblematic part of the speaker’s monolingual style” (589). She goes on to say that the use of a tag signifies something about the speaker’s membership in a group (589). Specifically, the use of tag-switches increases when a speaker is interacting with a non-group member, whereas the use of intra-sentential code-switching increases during communication with in-group members (599). Explained colloquially, tags are dominant when it is necessary to “defend one’s turf,” or assert oneself in a foreign context—as does Díaz in the space of the English language.

In the particularities of Díaz’s code alternation, we can observe in his texts that the most frequent speaker, Yúnior, tags the American English Black Vernacular

he grew up with emblematic tokens from the Dominican lexicon. Words such as “pópola” (2012: 47), “deguabinao,” and “estribao” (2012: 101) appear alongside more normative American Latino formulations, such as “hijo de la gran puta” (2012:134) or “gringo children” (2012:133). However, his code-switch tags are at their strongest in alternations that meld and fuse languages seamlessly in novel and delicious sounding noun-groupings such as, “for the record I didn’t think Pura was so bad [...] Guapisima as hell: tall and indiecita,” (2012:101). *Guapisima as hell* sounds incredibly natural to the English-Spanish bilingual, so much so that it nearly hurts to see its novelization, as if it had been co-opted from a friend’s mouth. Another telling example: “These viejas were my mother’s old friends [...] and when they were over was the only time Mami seemed somewhat like her old self. Loved to tell her stupid campo jokes,” (2012: 92). *Campo jokes*. These tags produce an in-group feeling that transmits insider cultural knowledge and reminders of folk identities from the island to inside readers, but more importantly, they provide outsiders with an equally out-of-group feeling, making the English language strange to the most native and “pure” English speakers/readers.

Ultimately, tags are also a way to invade and occupy, to territorialize the *major* language one is forced to use, with the *minor* language that constitutes an aspect of speaker identity. It is a politic. Tags are part and parcel of what I have been calling the discursive battle to occupy the cultural space that is language. Let us think about this from a different angle for the length of a few paragraphs. Metaphorically, a code-switch tag functions almost identically to the visual tag of the graffiti artist. Both are means of declaring and asserting one’s own culture and alliances over others in the encounter with an other who may not share the same background. As Poplack affirms about the tags of code-switching, the “tagz” of graffiti are also “heavily loaded in ethnic content;” that tags/z are considered “emblematic” of an artist and their particular style rings at least equally as true to those enmeshed in the world of graffiti (if not more so) as to those cognizant of the world of linguistic tagging. At their most obvious, both linguistic and graffiti tags/z are a type of *swag* a type of *style* fashioned to be seen by others. Appreciated subtly, tags/z communicate details about an individual’s personal, ethnic, and group identity to the rest of the world (i.e. non-group members). The tagz of the street writer, after all, are most often an epithet for the name of the graffiti artist and their artistic persona. The characteristic word is then painted in unique form on numerous city walls and abandoned buildings in a very public fight “to get up,” or to dominate, on the “scene.”



**Figure 1:** New York City Tag In Process



Source: Original photo taken by the author, J. Nalerio

Also important is that each interlocutor in this battle hopes to dominate over other authors as much as to sabotage and threaten the bureaucratic space of the city wall. The tag embodies something of lawlessness, transgression of the codes and norms of society—something buccaneer. Whether it be leaving your personal mark on a public or ordered space as in the graffiti artist, or tagging a major language with a minor one i.e. Díaz, both graffiti tagz and code-switch tags are a means of reterritorializing established linguistic spaces and rearranging them to give way to an author’s (minor) idiosyncratic language. In “Bombing modernism: Graffiti and its Relationship to the (Built) Environment,” design writer Amos Klausner explains graffiti’s subversive signifying potentiality:

[It has the] ability to reconsider letter forms, reformulate language, and destroy the accepted hierarchies of communication. With no artificially imposed order and the inherent decentralization of postmodernism as its guide, graffiti writers used irony (in the form of the oppressor becoming the oppressed), double coding (writers communicated simultaneous messages to different social groups), and paradox (the inherent illegibility of their work), as tools to change our shared expectations of how, where, and why we



communicate. It [graffiti] is an archetypal study in semiotics where signs and symbols are used to recognize how meaning is formulated and perceived. (3)

In the essay, “The Smooth and the Striated,” Deleuze and Guattari develop an ontology of (cultural) space offering a series of explanations through various “models” of the dialectic between the two (1987: 474-500). As the title suggests the smooth (rather than *the smooth-en-ed*) is the original space of departure, of unbridled creativity and immanence. The striated always implies a once smooth space. Deleuze and Guattari cite the ocean in all its “intensities” as the representation of original smooth space par excellence (though other examples include the smooth space of the fetal uterus in the early stages of gestation, for example) until “maritime space” was striated by measures, bearings and maps, and its striation set forth by the Portuguese in 1440 (1987:479). In addition, Deleuze and Guattari establish smooth space as nomadic space, drawing heavily on examples of cultural artifacts and practices of nomadic people to illustrate inhabited smooth space throughout the chapter. When the smooth versus striated (or nomad versus state) opposition is applied to language, we can say with some certainty that the striated textual fabric of today’s linguistic landscape has its origins in the smooth. The oral traditions of traveling storytellers and poets were at some point commodified and transformed into the institution of the Western Book (Manzanas and Benito 2003: 13). In literature, the bourgeoisie novel more than poetry has traditionally been a striated space, the artifice representing a striated linguistic and social environment back to itself. Also consider the strict categorization of literature by nationality, the staunch editing procedures of the publishing house. Yet, we are at a turning point and the hype around code-switching likely reflects a smoothening linguistic landscape across levels and cultural spheres. What Junot Díaz does in his work –smoothing the striated linguistic space of published literature– is a symptom of the times.

Before remarking on what makes Junot Díaz particularly “nomadic” in the Deleuzian sense, a few preliminary words should be said on the author in general. Díaz is aggressively creative. Having been criticized for his use of English interspersed with Spanish, and measured against a status quo instituted by language purists who set up impassable barriers, he was eventually embraced, even glorified by the establishment, teaching creative writing at one of the most prestigious universities in the world. He is on the board of the world-renowned Pulitzer Prize. The purpose of this anecdote is not to suggest that Díaz in particular has been successful at elevating code-switching in the eyes of the literary establishment, but that this event reflects transformations

underway in even the most firmly-ensconced institutions' relationship with language. One might even say that the cultural boundaries dividing languages are in the process of being gutted and reformulated.

As further exploration, let us begin with reflections on the (textual) city. Described by Deleuze and Guattari as "the striated space par excellence," (1987:481) the city is and also represents the established, striated, codes of modernity. From the unmoving asphalt wall, up to the gridlocked skyscrapers of the metropolis, we find striated spaces stifling creative vision and movement. In that same vein, the catalogued Spanish of the Academia Real Española and the measured English of Oxford's Cambridge English exams striate linguistic spaces: classifying, subordinating, restricting. Just as city buildings subordinate pedestrians to specific trajectories, as Deleuze and Guattari explain: "in striated spaces, lines or trajectories tend to be subordinated to the trajectory: one goes from one point to another" (1987: 478) without wandering or questioning. In another seminal text on the urban landscape, "Walking in the City," Michel de Certeau examines the human inhabitation of cities in their spatial and metaphorical aspects, concluding about the act of being a pedestrian: "they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read" (93). The code of the city dictates to its users, as language to its speakers, to blindly follow the preordained path from one point to another with little to no awareness of their implicit participation in etching the boundaries still deeper, its stories rigorously and staunchly conventional.

Yet we return to the fight, which disrupts and rewrites the code that encourage a blind surrender to fixed boundaries. Díaz and other taggers' rebuttal in this dually discursive and urban battle is the practice of developing what Deleuze and Guattari call nomadic smooth spaces (1987: 481). Their minds and imaginations become smooth spaces that liberate trajectories of intellectual and imaginative wandering. As a result, their innovations can presumably smoothen the striated. Returning to Díaz, he himself has remarked that his use of code-switching is a result of a kind of liberation of his tongue, or in his English-Spanish lexicon:

One of the things that's helped me is that I have a particular amount of shamelessness around these different idioms that I love. [...] I've never felt any shame of misusing the language that I grew up with [...] It takes so much more energy keeping these things apart. (2009)

His code-switching is the result of an organic mixing of languages that ultimately comes more naturally to him than maintaining their striation and maintaining apart his multilingual capacities. Although the tags and code-switches present in his work are arguably carefully planned representations (re-formulations) of an authentic linguistic

vernacular, they re-establish an uninhibited non-order across the linguistic landscape of the text and bring the reader to (surprised) attention and to unanticipated feelings and readings. It is from this point that a “*migrational*, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city,” (De Certeau 93). Meandering through the enclosed frontiers of striated factual space, dodging the mines and pitfalls detonated by a threatened literary status quo, Díaz and other nomadic taggers at their most effective “insinuate other routes into the functionalist and historical order of movement,” (De Certeau 105) smoothening and liberating striated urban and linguistic landscapes.

As in the picture on pg. 18, the graffiti artists’ tagging, or “bombing,” completes much the same function across the code of the city landscape. After the artist’s nomadic quest through the city to find an appealing space, their tags will reroute and rewrite the code of the striated space of the urban wall via novel, rhizomatic and chaotic lines and trajectories. The nomads mark their turf in the reterritorializing process. As De Certeau suggests and Deleuze and Guattari aptly point out once again, striated spaces can at times become smooth, depending on the trajectories and manners of the sentient beings that live in that space and how they occupy it:

[I]t is possible to live striated on the deserts, steppes, or seas; it is possible to live smooth even in the cities, to be an urban nomad (for example, a stroll taken by Henry Miller in Clichy or Brooklyn is a nomadic transit in smooth space; he makes the city disgorge a patchwork, differentials of speed, delays and accelerations, changes in orientation, continuous variations [...]). (1987: 482)

Deleuze and Guattari offer Henry Miller’s occupation and movement through the city landscape as an example of “living smooth” in a striated urban space. Similarly, Junot Díaz’s code-switches are a way of living, writing, and speaking smooth; linguistic meandering is part of his hybrid identity, forged in a linguistic landscape complicated by the diasporic condition. Like Henry Miller’s path through the city, Díaz and the other speakers sampled by Poplack in her landmark study mark a new path through linguistic space; their free code alternations make striated language space “disgorge a patchwork” and “change orientation” in that they inhabit a creative, diasporic wandering between the world(s) of Spanish and English, shamelessly discarding conventions of parlance. Combining *guapisima as hell* with the Foucault-referencing (Díaz 2012: 15) theory and jargon part of his vocabulary as a university professor, Díaz etches a unique path through the city: through linguistic registers pertaining to various socioeconomic classes and races, he is able to narrate the language heteroglossia that authoritative discourse would rather deny. Díaz’s insistence on the relevance of Spanish words and phrases to his literary project, in the face of an outspoken American public majority

xenophobically declaring the *Star-Spangled Banner* (the American national anthem) be recited in English only, is powerful.

In this paper, we have observed a unique link between the signifying of the lexical tags in Junot Díaz's narrations with the tagz of the graffiti artist. Tags and tagz seem to overlap in shared meaning; attesting to a battle of the discursive sort being waged in the frontier lands of North America, and globally as the contact zones between cultures inevitably expand. In a move resembling the linguist's analysis of demographic and language-oriented features of a sample, I have presented tokens of the Díaz protagonist Yuniór's code-switching in *This is How You Lose Her* for the analysis of its language, not as a closed system, but as a socially situated tool. We did not propose to undertake a rigorous empirical linguistic analysis of the Junot Díaz short story collection *This is How...* Rather, this peculiar metalinguistic, discourse analysis has been offered in support of broader claims about the changing linguistic landscape of postmodernity – with special attention payed to a concrete analysis of the hybridity that postcolonial critics, for example, have been referencing for the past fifty years. Furthermore, we have argued for the popular manifestation of code-switching as a form of identity politics, not only site-specific to Díaz's literary texts, but observable in the general linguistic landscape particular to our society today. We have also tried to demonstrate this feature as a symptom of a “smooth-en-ing,” in the Deleuzian and Guattarian sense, of the linguistic landscape occurring in today's globalized and —perhaps Díaz says it best himself— *exploded* societies.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This thesis is a derivation on the theme of Foucault's biopolitics. Foucault scholar Giorgio Agamben explains that "According to Foucault, a society's "threshold of biological modernity" is situated at the point at which the species and the individual as a simple living body become what is at stake in a society's political strategies. After 1977, the courses at the Collège de France start to focus on the passage from the "territorial State" to the "State of population [...]" (10). This is what we also try to address, the turn away from "territorial" politics to a politics of agency, voice, and language in this case.

<sup>2</sup> The book was the *Torah*, or *Old Testament*.

<sup>3</sup> Lim writes, "as people move from their natal territories, notions of individual and group identity, grounded in ideas of geographical location as a national homelands and of segregated racial purity become contested and weakened. The literatures being produced today by immigrant populations and by nationalists reflect, address, express, and reconstruct the late-twentieth century preoccupation with and interrogation of concepts of "identity," "home," and "nation" (294).

<sup>4</sup> Literary critic Ilan Stevens quotes Octavio Paz in his book, *Spanglish: the Making of a New American Language*, as having said of the mixing of English and Spanish, "ni es bueno ni es malo, sino abominable" (4).