WORDS AND WORLDS: ATTENDING TO CULTURE AS INTERCULTURE IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM THROUGH CHICANA LITERATURE

by

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Abstract

This thesis explores how Spanish language teachers may present the notion of cross-cultural understanding in their classes. It argues against a definition of culture that divides students from the target cultures into “us” and “them,” but rather, advocates the understanding of culture as “interculture.” This concept of “interculture,” which involves questioning stereotypes and self-exploration, can be well illustrated through integrating Chicana literature into the curriculum. In particular, the metaphor of the “borderlands,” which is critical to understanding Chicano culture, provides a relevant point of departure for learners of Spanish to see the target cultures, as well as their own, as hybrid, constructed, and dynamic.
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Introduction

Because I, a mestiza,
Continually walk out of one culture
And into another
Because I am in all cultures at the same time,
Alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,
Me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.
Estoy norteada por todas las voces que me hablan
Simultáneamente (Anzaldúa 77).

Learning a foreign language is an important part of living in a world of globalization and cross-cultural communication. In order to explore new worlds, a learner must acquire two fundamental skills: knowledge of a new language and knowledge of its cultures. Cultural competence is an important outcome of foreign language education. Learning to speak a new language, to name, is an attempt to articulate oneself within a new paradigm of describing reality. Indeed, the interactions that occur in the language classroom can be described as the exploration of new words and new worlds.

The social forms of language are what give words their meaning. As learners become more engaged in foreign language study, they realize that communication is more than the memorization of a different grammar. Language learning also requires a concern for culture—knowledge of the language, history, and world-views of one's own culture and that of the target group. However, the learner's culture
and the foreign world are most often presented as two different realms. Language study encourages learners to express themselves without requiring them to explore why they think the way they do. Students may assume that the foreign perspective can be understood once they have learned the language of the other group. In most Spanish textbooks, cultural knowledge is presented as facts about the country or selections of literature from a particular country. Thus, culture is presented as information, not a subjective process that requires self-inquiry into how learners filter information according to their own perspectives.

This thesis suggests that it is possible to imagine language learning as a different process, one that requires the learners to travel to the border between their own culture and the foreign point of view. The purpose is to explore what culture means through exploring the self, interpreting both self and culture critically, and identifying how language plays a part in identity formation. Such a methodology means investing the learner herself in a process of self-exploration, of articulating the particulars of her own cultural identity. Through such an exercise, cultural understanding becomes more complex because, just as there is not one easy definition of self, neither is there one culture. As language educator Claire Kramsch explains, "the pedagogical stance of the language teacher moves from teaching culture as the transmission of objective information towards looking at culture as a social construct between self and other perceptions" (205). This process is represented by the concept of "interculture," where cultural context in language instruction involves locating the crossroad of inquiry into self and other. It is the meeting of many words and worlds.
The ideas presented here are meant to aid Spanish language teachers interested in creating cross-cultural understanding in their classes. In particular, this thesis provides an example of how literature can help students begin to break down stereotypes of what native speakers might be like. This approach is suitable for advanced High School students or introductory adult language classes, where the language skills might still be in early development, but students do have experience appreciating literature from other curricular areas. Moreover, the approach presented here is seen in a Canadian context, where issues of cultural understanding could impact national harmony.

Culture is an act of interpretation with different levels of meaning, and subject to diverse perspectives. Cultural comparison has evolved to the recognition that there are no homogeneous national cultures, nor "organic" ethnic communities (Bhabha 5). Following postmodern arguments of thinkers such as Homi Bhabha and Clifford Geertz, we can say that culture is not something to be pointed at and located, but rather is a semiotic one, what Geertz defines as "webs of significance," whose analysis is "not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretative one" (5). James Clifford argues that humans are necessarily members of many cultural traditions, subcultural categories such as gender, ethnicity or religion. He says we are all caught in "webs," interconnected, "inauthentic -- caught between cultures, implicated in others" (11).

The understanding of words and worlds for Spanish-language learners may begin from the Spanish-English interlinguistic and intercultural zone that they experience as they learn Spanish. The language classroom is a Spanish-English interlinguistic / intercultural borderland. The hyphenated culture of the language classroom resembles the experience of Mexican-American (Chicana) writers who
inhabit their own borderland between Mexico and the United States. The common thread between Chicanas and Spanish learners is their shared location between at least two cultural systems. The borderland serves as a conceptual starting point for envisioning the study of foreign languages as the exploration of multiple perspectives and voices. When the learner studies a foreign language, he not only learns about the connection between language and subjectivity, but also about the tension of being able to speak many languages and travel through many cultures. By thinking of language education as border-crossing, learners may deconstruct stereotypical boundaries between foreign and native cultures, self and other, and the tensions between these divisions. Thus, language educators may make significant contributions to the future of multiculturalism, not only in their own communities, but also by preparing their students to participate fully in the world.

As Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa explains:

To survive the Borderlands
You must live sin fronteras
Be a crossroads (195)

This thesis examines the principle of language teaching and learning as a border-crossing experience. This type of "intercultural" language education locates the classroom as a borderland that allows learners to explore areas of connection between self and other. This thesis poses several questions. First, what is the social context of foreign language education, specifically as it relates to the portrayals of foreign cultures and the inclusion of students' own multicultural perspectives? Secondly, what are some central ideas explored in Chicana writing that make it an example of border-crossing? Finally, what kinds of teaching
practices would enhance students' own voices as well as promote critical consciousness so that self-reflexivity leads to an understanding of difference?

Chapter One examines the concept of interculture in foreign-language instruction. Language study must enable the learner to navigate more than one world through the knowledge that cross-cultural communication does not rely on translation but rather on developing a double-voiced identity that navigates similarities and differences. The chapter reviews ideas developed by linguist Claire Kramsch, in particular her construction of the foreign-language classroom as a "third culture"--a place infused with the social and linguistic meaning of the native and foreign world-views. The "third space" is the purposeful creation of learning moments whose distinguishing feature is a dialogic perspective that puts into question rigid barriers between self and other.

Chapter Two focuses on issues in multicultural education in Canada. Multicultural education must be integrated across the curriculum, since Canadian educators teach a culturally diverse student population. A major factor in the learning process is the complex relationship between the learners' own multicultural characteristics, their beliefs associated with these differences, and the social context of the classroom. A direct consequence of immigration is the fact that heritage customs will undergo change and transformation in the new environment. While different cultural groups share in making Canada a varied country, it is also true that the largest group of Canadians is those of mixed ethnic ancestry (Carpenter 59). The chapter looks at the different ways that multicultural education is discussed in Canada in order to gain a clearer picture of the social, political, and ideological challenges to defining culture as interculture within language pedagogy.
The chapter concludes by discussing a model of intercultural education that grapples with the appreciation of differences as a means to interpreting the dynamic of cross-cultural communication and understanding.

Chapter Three discusses key concepts in Latin American cultural criticism in order to provide a framework for interpreting Chicana literature. The notion of hybridity implicit in the notion of transculturation and post-colonialism adumbrates the overlapping dynamics of gender, history, class, and language contained in Chicana literature.

Chapter Four looks at the borderland as a metaphor for Chicana writers to describe their incultural identity. As Virginia Olensen says, literature is an "interpretative human action," the "cultural product of reports of experience" (158). The border is both a geographical boundary between Mexico and the United States, and a pragmatic response to the problem of cultural hybridity. The borderland has a specific history for Chicanas yet also provides a useful metaphor for understanding cultural dynamics.

Chapter Five discusses feminist classroom practice. This chapter addresses analogies between feminist pedagogy and language teaching, since feminist pedagogy advocates practices that reveal students' perspectives and makes transparent the role of language and voice in creating meaning. This thesis limits itself to providing a theoretical methodological framework for language teachers. Teachers will adapt the particulars of their lessons in accordance to many variables such as time and students' individual needs. As professionals, we are experts in a variety of classroom activities. However, what drives the teaching practice must be the rationale for doing what we do.
The methodology of this paper is necessarily interdisciplinary. Language is culture, since without a social context, words have no meaning. At the same time, culture is dynamic, permeated by ambiguity, as groups and individuals respond to the challenges and pressures of a rapidly changing society. In response to demographic, social, and political changes, debates over language, culture, and identity have assumed central importance in all aspects of education. Foreign language learning can be a key resource for helping students to manage this diversity.
Chapter 1: Creating a Space for Interculture in the Language Classroom.

Learning a second language is a complex task for the learner, as she finds herself without a "voice" in a monolingual classroom. Central to the communicative approach of language teaching is the practice of immersing learners in the target language as much as possible without confusing the learner or diminishing the self-confidence and motivation that lead to proficiency. The communicative approach has replaced audio-lingual methods which focused on grammar analysis and translation first, and then authentic communication. A communicative approach reverses this order by emphasizing that learners communicate first, and then see for themselves why and when they need grammar practice. Communicative teaching emphasizes pragmatic skills such as ordering a meal, making travel plans, and expressing personal preferences. However, the problem is that focusing on universal tasks may lead students to assume that language learning is simply expressing one's own perspective in another language and that this perspective will be universally understood. This superficial approach to culture curtails critical reflection, since it reduces culture to fixed images. It implies that while the language is foreign, the worldviews are not. As Claire Kramsch argues,

The negotiation of meaning that takes place in the foreign language is... only a negotiation of grammatical and lexical forms, or a negotiation of reference to a stable common external reality. It has kept learners unaware of the multiple facets of the target groups' cultural identity. It has left them blind to their own social and cultural diversity and has implicitly assumed a consensus between their world and the other. (Kramsch and von Hoene 336)
Learning a foreign language requires not only internalizing a new set of linguistic rules, but also a new social context understood through the notion that language is linked to world view. To communicate in a foreign language means to acquire grammatical tools and then move from that literal awareness of language towards doing things with the language, situated in culture. This chapter argues that to learn a foreign language is to recognize the lenses through which we interpret culture.

Teaching interculturally is to inquire into our own and foreign ways of defining culture. This concept is predicated on self-analysis, an activity that is ignited when learners are given the opportunity to realize their own perspectives. Such an awareness of self encourages multiple views within each individual learner, perspectives that s/he may or may not share with others. Thus, language instruction is the exploration of the deeply held meanings about ourselves and others. As such, language instruction is centrally involved in helping learners deconstruct the boundaries of difference.
Double-voiced Discourse in the Language Classroom.

Because foreign language learning concerns itself with "naming the world," linguistic fluency must go hand in hand with cultural competence. Making oneself understood is more than mouthing foreign words. As Laurel Richardson writes,

Different languages and different discourses within a given language divide up the world and give it meaning in ways that are not reducible to one another. . . . Language is not the result of one's individuality; rather language constructs the individual's subjectivity in ways that are historically and locally specific. (518)

Claire Kramsch defines language pedagogy as facilitating a dialogue between native and target cultures. Kramsch questions both the learners' knowledge and the target culture's perspective. In this way, the notion of cultural subjectivity is made central, and the focus shifts from an exchange of information to a consideration of the filters by which we read the world. As Kramsch explains,

The only way to start building a more complete and less partial understanding of both C1 [culture 1] and C2 is to develop a third perspective that would enable learners to take both an insider's and outsider's view of C1 and C2. (210)

Kramsch constructs language learning as a "third space" where cross-cultural competence is predicated on a knowledge of self. When learners are
cognizant of their own perspective, they may be able to recognize patterns of subjectivity. Kramsch writes:

When speaking with a single voice, learners stand within their usual way of speaking, even though they speak foreign words; they don't recognize that their interaction with another language and culture might put in question their usual way of expressing the world around them. Double-voiced discourse, on the other hand, is consistent with what bell hooks calls "the social construction of the self in relation," in which the self is seen "not as a signifier of an 'I' but the coming together of many 'I's,' the self as embodying collective reality past and present, family and community". (Kramsch and von Hoene 339)

The language classroom represents a global crossroads where people articulate their lives and ways of life. Thus, language instruction is a borderland that represents a place in which a wide variety of perspectives meet. Language instruction allows an encounter between self and other, and it allows students to explores areas of resistance. As this thesis will argue in Chapter Three, Chicana literature can be a means by which the Spanish classroom can be the crossroad of the learners' and native speakers' worlds. Chicanas use the border as an organizing theme for double-voiced discourse. When we bring to light examples of hyphenated realities, language educators can offer learners "alternative ways of naming and interpreting the world...the opportunity to think through and to question existing practices" (Kramsch 240).
Chapter 2 - Multicultural education as a Framework for intercultural Foreign Language Education

Canada is a multi-ethnic, officially bilingual country composed of immigrants and First Nations people. Multicultural education in Canada is based on the view that the social and economic well-being of Canada can be enhanced by preserving the cultural differences of a diverse population. Government policies hope such preservation will foster the abilities of citizens to be competent in more than one language and culture, thereby improving the economic and personal welfare of all Canadians (McLeod 218-19). Furthermore, when students feel that their interests, experiences, and goals, including their tongue and native culture are recognized and valued, they will be empowered to influence their personal, social, political and economic worlds (Banks 154).

This chapter reviews important elements of multicultural education. The aim of both multicultural and foreign language study is not just to learn about cultures, but also to achieve cultural understanding. Cultural understanding refers to working across cultural traditions so that learners deal with their own and different worlds, and to the notion of interculturality, and learn to accept that individuals have many different perspectives.

Nevertheless, while the general rationale of multicultural education is based on the personal and social benefits of combating racism and ethnocentrism, there are no established agreements as to how to achieve this ideal (Carpenter 53). The aim of this chapter is to discuss three main conceptual distinctions: liberal, political, and intercultural education, arguing that the intercultural approach aids language
methodology in its goal of advocating a third space of cultural understanding. The liberal approach requires mention since it reflects widely-held beliefs about cultural diversity, but it is criticized for encouraging cultural stereotypes and therefore entrenching ethnocentrism and racism (McCarthy and Crichlow xxi). Political multicultural education is limited to a socio-political analysis of cultural interaction. Intercultural education emphasizes the hybrid character inherent in any culture (Toshio 5). Furthermore, intercultural education requires the collective construction of knowledge. Thus this model is analogous to language education since both aim to not just learn about cultures, but to achieve understanding between cultures.

Liberal Multicultural Education

The liberal approach to multiculturalism generally accepts as norm the traditions, values, and cultural capital of the immigrant societies and equates ethnicity with culture (Carpenter 58). Liberal multiculturalism is criticized by educational scholars for reifying rather than questioning differences. In the liberal approach, superficial aspects (food, song, costume) of both the host and foreign cultures are touched upon. Critics such as Neil Bissoondath have argued that Canadian policy has endorsed such a view of multiculturalism, which commodifies a false culture, a specialized, exclusive "cult" of behaviors (Golfman 176). Such a "celebration of the exotic" (Moodley 8) is essentialist since it reduces both the host and foreign cultures to assumed homogeneous entities. As Adams argues, "inflation of cultural differences often ghettoizes minorities" (8). A direct consequence of an exclusive focus on ancestral heritage is what Carpenter argues
is "ethnic boundary maintenance" and, "as a consequence, multiculturalism, while intended to be inclusive, is paradoxically exclusive" (Carpenter 59).

Liberal multiculturalism does not provide an adequate model for educators interested in cross-cultural education. Liberal multiculturalism objectifies individuals since ethnicity becomes the salient identity of the self (Ford and Dillard 232). Further, liberal multiculturalism is ahistorical, not accounting for evolution and change. As Elvi argues, ignorance of social issues makes it harder for ethnic groups to gain political and social power since, as she suggests, "essences suggest unproblematic realities" (112).

The liberal approach to multiculturalism is also seen as facilitating the tendency for individuals belonging to majority groups to see themselves as the norm, and culture as the property of ethnic minorities. As Carpenter states, "multiculturalism connotes ethnicity, meaning that only those who identify, or are identified, ethnically are popularly perceived as having culture" (59). This type of "mosaic" multiculturalism implies that the Anglo norm is the hidden background. As argued by Pinar, when culture is seen as the perpetuation of the exotic, this "deforms white students as well" because, by remaining ignorant of how their identities are constituted, they "misunderstand who they are as racialized, gendered, historical, political creatures" (62).
Political Multicultural Education

Advocates of a political approach to multicultural education contend that the identity of any group emerges historically according to economic and social conditions. The political approach argues that the tension between "Us" and "Them" cannot be resolved through more information or contact. The aims of multicultural policy such as equity, inclusiveness, and civil rights are not available to everyone since individuals are differently enfranchised along the axis of such factors as gender, race, language, class, religion, and economics. This type of multicultural perspective is a "politics of difference" that emphasizes the socio-political factors in identity construction. Pinar describes culture as "representation," negotiated in the public sphere according to the social power given to a certain class, gender, race, and ethnicity. Thus, "the interpretation of others and ourselves is contingent on our social and historical context rather than objective truths" (61).

Knowledge and paradigms consistent with the interests, goals and assumptions of dominant groups are institutionalized within the schools and universities as well as within popular culture. The Western-centric and male-centric canon that dominates the school and university curriculum often marginalizes the experiences of people of colour, developing nations and cultures, and the perspectives and histories of women. It results in the Americas being called the "New World," in the notion that Columbus "discovered" America; in the Anglo immigrants to the West being called "settlers" rather than "immigrants" (Banks 155-57). The dominant ideology then becomes the background against which individuals define their identity. According to James Banks, multicultural education must give students opportunities to articulate their own knowledge so that they can "understand the extent to which
knowledge is a social construction that reflects the social, political context in which it is formulated" (155).

Intercultural Education

"Intercultural" multicultural education recognizes identity as a construction and seeks to articulate the frameworks by which we construct knowledge. Self-clarification is a prerequisite of intercultural education since the understanding of the other is predicated on recognizing one's own filters of interpretation. Interculturalism challenges assumptions of objective knowledge by suggesting that xenophobia can be diminished through questioning and deconstruction, a process of "recognition of otherness in self" and "selfness in other" (Carpenter 62). By contextualizing themselves within many social situations, learners can see themselves as multidimensional, a characteristic that they share with the world even though the particulars may differ. One is still "one's own person" yet one respects the fact that others' multiple positions may rest on entirely different affiliations (Roman 74).

The challenge of the intercultural approach is the notion of collective social power: how is it possible to speak about difference and political agency given the multiple sites that we inhabit (Lai 188)? One approach is to assert multiple locations while at the same time choosing to position strategic essences for the purposes of constituting a politics of self and identity. This assumed identity is contingent on historical, sociological and political time, as well as a particular place. As Mae Gwendolyn Henderson suggests, a "simultaneity of discourse" allows for
both multiple locations and varied political standpoints (144). Thus the challenge is navigating one's many identities.

When one understands the complexity of cultural hybridity as well as the many factors that inflect how one reads oneself and other cultures, the boundary between self and other becomes blurred, creating a third space of interpretation. The third space is in part a product of the language, the historical context and the traditions in which it is created.

Intercultural Education and the Spanish Classroom

Language learning can extend the way we understand ourselves and others. The primary aim of an intercultural education is, as Ouellet argues, "not so much an "understanding of other cultures" as an "understanding of the dynamics of cultures" (291). When language classrooms encourage a dialogue between languages and cultures—each with its own multiple variations according to gender, race, class, and so on—learners can reflect upon and revise individual and cultural practices of human interaction (Kramsch and von Hoene 352). This understanding presupposes the exploration of cultural traditions as well as the understanding of the socio-political dynamics with which the cultural variables constantly interact (Ouellet 292). Language students must not see the study of a different language and its speakers as a set of facts and concepts to be memorized, but instead be encouraged to explore the nature of the knowledge that is presented and to examine the ways in which cultural knowledge is constructed.
The methodology suggested by intercultural education can be an important means by which foreign language pedagogy can "examine the hyphen at which Self-Other join" (Fine 70). Literature is one site where students confront meanings about self and other. Chicana literature, since it draws from Mexican and American cultures, can give students and teachers the opportunity to construct knowledge about hyphenated identities.

Claire Kramsch argues for creating a "sphere of intertextuality" that requires reflection on both the target and native culture. Teaching interculturally means attention to the voices from the target cultures that testify to a world-view crosscut with heterogeneous racial, linguistic, and social experiences. Such an approach to language teaching accepts personal testimony, literary narratives, and critical discourses on individual and group identity. Latin America literature can play a key role in language instruction since an important principle of Latin-American or Latino writing is its awareness of racial, cultural, and linguistic hybridity.
Chapter 3: Perspectives on Cultural Identity in Latin American Literary Criticism.

This chapter suggests that the link between language and identity is not given; it has to be established. Authentic texts can lay the ground for learners to understand a different world-view if readers understand the social context that influences that writing. They can then be in a position to place that understanding in relation to their own cultural viewpoint. Thus, questioning and acknowledging the other culture, through language and literature study, can serve as form of self-knowledge. This chapter makes use of concepts in Latin-American literary criticism in order to understand the frameworks by which Latino writers articulate their world-view.

Transculturization

In *Between Two Waters*, Silvia Spitta merges ethnography and literary studies to argue that cross-cultural encounters change both self and other. Cross-cultural dialogue requires participants to disengage their original perspective. The result is a renewed perspective for both the foreign and native subjects, a change that Spitta refers to as transculturation. Transculturization is a two-way "give and take," "the complex process of adjustment and re-creation—cultural, literary, linguistic, and personal—that allow for new, vital, and viable configurations to arise out of the clash of cultures and the violence of colonial and neo-colonial appropriations" (2). Thus, whether he arrived due to conquest, slavery, or displacement, the Latin American subject is "consciously or unconsciously situated
between at least two worlds, two cultures, two languages, and two definitions of subjectivity, and who constantly mediates between them all" (24)

Spitta deploys the notion of transculturation in order to interpret the writers' subjectivity in a variety of texts ranging from colonial chronicles, visual art, and Chicana novels. Spitta explains transculturation as a methodology for literary interpretation as follows:

Three main concerns inform my analyses throughout. The first of these is to understand transculturation as a process that starts with the Conquest and carries on into the present. The second is to examine it not as a single process, but rather as many different processes of assimilation, adaptation, rejection, parody, resistance, loss, and ultimately transformation of Spanish AND indigenous cultures . . . . The third concern . . . is to see the colony as a space that has given rise to an extreme ambiguity of symbols. It is thus a semiotic space imbued with different, often contradictory . . . and incommensurable meanings that carry into the dynamics of contemporary Latin America. For as well as allowing for very divergent readings of the same signs and symbols, the colonial, I argue, also gives rise to subjectivities and subjects—and hence narrators—that are living in a borderland, defining themselves according to and being defined by two or more different cultural systems. (24).

Spitta uses her methodology to discover overlapping cultural perspectives in a variety of Latin American texts. Transculturation can be found in primary texts from the 16th century through to contemporary Chicana feminist literature. In
addition, Spitta uses the notion of transculturation to interpret cultural dynamics. For example, Spitta refers to Cuba as a hybrid of Spanish, African, and Asian cultures. Cultural hybridity is the process of the partial loss of culture by each immigrant group. The Cuban dynamic then evolves into the assimilation of elements from other cultures and the creation of a new Cuban culture. However, since foreign influences continue to be present, the new culture is never achieved. It is forever in the making, inevitably deferred (9, 15, 24). In all these examples, the different facets of transculturation are at work (assimilation, adaptation, rejection, parody, resistance, loss). Therefore, the study of Latin American diversity calls for a tolerance for ambiguity, unfinished, double and at times mutually exclusive readings.

Finally, Spitta calls for readers to be interpretative when they read texts located in a multicultural matrix. Spitta argues that readers are themselves “transculturadores” since when they read at various levels of cultural signification, they reconstruct themselves as a result of their encounter with difference:

If the characters depicted in novels and if the subjectivities of writers are assumed to be split and in flux, then one must also call for the creation of new types of readers. That is, readers who are capable of reading at least biculturally and bilingually and who do not read Latin American novels and narratives monologically (8).
Latin-American Postcolonial Perspectives

The post-colonial perspective in Latin America unites politics and narrative, situating the Latin-American canon within the struggle for power among cultural groups. Latino critic Jorge Klor de Alva defines postcoloniality as "a subjectivity of oppositionality to imperializing/colonizing (read: subordinating,/subjectivizing) discourses and practices (245). Post-colonial writers are important in cross-cultural understanding since they speak from a minority perspective. Post-colonial criticism alerts readers to the importance of representation and how manipulating social structures through language and canon formation can give or withdraw social power and control. Typically, post-colonial critics demand that universities justify the rationale for choosing the texts they require students to read in literature courses. They advocate that reading lists feature books by authors from a variety of social perspectives. As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese writes, "the canon, or the power to speak in the name of the collectivity, results from social and gender relations and struggles, not from nature" (Calderón and Saldívar 6).

Amaryll Chanady, in "Latin American Identity and Constructions of Difference," sees that it is impossible to speak of a singular Latin American identity. This problematizes Spanish literature curriculums since cultural hybridity rupture reified notions of hispanicity. As Chanady argues, post-colonial writers "problematize the literary canon, based on a select number of texts considered representative of an 'authentic' Latin-American expression conforming to the criteria of the dominant sectors of society that situate themselves within the Hispanic heritage" (Chanady xiii). Marginalized groups are usually denied access to the
public sphere, since access to language gives people power and control. Recently, Latin-American literary studies have tended to agree that women, the poor, indigenous groups, and minorities, have been written out of the canon of culture and literature. When these subaltern groups speak for themselves, their historical situations and cultural perspective are linked to political differences.

Testimonial literature, essays of collected voices, folklore, and oral traditions speak about minority groups' sense of self, their oppressions, and their daily lives. Often they relate a little-known reality, since their words are not usually part of the literary canon. Post-colonial writing has taken to dismantling both the categories of hispanic and literature in order to pave the way for the inclusion of all groups who see themselves as members of a common history.

Conclusion

This chapter has begun to shape a context for utilizing Latin-American literature as a point of departure for reflection on native and foreign cultures in the Spanish language classroom. Latin American literary criticism emphasizes hybridity, cultural exchange, and the struggle for voice. All of these frameworks share the call for opening up alternative interpretations in order to create a more inclusive cultural sphere. This process includes the active participation of the reader in the dialogic construction of meaning through establishing relationships between world-view, language, and text. These insights can be used when asking students of Spanish to deconstruct bounded notions of culture.

For hispanists, as for many postmodern ethnographers, "the subjects of our research increasingly inhabit locations that do not fit our historically derived
expectations of where they might be" (Lal 186). Configurations of hispanicity can be
examined from the perspective of Spain, Latin America, and increasingly, the United
States. Canadian multiculturalism urges educators to apply such critical
perspectives to our teaching practices. Latinos—Hispanics living in the U.S.—are
receiving increasing popular and academic attention. The Spanish classroom needs
to incorporate literature that suggests hybrid cultures and the dynamics of
articulating an identity. Chicana literature is one example of texts that can help
learners break down traditional boundaries between Us and Them, and develop an
appreciation for culture defined as cross-cut, mixed, and hybrid identities.
Our attempts to understand cultures in the foreign-language classroom are complex, owing to the dynamics of migration, globalisation, and hyphenated identities that characterize the world today. One point of departure for understanding Spanish-speaking cultures is that the Latin-American experience, like the Canadian one, is characterized by travels between languages and cultures, passages brought about by migration, exile, violence, hope, and loss. This chapter argues that through Chicana literature, the Spanish language curriculum could question the notion of hyphenated identities. The imagination of Chicana writers, shaped by their experiences in both Spanish and English cultures, offers an example of cultural hybridity. Chicana literature crosses linguistic and geographical boundaries and provides the opportunity for Spanish language learning to become a space where we understand the diversity of Spanish-speaking cultures as well as creating an environment that acknowledges the experiences of students who are also in between many cultures.

This chapter locates moments of borderland consciousness in the works of various Chicana writers. This means focusing on the borderland as a trope for the interaction among multiple languages, cultures and experiences. Thus, by examining instances of Chicanas "writing on the borderlands," we can discover a model for cross cultural relations. As Gloria Anzaldúa claims,
En unas pocas centurias, the future will belong to the mestiza. Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new myths - that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves and the ways we behave - la mestiza creates a new consciousness. (80)

Part I provides a definition of who Chicana(o)s are. It begins with a brief history of the Northern Mexican population and its effects on cultural identification in this colonized Hispanic group. Like the history of other Mestizos, interculturality is linked to contact with foreigners in the context of conquest and colonization. Situating the Chicano population within their history of geo-political border changes allows us to see the reasons why the borderland signifies the identity of the subject created by many cultural influences. In contrast to the majority of the Latino population in the US, many Mexican-Americans are not immigrants. However, while the geographical borderland is the "homeland" of Mexican-Americans it is not the case that there is one unitary interpretation of the Mexican-American experience. Ethnographic studies point out that the Mexican-American population is not a homogeneous group. Mexican-Americans can be generally divided into the subgroups of Hispanas, Mexican-American, and Chicanas. For these reasons the first section of this paper discusses the differences in ethnic and political standpoint among Mexican-Americans, in order to clarify what is meant by Chicanas.

Part II demonstrates the trope of the borderland at work in expressing the perils and joys of being bilingual and bicultural. Thus, the borderland encompasses
geographical, political, and epistemological locations. In Borderlands/la frontera, The New Mestiza (1987), Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa inquires into the nature of the intercultural subjectivity of Chicanos living between the Mexican and American linguistic and cultural worlds: "The U.S.-Mexican border es una herida abierta where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it haemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture" (3). The U.S.-Mexican border is the metaphor for negotiating and affirming Chicanas self-definition as Mexican and American: different from and same as both parent cultures. It is the place where Chicana writers encounter the difficulty of legitimating themselves and their community, as well as a place where the tension is healed and the focus turns to invoking different avenues for self-representation.

The Chicana writer experiments with all the languages and literary genres she has inherited—English, Spanish, and bilingualism. The representation of a multilingual identity motivates Chicanas to improvise with the literary conventions of the mainstream canon. The attitudes to language are demonstrated in the works of several authors discussed in Part III: Carmen Tafolla's "Right in One Language," Lorna Dee Cervantes' "Refugee Ship," and Ana Castillo's novel, So Far From God. These writers challenge the American and Latin-American canon by textualizing their bilingual communicative ability. In this way they make themselves visible in both parent cultures and assert their existence between two literary domains.
Part IV discusses the implications of crossing cultural borders from a feminist perspective by examining representations of women. Although the Chicano community has made inroads into combatting racism and classism, women continue to struggle for equality and an active role in Chicano cultural discourse. Thus Chicanas write and rewrite both real and legendary mothers as a means by which to re-position female gender roles. Part IV will discuss how the representations of mothers and Malinche--the Mayan mistress of Hernan Cortés--signify a feminist commitment against their silencing within the Chicano community. One example is a definition of feminism that recognizes the contributions of mothers whose acceptance of their traditional roles not only preserves their cultural heritage but also models a life in between two or more cultures. The second example is the rewriting of Malinche through the lenses of contemporary Chicanas who question patriarchal representations of Malinche and their ideological effect on Chicano and Mestizo cultural identity. By challenging Western feminism and Latin American patriarchy, Chicana feminist writers create a borderland gender politics that is tailored to their own needs as women and members of an ethnic group.

The chapter concludes by discussing the borderland metaphor for its possibility of offering a paradigm for understanding self and other in these times of permeable borders. By crossing social, cultural, and national boundaries, Chicana writers map a possible world where personal identity in all cases exists in the plural.
Part I: Who are Chicanas?

It is not true that we do not know who we are. If anything, we should suffer the accusation that we know too much who we are, have too much identity. (González 43)

According to Chicana historian, Deena González, "Chicana is a contemporary term, but can be applied to Spanish-speaking and Mexican-origin women in any area presently considered territory of the United States" (42). At the same time, there are ethnic, identity, and political differences among the Mexican-American population. Hispanic communities in the United States can be traced back to Spanish colonial times, since the mid-16th century (Rebolledo and Rivero 4). Early Mexican settlers identified with their Spanish heritage, yet regional and racial differences affected how these Mexican/Hispano settlers identified themselves. As Tey Diana Rebolledo and Eliana Rivero explain:

It is clear that the military men and female and male settlers who arrived in New Mexico were a mixed groups of people. Hispanics, mestizas, mexicanas, blacks, mulattas, lobas, and persons of varying degrees of mixed blood mingled with the native peoples . . . New terms evolved to explain racial composition: coyota/coyote, which originally was the term for the mixture between Indios and Mestizos, in New Mexico evolved in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to describe a person of Mexican and other (mostly Anglo) ancestry. (Rebolledo and Rivero 3)
In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo made Mexicans living in the northern provinces citizens of the United States. The American takeover that ended the Mexican-American War meant radical changes to the Mexicano community as it lost the land granted to it by Spain, as well as social and political rights. In terms of women's lives:

The extraordinary independence of New Mexico women... came to an end in 1846 when New Mexico was invaded by United States soldiers, convinced of their own superiority and disdainful of the natives... Only fifteen years after the American conquest, the New Mexican woman had all but abandoned her easy, graceful costume and was yielding to the fashionable tyranny of corsets, hoop skirts, and bonnets. Her fandangos were corrupted beyond recognition by strong American whiskey and rough American frontiersmen. Her legal rights upheld in alcalde courts were curtailed in American courts. Her Sunday merriment became a private thing, as foreign priests swept fandango music and gaiety out of the churches, and American officials banned other Sabbath activities. As years went by, ethnic discrimination denied her husband political power and jobs, her children were forbidden to speak Spanish in school, and her folk festivals and folk art were scorned. (Lecompte quoted in Rebodello and Rivera 9)

Throughout the twentieth century, Mexican-Americans became increasingly assimilated into Anglo society. Many fought in both World War I and World War II, and women entered the work force mostly as semi-skilled factory or field workers.
However, these contributions to American society did not improve their social status.

"In many places in the country schools and eating places were still segregated, Spanish was forbidden, and students' names were Anglicised" (Rivero and Rebolledo 19). As their population grew, Mexican-Americans became a significant presence in places other than the border, places such as California, and major Eastern cities. This new generation of Chicanos made even more complex the problem of enunciating a collective identity. There was a large population distributed all over the United States living in an English-dominant society as well as new generations whose first language was English (González 42). As well, regional differences remained important (Zavella 145).

The late 1960s and the 1970s saw a rallying of Mexican-Americans who demanded social rights. Protests against working conditions for agricultural workers, fights for bilingual education, the struggle for civil and women's rights, and opposition to the Vietnam War motivated radical Mexican-Americans to identify as a group. This led to the coining of the term "Chicano," a mispronunciation of "Mexicano." The Chicano Movement influenced The United Farm Workers Association (1965) and the Raza Unida Party (1970), being an active social movement that bore many of the characteristics of other indigenista movements in Latin America. "It was led by mestizos who created a mythology around the grandeur of the Indian past as a means of claiming for themselves a place in contemporary society" (Fernández xxvii). The Chicana ethnograher Patricia Zavella recalls her involvement:
We adopted the highly politicised term "Chicano", which designated pride in our rich pre-Columbian heritage and the importance of celebrating our mestizo racial and cultural mixture, and rejected the influence of the Spanish colonizers. The term "Chicano" also signalled the history of racism of North American society toward people of Mexican descent; it claimed the right to self-determination and control over institutions within the Chicano community, and called for spiritual and organizational unity of the Chicano people. An integral part of reclaiming our Mexican heritage was speaking Spanish and celebrating cultural values of communalism, the family, and brotherhood (el pueblo, la familia y carnalismo). (142)

However, not all Mexican-Americans share the sentiments of the "movimiento." While many Mexican-Americans value their heritage, only individuals with an explicit political awareness tend to identify themselves as Chicano. Patricia Zavella's ethnographic study demonstrates the differences in self-identification among Mexican-Americans. Zavella's study of female Mexican-American cannery workers in California drew the observation that among those who were born in the United States, those who identified themselves as "Spanish" or "Mexican-American" were often the most conservative. "Those cannery workers who were the most militant ... explicitly called themselves Chicanos or Mexicanos" (144). When conducting a similar study in New Mexico, Zavella found that women who had long and continuing Mexican cultural traditions referred to themselves as Spanish. On the other hand, many women were resistant to any type of ethnic self-
identification. For example, Dolores, an informant who nevertheless "had the largest
and most dense ethnic network of any informant," and participated in ethnic
activities" said of herself, "I'd say I'm Spanish-Mexican, Mexican-Spanish,
whatever. I'd tell them where I work, what I do, I guess" (148).

The diversity of the Mexican-American population points to the diverse
experiences that Chicana writers try to understand and relate. While some
Mexican-Americans may not worry about their cultural identity, the taking of the
name Chicana has given many writers agency for personal expression. For
example, in the words of poet Bernice Zamora:

I could never be fully Mexican, and I was well aware of that. But I could be a
Chicana; I was a Chicana. The Chicano Movement identified all of us who
lived in a kind of limbo, with no place to be, no audiences. I knew there were
lots of people out there, lost between two cultures. Not one, not another, and
creating a whole culture, and by the way, not hating either one, addressing
both cultures. (Zamora in Li 301)

Part II: Chicanas Declare their Borderland Identity

To say that Chicanas write from the borderland is to evoke a self at the
crossroads of at least two traditions, languages, and subjectivities. Narratives of
the borderland invoke the inherent tension of the bicultural experience: on the one
hand the borderland is a state of split personality, of not belonging; on the other,
the border is a liberating space where the writer imagines alternative possibilities for self-definition.

The writers in this section approach the "borderland" in different ways and invite readers to consider the tensions and joys of identifying oneself as hybrid and intercultural. The unifying thread in these poems is the questioning of bounded paradigms for identity. These writers consciously choose to position themselves at the crossroads of binary oppositions. They opt for not having to choose one or the other. In this way, they create a new option--a borderland identity.

Pat Mora: "Legal Alien"

Bilingual, Bi-cultural
able to slip from "how's life?"
to "m'están volviendo loca."
an American to Mexicans
a Mexican to Americans

a handy token
sliding back and forth
between the fringes of both worlds
by smiling
by masking the discomfort
of being pre-judged
Pat Mora experiences rejection by both parent cultures. In "Legal Alien," cultural membership relies on a sense of a unified self and patterns of sameness. Bi-cultural individuals are considered foreign and different, a point of reference from which to distinguish oneself and accentuate the difference in the other (Minh-ha 371). While it would normally be considered an asset to understand more than one language and culture, the speaker points to the ordeal of experiencing "otherness" and alienation from both the Mexican and American worlds.

The experience of fitting either the Mexican or American definitions of cultural identity is expressed as much by the poem's choice of language as by the actual content of the poem. The poetic voice enacts the pressures of a double identity, the anxieties of being "able to slip," "sliding back and forth / between." Writing of her own feelings of otherness, Chicana writer and activist Papusa Molina anticipates the need for Chicanas to find a niche where they can assert themselves as bicultural: "Ese miedo that enters me when I am afraid of not being able to express my deepest feelings because el Ingles no da . . . el miedo of always being an outsider; no matter who I am with, the sense of belonging is always temporary; the fear of living in the Borderlands paralyses and silences me" (326).

Feelings of membership and exclusion from the parent cultures, gives rise to what writer Alicia Gaspar de Alba calls "cultural schizophrenia." This sentiment is developed by Gloria Anzaldúa's poem "To live in the Borderlands means you." The poetic voice raises the issue of "multiple antagonisms" (Alarcón 366) that mestizas
face in relation to the power relations embedded in the discourses that distinguish one group from another.

To live in the Borderlands means you

are neither Hispana india negra española
ni gabacha eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed
caught in the crossfire between camps
while carrying all five races on your back
not knowing which side to turn to, run from. (Anzaldúa 194)

While on one level, being "caught in the crossfire" signifies the dialectics of living on the fringes of the dominant culture, many Chicana writers desire to disengage from attack mode and celebrate their complexities. Like much of Latino literature, a primary impulse for Chicana writers "involves an emphatic self-legitimation, a negation of hegemonic denial articulated as the rejection of anonymity" (Flores and Yúdice 60). Poet Bernice Zamora appropriates the multiple voices available as a Chicana, accepting "the other in ourselves" (Henderson 147):

You insult me
When you say I'm
Schizophrenic.
My divisions are
Infinite. (78)
The sentiment to acknowledge Chicanas' lives is thematized by La Chrix, in her long poem "La Loca de la raza cósmica," published in 1978 in the midst of the Chicano Movement which was largely male-defined (Rebolledo 98). According to Rebolledo, the poem subverts the Chicano literary trend at the time, the "yo soy" texts that portrayed their culture through a male perspective (98). La Chrix writes a female "yo soy" poem, making the point that Chicanas have a unique reality as women and needs to be taken into account when speaking about Chicano society.

Soy mujer
soy señorita
soy ruca loca
soy mujerona
soy Santa
soy madre
soy MS. (84)

La Chrix fluctuates between modern women, traditional representations, cultural and political. "La Loca" can also be read as the articulation of the multiple "I's," the shifting and varying roles in women's lives. The multiple "yo soy" of the poem speak as much about the diversity of the Chicana community as it does about the multiplicity of identities that exist within one self. As stated in Henderson's description of black women's writing, the dialogic character reflect[s] not only a relationship with the "other(s)" but "an internal dialogue with the plural aspects of self that constitute the matrix of . . . female subjectivity" (145).
Bakhtin's notion of dialogism suggests that language is an expression of social identity and subjectivity, constituted through "the role of [the] word as medium of consciousness" (quoted in Henderson 146). "Because we are a complex, heterogeneous people, we speak many languages," writes Gloria Anzaldúa (55). Chicanos and Latinos in the US have insisted on maintaining their language despite the almost totalizing effects of English. Even if younger Latinos are not proficient in Spanish, the language is always in the background either in music, television, or in conversations among friends and relatives. According to Juan Flores and George Yúdice, as a result of continuous immigration over the last 30 years, as well as the historical back-and-forth migration of Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans and more recently other national groups, Latinos have held on to Spanish over more generations than any other group in history. Ninety percent of U.S. Latinos / Latin Americans speak Spanish (58).

The concern to identify oneself as Chicana and therefore bicultural is reflected in the importance of language as a theme in Chicana writing. Chicanas write in English, Spanish, and a mixture of both languages. The concern over language signals a desire to achieve recognition in American letters. As Frances Aparicio suggests in her article on Latino/a writers:
By metaphorically displacing the ideal monolingual American reader and by producing texts whose poetic and cultural signifying require cross-cultural competency, contemporary U.S. Latino and Latina writers are marginalizing and even potentially excluding the monolingual reader ...More important, they are concretizing the power of Latinos and Latinas to write as agents of our own border cultures rather than having to compromise by suppressing our bicultural referentiality (800).

Carmen Tafolla develops poems that complicate the notion of literacy by using Spanish and English within the same poem. In addition, the English and Spanish code-switching textualizes the relationship of power between the status quo and minority perspectives. Lorna Dee Cervantes looks at the connection between identity and heritage language. Spanish is the link to her roots and therefore her sense of self. The poet addresses the relationship between personal identity and the influence of family, history, and language. Ana Castillo creates a pedagogical work that takes into consideration the linguistic abilities of readers. In her novel, the narrator intervenes as translator for the education of English readers. In this way the borderland is an intermediary space that preserves Spanish idiomatic expressions in their original version, as well as taking into consideration the need to reach a wide audience.
"Write in one language," they say
and agents sit and glare hairy brows
over foreign words, almost trying hope,
say, "It's not French, is it?"

But it isn't/

Nor is my mind. (Tafolla 174)

"Right in One Language" focuses on strategies of representation in self-fASHioning. Carmen Tafolla shows that her identity is an orchestration of multi-vocal exchanges and inter-textual weavings occurring in an ideologically charged situation where personal and group identity is challenged by Western representational practices. As gendered, racial, and ethnic subjects Chicana and black women writers may share similar strategies for intervention in dominant discourses. Henderson argues that for African-American women, "self-inscription . . . requires disruption, rereading and rewriting the conventional and canonical stories, as well as revisioning the conventional generic forms that convey these stories" (156).
In "Right in One Language," the lyrical speaker creates her own discourse. The Chicana author and the monolingual "agent" clash in the struggle to represent the poetic voice:

"You seem to lose control of the line in this one," he says, "it all explodes."

I see bilingüe-beautiful explosions -

two worlds collide
two tongues dance
inside this cheek
together. (174)

As Djelal Kadir states in The Other Writing: Post-Colonial Essays in Latin America's Writing Culture, when questions of otherness and cultural consciousness are incorporated in writing, reading and writing take on aspects of "difference" moving to a political dimension concerned with the freedom of individuals to write within the literary sphere.

When the other writes as other, the space of culture becomes charged with a certain intensity. This is the tension that results from an interventionist act that disputes hegemonic uniformity, disrupts
homogeneous consensus, challenges self-privileging equanimity, and
disconcerts the terra firma of a culture's territorial grounding. (5)

The poet's creativity is inspired by examples of Latino fusion music, music
that is influenced by a variety of Latin- and North American forms. The crossovers
that make this music novel and extraordinary inspired the poetic persona whose
own "music" is hybrid.

Por aquí, poquito and a dash allí también
salsa - chacha - disco - polka
Rock that Texan cumbia
in a molcajete mezcla ! (174)

The plurality of languages comprised in having "two tongues" results in an
extended range of linguistic choices and possible permutations. According to
Flores and Yúdices' analysis of Latino interlingual "border language practice:"

The irreverence implicit in trans-creative expression need not be
deliberately defiant in motive; it reflects rather a largely unspoken
disregard for conventionally bounded usage insofar as such
circumscription obstructs the need for optimal specificity of
communicative and cultural context. The guiding impulse is one of
play, freedom, and even empowerment in the sense that access to
individual and collective referentiality cannot ultimately be blocked.
Interlingual puns, multidirectional mixing and switching, and the
seemingly limitless stock of borrowings and adaptations attest to a
delight not only in excluding and eluding the dominant and
exclusionary, but in the very act of inclusion within a newly constituted
expressive terrain. Rather than rejecting a language because of its
association with a repressive other, or adopting it wholesale in order to
facilitate passage, Latino expression typically "uses" official discourse
by adapting it and therefore showing up its practical malleability. (76)

Linguistic improvisation also takes a step towards destabilising the semiotic power
of English words through the Spanish linguistic optic.

City Inspection Crew
House and Gardens Crew
Publications Crew agree
the lack of discipline
lack of Puritan

purity pior y ti (174)

The semantic weight of the words "Puritan" and "purity" is discarded by the poet's
change to "pior y ti". The playfulness with words is creative, at the same time
taking the game one step further by deconstructing the hegemonic power of words
to judge the poet's creativity.
In "Right in one Language," reference to Geoffrey Chaucer is used to parody the literary canon. Tafolla crosses her style with Chaucer's work, in this way implying that both authors share a literary point of view. The merging of Chaucer's "literature" with her intercultural, and overdone tone produces a humorous effect similar to Kathleen Glenn's depiction of "double voicing" in Laura Esquivel's Como agua para chocolate, where exaggeration inserts "a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and which retains, an intention of its own" (42). The semantic intention of reference to Chaucer seems to question the assumptions involved in calling a text "high literature." In the following passage, Tafolla hints that growth in literature stems from challenging and expanding socially accepted notions of linguistic or narrative style.

Chaucer must have felt like this,
the old Pachuco playing their Tex Mex onto the page
and even then the critics said,
"Write
in one language".
But he looked at all that cleanliness, so controlled,
forms halved, and just could not deny
his own familia, primos from both sides,
weeds that liked to crawl
over sidewalks, pa' juntarse,
visit, stretch out comfy,
natural and lusty,
hybrid wealth (174)

The closing stanza is a reprimand directed to a "You, like they," who is the reading public. The poet calls on readers to question aesthetic conventions (a "Puritan-clean floor, "like Leave it to Beaver's house") which can exclude the voice of minority writers.

Lorna Dee Cervantes: "Refugee Ship"

Like wet cornstarch, I slide
past my grandmother's eyes. (Cervantes 293)

Lorna Dee Cervantes suggests in "Refugee Ship" that ties to family and culture are erased by assimilation and linguistic racism. The poem focuses attention on the challenges of growing up bilingual and is an implicit indictment of the alienation children feel if they are not given opportunities to connect with their heritage and establish cross-cultural family relationships. Grandmothers represent tradition and history. Their words are the means by which cultural values are transmitted to children. The persona in Refugee Ship "slide[s] past my grandmothers' eyes" and suggests cultural loss. Furthermore, the "I" sees herself as a living contradiction. She cannot speak Spanish yet her appearance announces her Mexican heritage:
Mama raised me without language.
I'm orphaned from my Spanish name.
The words are foreign, stumbling on my tongue. I see in the mirror my reflection: bronzed skin, black hair. (Cervantes 293)

The last stanza states the bitter results: when people are prevented from speaking their language and practicing their culture, their sense of belonging grows distant and dim. Thus their sense of identity and self is lost.

I feel I am a captive aboard the refugee ship. The ship that will never dock. El barco que nunca atraca. (Cervantes 293)

So Far from God: The Narrator as Translator

So Far From God is a novel told from the first person point of view about a family in New Mexico. Despite the fact that the novel is written almost entirely in English, the story is peopled with Chicano (nuevo mexicano) characters. Spanish is used in isolated words and phrases code-switched with English according to a communicative context. However, the borderland comes into play when characters exchange jokes, proverbs, and recipes in Spanish.
Chicana novelists are particularly implicated at the English-Spanish linguistic hyphen. When Chicana writers sign with a large publishing house, they must respond to the publisher's desire to reach a wide audience, one that is primarily a non-Chicano English reader. Further, Chicana writers are cognizant of the fact that, owing to the overwhelming presence of English, many young Chicanos do not speak Spanish. In *So Far From God* narrative authority mediates the relationships between writer, audience and text. Through translation, the narrator positions herself as mediator between the Spanish and English worlds, creating a situation that allows Chicano voices to speak authentically. In the following example, the narrator reproduces Spanish proverbs in the original language. In this way, bilingual readers are exposed to an oral tradition in its authentic form. At the same time, translation initiates English readers into the culture while at the same time preserving Nuevo Mexicanos' cultural and linguistic difference from monolingual representational norms.

This was no indirecta but said directly at that scoundrel: "¡Bocado sin hueso!" By this dicho, she was implying Domingo to be a freeloader. 

"¡El mal vecino ve lo que entra y no lo que sale!" A bad neighbor sees what goes in but not what goes out. Zas! Domingo, who had a few dichos handy himself, came right back with one for the metiche.

But she was just as quick to the draw. "¡A quien mala fama tiene, ni acompañes ni quieras bien!" He who has a bad reputation, do not accompany nor love too dearly.
"¡Cuerpo de tentación y cara de arrepentimiento!" Tempting body and face of regret!

"¡Serás payaso, pero a mí no me entretienes!" You may be a clown, but you don't entertain me! (Castillo 144)

So Far From God can be read as a framework for cross-cultural communication, for the appreciation of differences and similarities between cultures. Like Gloria Anzaldúa's description of her own writing, Ana Castillo also sees a social purpose to her intercultural perspective:

I, for one, choose to use some of my energy to serve as mediator. Through our literature, art, corridos, and folktales we must share our history with them so when they set up committees to help Big Mountain Navajos or the Chicano farm workers or los Nicaraguenses they won't turn people away because of their racial fears and ignorances. They will come to see that they are not helping us but following our lead. (Anzaldúa 85)

Part IV: Women's Words and Worlds--Female Models of Borderland Identities

The articulation of identity, of "home," involves assessing the past. Fundamentally, the Chicana writer realizes that she is not self-created but rather the product of family and histories, traditions, and languages. However, many of the
female voices of the past have been silenced or distorted by patriarchal values. It
has been a one-way conversation where men have determined women's role, a role
that has not usually been questioned.

Contemporary Chicana writers have a complex relationship with the
traditional roles they have inherited as Mexican women. Chicanas negotiate a
middle space between traditional values and modern feminism. This section
examines how Chicana writers deal with the figure of the mother, both the mothers
of home and childhood as well as the mythical mother Malinche. Focusing on the
role of these women in Chicana writing, we will examine two areas: the impact of
mother-figures in providing role-models for a bicultural identity, and the concept of
examining and rewriting myths in order to liberate women's voices. Through the
literary treatment of women we can understand how Chicana writers reconcile their
desire to preserve tradition with the need to cross over into a domain that values
women as equals.

The Mother Figure in Chicana Writing

    bell hooks suggests that the home is "where the everyday rules of how to live
and how to act [are] established" (207). Chicano culture places much emphasis on
"La Familia" (Valdivia 12). Valdivia argues that traditional family values reflect Aztec
and Spanish beliefs that emphasized putting first the survival of the group before
the desires of the individual (12-13). As Valdivia explains:
The woman's responsibilities are to manage the household, pass the cultural values and beliefs to the next generation and to be the support system for family members who must survive in a hostile environment.  

(13)

For Chicana writers, the mother-figure is part of the "borderland" metaphor which constructs their identity. The image of the mother can be stereotyped, in particular mothers of color, who are believed to be oppressed and passive. For this reason, Chicanas emphasize the positive aspects of motherhood, in particular, mothers are role-models for their future lives as women and Chicanas.

In "Haciendo Tamales," "home" is hybrid and the mother character represents survival and ingenuity. In the following passage, author Cordelia Candelaria, conjures up the borderland metaphor as the lyrical speaker recalls her mother's attempts to integrate two culinary worlds.

Haciendo tamales mi mama wouldn't compromise -
no mftr chili, no U.S.D.A. carne
nomás hand grown and home-raised todo.
Oregano had to be wildly grown
in brown earth 'bajo la sombra.

Tamale wrappers had to be hojas
dried from last year's corn
nurtured by sweat - cómo no?
Trabajos de amor pa'enriquecer el saborcito.

To change or country
she wouldn't sacrifice her heritage.
Entonces, como su mamá antes y su abuelita
she made her tamales from memory
cada sabor nuevo
como el calor del Westinghouse where
she cooked them with gas under G.E. lights
bien original to the max! (Candelaria 115)

The images are those of traditional recipes which have been passed down through generations of women. However, the mother also adapts practices to fit with the modern conveniences available in the United States. The mother emerges as a compelling figure who lives within two traditions and her blending is both novel and extraordinary. She is a woman who understands the nature of change and holds on to important cultural values.

The mother has the capacity to deeply influence the daughter because she is "a human being empowered with the capabilities of performing the life-giving miracle" (Vigil-Piñón 7). In her poem, "Tonantzín Morena," Angela de Hoyos employs the mother as a symbol of the poet's ties to family and culture. Through her bond with her mother, the poetic voice feels a strong bonding to other Chicanas since the poem is dedicated both to her mother and "a mis hermanas de sangre y de raza." Significantly, the mothers name is Tonantzín, the indigenous name of
the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexicans and Chicanos. The poetic persona renders homage to her mother, elevating her by describing her along the lines of the Aztec fertility Goddess—la Tierra Madre. Flesh mother and spiritual mother merge in this narration of home life. They are united in their lives between the indigenous and Western worlds.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{mi madre morena} \\
\text{con su hechura de diosa} \\
\text{dominando el espacio} \\
\text{corazón abierto} \\
\text{mente alerta} \\
\text{manos a la obra.} (70)
\end{align*}
\]

The rendering of mothers as strong is significant in its difference from a stereotype of mothers as oppressed women. In contrast to liberal feminist efforts to integrate women into a male work force and society, Chicanas blend traditional and Anglo lifestyles. Chicanas writers reinforce women's role as mothers and caregivers; they value this contribution and the positive effect mothers can have on their daughters.

Malinche: The Mother of the Mestizo

Like all feminists, Chicana writers are committed to voicing women's perspectives, revealing the silenced voice of women in the historical record. Redressing the past is an important aim for Chicana writers who seek in the
historical record traces of their inherited knowledge and its effects on their sense of self as woman and Chicana. Many Chicana writers explore the representation of women in Latin American and Mexican myths since, as Chicana theorist Tey Diana Rebolledo points out, "we are all Guadalupe, Malintzin, Coatlicue, La Llorona, Sor Juana, Adelita, and Doña Luz" (94). Mythological representations of women are significant in that they uncover the collective psyche of Chicanos in terms of their attitudes towards women. Malinche, a cultural icon of Mexican, Chicano, and Latin-American mestizo cultures, is the archetypal mother of mestizo men and women, and is significant to the Chicana writer. An important theme for Chicana writers is to imagine Malinche's point of view—a borderland standpoint that questions the relationship between Malinche and Cortés. As expressed by Inés Hernández, an alternative version of Malinche's life has the potential to create a liberating destiny for Chicanas:

"We should consider that each Mexicana/Chicana could become a Malinche in the sense of being a path-opener, a guide, a voice, a warrior woman, willing to go to the front to confront the injustices that our people suffer. (Hernández 160)

Malinche is the Aztec princess who was sold to Hernán Cortés and became his interpreter and mistress. The prevalent story about Malinche is that she betrayed the indigenous people by interpreting for Cortés and giving birth to their illegitimate son. The dictionary defines "malinchista" as a "national traitor," someone who covets the foreign and rejects the mother culture. In popular slang,
Malinche is also "la Chingada," the raped one, and a common insult is "hijo de la chingada," Malinche's son—an illegitimate mestizo. In contrast to being "chingada," there is the "chingón," the rapist and conqueror. Paradoxically, Mexicans and Latin Americans are "chingones" and "chingadas," part of both Malinche and Cortés.

This internal conflict is acted out in contemporary society in the approaches Chicanos may take towards asserting an ethnic identity within the dominant culture. For example, middle class Mexican-Americans may wish to assimilate into Anglo society. They disassociate themselves from mestizaje, especially if mestizaje is associated with the proletariat or the "Movimiento." Negative attitudes towards Malinche and self-imposed separation from the Indian is the Latino's own internal racism. For example, Gloria Anzaldúa writes:

Estas carnes indias que despreciamos nosotros los mexicanos así como despreciamos a nuestra madre, Malinali. Nos condenamos a nosotros mismos. Esta raza vencida, enemigo cuerpo. (22)

Despite Malinche's historical importance, she is practically absent from the historical record. In "La Malinche a Cortés y vice versa," poet Angela de Hoyos imagines Malinche's awareness of her position as a native woman within a patriarchal society. Angela de Hoyos records Malinche's double-voiced discourse—the public submissive voice of a woman who is subservient to Cortés, and her private voice—which protests her exploitation:
ELLA Sí, amo y señor mío, tienes razón

Ya lo sé que me quieres

y perdonas mi necedad. Es que nosotras

la mujeres siempre somos imposibles.

Y entre paréntesis ELLA se dijo:

¡Huh! ¡y para eso te di

mi sangre y mi pueblo!

Sí, ya lo veo, gringo desabrido,

tanto así me quieres

que me casarás

con tu subordinado Don Juan

sin más ni más

como si fuera yo

un kilo de carne

- pos ni que fueras mi padre

pa' venderme a tu antojo

güero infeliz . . . !!! (70)

Like Angela de Hoyos, Carmen Tafolla’s “La Malinche” also portrays Malinche as a heroine, aware of the historical moment and the destiny of her people—the inevitable bridging of the indigenous and European destinies and a new reality:
I saw our world
And I saw yours
And I saw -

another. (198)

Cota-Cárdenas gives voice to a Malinche that speaks out against false dichotomies and ethnocentric perspectives on reality. Cota Cárdenas portrays Malinche as a postmodern character who acknowledges her own multiple perspectives, rejecting the label of victim or traitress, taking responsibility for her role in history:

[but why don't they understand that I did it all because of love and not because of any hate nor any ambition. A traitress? Because of our language, that I helped them, that I sold my people . . . ? You know what, you know a lot about -isms and -acies but I advise you, my children, to look for the answer inside and to look further than the labels implanted and thrown out in reaction hate violence . . . . What's wrong is that we're very smart, very bright, and we learn certain things cause YOU BOUGHT IT LIKE I SAY WELL THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY . . . . And what I Malinche Malinche am telling you, is: SHOW ME. Because from what I've seen, not in every case that's true, is that we go on being, in name of every cause, chingones y chingadas . . . for a change of subject . . . BREAK THE TIES TO YOUR MYTHS (in translation, Cota-Cárdenas 204).
The relationship between collective myth and individual subjectivity is problematic for Chicanas who are caught in the dilemma of having to position themselves at the crossroads of many cultures. Furthermore, as subjects isolated from the Latin American continent, Chicana writers' interpretations of myths are influenced by their socialization in the United States. Chicanas reinterpret Malinche because they have lived through American social movements that redefined the rights of women and minorities. As Western Third World feminists, they confront the Chicano status quo and look within their own culture for elements of patriarchal oppression.

As the many dimensions of Chicana writings illustrate, the "borderlands" are characterized by a deep metaphorical and philosophical strain. So far we have discussed three dimensions of Chicana borderland literature: 1) negotiating a bicultural identity outside discourses that reify notions of race, class, and culture; 2) the role of languages in governing self-fashioning; and 3) the articulation of an intercultural feminism that challenges both Anglo and Latino interpretations of Chicana women. All these efforts combine in the struggle of the Chicana writer for self-defined positions within the dominant Anglo culture, as well as within the parent Chicano/Mexican cultures: what Ordóñez calls "opting for the both-and of the hyphenated cypher" (183). The process involves structural analysis of the U.S.-Mexican border, a border politically charged by conditions of colonization, discrimination, and political exploitation. From these influences, the Chicana writer creates a grounded theory of Chicana intercultural knowledge and subjectivity, constructed through two or more languages, cultures, histories, aesthetics, and political standpoints. Thus, Chicana writers prepare a ground for those of us who
similarly grew up with hybrid personalities. In our lives as immigrants, or new
generations living in a multicultural nation such as Canada, we need to hear the
voices of others who, like us, identify as interstitial subjects, most at home with
ourselves and in the world in the presence of the world's diversity.

Conclusion: Personal and Global Border Crossings

Chicana borderland perspectives offer readers alternative paradigms for
locating the self as an intercultural individual and global citizen. Chicana writers
cross a series of social boundaries, and their example may affirm our own self-
fashioning processes. In this discussion, the works of Gloria Anzaldúa and Ana
Castillo point to the complexities of mapping out a multi-subjective self when one
tries to negotiate personal uniqueness within the context of either dominant
cultural norms, or through an awareness of important global issues.

Chicana writers suggest that hyphenated identities mean gender as well as
political agency. This is because the border mentality weaves subjectivity with
history, allowing a complex analysis of one's social condition. As Norma Alarcón
notes, the strategies of women of color in the U.S. require her to inquire into
multiple theoretical frameworks that account for her multiple oppressions, a
strategy of "contradiction, contestation, deconstruction, resistance, disidentification
or the production of alternative discursive practices" (191). Disengaging from
"struggles of borders" also requires an outward movement, from the self to the
society, and the advantages of working as groups towards common goals. The
fulfillment of desires of difference involves confronting the political resistance to the
coexistence of many world views. Thus, Chicanas such as Anzaldúa, advocate multiple perspectives grounded in the material realities in which they live as members of an oppressed class.

As Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands /la frontera* suggests, there are two borders—the colonized space of the U.S.-Mexico border and the epistemological perspective that is the result of the history of exploitation—the border is "not nowhere." Anzaldúa evokes Elizabeth Ordóñez’s characterization of Chicana postmodern writing as "the fantasy of beauty and perfection alongside the ugly, painful political reality of the poet whose ethnicity—as well as gender—forcibly repositions her on battle lines that white, patriarchal, modernist systems of representation sought to ignore or deny" (177). In the following passage, Anzaldúa emphasizes that an epistemic standpoint is not created out of thin air, but is the consequence of deep analysis of material and subjective experience:

She puts history through a sieve, winnows out the lies, looks at the forces that we as a race, as women, have been a part of. Luego bota lo que no vale, los desmientos, los desencuentros, el embrutecimiento. Aguarda el juicio, hondo y enraizado de la gente antigua. This step is a conscious rupture of all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions. She communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths. (82)
Ana Castillo locates her writing on a pan-American borderland as she combines interculturalism and international solidarity. In the words of art critic Alfred McAdam, "language is not only raw material but a point of view and an audience" (6). In "November Verse" Castillo uses language to define an audience and create her vision of the world. A short poem in English, Spanish and Portuguese invokes a vision of cross-cultural relations unhampered by geographical and linguistic distances:

there is a little girl / una criatura / uma menina dice
somewhere / por allí / nao se
an Emily / una Alfonsina / uma Gabriela tal vez
and she will grow up / haciéndose vieja / morrer
never knowing / sin saber / sem viver. (102)

"A November Verse" blurs the boundaries of women's differences. Through language, the poet engages what Mae Gwendolyn Henderson calls the "simultaneity of discourse" in order to bring to light the common experiences of Third World children (145).

By appropriating the U.S.-Mexican border as a signifying space, Chicana writers suggest that "culture" is not always found within national or linguistic boundaries. This belief is complicated as Chicana writers struggle to define a location that defines them both as women and as members of the ethnic group (Rebolledo 97). As women and Chicanas, they support the Movimiento's struggle against racism and acculturation, but they still fight for equality for women within
their own culture. As well, Chicana writers stand in international solidarity with other Third World groups.

For Anzaldúa, "the future depends . . . on the straddling of two or more cultures" (80) and thus her and other Chicana writing is thick with what Elizabeth Ordóñez describes as "webs of significance . . . weaving a web between two cultures while transforming them both" (179). Through Chicana writers' "borderland consciousness," we can think of the effect intercultural hybridity and cross-overs are having in reshaping our teaching of culture. Borderland consciousness speaks to the issue of negotiating differences and commonalities between and among groups, as well as within the individual. The increasing contacts across multiple languages, and racial, gender and ethnic experiences invokes what Chicano writer Ray González calls recognizing ourselves as "citizens of the Americas, not American citizens" (x).

The borderland as a paradigm for articulating hyphenated identities provides a powerful framework for the Spanish language curriculum to recognize that it is intercultures that inhabit our discipline and our classroom. Chicana literature is one instance of how learners can grapple with examples of individuals negotiating a sense of cultural identity.
Chapter 5: Situating Feminist Pedagogy in the Spanish-Language Curriculum through the Teaching of Culture

In all their facets—curricular, structural and, cultural—teaching practices shape the context of knowledge construction. In order for learning to be meaningful, there must be purposeful, interactive activity, not only between the learner and the target culture, but also among the people in the classroom. Knowledge is not something that is passively acquired, but rather must be constructed and contested. This process occurs in the "culture" of the classroom community. Critical aspects of the learning experience include selecting appropriate content and establishing a classroom environment that encourages personal responses, exploration and risk-taking. However, none of these benefits occur "naturally", they all require a constructivist approach to foreign language instruction.

Exposure to authentic sources, such as Chicana literature, provides an excellent opportunity for developing intercultural understanding, so that misconceptions can be dissolved, interest and empathy towards native speakers can be developed, and perspective on one's own culture can be gained. Since Chicana writers are both insiders and foreigners to their parent cultures, their writing is rich with explorations of definitions of individual and collective identity. Nonetheless, reading authentic sources is only the beginning of the learning experience. The journey of literature exploration is re-experiencing the themes and textures of the stories told, soliciting personal responses, and thinking critically. These things can be achieved by presenting opportunities for learners to construct, explore, and extend their knowledge.
This chapter explores aspects of feminist pedagogy that facilitate teaching practices of cultural understanding in the Spanish language curriculum. As Claire Kramsch argues, there needs to be a reevaluation of language methodology so that language practice is seen as a journey in cultural exploration. She argues that there is a "near total lack of experience among both teachers and learners for talking about talk," which stems from the lack of the integration into teaching methodology the notion that "language actually constitutes social reality" (5). This chapter does not, however, provide "recipe" approaches to improving language teaching practices. Rather, it seeks to offer logical rationales for changing methodology.

Feminist principles of pedagogy, such as soliciting personal experience, understanding differences, encouraging political awareness, and developing a postmodern notion of multiple subjectivities, are closely related to critical frameworks of Latin American cultural criticism that advocate heterogeneity, both in theoretical constructions and in the conceptualization of identity (Chanady xii). Moreover, feminist pedagogy complements language education because of its emphasis on the student voice. The notion of "experience" begins this chapter. Experience is important to language learning in terms of cultural understanding since, as Kramsch argues, many aspects of one's own culture can only become apparent through contrast with another (Kramsch 3). However, the disclosure of experience reveals that one's class, race, gender, and political positions often determine life experience.

These variables, which frequently decide the quality of life, preclude a relativist sharing of experience. "Difference" as a concept in feminist pedagogy means analyzing one's own and others' representations through structural,
historical, and political analysis. In addition, post-structuralist feminists argue that
speakers' accounts of their experience do not guarantee a coherent and unified
personal and social self. Identities are in flux and hyphenated, what feminist
teacher Bronwyn Davies calls "multiple subjectivities" (145). Finally, an important
dimension of feminist pedagogy is "standpoint." "Standpoint" refers to the
conscious action of making students aware that they can attach social meaning to
experience, so that they can contribute to or change their social conditions.

Experience

Feminist critics argue that educational knowledge sustains a social order that
discounts the experiences of women and minorities (Pritchard Hughes 216-220).
Traditional curriculum and teaching practices are weighted towards the knowledge
and perspective of white, European males. As Frances Maher states:

Traditionally, the experience, viewpoint, and goals of white, Western
elite males are taken as representing all of human experience. The
histories, experiences, and consciousness of other groups, whether
women, all people of colour, or all working-class people are either
ignored, condemned as inferior, or judged as deviant. Furthermore, in
this process of universalizing the experiences of one particular group,
claims are laid for the primacy of a certain kind of thinking and
problem-solving, namely the scientific method. (91)
When only one way of knowing is legitimated, students are involved in what Paolo Freire calls a “banking” education where they are the consumers instead of the producers of knowledge (Pritchard Hughes 226). On the other hand, if personal experience is regarded as a source of knowing, feelings and personal lives must be acknowledged and valued as part of the process of learning. The subjective, or feeling dimension of experience and the epistemological critique will be discussed in turn as they relate to pedagogy. As different world-views are shared, claims of universal knowledge that might be presented in texts or curriculum are questioned and reconstructed.

Experience and Validating Feelings

Traditional academic knowledge separates objectivity from subjectivity, public from private, and therefore severs the connection between one’s personal history and knowledge so that “the self . . . is negated, and knowledge is seen to exist apart from those who construct it. So knowledge is conceived of as being discovered rather than produced” (Prichard Hughes 220).

A respect for learner’s feelings is a foundation of feminist teaching practice. Kathleen Weiler reminds us that the recognition of women’s feelings and the specific conditions of their lives propelled contemporary feminist activism in the 1960s (456). Weiler explains how articulating personal feelings empowers students to gain a critical perspective on their lives:

Feeling is looked to as a guide to a deeper truth than that of abstract rationality. Experience, which is interpreted through ideologically
constructed categories, also can be the basis for opposition to dominant schemes of truth as what is experienced runs counter to what is set forth and accepted as "true." (463)

Experience and Ways of Knowing

Articulating feelings and experiences is the first step in constructing knowledge which is grounded on the lived and concrete. In response to criticism that knowledge derived from experience is neither objective nor empirical, Weiler asserts "[t]hat women need to examine [that] what they have experienced and lived in concrete ways, in their own bodies, is a materialistic conception of experience (465).

Experience acknowledges students as diverse individuals and reinforces the belief that there are no universal knowledges. Furthermore, differences in experience show that knowledge varies according to race, gender, class, and cultural location. Wendy Luttrell's sociological study of black and white working-class women points out racial differences, but acknowledges class similarities in definitions of knowledge. For example, Luttrell found the following definition of knowledge for working-class women:

They both distinguish between knowledge produced in school or in textbooks by authorities and knowledge produced through experience. They also have some similar ideas about their "commonsense" capabilities to take care of others. Their ways of knowing are embedded in community, family, and work relationships and cannot be judged by dominant academic standards. Most
important, their commonsense knowledge cannot be dismissed, minimized, or “taken away.” (33)

Luttrell concludes her study by emphasizing the ideological nature of knowledge (44). Different kinds of knowledge destabilize notions of universality or objectivity and beg the ideological question why some knowledges are respected and why others are devalued, or repressed.

Earlier feminist attempts to find a common “women’s way of knowing” were dismissed as women of colour helped Western feminists understand that differences in class, race, and culture ensured that women’s experience was not universal. Acknowledging the structural and political reasons for such differences became the imperative foundation of feminist criticism. Thus, a second key concept of feminist pedagogy is “difference” as a fact to be analyzed and questioned so that the conditions of women might be improved.

Difference

As educators acknowledge the experiences of women, minorities and other socially marginalized groups, questions of how those differences are dealt with in the classroom carry ideological importance. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues, Difference seen as benign variation (diversity), for instance, rather than as conflict, struggle, or the threat of disruption, bypasses power as well as history to suggest a harmonious, empty pluralism. On the other hand, difference defined as asymmetrical and incommensurate cultural spheres situated within hierarchies of domination and
resistance cannot be accommodated within a discourse of "harmony in diversity." (181)

Most feminist educators use the term "difference" to denote the relationship between political location and experience. In other words, differences in perspectives and interests can be understood by looking at one's material position in society. As Mohanty argues:

The issue of subjectivity represents a realization of the fact that who we are, how we act, what we think, and what stories we tell become more intelligible within an epistemological framework that begins by recognizing existing hegemonic histories. (185)

As teachers encourage learners to explore their experience, they may find contradictory perspectives, and irreconcilable internal differences. In other words, notions of self are always in flux and self-understanding is context-dependent. Understanding the contradictory nature of experience and self becomes difficult if knowledge is based on binary structures. Dualistic ways of thinking lead learners to categorize experiences in oppositional terms such as male/female, right/wrong, and self/other. This blocks the possibility of hyphenated identities or simultaneous perspectives. Thus, feminist pedagogues engage post-structuralist theories in order to deconstruct fixed notions of identity. This deconstruction allows learners to see themselves as complex beings with shifting subjectivities.
Multiple Subjectivities

Post-structuralist feminists claim that western epistemology is based on binary oppositions that structure not only our thinking about identity but are also carried through into ways of thinking about society and cognitive processes themselves (Pritchard Hughes 221). Post-structuralist feminist pedagogy "foregrounds the lack of innocence in any discourse by looking at the textual staging of knowledge, the constitutive effects of our uses of language" (Lather 156). In terms of liberating students from oppressive gender roles, Davies writes that attempts at creative and non-sexist writing continue to invoke binary dualisms because students lack a language to express their characters in alternative ways. Language is not an "innocent" translation of our thoughts but rather it is our social values and beliefs, which give words their meaning.

When teaching reading to children, Davies helps students deconstruct texts by introducing the notion of discourse—culturally sanctioned systems of thought—that encourage boys and girls to acquire the "patterns of desire" appropriate to social definitions of male or female (145). Bronwyn Davies urges teachers to provide students with alternatives to binarisms. As she argues,

[in any form of writing the authors are obliged to position themselves as a recognizable form of speaker, and that both they as author and the characters who appear in their texts must be recognizably male or female, there being no other form of human existence that they have been given discursive access to. (149)
As well, Davies introduces the post-structuralist concept of "narratives," which are the values underlying educational practices, literature, and popular culture. These narratives constitute maleness or femaleness in oppressive or liberating ways (145-46). Discourses of maleness or femaleness with are based on value-laden metaphors which reinforce a dualism between male and female:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge (accepted wisdom)</th>
<th>Ignorance (the occult and taboo)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good, positive</td>
<td>negative, bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind (idea)</td>
<td>body (flesh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>chaos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Willshire in Davies 147)

By recognizing "the lack of innocence of language," students have the conceptual ability to "read text and self" differently, as "precarious, contradictory and in process" (165). As a teaching approach, post-structuralism directs students to examine the filters by which they label and attach meaning to their lives. Through critical reading of texts, students can objectify the cultural messages they have internalized. A decentring of discourses enables alternative interpretations which, in Davies' work with girls, for example, allows students to choose alternative positionings that give them more social and personal power.

They need to be able to crack the code of dominant gender ideologies for themselves, to understand how they are constituted through
discourse, how they might invent, invert, rethink, rewrite a new world. To do this they need to be able to understand:

- multiple textual interpretations and how these are arrived at;
- how one discourse can be used to modify or counteract the force of another;
- how desire is constructed through storyline, image, and metaphor;
and
- how to begin to invent new connections, new possible patterns of desire. (159)

However, if reality is not predetermined but rather constituted through a myriad of social, economic, political, historical, and geographical differences, these unstable and provisional identities challenge feminists to avoid relativism and maintain political relevancy. How can self-definition avoid relativism and instead lead to empowerment and emancipation? If women's experiences are multifaceted, then feminism cannot be a unified social movement. However, this does not mean that feminism is without foundation. Indeed, it is through the very acceptance of plurality and constant change that feminism as a social movement is able to exert change towards equality across a variety of social, cultural, and educational domains. Feminists approach the notion of power within multiplicity through the concept of "standpoint."
Feminists agree that all women share a common interest in liberation from oppression (Pritchard Hughes 218). If, on the one hand, one’s world-view is subjective, standpoint refers to an explicit commitment to engage one’s particular world and work to change it. As Linda Briskin points out:

The feminist identification of the social and political character of gender underscores the structural and ideological barriers that face women, and helps turn them from guilt—an inward and individualist focus—to anger—an outward and societal focus. (22)

Standpoint refers to engaging a part of one’s identity—either class, race, or gender—as a distinctive lens from which to engage in activism. The nature of feminism is not given, nor is it fixed. The feminist movement does not rely on unified positions, but rather on the actions of the people who comprise and construct it. Since these people’s actions are contextualized within the material conditions of their lives, they will act against exploitation in their own way, this being an expression of a larger political commitment to liberate both men and women.
Conclusion

Ultimately, learning a foreign language can offer alternative avenues for interpreting others and ourselves. As an interpretative community, foreign language study is centrally involved in the generation of meanings relating to language as a representation of identity. At the place where languages and cultures meet, questions of pedagogy are important.

For Chicana writers the border is not the “margin,” but rather the “crucible of new identities” (Zúñiga 38). Anzaldua calls for “a massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness” (80) as a way to recognize and appreciate global heterogeneity and hybrid identity. Anzaldua's border consciousness is actively constructed, understood through what Linda Alcoff defines as “identity politics:” “the idea that one’s identity is taken (and defined as a . . . motivation for action, and as a delineation of one’s politics . . . to recognize one’s identity as always a construction” (431). This discourse of border identities can be a key metaphor for understanding our own identities, since in this globalized era we are all “in all cultures at same time, / alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro” (Anzaldua 77). Thus the border is transformed as a source of empowerment, parallel to the feminist notion of “experience” which “leads to formation of politicized consciousness and self-identity” (Mohanty 34).

Feminist pedagogy argues that “To reconstruct the world, we must rethink and rewrite it” (Davies 148). Only then can we perceive culture differently. While there are many pedagogical approaches that are innovative to language teaching, a
pedagogy that empowers teachers and students to "write and speak new worlds into existence" (Davies 148) is particularly meaningful for a discipline that engages in elucidating cultural transactions.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Language learning is about how words inscribe worlds. A model of contextualizing language instruction within the notion of culture as "interculture" is possible by focusing on the English-Spanish interlinguistic phase of learners and using it to explore the faultline between Self and Other. Whereas a communicative syllabus may focus on presenting culture as similar or different, Kramsch proposes a different kind of exposure to cultural context, a "third space" that provides the learner with opportunities to test out the boundaries and see if they work.

Questions of culture are important to language teachers because their classrooms become the sites where choices are made as to how knowledge is produced, whose voices are heard, whether the faultline between Self and Other is essentialized or deconstructed.

According to Louise Rosenblatt's idea about the reader-response theory of literature, the "living context" in which literature exists inspires the reader to explore "ever widening circles of interest" (117). As readers search for an understanding of self and of the human experience, reading becomes a dialogue between an attentive ear and a "living" voice. Chicana writers strive to invent and articulate an intercultural speaking subject that seeks to interact with readers. Readers, like Chicanas, are also "in-between": in-between the author and text, in between Chicanas' and their own words and worlds. Chicana poet Evangelina Vigil-Piñón creates a bilingual Chicana voice that reveals the intimacy of the dialogue that exists between author and reader:
How strange
To have this compelling urge
To write to ghost readers.

I spill my whole life on you
And don't even know who you are.

I don't understand it.
I've always been taught
To be very careful who you trust.

¿Qué confianza, verdad? ("como embrujada" 303)

Anzaldúa's call for a "massive uprooting in dualistic thinking" echoes in the work of language instruction that positions itself as the place of intercultural understanding, where borders are crossed and similarities and differences are theorized and honoured (80). The Spanish classroom is located as an English/Spanish intercultural zone which draws on both experience and theory in order to "work the hyphen" of dualisms of foreign/native, knowledge/ignorance, male/female, your culture/my culture:

The work of mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to
the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundations of our lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. (Anzaldúa 80)

Feminist teachers stake education as a site for consciousness raising and change (Briskin and Coulter 251). Feminist pedagogy brings the key concepts of feminism into classroom practice. This means soliciting personal experience, understanding the political nature of difference, and revealing that some knowledges have been privileged and others subjugated (Pritchard Hughes 224). Feminist pedagogy "change[s] the relationship between teacher and the taught so that she no longer simply transfers information but enables the class to analyze and integrate information and knowledge together" (224).

The English/Spanish interlinguistic bridge between learners and Chicana writers is a departure point from which to chart the Spanish language classroom as a "third space" where borders are crossed and similarities and differences are theorized and honoured. Teaching culture as interculture requires teachers to validate students' experiences and cultural backgrounds, value different ways of knowing, and understand differences through considering various ideological, historical, and social contexts. Language instructors such as Claire Kramsch, as well as feminist teachers, draw on post-structural theories of discourse analysis that make transparent the filters by which we interpret ourselves and others:

Experiencing the boundary means discovering that each of these cultures is much less monolithic than was originally perceived; each includes a myriad
of potential change. Thus we have to view the boundary not as an actual event but, rather, as a state of mind, as a positioning of the learner at the intersection of multiple social roles and individual choices. (234)

Much remains to be done to clarify the dynamics between context, content, teacher, and learners in the language classroom. Discussion about local and global understandings of collective and individual identity need to be encouraged, especially in the context of the globalization trend in contemporary society. It is possible, nevertheless, to tease apart the many discourses that construct both native and target cultures through critical engagement with language methodology, multicultural ideology, and feminist pedagogy.

This thesis has explored some common understandings between Chicana literature and Spanish language pedagogy. First, how do these groups use language to name themselves and others? Secondly, is cultural “identity” really a hyphenated identity, a mix of influences from many languages, histories, and social backgrounds? Spanish educators use the English-Spanish linguistic hyphen of Spanish language learners as the starting point for the appreciation of intercultural identities. This methodology might work to reduce a variety of stereotypes and increase understanding of self-identity. In light of global mixtures and migrations, foreign language study reflects what Homi Bhabha describes as the “need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences”(1).
Bibliography


