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Written *Mestizaje*:

Demarginalization of Chicano Spanglish in Margarita Cota-Cárdenas' *Puppet*

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*The work presented in this MA thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text. The work in this thesis has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.*

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#### ABSTRACT

In radically postmodern fashion, Cota-Cárdenas's *Puppet: A Chicano Novella* embraces graphic excess, narrative fragmentation, and a polyphony of voices, but more importantly, it uses code-switching as a liberating combination that help the characters escape duality and preconceptions in order to constitute a new Chicano identity. This novel is purposely bilingual, experimental and aggressive as a way of rebelling against the Anglo society and as proof of the disturbances produced by the clash of cultures. The image of a broken puppet which the main character embodies will illustrate the discussion around bilingualism, the use of code-switching as a literary technique and its markedness when addressing the audience. These devices will be key when contradicting the general conception of Spanglish as the result of a poorly developed linguistic minority situated in the Mexican-American border.

TAGS: mestizaje, chicano, markedness, code-switching, puppet.

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*Written Mestizaje:*Demarginalization of Chicano Spanglish in Margarita Cota-Cárdenas' *Puppet*

no pensar no escribir esta noche llena de Puppet y otras señas del barrio...

Margarita Cota-Cárdenas, *Puppet: A Chicano Novella*

## 1. Introduction

The paradigmatic individuals of the 21st century are migrants. Those who translate within different realities and develop their own consciousness, identity and language. Those who are constantly adapting to new environments and for this purpose, create new ways of expressing their thoughts through language. Though it is not a new practice, living in a bilingual environment is becoming more and more usual, which may lead or not to the convergence of diverse languages and identities. This is the case of Spanglish, which is one of the varieties spoken by Chicanos/as in the US-Mexican border. In this study, I will trace the roots of this linguistic practice, which I will formally refer to as code-switching, in order to share some light on its influence on the spread of Hispanic multiculturalism through written discourse. Moreover, I will defend the use of Spanglish as the natural outcome of the bilingual individual and prove that its reflection on literature is also the most natural decision when approaching this phenomenon. Besides the commentary on language as the reflection of identity, I will also include some discussion centered on the importance of the reader in these multicultural texts because of their importance as translators or because of their marginal position when alien/foreign to both the language and its culture. For this aim, I will use Marga-

rita Cota-Cárdenas' *Puppet* as a self-conscious Chicano novella which relies on the characteristic mestizaje of the borders in order to recover a story of decentered identities and languages that originates from the collision among cultures.

Though *Puppet*<sup>1</sup> is not a mainstream work, it has quickly escalated to the status of a classic of Chicano literature. This may be due to of the use of Spanglish (CS), the anticipatory nature of its main themes, and how these two are interweaved with the narrative style and the historic events presented which would lead to the creation of a migrant identity and to the revision of the role of Chicano communities within the United States. In the novel, Patricia Leyva is a Chicano/a literature and Spanish teacher, but also the secretary of a construction company and most of all, a Chicana unable to embrace her authentic self. Patricia/Petra/Pat will cling to the death of Puppet so to tie up the loose ends of her life as a woman, an activist and most of all, as a mother whose identity and language have been dismembered by the Mexican-American border of the late 20th century.

Though not specifically devoted to the analysis of language, Ana María Manzanás' "A *Mestiza* in the Borderlands: Margarita Cota-Cárdenas' *Puppet*" compares Cota-Cárdenas' work with that of Anzaldúa's in *Borderlands* and comments that the first is an updated but "static" (56) version of the same reality Anzaldúa represents. Though *Puppet* is more closely related with the dissolution of values and the creation of an uncertain mestiza identity, in Anzaldúa's book they turn out to be the main features of the borderlands. Manzanás also engages Bakhtin's concept of hybridity, which generally implies a "double-voiced, double-styled

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<sup>1</sup> Though *Puppet* was originally published in 1985, I will use the translated version of 2000, relying mostly on the original text, many times in contrast with its translated version. I will refer to this translated version as "T" when comparing original and translated.

speech” (50), regarding the narrative style of the novella. Taking my cue from this study, my analysis argues that there is not only a hybrid double vision, but a multiple one, that affects both the choice of linguistic codes and the form (and without a doubt, identity and culture). Following a similar line of thought, Desirée A. Martín also devotes her article to the hybrid nature of the Chicano identity through Cota-Cárdenas masterpiece. She refers to Puppet’s narrative as “fluid” (92), mainly because of the languages and codes used, but also because of its style. Though it soon departs from a revision of the effects of bilingualism on the individual, the article centers on the creation of a Chicano, even Chicana, identity as marginal, translated and transnational; and more importantly, as part of a community.

Many of the articles that analyze this novel, as well as the Chicano state of being as a whole, approach it through the perspective of border theory, sociology or even anthropology. My perspective points in another direction insomuch as it merges both linguistics and sociology for a better understanding of the phenomenon of written code-switching either as a literary device or as the natural consequence of bilingualism in literature. For this aim, I will use Myers-Scotton’s Markedness model as the linguistic setup for the latter analysis of the use of code-switching in literature. Although she has been heavily criticized for diminishing the spontaneity of speech, what I think is relevant for this research is her later conclusion regarding the choice of CS over monolingualism, as it proves to be highly beneficial for certain interactions. The outcome will be preceded by extensive calculations on whether to choose CS or not, resulting on the optimal use of the speaker’s resources. These calculations may be lead by a solidarity principle or as a defensive method. Albeit this model is meant to be applied to oral interactions, I believe it can perfectly be adapted to written contexts.

Because of the difficulties of defining and measuring bilingualism, this research will be inclusive. As kids, we acquire language in an innate manner through an unconscious and natural capacity that proves to be the ultimate factor in distinguishing humans from other species. This means that we would acquire at least one language if exposed. Field distinguishes among sequentially learnt or simultaneously acquired languages. Even if the languages are simultaneously acquired, one of them will be “dominant” or “primary” (36). This dominant language is the one the child will use to process new information, regardless of the order in which the languages were learnt. This fact implies that the influence of the languages will always be unidirectional; but it does not always happen as such, as the general tendency is that both languages influence each other. Field also affirms that at some point of the process, the learner will internalize the grammar of the secondary language and develop his own “interlanguage” from which he will continue developing until becoming proficient, or not, depending on the balance of the social situations in which he uses one or the other language (33). It is widely assumed that if the child is raised with two languages, he will not confuse or have any predilection for one or the other so, the mixture among languages may be due to the imitation of the behavior of the members of his community. If so, this behavior will be fixed by its usage by following generations and end up establishing a non-standard variety of language, such as the social dialects: Chicano Spanish or Spanglish (often used as the popular name of CS). Chicano Spanish is defined by Field as a “language variety that *sounds* like Spanish but has so many borrowed English words and structures in it that native speakers of national standards of Spanish may not understand it” (86). This definition provides the hint for understanding the reality of this language that is the mutual influence of both languages up to the point that they become less “standard” and more convergent. This convergence is

provided by the bilingual individual, whose knowledge of both languages has influence on each other even at the deeper levels of grammar and syntax resulting in a brand new code, that is Spanglish, characterized by the constant alternation between English and Spanish which proves to be a deliberate maintenance of both languages so as to reflect the diverse realities these languages enclose. What is more, Chicano bilingualism has proved to be strong enough to persist over a century and it does not seem to be willing to disappear.

## 2. The Linguistic Collage of/on the U.S.-Mexican Border

The character of Puppet embodies the impoverished descent of Mexican immigrants, whose appearance shows the insecurities of his community. He is described as both limp and stuttering. The fact that he shows difficulties when speaking either Spanish or English foregrounds the idea of the impossibility of belonging to either of these cultures, but at the same time, his death serves to forget about his disabilities and upgrade his story into a myth. Puppet's myth could be compared to that of La Malinche or La Llorona, but in this case, it does not only belong to the Mexican culture but to the Mexican-American one, to that of the Chicanos. Chicano is a derivative of Mexicano and is often associated with the US Civil Rights Movement. According to Peñalosa, the term Chicano generally refers to "persons of Mexican descent who are resident in the US" (2), the most widespread use differentiates among Mexican-born Mexicans and US-born Chicanos. Field suggests the idea that "the term Chicano tends to be inclusive of any person who self-designates as one" (14), which I believe is the primal and most self-conscious approach to this denomination. Though it used to describe the poorer classes in Mexico, the term Chicano was recuperated by the 60s activists and adopted to name the community of Mexican-Americans in the US, regardless of their social status. In *Puppet*, María, Pat's daughter, will introduce herself as a "Chicana" to a group of Chilean exiles in Munich (74 Cota-Cárdenas). But, when addressing her mother, a friend will say that "se ve que tú todavía eres mexicana, Petra" (63), though the narrator would ironically refer to Pat as part of the "ja ja jalta sociedad chicana/méxico-americana/mexican-american/spic etc. según el punto de vista etc. etc." (103). So, the disambiguation between Mexicana and Chicana in this case, depends much on the political inclination and the self-conscious individual choice among terms. Being capable to choose, whether it is regarding names, origins or even

belonging is easily relatable to the conventional character of signifiers, as proposed by Saussure, and is an inherent device of the Chicano identity. Because of this want of revealing one's true self through language I find it necessary to make an overview of the cultural and linguistic particularities of both sides of the Mexican-American border.

The US has always been a nation of immigrants, from the first English and Dutch settlers who arrived on the Mayflower to the enslaved Africans imported to the colonies from the 17th century on, by way of Irish, Italians, Scandinavians, etc. Field affirms that "there has never been a time in history on this continent [...] where the inhabitants spoke only one language" (2). Spanish language has been present in the US ever since the 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish colonization. And though English soon became the national language, bilingualism has always been present in the borders, and perhaps not only in the borderlands but in any place two communities of speakers coincided. Bilingualism often has a subtractive nature, as one of the languages may fall in benefit of that of the majority, the most prestigious, or the culturally dominant. These factors influence the language choice and its usage, as it proves as beneficial to give up the heritage language in favor of the prestige one, for example, in order to avoid the stigma of the "lack of education" (Field 39) if one is not proficient in the English language. Although Spanish is the most widely spoken minority language in the US, there has been a long process which turned English into the one and only official language of the United States of America. The social dominance of English has been promoted by the institutions ever since the Revolution, with the resulting quest for the creation of a specific and homogeneous "American kind of English" (Field 9), constantly corrected and regulated by schools. Because of their relevance as the second minority group in the country, this quest for the

“Americanization” of the population has moved its focus to the Latino<sup>2</sup> community in the US (Field 11). Cota-Cárdenas also includes passages that deal with the gradual suppression of Spanish in education ever since the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the pressure on language minorities and the concealment of those who do not adhere to the prestige language, updating the debate over the loss of Spanish as a written language in the US.

Language is closely related to self-awareness and with the social revelation of who we are; it influences how we experience the world and, at the same time, categorizes it. In the case of the Chicano community, history, tradition and identity are revealed through their very own use of language that is Spanglish, or the code-switch between Spanish and English. During a moment of revelation in *Puppet*, Pat will reveal the origin of her bilingualism: “(de repente te das cuenta, tú cuando rezas lo haces en inglés las monjas que te enseñaron las monjas mexicanas-americanas de entonces les enseñaron a ustedes a rezar **in inglés** Ave María full of grace the Lord is with)” (100). Bilingualism is the most salient feature of Mexican descendants in the US and, among other Hispanos, they conform the “second largest minority group of the United States, and its largest linguistic minority” (Peñalosa 3). This Spanish-English speaking community has to confront not only linguistic but social matters deriving in what Field addresses as “asymmetrical relationships” (xviii) among the diverse languages spoken in the community. This lack of balance often ends up with the dominance of one of the languages, with the creation of a bilingual environment or with the isolation of one of the

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<sup>2</sup> Latino is a shorter formula for Latinoamericano, and includes speakers of other Romance language beyond Spanish. This term is less controversial than Hispano, which includes political aspects and is closely related with ethnic pride (heritage vs. colonial dominion). Chicano is often associated with the original inhabitants of Mexico and those mestizos born from European colonizers and indigenous people (Field 12-14). It is necessary to be acquainted with these disambiguations as it is a source of tension among the Hispanic groups regarding their upbringings and the places they live in.

linguistic communities. Cota-Cárdenas includes some illustrative notes Pat took while in college as when the teacher argued that “el mexicano es un producto de la unión del español e indígena. . . es entonces, **un hecho liquidado**. . .” (61), so as language is a reflection of identity, then Spanglish (CS) is the natural outcome of the bilingual Mexican-American community. Despite the hostility for bilingualism in the US, Latino and Hispano writers have kept on documenting their reality with the support of the real multilingualism and multiculturalism of the US. The general tendency for most US Hispanic writers is to write either in English or in Spanish, but not both at the same time, as if they were affected by some kind of literary diglossia. However, recurring to the alternation between codes, languages and dialects has become more and more habitual in communities such as the Mexican-American, Cuban or Puerto Rican in the US.

### 3. Code-Switching as a Marked choice in Chicano Literature

Code-Switching (CS) is still a highly stigmatized and not very usual form of conversation nowadays, though it becomes even more uncommon in literature. The negative attitudes towards this phenomenon have been promoted by remarkable linguists such as Saussure or Bloomfield, as they affirmed that bilinguals who code-switched were not competent enough or that intrasentential switches reflected a deficit on the vocabulary of either of the languages. Some other scholars view CS as the confusion or inability to separate both languages (Lipski 191), which resulted in the addition of completely unassimilated words from another language into one's speech. Though some of these assumptions were made more than fifty years ago, they still inspire many pedagogical programs and can be seen in the contradictory attitudes towards bilingual programs in the United States. CS has been studied mostly in two directions: structural and sociolinguistic, and mainly on its conversational side. For this research, I will focus on the application of the sociolinguistic approach to written CS as I do not intend to unfold the phenomenon's syntactic and morphosyntactic restrictions but to draw attention to its social signification through literature. These two perspectives are not contradictory but go hand in hand. Auer affirms that there is a level of conversational structure that is autonomous from grammar and syntax, and in the same way some social and ideological structures can explain certain language choices (4). Lipski also agrees on the fact that both linguistic and sociological features are involved in the CS phenomenon, which can be easily identifiable in the opposition between spontaneous or literary code alternation (191). Both perspectives are equally important, but both fail to explore the whole range of possibilities within the CS phenomenon.

This phenomenon is referred to by a multiplicity of terms, from code-switching, to code-mixing, code-alternation, borrowing, etc. Sometimes, and as in the case of this research, CS is used as an umbrella term that includes all these bilingual behaviors such as those “usually considered borrowings in the linguistic analysis of everyday speech” (Mendieta 565), which is why some scholars have considered the distinction among code-switching and borrowing, and code-switching and code-mixing<sup>3</sup>. Myers-Scotton argues that it is not necessary to differentiate between CS and borrowing as she rejects the idea that borrowings are made to fill the lexical gaps of the secondary language. She also distinguishes between *cultural* and *core* borrowings. The first ones will fit new concepts and objects that the second language lacks, but *core* borrowings already have their equivalent in the second language (Myers-Scotton 28-29). CS and borrowings seem to have more similarities than differences, so I believe there is no benefit in establishing their singularities. I will rather include what is traditionally understood by borrowing in the phenomenon of CS. In short, I will use the term CS when referring to the alternative use of two (or more) languages (or codes) by bilinguals within the same discourse, whether oral or written and regardless of the adaptation or not of the terms switched in the receiving language.

The term “code-switching” does not only imply the alternation between two languages as it includes the dialectal varieties and the diversity of registers a speaker can choose from within the same language. This fact will quickly attract the attention of the reader of *Puppet*, as Cota-Cárdenas embraces this potential diversity not only as a way of upgrading the style of

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<sup>3</sup> Code-alternation is the term used by Auer for conversational CS and it is very much related to his *sequential approach* applied to CS, which argues that the meaning of CS depends on its preceding and following utterances. Code-mixing is often used as a hyponym that includes intrasentential CS and borrowings. On the other hand, the term lexical borrowing can be exchanged for *loan word*; it reveals some chronological insight and depends on the integration of the lexical item in the recipient language (phonologically, morphologically and syntactically).

her novella, but almost as a political weapon that works as a situational and ideological marker in the gigantic map of the US. She does not only merge English and Spanish in the same discourse but variations of these two languages from a very formal English to the sound of the lowest but purest forms of Chicano Spanish that populate the American Southwest. Auer includes a differentiation among “my language,” “your language” and “no one’s language” (12), in which the latter is easily identifiable with CS (also referred to as Spanglish or Chicano Spanish). These three languages share a common “symbolic ground” (Auer 12) in the Mexican-American border as all three are used interchangeably, though marked in some occasions because of the identity of the speaker. Auer also assumes that all conversational CS occurrences are “meaningful” (13). This fact is quite more appealing in written utterances, as writing can never be innocent. When dealing with spoken CS, it is easier to see that certain switches are heavily influenced by “extra-conversational dimensions,” while in written CS, as it implies an individual presentation of ideas, CS is likely to be less affected by social or political influences (Auer 20). This point proves to be useless when regarding literary CS, as it does not only imply the written expression of the alternating codes but an aesthetically constricted presentation of events.

Two of the main distinctions regarding CS are related to their localization within the discourse. CS can be intrasentential or intersentential depending on whether the alternation is produced within (more common) or between sentences. Lipski proposes to divide bilingual texts into three categories differentiated by the localization of CS on the sentential level but also regarding its markedness. Type I bilingual literature will include monolingual texts with scarce words of the heritage language or L2, though this does deny its bicultural character. Some of these heritage words may be part of the everyday life, having a more common status

than other types of alternations. In Chicano or Boricua contexts it is more common to refer to your *abuelita* or your *barrio* than choosing their English equivalents, though it does not imply a language switch but rather a conscious choice based on usage and past references to the same reality. Type II texts are distinguished by intersentential CS, and therefore, considered bilingual. Consequently, these texts are usually produced by those bilinguals who use each language in a different context. Type III texts are also bilingual but, in this case, determined by intrasentential CS. These kind of texts are the least common and, though they may not be easily understandable, they present a higher degree of integration among languages and contexts. Keller will affirm that a bilingual grammar is necessary for the creation of this type of bilingual literature, and so CS will not be constrained by the competence of the speaker, as he will be able to approach the same ideas in either language, and apart from that, he will be able to merge the bilingual linguistic and cultural knowledge in order to develop a better understanding. Because of this fact, these texts will be the ones that truly represent bilingual literature and therefore, the more valuable for research (Lipski 195, Rudin 20-21). This third type of bilingual texts represents Keller's notion of *foregrounding*, which refers to the markedness of the switch, its unfamiliarity or the radical character that the alternation of code conveys.

Myers-Scotton's Markedness model argues that societal norms determine the markedness of the code used, so that the election among codes can become predictable or remain unexpected. This does not mean that societal patterns push the speaker to choose one code or the other, but that the speaker chooses among these codes depending on his presuppositions and aspirations for the conversation. Sometimes, these negotiations among codes may be

really accurate when responding to a given social situation, and some other times the speaker will choose to be purposely deviant. These deviances will be considered as *marked*, which means they are less frequent, unexpected, though nevertheless, purposely presented to create a certain aesthetic effect. Myers-Scotton proposes three maxims that control the code choice, these are *marked*, *unmarked* and *exploratory* choice (Moradi 16-17). This last *exploratory* choice is also considered in Auer's introduction to conversational CS. He uses the term "language negotiation sequence" for those times when participants do not agree on a common "language-of-interaction" (8). Myers-Scotton argues that the exploratory choice serves as an in-between position when the choice is not clear. Therefore, CS would be a rational, "conscious and mindful" choice (Moradi 16) in which the speaker consciously chooses from a linguistic and cultural repertoire that goes from very likely to happen to not so commonly used, depending on each social situation. As I have advanced in the methodological overview, Myers-Scotton kept on developing her model until achieving a rational explanation that concluded in the optimal use of the speaker's resources, not so much because of the inherent social constraints but because of the willing choices of the speaker. This development explains that the speaker's choice depends on the social factors and the discourse situation, what Myers-Scotton addresses as "structural constraints" and on the "rationality" filter, the resulting decision dictates whether the code is appropriated or not for the situation (Moradi 17). The "rational" appropriateness falls within the continuum from marked to unmarked and because of this fact, the rational constraint modulates the choice of code from expected into resisting the expectations. In conclusion, the marked use of a code depends totally on the rational and conscious decision of the speaker to achieve a particular goal.

Though nowadays it is widely assumed that CS is a natural choice for bilinguals, Mexican-Americans often refuse to switch when interviewed or recorded, as it is still a highly stigmatized phenomenon (Montes-Alcalá 218). Regarding the expectedness of oral CS, Mendieta-Lombardo and Cintron coincide that nowadays CS is unmarked if oral and corresponding to “those who live with two cultures and languages” as it is the case of the Chicano community (566). I do not fully agree with these scholars, though as I understand that CS should hold the status of unmarked choice if that means that it is generally accepted and used consistently, but because of its relevance and the variety of meanings it conveys I believe it should remain labelled as marked, even more so if referring to literary CS. In her study, Montes-Alcalá tries to access the insights of a group of bilingual educated Mexican-Americans regarding the production of CS both oral and written. This study reveals that opinions on CS are highly positive if oral, though less positive if written. Although oral productions are seen as more natural, written CS is preferable than monolingual texts because the reader “can relate better to the author” even if the reader is aware that CS is only used with stylistic purposes (224). In their adaptation of the Markedness model to bilingual poetry, Mendieta and Cintron quote Myers-Scotton who affirms that the audience needs to “put aside any presumptions [...] based on societal norms for these circumstances [CS, whether oral or written]. I want your view of me, or of our relationship, to be otherwise.” (567).

As all language is created by individuals willing to communicate, it is constrained by subjective and objective motivations which the speakers will mix and match in order to fulfill the goals of a given interaction. The speaker is the one to willfully choose the code so as to adapt to that of the interlocutor and be easily understood, because of this fact, the markedness

or not of a code does not only reside on the speaker as the audience is also compromised with the continuity of the interaction. In the same manner, CS also requires of the collaboration of both the speaker and his audience, but this collaboration is often purposely neglected when regarding literary CS. Most of the CS examples in literature presuppose that the reader will understand the text, and what is more, assume that the reader will feel reflected somehow in what he is reading, not only because of the language but because of the reality it portrays. Therefore, in many cases the use of written CS will become a marked choice in itself when addressing a not so much intended readership, as may be the case of the monolingual reader or any other reader that does not coincide with the Chicano production.

#### 4. The Importance of the Reader in the Chicano novel

Cota-Cárdenas meaningfully chooses Spanglish (CS) over either Spanish or English, though drastically reducing her audience, because a pure monolingual text either in Spanish or English would fail to convey her full message. The author is aware of the communal significance derived from CS and she uses it as a strategy that makes the text more accessible to the reader. By including this phenomenon, Cota-Cárdenas is suggesting themes such as identity, solidarity among in-groups, belonging to a community besides fulfilling an aesthetic goal. Field affirms that “going from one language to another in different ways or combining the two together can serve to express ethnic and/or social identity and, in some cases, to indicate social solidarity with other members of the community” (81). In the case of Chicanos, CS works as a marked choice when it implies the opposition to the process of acculturation, as they refuse to assimilate to English and they fight against its imposition. They are caught in between languages, but they can escape by breaking the dichotomy between Spanish and English. As both languages are part of them, and there is not a functional separation, they choose not to choose, they rebel against binary oppositions in favor of freedom: freedom from colonialism, gender and codes.

Language switching in literature [...] stems from a conscious desire to juxtapose the two codes to achieve some particular literary effect, which in turn presumably reflects an inner drive that cannot find ready expression by remaining within a single language” (Lipski 191-192). This claim may convey an exact reflection of the use of CS in oral stances. Of course writing involves constant correction and edition, which causes literature to be any-

hing but innocent or spontaneous, but oral CS is also a self-conscious device as it mirrors and corrects the bilingual experience in real time. As CS is typically regarded as an oral phenomenon, I find it useful to list a set of factors that influence speech: the setting, the purpose of the interaction and its participants. This categories include both emotional and physical barriers as the choice of both language and register, the familiarity among participants and with the topic of the conversation, etc. For example, the individual can choose among all of his linguistic possibilities (language, dialect, register, etc) to resemble that of the group he belongs to, or to be distinguished from that other group. Soon these choices will become patterns, so interiorized that they will be kept and developed from generation to generation up until the point of creating a code on its own (which in the case of the Mexican-Americans will be referred to as Spanglish or Chicano Spanish).

Though the edition of *Puppet* is bilingual, both the English version and the original present high levels of multilingualism which are a mirror of the impossibility of fully translating languages and cultures. *Puppet* is highly dependent on the reader, from the extreme of being almost incomprehensible for English monolinguals to the abusive repetition bilinguals will experience when the author is trying to clarify or increase the perlocutionary effect of the utterance.

When approaching any literary creation, the reader often takes the role of a translator who needs to bridge the gap between languages and cultures in order to achieve a complete understanding and so, be able to enjoy the literary work. In the specific case of Chicano literature, the reader has a tougher work to do, as he may not be able to disclose all the hidden meanings and connotations of the narrative. Translation permeates every linguistic exchange,

and in a subtle way transforms everything depending on the interests of the author and the reader. Because of this, the Chicano author has a very important function in the understanding (or not) of the narrative, as he may choose to make it easy for the reader by including familiar topics and themes, known usages of language, etc., or he can choose to be radical and experimental, making the text consciously marked, both in form and content. Either way, the Chicano author does never translate as there is not an original and a translated version, Chicano literature is naturally bilingual. *Puppet* has been translated in a majestic manner, needless to say that the interpretation of the original text does not diminish its quality, as the voice of the translator is hardly visible. Culture and identity remain illustrated by the use of CS as a theme, though not as close to authentic and realistic productions as in the bilingual edition.

Some authors will choose not to aid the reader so as to maintain the purity or realism of the text, though Lipski argues that written CS can never be approached as natural or as if produced in a “normal nonliterary environment” (192). Lipski uses Keller’s idea of foregrounding when paraphrasing that, at least, if not natural, CS in literature must try to create “powerful bilingual images” (193), that is, reveal its markedness with an aesthetic end. Still, I believe there is a high degree of mimesis of the bilingual identity through these ‘realistic’ texts, which at some point, will help preserve the heritage language. The fact that we cannot measure the “realness” or “spontaneity” of written CS leads to the creation of diverse hypotheses on the purity of Chicano texts and authors. Some scholars will argue that literary texts are self-contained and organic, to which I will add that in the particular case of Chicano literature, these texts are constantly updated by the readers and their circumstances. When the author chooses to assist the reader, the process of understanding is more pleasant but anyhow,

the reality portrayed will only be fully understandable when both the reader and the writer share the same cultural and linguistic background. This fact reduces the chances a monolingual reader will have to address a Chicano writing unassisted, to experience Chicano literature on his own. Even if most of the Chicano authors expect a bilingual and biliterate audience, the English monolingual reader faces the problematic of having to translate not only common Spanish words or realities but to understand the specific connotations impregnated on CS. He will not only have to figure out the plot but to fully understand the humor, colloquialisms and other particularities of the culture. But what is relevant here is the use of CS both as a theme and as a symbol of the different experiences Chicano reality presents to mainstream culture. Here is where the monolingual reader has a real chance to approach the multilayered speech and traditions of the bilingual Chicano community.

5. *Puppet: A “Stereotypical” 20th Century Chicano Novella*

A stereotypical Chicano novel of the period analyzed [70s-80s] would have the following features: the narrative voice assumes a stable point of view that coincides with, or runs parallel to, the perspective of the protagonist; experimental narrative techniques are rare; the narrative does not use an artificial, imaginary or fantastic setting, but it is set in a realistic time and place, in a Chicano village or barrio and in the twentieth century; the Mexican revolution is mentioned, and elements of contemporary Chicano history are introduced as well as American history and world history; the Mexican immigrant experience is present in most novels [...] The main character is a male Chicano who shows autobiographical traits of the author and is presented as an exemplary figure. [...] Machismo [...] Mexican folklore [...] The hero undergoes a cycle of initiations that alienate him from his family and its values [...] a confrontation with another culture and another language.

Ernst Rudin. *Tender Accents of Sound*.

By writing about Puppet's death, Patricia/Petra/Pat Leyva will unfold Chicano history and future but also her own past and destiny, as she extracts bits and pieces of her own memories, though much aided by the ever-present character of Memo. Puppet and his Hamletian ghost occupy the position of the “exemplary figure” mentioned by Rudin, a figure that embodies every trait of mestizaje Pat lacks, or has forgotten. The more she digs into her memories and brings them up to date by writing about Puppet, the more confused she is up until the

point that she becomes medically certified as maladjusted. The disjointed characterization of Puppet contributes to the creation of a fragmentary image of the Chicano reality. He is repeatedly described as “UN MUÑECO, UNO DE ESOS DE HILOS Y MADERA, TODO ANGULAR, UNA PIERNA PA’ALLÁ, OTRA PA’CA...” (14). This fragmented image of a puppet will permeate the whole novella and will serve as a metaphor for the display of the ideas on the narration. It will also become visible in the narrator’s voice, which is constantly debating between the *I* (self and other)<sup>4</sup> and the *you* as Cota-Cárdenas tries to present both romantic (“romanticaca” 9) and objective events within the same voice as if both *Is* were the same, or even better, as if they both resulted into something else: “Uno y uno son tres” as reads the title for chapter 14, which would be the embodiment of the *mestiza* experience. Many times, the other *I* narrator comes up as an organizing principle which tells true from false; it serves as a indicator that shows when Pat’s stories are not really hers but overheard or part of the heritage knowledge. The merging of Pat’s and Puppet’s life does nothing but clarify the hybrid status of Chicanos, as they all can feel identified with each other no matter what their past is or whether they were educated or not. Furthermore, some times ordering the self does not lead to a solid ground but to a third entity that, again, embodies the struggles and contradictions of the borderlands.

*Puppet* then, challenges all preconceptions and redefine what a Chicano novel is, that is, not only bilingual but multilingual and polyphonic as it includes slang and marginal voices, Spanglish, formal English and formal Spanish, etc. This opens a new path for research

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<sup>4</sup> This divided view of the self is also present in Manzanos approach to *Puppet*, though much more elaborated through the principles of border theory.

which is the distinction between bilingualism and diglossia. The first is related with “individual linguistic behavior” and the latter with the “linguistic organization at a socio-cultural level” (Ferguson qtd. in Peñalosa 42). Diglossia is easily recognizable in *Puppet*’s narrative because of the inclusion of marginal characters as Puppet himself, his fiancées or Memo for example. This phenomenon defines the use of two varieties of the same language for different social purposes, which is easily relatable with the presupposition of English as the language of formal affairs and Spanish in more colloquial situations (Peñalosa 41-42). Though the narrative is crammed with this linguistic phenomenon, I will not devote more attention than required, which in my opinion is related to the asymmetrical usage of languages and registers in bilingual communities. In the case of Chicanos, Spanish will never be as “standard” as English is. Though it is true that they use both languages and its correspondent varieties interchangeably fitting perfectly all social contexts, Spanish is always relegated to contexts of informality, closer to the unprejudiced comfort of the family and mostly, in the home environment.

The lack of closure that characterizes the narrative of *Puppet* and, of Chicano reality in general, is revealed by the display of the events which do not respond to a chronological order but to a continuous flow of flashbacks integrated into Pat’s narration. These alterations in the narrative’s chronology are detailed through recurrent images such as: “CHARCO(s) DE SANGRE” (12) for the uncountable crimes committed since the colonial times throughout Latin America and up to Puppet’s death, the mediator between real and fictional that is the phone’s “BRIIIIIINNNGGG” (3), the constant and learnt fear for “LA MIGRAAAA” (55) which can also be related to the fear of trespassing boundaries, either linguistic, social or psy-

chological. “LA MIGRA LA MIGRA AI VIENE AY AY AY ojos llenos de confusión chisporroteo fequitas de esperanzas se pueden casar los curas nononononono N.N.N.N.N.N.[...]” (76) refers to some insights that Pat shares on the day Puppet is going to be buried. She openly says she has fallen asleep and these are the embodiments of her dreams. But it may also be attributed to her mental illness, to the “writer’s paranoia” (80) the shrink said in the first place. Patricia/Pat/Petra Leyva trespasses various grounds, as a visitor and as a traitor, produces her own diverse linguistic codes and is able to adapt to an infinity of situations within her own self. She proves to be a true hybrid, but this condition entails convulsion, disturbances, interferences and, consequently, identity disorders. Manzanas argues that the “quasi historical narrative Petra puts together thus reveals a world that is infinitely unfinished, ready to be revised, open to reconsideration and intervention” (55). Closure is unachievable, and will never be, as long as the Chicano reality is based on individuals and their particularities. The only closing element is the death of Puppet, but instead of definiteness, it brings back a continuum of memories and refreshes the sentiment towards the search of *La Raza* and even the recovery of the utopian Aztlán.

When approaching the text for the first time, the most striking characteristics found are both the typographic display and how it affects the revealing of the polyphony of voices. The changes in register become sensibly marked by the way Cota-Cárdenas types them down in the narrative as in: “escucha: **I know** . . . pero escucha, mija, tengo qu’ijirte algo [...] se ha desmayado la Pat. . . !” (75). This fragment, though small, reveals the more approximate approach to the Chicano language which is not only bilingual but also moves across registers depending on the individual and the conscious choices he makes when creating a discourse.

This type of discourse will be a Cota-Cárdenas' manner to describe people of lower social status as Memo, or even more striking in the case of Puppet. This markedness on the register is also presented by the change of the graphemes <s> and <h> for <j>, for resembling the aspirated sound closer to the English /h/ than to the Castilian /s/ as in *nosotros/nojotros*, *hicieron/jicieron*. These distinctions are most frequent when addressing Memo's speech because of the need to make present the differences between the diversity of Spanish dialects and registers. Both Memo and Puppet's speech often includes the simplification of vocalic groups, as in the case of "qu'ijirte" mentioned above. These pronunciation changes may be due to the influence of Andalusian Spanish (*seseo*, *ceceo*, *voseo* and *yeísmo*) and the archaic kind of Spanish (Peñalosa 20-21) spoken in the times of the conquest which has evolved from then on to our days resulting in the various dialects, or accents, present in the Caribbean and Latin America as Mexican Spanish, Cuban Spanish or Puerto Rican Spanish.

In the same way as the diverse voices are inserted in the narrative, so are the language switches. Unannounced and always rationally marked, the alternations between codes permeate all characters throughout the text. Rudin argues that though "Chicano literature as a whole is bilingual [...] fully bilingual literary texts are rather rare in it" (15) and that the conception of a text as bilingual responds to a "high degree of code-switching" (16), though he coincides with the authors who regard CS as mimetic and realistic but never spontaneous. One of the techniques for reflecting more naturally the inclusion of CS within the narrative is through the dialogues. Cota-Cárdenas will use and abuse the possibility of addressing directly speech in the discourse so as to enhance the authenticity of the switches, though of

course, these inclusions will be marked not only because of the information they convey but also because of the way they are graphically shown.

Writing is visual and this idea may not only involve code-switches but other kinds of alterations, as in the case of *Puppet*, which shows a wide variety of choices concerning the typographic display of words, from italics, to bold type, capitals, etc. Moreover, Cota-Cárdenas enhances the oral nature of CS by the free usage of punctuation, not throughout the narration but mostly relevant when the narrator addresses directly Pat's unconscious. She denies the use of full stops in favor of the vagueness of the ellipsis, some times, composed by more than three stops, and more often than expected, with several spaces in between. This experimentation with form serves to distinguish between fiction and reality, that is, Pat's dreams and flashbacks and the real events that make the narrative advance. In the same way, Cota-Cárdenas is challenging the limits of identity through these misspellings, mixing codes, repetitions when addressing both Anglos and Mexicans or Chicanos. Pat will never be adequate, though she is well educated and has a certain economic stability she will always be too Anglo for those of mixed origin and too Latina for the monolingual Anglos.

“— ‘amá? . . . Si, habla tu number-one daughter. . . Ji, ji. . . Ya, I'm feeling real good [...] Si, yo sé. . . I miss you too. . . Pero necesito mi independence. . . [...] Well, I think I would like living en la costa[.]” (58). This example shows that María may not be as fluent in Spanish as her mother Pat, and maybe because of this, some of her intrasentential switches respond to a lack of familiarity with some terms in the target language. However, María will develop her skills in Spanish language as she travels America in search for her identity in the

same way her mother will do through Puppet's death. By the end of the novel, the reader will recognize a grown María, who has focused her energy in the Chicano movement and who is readily familiar both with Spanish and Spanglish as she now understands its origin. Most of the times, the prevalence of untranslated Spanish words reside on their meaning, as it may be obvious because of the context or because it refers to a widely known reality even if from a different culture. Either way, I believe this is not the case addressed by Cota-Cárdenas as she is more inclined to recover the essence of the dialogistic utterances included in the text.

"Crap, puro crap. . . De dónde saca la genta estos labels, estos nombres?" (70) is uttered by Venus, a friend of Pat, who is still an activist, when she is accused of being a communist. In this case, the speaker shows the ability to recover almost the same reality in both languages, and decides to use English first. Lipski presents the idea that some times, there may be a need to "elicit" a chosen word in one language in order to recover its equivalent in the other one (197). Though I do not disagree with this hypothesis, I believe in this case Venus uses repetition to make the whole audience, either monolingual Anglos or Spanish-speakers, participants on her discourse. This type of noun switches are the most common ones, as both English and Spanish share a similar grammar and word formation processes, which includes the minimally inflected formation of the plural: label/s and nombre/s. In the case of Puppet, the writer does not purposely include repetitions in order to clarify the message conveyed in the narrative, but here the repetitions are part of the natural CS output. It seems a bit odd to find both of them written down in the final literary work, as in oral CS repetitions are often used as a mechanism for recovering the desired word in the pertinent language, but in the case of literature, that work has already been done by the author in real time. This desire to show everything concerned with language production may be due to the ambition of the author of portraying written CS' authenticity in a radical and therefore marked fashion. The novel also includes

the exact opposite of what has been defended as authentic as in: “ayer ayer yesterday it was just yesterday” (81 T) versus “ayer ayer ayer” on the original version. Though I cannot find a clear motivation for the inclusion of the English word in the translated version, and I assume it is not difficult to understand nor part of CS, I can only refer to it as a stylistic concession of the translator in an attempt to make the passage more culturally vivid for the monolingual reader.

—You know who Malinchi was, María? [...] she fell in love with this white man, see . . . Pues era español, yeah, Cortés, whatever [...] . . . Well, la usaron, la usaron como quien dice, pero primero, well . . . she was sold, para no decir sold-out, primero por su gente . . . entonces, pos el rate machote aquél, he sold her out. . . pos a un teniente de él, o sergeant, no sé, da igual [...] Ja, ja, ja . . . y que ella los vendió a ellos! Todavía ni existían . . .!

(Cota-Cárdenas 130)

Related to the idea of the creation of names and labels, Pat Leyva will struggle throughout the narrative with the symbol of La Malinche and her importance for the Hispanic culture. “Eres tú Malinche malinchi Quién eres tú (quien soy YO malinchi?) /vendedor o comprador?” (87) “Por el idioma, que yo les ayudé que yo **vendí a mi pueblo?**” (89). Pat is indeed sort of La Malinche, a strong independent woman who has to fight society to survive but often regarded as a threat or even a traitor. The incorporation of Mexican symbols as La Malinche and La Llorona, invoke the nostalgia for the better past, a past that is situated before the creation of the US and even before the Spanish colonization. “— . . . Aló, si, soy yo, Malin . . . Pat, Petra” (90), even “**Cinder-Malinsheesh**” (91) as an adaptation of the Cindere-

lla fairytale into the Chicano reality. Pat, a single mother of two assumes these roles so that it becomes visible the impossibility to adapt to a predefined Chicano identity. This does not mean Chicano identities are stagnant but quite the opposite, Chicanos are not easily defined, this resistance demonstrates the potential of adaptation and their flexibility as they can embrace diverse languages and national identities.

Cota-Cárdenas constantly uses the repetition of key words related to the Southwest, Mexican-Americans or Chicano realities as: *víbora*, *mocoso*, *mija*, ***macho***, ***Malinchi***, even the worldwide known expression ***mi casa es su casa***. Most of them are nouns, which are the most basic form of conveying information, and thus, more likely to represent realities that may not exist in other cultures (Lipski 197). Most of these words have an equivalent in whatever language, but the reason why they remain untouched is that they carry metaphorical significances often left behind if tried to be translated. Some of them are purposely displayed in italics or bold, but some others are inserted with no alterations in the bilingual text. These unannounced switches are, in my point of view, at the highest level of markedness as they have been assimilated as part of the new Chicano culture and do not need to be overtly exposed, they have already become part of the Chicano lexicon. Though all CS presented in the narrative of *Puppet* is marked, there are cultural and sociolinguistic factors, as well as the creativity of the author, that lower or enhance the level of expectations of the audience to give more importance to the presence of the switch. Because of this fact, the naturalness of this phenomenon may be put into question.

Cota-Cárdenas also includes linguistic alterations such as “lonche [lunch]” (82) or “Mah-leen-cheeh [Malinche]” (81), widely known as “incorporated borrowings”, in reference to a term that is close in meaning to what is generally known as a loanword and opposed to the spontaneous incorporation of a single lexical item to a language where it does not belong (Peñalosa 57). “Le fallaron las breacas [brakes] al troque [truck]” (124) will be the highest degree of adaptation of the borrowing as it is perfectly adapted both phonologically and morphologically not only to the recipient language but including traits of the two languages, it is what Peñalosa tags as a “calque” or literal translation (57). These examples are already incorporated into the Chicano everyday speech, whereas in the case of “y la luna va glisando sobre el agua” (116), “glimmering” (124) in the translated version, it is not as clear. This calque responds to an aesthetic purpose, it is produced creatively and therefore, shows a higher degree of markedness. Whereas it might seem easier to recover the gerund *glistening* than *glimmering*, the translator must have thought otherwise and chose the word that fitted better in the process of adaptation of the borrowing to the Spanish language. Another particularly interesting translation reads as such:

“... **jaqueca** (siempre me recordaba **hot-cakes**)” (Cota-Cárdenas 46)

“... **jaqueca** (it always made me think of **hot-cakes**, that word).

(Cota-Cárdenas 49, T)

Later in the narration, Pat will complain that she “todavía tengo jotquequis batiéndome la cabeza” (53). It is significant that the translated version is the original wording for hot-cakes and it is also remarkable the signification of “batiéndome,” as what is being mixed or shaken and therefore, causing the headache, are the hot-cakes in her mind. Both “hot-cakes” and “jaqueca” become visible to the reader because of the use of bold letters, which updates

their meanings in the understanding of the reader, not as a past reality, but as a unique experience of the narrator. Though in the case of “jotquequis”, and maybe because of its explicit relevance, it is not marked in any graphic way as it is already an adaptation of the English term into the Spanish-language pronunciation, almost used as if a widely known borrowing. The constant repetition of the newly created “jotquequis” leads to elaborate on the reversal of the social status of Spanish, as the word’s origin is Spanish though merged with the English look alike “hot-cakes” in order to develop a new reality that is neither a headache nor the hot-cakes but something new only understandable by Pat. It is Pat's own symbol, and regardless of its importance for the outer world, it represents the true inbetweenness she is caught up in. Likewise but on the opposite direction, the name of Inés, one of Puppet’s fiancées, becomes an English word because of the appropriation of its phonetics. Inés, rebaptised as “la Inerest” (10) or “Miss Interesting Inerest” (47) became the laughingstock of Puppet’s friends because of her naivety when instantly creating an alternative identity by just elevating her name into a more prestigious language that is English. All these occurrences fall under the umbrella of CS and are regarded as literary strategies that serve to reduce the distance between author and reader (Mendieta 556), as they try to make the content more accessible and relatable to the experiences of the intended audience (not so much if monolingual and monocultural audience). As I have discussed before, discourses are always motivated and intentional, not only because of the themes and symbols they convey but, specifically in written Chicano literature, because of its intended readership. In the case of bilingual Chicano literature, it is necessary to refer to the subjectivity of the narration and because of the collective reality it is usually inserted in, it is also necessary to distinguish among the resulting marked or unmarked choice depending on the audience. Puppet as a Chicano narrative is selected as the marked choice because it serves as a creator of distance with the Anglo monolingual, who does not look for

identification but to be immerse in the exoticism of the borderlands. For many Chicano authors, this search does not have to come easy for the intruder, who needs to be fully committed to the process of reading, fighting the challenges of the authors and also becoming aware of their limitations.

“—Entre dos culturas [...] Entre dos sistemas, en estado conflictivo que resultó en . . . ELLOS, que eran ellos solos, que querían ser lo no de allá ni de acá que a fin de cuentas los veían más o menos igual ELLOS SOLOS en los ojos de ellos había EN LOS OJOS DE ELLOS.” (92)

## 6. Conclusion

Language serves to express how we see ourselves in the world, so the choice of words becomes extremely relevant when reflecting our identity and/or belonging to a community. Among other ways, minorities assert their identity through writing, either to create their own identity or to fight against an identity crisis. Minorities, such as the Chicano community challenge the hegemonic attitudes towards Hispanics, namely marginalization, being incapable to learn, etc. by redefining their language and culture. It is often said that language is the main factor involved in the creation of an identity. For example, you need to speak French in order to be regarded as French, which also includes belonging to a community or ethnic group. Therefore bilingual literature serves as an automatic legitimizer of the heritage and identity of a community of speakers. In the case of the Chicano community, as they refuse to be defined by just one language or one culture, their literature is going to be marked by experimentations both in form and content, continuous contradictions and a lack of closure in every given scenario, from a thematic point of view to the quest against linguistic attrition. Though CS is only one option among many for the bilingual, in the case of the Chicano community, it moves from being merely an oral situational or stylistic variation of language into a higher approach to their own identity through language. CS is a way of merging both worlds, where Spanish is no longer inferior but equal to English and where they both coexist within the same discourse. Most of the times, this coexistence contributes to a better understanding of what is portrayed in the text and some other times, it provokes the attention of the off-guard reader. CS becomes an implicit manner of conveying meaning as part of the interaction bet-

ween characters (or speakers if oral). It does not need anything beyond itself, it is marked in every possible way.

CS serves to dramatize and enhance certain events of the narrative, but at the same time it objectivizes its authenticity through the written expression. In other words, it works as a literary device while maintaining its status of linguistic phenomenon innately produced by bilinguals. This distinction is also driven by the Markedness model, because of which, CS will remain unmarked if spoken (unless it implies a rhetorical use or contrasts previous information), but because of its scarcity, it will become automatically marked when written. Additionally, written CS becomes an explicit manner of conveying meaning, inasmuch as it does not need anything else but its own presence. These meanings can vary from showing solidarity among in-groups, to becoming an organizing strategy that guides the reader through the narrative and stimulates his attention, to contrasting new and old information as with the exclusively Mexican-American traditions, to the highest marked choice that is creating a dramatic effect usually by expressing the voice of the characters as uniquely bilingual, and often inscrutable for a non-Mexican-American readership. When answering to what extent literary CS can be considered authentic, I would say that in the case of *Puppet* CS is mimetic throughout the narration as Cota-Cárdenas uses it as a reflection of what is taking place in the real world of the marginal bilingual Mexican-Americans. This reality coincides with the loss of a fixed identity and so, of a fixed language which addresses the Chicano identity both as individuals and as part of a community. Mestizaje is often doomed to an unfavorable reception and essentially, the clash of cultures results in death, though in the case of Chicano, death is necessary for the rebirth of their culture: (I find this claim quite distressing, unless

you qualify it a little; Do you really support this claim? maybe you could rewrite it assert “in death and rebirth”? Otherwise you sound like one of those ultraconservative politicians warning against the threat of immigration) death of previous Chicano literature, death of both English and Spanish languages, even death of the normative writing. Both Spanish and English are the voices of the conquerors, so the new Chicano transcends that past and reconstructs their culture based on their own expression of heritage, identity and language. It is only by transcending their past that both Pat and the Chicano community in general, are able to create their own culture, which is both American and Mexican and at the same time none of the above. This process of both destruction and birth fights the imposition of fixed identities and languages, and reveals the ever/always changing status of the border, which will be perpetually in progress. And finally, because of its lack of closure, Chicano CS also serves to reverse the power relations among languages, not so much by placing Spanish before English in a country where the vast majority of the population are white monolingual Anglos, but because of the development of CS as a fluid new entity that transcends every categorization and closely reflects the hybrid nature of those in between cultures. This idea can be easily transposed to the narrative *Puppet: A Chicano Novella*, which serves as a way of articulating the contradictory reality of the Chicano individual.

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