Latinø Children and Their Picturebooks Over Time

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ABSTRACT

Latinø children's literature scholars point to the early 1990s as a crucial time in the history of US children's literature by and about Latinøs, rightly claiming that up to this time, such books presented miniscule publication rates and received limited mainstream attention (Koss et al.; Naidoo "Opening doors"; Nilsson). In some cases, books with Latinø themes presented highly problematic racioethnic representations in both their verbal (written) and visual narratives, particularly when created by non-Latinøs (Quiroa, "Promising Portals"). These trends continued beyond the 1990s until more recently when shifts in the larger field of US multicultural literature by and about diverse racial and ethnic groups occurred[1].

The history of children's literature by and about Latinøs in the U.S. is not as robust as that afforded mainstream and European literature, and deserves periodic documentation that equally takes into account their verbal (written) and visual (illustrations) narratives. Therefore, I provide a historical review of related, extant scholarship and book titles of this body of books, specifically focusing on those in picturebook formats. A central tenet for my work is that their visual narratives have received too little consideration from an interdisciplinary approach, including the fields of a) education (English language arts, biliteracy, and social studies); b) librarianship, c) ethnic/cultural studies, d) Spanish language and literature studies, e) semiotics, and d) art. Thus, an interdisciplinary approach can broaden understandings of how Latinø children and their narratives are portrayed in their picturebooks today[2]. This review is also crucial given the increasing technological advances of the twenty-first century resulting in greater availability and emphasis on reading multimodal texts like picturebooks and graphic novels (Chesner; Serafini et al.).

KEYWORDS: Multicultural literature, Latinx/a/o/ø children's literature, history, critical literary analysis.

RESUMEN

Los estudiosos de la literatura infantil latina señalan los primeros años de la década de 1990 como un momento crucial en la historia de la literatura infantil estadounidense escrita por y sobre latinos, afirmando con razón que, hasta ese momento, tales libros presentaban tasas de publicación minúsculas y recibían una atención limitada por parte de la corriente dominante (Koss et al.; Naidoo "Opening doors"; Nilsson). En algunos casos, los libros con temas latinos presentaban representaciones racioétnicas muy problemáticas tanto en sus narraciones verbales (escritas) como visuales, particularmente cuando eran creados por no latinos (Quiroa, "Promising Portals"). Estas tendencias continuaron más allá de la década de 1990 hasta que, más recientemente, se produjeron cambios en el campo más amplio de la literatura multicultural estadounidense por y sobre diversos grupos raciales y étnicos.

La historia de la literatura infantil de y sobre latinos en los EE.UU. no es tan sólida como la de la literatura convencional y europea, y merece una documentación periódica que tenga en cuenta por igual sus narraciones verbales (escritas) y visuales (ilustraciones). Por lo tanto, ofrezco una revisión histórica de la bibliografía existente y de los títulos de este tipo de libros, centrándome específicamente en los que tienen formato de álbum ilustrado. Un principio central de mi trabajo es que sus narrativas visuales han recibido muy poca consideración desde un enfoque interdisciplinar, incluyendo los campos de a) educación (lengua y literatura inglesas, alfabetización bilingüe y estudios sociales); b) biblioteconomía, c) estudios étnicos/culturales, d) estudios de lengua y literatura españolas, e) semiótica y d) arte. Por lo tanto, un enfoque interdisciplinario puede ampliar la comprensión de cómo los niños latinos y sus narrativas son retratados en sus libros ilustrados hoy en día. Esta revisión también es crucial dados los crecientes avances tecnológicos del siglo XXI que resultan en una mayor disponibilidad y énfasis en la lectura de textos multimodales como los álbumes ilustrados y las novelas gráficas (Chesner; Serafini et al.).
PALABRAS CLAVE: Literatura multicultural, literatura infantil Latinx/a/o/ø, historia, análisis literario crítico.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Young children delight in picturebooks that make them laugh and take them on adventures to real or fantastical worlds. They also like characters they can identify with and admire, protagonists who look like them, sound like them, live like them, and whose parents use familiar terms of endearment in realistic ways. The same is true for Latinø children as I discovered personally while reading aloud the picturebook *Under the Lemon Tree* by Edith Hope Fine, illustrated by René King Moreno, to my biracial/bicultural Latina daughter. Carolina was about four years old at the time and excitedly interrupted the reading to declare that the female child protagonist looked "just like me". We read Latinø-themed books together before, but this one clearly captured her attention more than the others, in part because, like the protagonist, she and her sisters also loved limones whether green or yellow. [3] My daughters' responses to this and other titles (see Barrera and Quiroa) reflect Rudine Sims Bishops' theory on the value of providing children with books that can serve as mirrors to see themselves in. These books can also provide windows to see into the worlds and lives of those different from themselves, and even sliding

glass doors to enter into new book worlds with enough reality (universal themes) that they can easily participate in the story in a "performative" way (Quiroa, "Literature as Mirror" 71) or in a "carnivalesque romp" (Sipe 267).

2. ANALYZING LATINØ CHILDREN'S PICTUREBOOKS

As a multimodal literary and artistic book format with intersemiotic complexity that Zbaracki labels "blurred genre" (284), Serafini and Read state that children's texts include a "range of modalities, including visual, textual and graphic design elements" (331). As such, they call on picturebook scholars and researchers to "move past the dominance of linguistically-based theories and analytical approaches, and take up a variety of analytical frameworks that conceptualize picturebooks as artistic, literary, semiotic, and multimodal entities" (331).

At the same time, literary scholar Marilisa Jiménez-Garcia examines children's literature, including picturebooks, as presenting "a diverse site of inquiry within cultural studies, and American and American literature" ("Pura Belpré" 113). She notes that "Children's literature is a field divided among librarians, literary critics, teacher-educators, and publishers, all with a different skill set and research agenda". She contends that "children's literature in the humanities and Latinx Studies converge in ways that render Latinx authors for youth visible in multiple fields." ("Side-by-Side" 113). In this article, I take into account these many divisions in a historical discussion of Latinø-themed and authored/illustrated picturebooks, pulling together scholarly spaces that rarely seem to converge, nor necessarily build off of one another's research. The study is framed by my work as critical literacy educator and informed by an overarching LatCrit framework as discussed by Laura Chávez-Moreno, in particular her four framing ideas which include:

- A focus on issues that affect Latinxs and/or include Latinxs as the research participants; and in the case of the latter, value participants' experiential knowledge yet recognize that Latinxs (like all people) can perpetuate hegemonic ideologies and practices
- define and theorize race and/or racialization
- conceptualize Latinx as a racialized group
- advance the specificity of Latinidad (24)

The study is organized chronologically from the nineteenth century to the present with the goal of highlighting and adding context and detail to seminal, and sometimes little-known, Latinø-themed and authored/illustrated texts that include magazines, a chapterbook supported by photos, and numerous picturebooks.

3. HISTORICAL REVIEW

3.1. Nineteenth Century: Idyllic Childhoods

Literature and cultural scholar, Manuel Martín-Rodríguez ("Chicano/A Children's Literature") views the body of Chicano-themed children's titles as having a "transnational history," one built from "the fluid interaction of that particular group with other peoples with whom it shares historical experiences and cultural capital," or what he calls a "transazlantic development" (15)[4]. With this frame, he traces the history of Chicano children's literature starting in the nineteenth century, pointing to the importance of the children's magazine, *La edad de oro* written and produced monthly by José Martí (July to October 1889) while in exile from Cuba in New York City. This publication is described as "A combination of stories, poetry, chronicles, and graphic art … indicative of Martí's attempt to enrich the vocabulary, reading habits, civic spirit and cosmopolitan sophistication of Latin(o/a) American children." (16) At the same time this magazine was illustrated by a French artist, Adrien Emmanuel Marie, whose black and white line images depict an idealized and nostalgic European image of rural childhood similar to those of the renowned English children's author and illustrator Kate Greenaway. ("A Day in a Child's Life"). Martín-Rodriguez ("Chicano/a Children's Literature") also discusses other important Spanish lay and religious periodicals for children published during this time period, primarily produced in Spain or the American Southwest, noting these also shared a similar understanding of childhood as an "idyllic, gilded age," and a time of "fertile ground for moral teaching and civic indoctrination" (17).

3.2. Twentieth Century

3.2.1. 1900 to 1920: Living the "Foreign Child Life Described"

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company began publishing its chapter book series *Children of Other Lands Books* which they described by stating,

> There are many books about the children of other countries, but no other group like this, with each volume written by one who has lived the foreign child life described, and learned from subsequent experience in this country how to tell it in a way attractive to American children—and in fact to Americans of any age (Godoy).

Its only Latin American title in this series was, *When I was a Girl in Mexico*, published in 1919 and written by twenty-nine-year-old Mercedes Godoy, the third woman author in the series. My own quick purview of several titles in this series, available digitally through the Library of Congress, reveals that the titles published just prior to, or in the same year as Godoy's text did not follow a strict, formulaic manner with similar chapter headings or topics covered. As such, it would seem that Lothrop, Lee, & Shephard allowed these series authors some freedom to create biographies containing what they considered as most important in recounting their childhood in a "foreign country."

Godoy was the daughter of a Mexican-born diplomat father and well-connected Mexican American mother in California ("Godoy to be Counselor" 4; "Mexican Beauty Meets American Society" 13). Woods considers Godoy's work to be the first published life writing of a Mexican woman other than that of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz. He states that such writing was "unheralded and unnoticed," a phenomenon he claims still existed in the early 1900s (10). Woods also described Godoy's memoir for children to be a tale of the "easy and pleasant life of a daughter of a Mexican diplomat" (10), sagely highlighting the irony that "the most attention for Mexican autobiography has come through the studies of foreigners interested in Mexico" (10).

The cover features a two-tone (black and red), woodcut image over its yellow cloth binding and is based on a photo Godoy provided within the book labeled, "Montezuma on his Throne" (132). Its descriptor identifies the scene as a "Historical Parade during the 1910 Mexican Centennial." Like the original photo, the procession on the cover faces the viewer as it moves forward over what appears to be a sawdust carpet led by indigenous women (or possibly actors dressed as such) in traditional clothing holding baskets of fruit, while men behind them wear feathered hats and carry a banner

held high which, unlike the photo, bears the book title and author's name. Underneath, and bringing up the rear, is a wooden float-like structure transporting the king "Montezuma"[5], one of two important Aztec rulers with this name in Mexico, dressed regally in a white and embroidered robe.

Whether a product of the publishing company or of Godoy herself, this cover image seems to equate Mexico with an indigeneity that is disrupted immediately following the interior book title page with the appearance of a large, black-and-white photo of the author. Here, Mercedes poses in an elegant light-colored or white dress and the photo is positioned over her bold, handwritten signature. Although difficult to determine with certainty, she appears to be fair in complexion with lighter colored eyes, and bears little resemblance to the individuals on the book cover. These are the first clues as to the book's content, most likely intended to hook the young US reader visually into reading an exotic story, replete with native royalty and their acolytes and a romantic, light-skinned (seemingly wealthy) female protagonist.

The textual narrative describes Mercedes' fond memories of growing up in Mexico—stories from her early family life and education to holidays and important cultural and social institutions and sites in Mexico City. Black and white photos are interspersed throughout, providing readers with images related to the textual narrative--almost like clues to support the narrative about this foreign country. Most of these depict important cultural buildings and structures in and around Mexico City, all settings the author frequented as a child. Some of these include the National Library (20), the Central Square (30), the Cathedral in Mexico City (46), the Chapultepec Castle and Lake (72), and the important volcanos, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl (80). At the end of the penultimate book chapter titled, "The Mexican Centennial," the image on the cover is repeated as a photo, accompanied by a second image on the page "Aztec Warriors. Another striking feature of the Historical Parade" (132). Thus, the visual clues provided in this chapter book start and end by visually supporting a supposed "foreign" indigeneity to its content--a population the author clearly identifies as poor, barefoot peasants who work primarily as nannies or artisans in the written text. Yet all the while Godoy attempts to convince within the

verbal (written) narrative and most of the photo images that her own blissful Mexican childhood of privilege, wealth, and high European fashion was on par or superior to that of her U.S. child readers. In fact, one unnamed reviewer noted that Godoy's text would be "a revelation to those American children who imagine that Mexican is a synonym for bandit." (Ungraded Teachers Association of New York City 94).

3.2.2. The 1930s to the 1950s: Depictions of our Neighbors to the South and the Western U.S.

The US national context for picturebooks published in the 1930s was set by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, namely, his "Good Neighbor" policy, enunciated early in his first term of office in 1933, and more clearly in 1938 amidst the chaos of war in Europe[6]. Here, he emphasized cooperation and trade over military force to build and sustain stability in the western hemisphere. Also in 1938, high school Latin educators Hogan and Yeschko published an annotated bibliography divided between the October and November issues (6 and 7) of The National Council of Teachers of English journal, *The Elementary English Review* (now *Language Arts*), titled "Latin American Countries in Children's Literature". Here they included the works of the "foremost authors and illustrators of children's literature" (no. 6 225) of the time, individuals believed to devote their art to "portraying foreign countries and peoples in so fascinating a manner that international barriers may be broken down and long-cherished prejudice dissolved" (225). Hogan and Yschko noted that the US had long endeavored to "encourage and maintain friendly relationships with the Latin Republics to the south" (225), and that their article was an attempt to "show the child what a wealth of material he may find regarding these civilizations" (225).

To create their bibliography, Hogan and Yeschko (1938) examined over 200 books with settings in Mexico, Central, and South America before selecting to annotate only those titles which "artistically presented to the child a valid picture of national customs and developed in the reader favorable attitudes of international respect" (no. 6 225). In fact, they claimed they did not include books with "'hostile' attitudes toward Latin American civilizations" or "thrillers" where a country served as the background for "improbable

adventures" (226). In 1940, the editor of *The Elementary English Review* reprinted a revised and expanded version of these bibliographies also in two parts/issues (numbers 6 and 7), with the rationale that its readers found the original bibliography lists useful but hard to locate, and that "Latin America was becoming of increasing interest to us" (Issue 6 230). My review of the children's titles in these articles found very few to be created by Latinø authors and illustrators other than an illustrated chapter book in the Lothrop, Lee, and Shephard series, Children of Alta California, titled, *Benito and Loreta Delfin* illustrated by the versatile artist, Jo Mora (Leetch). This book recounts "the adventures of two Mexican children" (Hogan and Yeschko 232), accompanied by Mora's line drawings.

Born in Uruguay to Catalan and French parents, Mora's family immigrated to the East Coast of the US and later studied art in New York and Boston. He eventually took a train West to work as a cowboy at the Donahue Ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley, where he learned the Californio vaquero lifestyle and took time to draw, paint, and photograph the California Missions along El Camino Real (see Hiller "The Life and Times of Jo Mora"). He eventually returned to Arizona to live with the Hopi and Navajo, "learning their languages and documenting their daily lives and sacred ceremonies in drawings, paintings, and photographs" (Living the New Deal). Retired art educator Peter Hiller describes Mora as "a gifted illustrator, painter, writer, cartographer and sculptor" as well as an architect and photographer "who "produced work that often mixed whimsy with honest cultural depictions of the West" ("Jo Mora Remembered"). Mora's talent spanned several decades including the New Deal era, earning him the title of "Renaissance Man of the West" since so few artists were able to support a family "solely through artistic prowess, and rarer still during the Great Depression" (Living the New Deal).

In their second 1938 article, Hogan and Yeschko included the previously discussed *When I was a girl in Mexico* (Godoy 1919) and the now classic picturebook available in English and Spanish editions, *Pérez and Martina: A Puerto Rican Folktale* retold and translated by New York Librarian, Puerto Rican Pura Belpré and illustrated by Carlos Sanchez M. Librarians are well acquainted with Pura Belpré as the first to introduce the Spanish language to the NYC library children's and community outreach programs through dramatic,

oral renditions of her Puerto Rican grandmother's traditional tales using hand-made puppets (Jiménez-García). Children's librarian Betsy Bird and her sister Kate Ramsey of the School Library Journal podcast, Fuse 8 n' Kate note that the text of this title describes Martina as having "soft brown skin," while the accompanying illustrations render it quite pink ("Perez and Martinez"). The two wonder if this was an illustrator or publisher choice. Scholar Marilisa Jiménez-García (2014) adds more context for the illustrations, although not for their colors, noting that Belpre's puppet renditions of the folktale remained faithful to her grandmother's oral tradition and depicted,

> … an 'exceedingly proud' Martina in traditional Spanish dress—black lace shawl, red flamenco dress, and black fan. Sánchez based his illustrations on the puppets built by Belpré. Belpré sewed both a red flamenco dress and a black mourning dress, complete with a pinned-on guitar, for the puppet Martina" (116).

She details that the puppets and the illustrations "suggest Belpré's wish for children to associate Martina with typical Spanish costumes" (116). Unfortunately, I was not able to locate information regarding Martina's skin color nor that provided more depth into the life and work of Carlos Sanchez M.

In 1941, Helen Gamble wrote that "Inter-American co-operation" was the subject of utmost importance" (283) a topic upon which "depends the solidarity of our hemisphere and the efficiency of our defense…" (283). She also noted the necessity of guiding "tomorrow's citizens through books …" (283) to appreciate how, in her view, the future of the democratic way of life in the western hemisphere was dependent on the close cooperation of the United States and Latin America. She believed that the problems of the time had roots in "antiquity" and that US children should delve into "those unique primitive civilizations—Mayan, Incan, Aztec, and Toltec" (283) by studying and re-enacting their legends, folklore, and historical events to come to "a contemporary scene, colorful and vigorous, which clamors for expression and interpretation" (283).

Another Uruguayan American author/illustrator and artist was Antonio Rodolfo Frasconi (1919-2013), the son of Italian parents who left Europe during the first World War and, although born in Argentina, grew up in Montevideo where he studied at Circulo de

Bellas Artes. However, he became bored of copying other artists' work and, at twelve years of age, started working as a printer's apprentice. During his teen years he started producing "left leaning illustrations for publications" ("Artist Spotlight"). Although Frasconi appreciated the work of Doré and Goya, he was most "influenced by an exhibition of French impressionist and post-impressionist works, especially the woodcuts of Paul Gauguin." ("Artist Spotlight"). In 1945 he received a Guggenheim fellowship and studied painting at the Art Students League in the US. He exhibited his work at the Brooklyn Museum a year later and then again at the Santa Barbara Art Museum. During his career, he created individual art pieces and books for artists and children. In fact, Leonard Marcus reports that he illustrated over 100 books. Frasconi's 1956 title, *See and Say: A Picture Book in Four Languages*, written in English, French, Italian, and Spanish came about when he was unable to locate such titles for his own two sons. Children's literature historian Leonard Marcus states that

> Multilingual books for young people have a long but spotty history.… A picture book like Frasconi's however, was quite rare at the time of its publications, and reflected not only the artist's lifelong interest in linguistic and cultural variation but also the postwar internationalist outlook of his editor, Margaret K. McElderry (124).

Frasconi's 1958 bilingual picturebook *The House That Jack Built: La Maison Que Jacques A Batie* in English and French won the 1959 Randolph Caldecott Honor, an award given to the illustrator of the most distinctive picturebook published the year prior from the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). Then in 1962 his bilingual English/ Spanish title, *The Snow and the Sun - La Nieve y el Sol* garnered Horn Book Fanfare recognition. Martin ("Antonio Frasconi, Woodcut Master") reports that Frasconi,

> abhorred art that dwelt on aesthetics at the expense of social problems. He repeatedly addressed war, racism and poverty, and devoted a decade to completing a series of woodcut portraits of people who were tortured and killed under a rightist military dictatorship in his home country, Uruguay, from 1973 to 1985. 'A sort of anger builds in you, so you try to spill it back in your work,' he said in a 1994 interview with *Americas*, a magazine of the Organization of American States.

Although Frasconi's titles were not Latinø-specific, possibly due to his European immigrant heritage, Marcus points out that this artist believed children's literature should show a "broader panorama: the diversity of other people, their culture, their language, etc. That should be the first step in the making of character—respect for other nationalities and the understanding of their cultures." (qtd. in Marcus 346). He claims that Frasconi's forays into multilingual picturebooks were anomalies until the 1970s (124).

3.2.3. 1960s-1970s: The Effects of the Civil Rights and Chicano Movements

Amidst the Civil Rights movement, Nancy Larrick published the seminal article titled, "The All-White World of Children's Literature" in 1965, which became a point of reference and a rally call for the field of children's literature in general. About the same time, the Mississippi Freedom School teachers raised concern about racist portrayals of African Americans in school texts (Social Justice Books), which led to the 1964 founding of the Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) to serve as a resource center for "culturally accurate and respectful books, teaching manuals, films, and lessons." The following year, the CIBC initiated its book review publication titled *Bulletin*, with reports in its 1972 and 1975 issues on the racist, sexist, and colonial representations of Puerto Ricans and Chicanos (respectively) in extant children's books, and noting that these were primarily created by white authors and illustrators. This is interesting despite what Aldama ("*Routledge Concise History*") calls a "renaissance" for adult Latino literature during this same time period, stating,

> many Latino/a authors of the 1960s and 1970s shared a common ground: to affirm and reclaim their heritage. In this moment of renaissance for Latina/o literature as a whole, we see an explosion of forms and themes in novels, short stories, poetry, and drama. It was a period characterized, *grosso modo* [sic], by an impulse to make visible the many present and past cultural and historical heritages that make up the different Latino/a traditions (77).

Yet, such a renaissance did not seem to occur for Latinø-themed children's literature, in part because youth literature, especially

picturebooks, generally lacked the status of adult titles--even children's books with white protagonists written for white readers have "not often been given the same status as literature for adults within academia" which has instead stressed only its "didactic function" (Aguilar 129).

In an interview discussing the evolution of his series "Mini-Libros," Mexican American activist, author, and bilingual education champion Dr. Ernesto Galarza recalled writing a limited edition of his first children's book in Spanish, *Rimas tontas para niños listos* illustrated by Art Schneider for his young daughter in 1942 or 1943 (de Anda 1982). He did not consider publishing similar titles until the late 1960s after learning of bilingual teachers' urgent need for curricular materials. This resulted in 12 Spanish-language titles in the Mini-Libros series published by his own imprint established in San José, California for this purpose, Editorial Almadén. In an oral interview, Galarza stated that he produced these books specifically for "people who were in teaching and who were assigned to teach a bilingual class" (126).

Dr. Galarza believed that children wanted to have fun when reading, rather than only learn about literary techniques—especially younger children, declaring that "I wrote those books in the hopes that those would be a way of appealing—of making the curriculum experiences appealing to the children" (86) and that they would "help young Mexican children to perfect their home language" (121). Hagen (2023) reports that Galarza believed Spanish literacy had to precede English instruction, and so

> [t]ook it upon himself to craft and publish what he called "Mini-Libros," easy-to-read Spanish texts that he designed for use in the classroom and hoped would engage young readers. So as to make students as comfortable as possible, the Mini-Libros even contained vocabulary specific to Mexico and the working-class immigrants coming to the United States at the time.

In all, Galarza wrote five nonfiction titles mostly graced with his own photography and seven poetry books, two of which were illustrated by Vincent P. Rascón, to whom he credits their success[7]. Rascón was a well-known artist who was born in El Paso, TX and received training in the US, Mexico, and Spain. He was "best known for his

expressionistic paintings and works on paper" (College of San Mateo). A longtime professor at the College of San Mateo, he helped found the fine arts department University of Sonora at Hermosillo, Mexico and took students there each summer to learn about the rich culture and fine art of that country. Rascón rendered the mono-toned illustrations in *Poemas parvulos* in black ink lines, some of which he filled strategically with marker-like black pen to give texture to animals like sheep while in others he used color, a warm-earth-toned yellow-orange, for the skin of Mexican/Mexican American protagonists or to highlight other Mexican cultural details like clothing or designs in pottery. Such use of color was common during this time period given the high costs of producing four-colored picturebooks. Rascón's simple illustrations paired well with the larger text font in Galarza's texts for younger readers— extending and expanding on the Mexican cultural references in each poem. As such these titles were a rarity in children's literature in that they were a) written and illustrated by Mexican Americans, b) available in the Spanish language; c) and featured themes and references potentially familiar to Mexican American children. Dr. Galarza planned to sell enough titles to build a library, but by the time he completed and published the first 12 titles, interest in bilingual education had declined and schools were not buying them in sustainable quantities. Thus, he did not publish the remaining six books he created as originally planned. In all, the Mini-Libros series sold about 60,000 copies in 27 states Mexico, Spain, and what was then the U.S.S.R. (Galarza 1982).

In the mid-1970s, educator and scholar Isabel Schon (1940-2011) began faithfully publishing what would become 20 professional books, most of these annotated bibliographies, alongside over 400 research and literary articles during her career ("Isabel Schon, Founder of Renowned Book Resource Center"). She concentrated on titles with Latinø themes from 1976 through early 2009, including a series titled Hispanic Heritage, renamed Latino Heritage in subsequent years, as well as a Mexican and Mexican Americans series, and others on noteworthy and recommended books for Spanish-language titles. Schon's many publications kept educators and librarians informed on new Latinø-themed youth literature, including picturebooks, for educators and librarians.

Despite Schon's efforts, in 1978 the US Commission on Civil Rights still documented the racist practices of schools for children of Mexican descent in the American Southwest, noting their practice of cultural exclusion and the "omission of Mexican American history, heritage, and folklore from the academic curricula" ("*Mexican American Education Study*" xxx). These practices do not "inform either Anglo or Mexican American pupils of the substantial contributions of the Indo-Hispanic culture to the historical development of the Southwest" (30-31). This statement is ironic today, considering recent state legislative action to ban books, curriculum, and courses in schools, libraries, and universities with ethnic themes and histories (Young, Jeremy C., et.al)[8].

A favorable turn for Latinø children's literature during this time period was the start of Children's Book Press (CBP) in 1975 that, in addition to Ernesto Galarza's Editorial Almadén, was one of the first independent US publishers exclusively dedicated to publishing multicultural and bilingual children's literature "by and about people of color" ("Award-Winning Bilingual Books"). Founded by Harriet Rohmer with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Children's Book Press was specifically dedicated to promote the "shared experiences of cultures that have been historically underrepresented or misrepresented in literature for children." ("Award-Winning Bilingual Books"). CPB's first books were folktales and legends from the oral traditions of indigenous people in the Americas. After expanding its editorial division, it produced realistic fiction stories set in the US, poetry collections, and anthologies, and before its acquisition by Lee & Low in 2012, it built an impressive list of notable titles, several of which received one of the three awards detailed below. Today, this imprint maintains Rhomer's original mission and continues to publish picture books "featuring a wide range of diverse cultures, with an emphasis on bilingual English/ Spanish titles" ("Award-Winning Bilingual Books").

3.2.4. 1980 to 2000 Increasing Attention

The 1980s remained a relatively quiet period in the publication of Latinø-themed children's; however, Tiffany Ana Lopez and Phillip Serrato report that some adult literary critics saw this time period as a "chasm between the vibrant movement-based literary production of the 1970s

and the mainstream publication activity of the 1990s" (91). However, they labeled the 1980s as the "Decade of the Hispanic," calling it a critical, vital time for adult titles, as authors were "drawing on past traditions, expanding and breaking boundaries, grappling with definitions of identity and culture, speaking in multiple voices, and writing with a sense of charting new paths." (91) They also state that adult Latinø authors extended conversations started in the 1970s and engaged

> with pressing issues at that cultural forefront of the 1980s, most significantly affirmative action, institutionalized racism, immigration, diasporic identity, the AIDS crisis, the military industrial complex, environmentalism, the war on drugs, economic recession, and the decline of government commitment to programs addressing social inequity. Latino/a literature produced during this moment is characterized by defining itself as a "distinct body of writing with its own literary themes and narrative contours, including Spanglish, code-switching, caló, and other hybrid forms of language" (91-92).

All of this work preceded the subsequent literary boom of the 1990s and helped to establish authors such as Rudolfo Anaya, Sandra Cisneros, and Ana Castillo, among others who first published in smaller, independent presses such as Arte Público Press (founded in 1979) and Editorial Bilingüe/Bilingual Press (founded in 1973). Another small independent press, Cinco Puntos Press was founded by the husband-and-wife team Bobby and Lee Byrd in 1985. This press was situated in Texas near the US border with Mexico and concentrated on publishing stories from Texas, Border, Latinx, and Native life ("Cinco Puntos Press").

Despite the active work of adult Latinø authors in the 1980s, and the scholarly critique of the quality and quantity of similar texts available for children in the 1960s and 1970s, Rosalinda Barrera noted that a renewed, critical attention to the state of multicultural youth literature (including Latinø titles), did not gain momentum until the early 1990s. For instance, in 1992, she wrote,

> One might explain the lack of diversity in the school's literature as unavoidable, given the heavily mainstream nature of contemporary American children's literature (a state of affairs that automatically limits the breadth and depth of any current literature-based programs in this country)" (230).

Barrera continued, stating that such shortcomings were further compounded when the traditional literature and popular culture of a given school's surrounding ethnic communities received "little or no attention in the school's language arts curriculum" (230). She also noted that when these were included, it was only at a "surface" level (e.g., food, flags, fiestas, holidays, dress, and a few historical figures, songs and dances) rather than drawing from their "extensive body of oral and written ethnic literature" (230).

Despite such critiques, the 1990s saw small gains for Latinø-themed children's literature in both quantity and quality of books produced each year, with picturebooks definitely garnering more visibility, a topic woven through the discussion below (Barrera et al. "Poco-a-poco"). These gains occurred, in part, due to the founding of Piñata Books, an imprint of Arté Público Press in 1994, as well as to the establishment of three book awards specifically for this body of books, each with a category specifically for young readers or specifically for illustrations.

The first, the Américas Award, was initiated in 1993 by CLASP, or the Consortium of Latin American Studies Program which today is comprised of 28 post-secondary members and some public schools (Clasp Members 2024). This award was the outreach brainchild of founder, chairperson, coordinator, and ex-officio coordinator, Julie Kline, who recently retired from the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. The Américas Award is intended to "encourage and commend authors, illustrators and publishers who produce quality children's and young adult books that portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the United States, and to provide teachers with recommendations for classroom use" ("World Area Book Awards). It offers up to two annual book awards for and middle/high school readers, together with a commended list of titles. The TeachingBooks website lists 503 distinct titles recognized by this award ("Américas Award, 1993-2024") In 2016, I first reported the wide range of countries, geographic regions, ethnicities, and themes these books represented ("Filling the Gap" 37-39). One important component of this Award is its extensive Commended list, together with its classes and workshops for educators as these allow teachers to "gain an in-depth content knowledge about Latin America/Latin@

heritage, including "multiple voices, multiple perspectives, and a consideration of issues of race, ethnicity, and gender" (Kline).

The second award, the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award was established by a group of educators at Texas State University's College of Education in San Marcos in 1995 "to honor authors and illustrators who create literature that depicts the Mexican American experience" (Tomás Rivera Book Award). It was named in honor of Dr. Tomás Rivera, a distinguished alumnus of the University. Over the years, it "has recognized exceptional work of authors and illustrators of picture books as well as YA novels." (Gainer 109). Gainer also notes that the works represented in this curated collection were, "vetted by educators and scholars of Chicano/a literature who are looking specifically for evidence of how the works reflect the spirit and values of Dr. Rivera identified as vital for Chicano/a literature." (109) These themes include a) remembering, or connecting to the history of the Chicano community, long denied as part of the official school curriculum; b) discovery, which also relates to history "as the active search for meaning and connections of people leads to the discovery of community" (110); c) volition, or agency and the power to realize change as "Rivera was concerned that people who are marginalized and severed from a strong community, often feel alienation and can lose a sense of agency" (110); and finally, community because for Rivera, Chicano/a literature was an act of "self-determination by the community." More specifically, that "through the literature, Chicano/as can define themselves rather than accepting the misrepresentations (or erasure) of the community that abound[s] in mainstream media, official schooling, and texts published by others (110). Like the Américas Book Award, the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award has the goal of getting its award and honor books into the hands of children and their teachers. This is accomplished by providing a space for children to connect to the literature and then share their own work it inspired from studies of the winning authors and illustrators. This takes place alongside award- and honor-winning authors and illustrators each year.

The third award resulted after dedicated Latina librarians Oralia Garza de Cortés and Sandra Ríos Balderrama came together in 1986 "to carve out an inclusive vision for a literary America that included

Latino children's authors and illustrators whose very heritage, and cultural experiences would serve to enrich a multicultural, multilingual society" (Mllawer and Beullens-Maoui 4). They reported that their vision for this award was

> ". . . born from a sense of injustice of the countless stories left unpaged" [and that their] "dogged persistence and determination drove us to right a wrong, to insist that this long overdue literature be published, produced, honored, and recognized, and hold its rightful place in the annals of literary children's history" (Mllawer and Beullens-Maoui eds. 4).

Ten years later, their work resulted in the first Pura Belpré Award presented in 1996, cosponsored by REFORMA (the National Association to Promote Library Services to Children) and ALSC (Association of Library Service to Children, a Division of the American Library Association). Initially a biannual award, it became annual in 2009 and is given to a "Latino or Latina author and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth" (American Library Association) in the categories of youth illustrations and children's narrative, with "children" defined as ages birth to 14 years or approximately eighth grade. In 2021 REFORMA and ALSC partnered with the Young Adult Library Services Association or YALSA (another Division of ALA) to add a young adult narrative category for ages 14-18 years. According to Alicia Long and Sujei Lugo, 41 books and 28 individuals (17 for author and 11 for illustrator) received this award through 2021, statistics that do not include those titles and creators receiving its honor recognition (28), which according to the website TeachingBooks numbers over 100 titles in 2024.

Another important factor in the development of Latinø-themed literature came about through the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison which started documenting the numbers of newly published Latinø-themed books it received to review annually in 1994. Although CCBC counted African American-themed titles since the 1980s, it only started doing so for Latinø books in 1994 because prior to this time there were too few books received for which to keep statistics (Horning, et. al.)[9]. On another front, successful Latinø adult authors and poets such as

Rudolfo Anaya[10], George Ancona[11], Gloria Anzaldúa[12], Gary Soto[13], and Juan Felipe Herrera, to name a few, turned to producing Latinø children's literature during this time, especially picturebooks. For example, photographer George Ancona debuted what became a long career of photo-illustrated, nonfiction titles for children with the monochrome (yellow-black) *Monster's on Wheels* in 1974, followed by *And what do you do?* in 1976 that featured 21 people in action at work. Until the early 1990s, his title covers and interiors remained monochrome black-and-white, yellow-and-black, or blue and black until the late 1980s/early 1990s when technology made it possible to produce his works of spectacular, fully color photos on high-quality, glossy paper as in the title, *Pablo Remembers: The Fiesta Day of the Dead* in 1993. Alamillo and Arenas provide a synopsis of how Ancona described his life work, namely,

> as a journey to find himself, his identity, and his roots. To discover what he had not learned about his heritage while growing up in the United States, he set out upon a search, and in doing so he realized that there must be many children and young adults with the same questions he had about his home culture (53)

Other examples include Juan Felipe Herrera's first bilingual picturebook in 1990, *Calling the Doves/El canto de las palomas*, illustrated by San Francisco artist Elly Simmons and *Hairs/Pelitos,* illustrated by Terry Ybañez from a chapter in Sandra Cisneros' best-selling prose novel, *The House on Mango Street*.

Like many of the authors during this time period, Pat Mora first published poetry books for adults in the 1980s, and then produced her first picturebook based on a true story in the life of Tomás Rivera, *Tomás and the Library Lady* illustrated by Raúl Colón. Originally set to be published in 1989, it did not come out until 1997 due to "illustrator difficulties." She describes Colón's art as presenting a perfect fit with the storyline, which is evident in its many awards such as the 1997 Notable Books for Children by the Smithsonian, the 1998 Teachers' Choices Award from the International Reading Association, the 1998 Américas Award, and the 1998 Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award. Pat has since published well over thirty-five picturebooks in concert with many of the illustrators highlighted below.

One artist of note in the 1990s is David Diaz, whose title *Smoky Night* written by Eve Bunting received the 1995 Caldecott Award--like that of Frasconi thirty-nine years prior. Set in 1992 during the painful community response to the Rodney King police beating in South Los Angeles, and not specifically a Latinø-themed title, this picturebook written by a well-respected white, female US author did promote his career significantly. His "gouache paintings framed by bold borders with intricate photographic collages as backgrounds" yielded relatively flat paintings perfectly matched to "the textured collages; vibrant when the action heats up and softened by the end of the story" (David Diaz).

In 1995, the beloved *Chato's Kitchen* (Soto) was published by a mainstream press, and together with Susan Guevara's illustrations garnered significant scholarly discussion and use in California schools. With its low-riding East LA protagonist, Chato and his homeboy Novio Boy, (both cats), the text and illustrations in this title work seamlessly together to present a comical take on the familiar cats-pursue-and-eat-mice trope, but with a Latinø twist. Here, Guevara's brightly colored, acrylic-on-scratchboard illustrations fill borderless, double-page spreads that bleed through the gutter in the center and allow space for movement across the pages. This visual narrative presents a parallel subplot featuring a bird family, while subtly providing readers with culturally familiar Mexican American icons in ways that both allow its protagonists to move the length of the book—throwing tortillas from the comal to waiting hands to wrap and place in a table warmer—and do not distract readers from the verbal (written) text. A true poet, Soto's spare text manages to convey meaning and tone (humor) masterfully incorporating Spanish terms and phrases in ways that do not insult the Spanish/English bilingual reader while also providing the monolingual English reader with context clues and a glossary to make meaning. For example, the book opens as Chato notices a family of mice moving in next door and of course, tries to welcome them, "'*Órale*, neighbors', Chato purred. 'Don't be scared of me. I'm a cool, low-riding cat.' The mice dropped their things and scattered. 'No, *de veras hombres*. I'm ok,' Chato reassured. But the yard was empty." (Soto). Another ground-breaking work was the bilingual picturebook, *Family pictures/Cuadros de familia*, written and illustrated by Chicana artist Carmen Lomas

Garza in 1997. This autobiographical life story presents short, topical vignettes set in the American Southwest that accompany Garza's flat, colorful art in the folk tradition.

In addition, the brightly colored, whimsical art of educator-artist-activist Maya Christina Gonzalez debuted in the late 1990s with the first of four seasonal, autobiographical picturebook poetry collections written by Francisco X. Alarcón. The first, published in 1997, was *Laughing Tomatoes and Other Spring Poems/Jitomates Risueños y otros poemas de primavera,* which was followed in 1998 by her illustrations in Gloria Anzaldúas' picturebook, *Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y la Llorona*. Gonzalez would go on to illustrate and write/illustrate multiple picture book titles in the following years, most with her signature bright colors and bold lines evocative of Mexican art, flora, and fauna. Likewise, Anita De Lucio Brock's colorful art in Juan Felipe Herrera's 2002 *Grandma and Me at the Flea/ Los meros meros remateros* picturebook did not shy from, or mute in any way, its joyous, loving portrayals of Latino intergenerational families and their communities in the US.

3.3. Twenty-First Century: Building on the Past

3.3.1. 2000-2010: High quality illustrations—colors, shapes, lines, images

Many of the picturebooks discussed above came out just before the 2000 US census data with its revelation that Latinøs comprised 12.5 percent of the total US population--a 50 percent increase since 1990—and had become the country's fastest growing minority group (Guzmán).

The Author examined the Children's Book Center data on Latinø youth literature it received from 1993 to 2010, and used the term lackluster to describe the low average of seventy-three titles CCBC received annually during this seventeen-year time period (2013). She also stated that the sixty-six books published in 2010 represent 05 percent of the 3,400 the CCBC received that year, a percentage that has remained virtually unchanged for quite some time" (47). She noted that scholars of these books found their quality to be "uneven", referring to Naidoo's discussion of how insidious, stereotypic

visual representations still made their way into recently published picturebooks ("Reviewing the Representation"). Yet I found hope in the quality of books produced by and for Latinø youth between 2000-2010, with more of these works receiving high recognition (e.g., starred reviews, awards, etc.) and their themes of joy, humor, and a deep value for family, extended family and community. She also noted the newer trend of recounting historical stories and the lives of important people previously untold, while appreciating the realistic way that Latinø authors and illustrators wove themes of immigration and the border into their stories (57).

During the subsequent early years of the 2000s, Latinø illustrators and authors produced a steady stream of award-winning titles, including Pam Muñoz Ryan's now classic historical fiction intermediate-level chapter book, *Esperanza Rising* in 2000, followed in 2006 by Margarita Engle's free verse biography titled *The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano*, a newer, accessible narrative genre for young adults. Notably, illustrators embraced the colors, humor, religious values, family, and community life of their heritages as evidenced in Mexican American Yuyi Morales' 2003 title, *Just a Minute! A Trickster Tale and Counting Book* and its sequel in 2008 *Just in Case! A Trickster Tale and Spanish Alphabet Book*. Her art was also featured in the award-winning picturebook biography written by Kathleen Krull and published by Harcourt titled *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*, also published in 2003.

Other picturebook biographies produced in the early 2000s came from the prolific Dr. Meg Medina as in, *My Name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz/Me llamo Celia: La vida de Celia Cruz* in 2004 and *Tito Puente: Mambo King/Rey del mambo* in 2013, both illustrated by artist and muralist Rafael López. She also wrote *My Name is Gabito/ Me llamo Gabito: The Life of Gabriel García Marquéz* in 2007 which was illustrated by Raúl Colón, whose illustrations on watercolor paper combined watercolor washes, etching, and colored and litho pencils, giving them a textured look with rich, deep colors ("Raúl Colón").

A few more illustrators whose picturebooks should be recognized here include a) Rudy Gutierrez with his signature horizontal, flowing lines of movement that set the pace in each of his picturebooks; b) Magaly Morales, the sister of Yuyi Morales, who leans into a warm,

sun-drenched color palate and gives verbal (written) texts meaning through loving, circular-shaped children; and c) John Parra's acrylic naïve art style paintings replete with small details and a realistic perspective. He states that his early influences were "Mexican folk art and retablos, the artists such as Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera". ("Meet John Parra"). Likewise, Eric Velasquez's portrait-like oil paintings in *Grandma's Records* and *Grandma's Gift,* published in 2001 and 2010 respectively, provide Latinø children with images of Spanish Harlem and Afro Latinø-Puerto Ricans not commonly included in prior children's picturebooks. All of these author-illustrators' work added to the growing diversity in the visual depiction of Latinøs in picturebooks.

3.3.2. 2010 to 2024: Becoming the Future

The last fourteen years have also seen a continued increase in books received by CCBC and an expansion of Latinø picturebook topics, artistic styles, and even forms such as graphic novels for younger readers, most of which are seeing mainstream press publication. In fact, in 2023 the CCBC received a remarkable number of 410 books about Latinøs (11.7% of the total number received) with 398 of these written and illustrated by Latinøs (11.4%) ("Books by or About"). This is a significant increase since 1994, although still not on pace with the US Latinø population which made up almost one-fifth or 19.5% of the US total population in 2023, and is the second largest group after the non-Hispanic White population ("New Estimates"). Likewise, Regan Postma-Montaño and Jesus Montaño call 2000-2020 a boom during which a "significant number of children's picture books about Latin American poets, writers, and artists were published, most created by Latinx authors and artists" and that these titles presented "transnational connections" that "better reflect the complex multinational lived experiences of diasporic Latinx peoples. (287).

The context for some of this growth can be seen in the 2014 foundation of the nonprofit, grassroots organization *We Need Diverse Books* (WNDB) to "combat systemic racism and oppression by creating a world where everyone can find themselves on the pages of a book." To reach this goal, it "created programs to mentor diverse writers and illustrators, support diverse publishing professionals, and provide

books to classrooms nationwide." ("We Need Diverse Books Official Organization Statement"). In a 2022 interview, WNDB executive director, Caroline Richmond stated that it advocates for "essential changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people" (Costa)[14].

Subsequently, Lee & Low Books, now the largest US publishing company dedicated to multicultural children's literature, together with university scholars, conducted its first of three Diversity Baseline Surveys (DBS1) which revealed what was expected, but until this point had not been statistically established: Nondisabled, white, straight, cis women dominated almost all levels of the publishing industry (e.g., editors, marketers, administrators, etc.) except the highest tier of administration where more nondisabled, straight, white, cis males prevailed. The survey is conducted every four years (2019, 2023), and other than higher numbers of respondents each year with more participation across large publishing houses and independent houses, the numbers have not shifted significantly[15].

During this time period, specific illustrator-authors were quite prolific, one being Duncan Tonatiuh whose first picturebook, *Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin* in 2010 was followed by 11 subsequent titles he wrote and illustrated, with an additional two more he illustrated for other authors. His distinctive art style is influenced by Mixtec indigenous, pre-Columbian-influenced art which matches well with the biographies and folk tales he recounts. Raúl the Third started illustrating for Cathy Camper's Lowrider series. His richly detailed, black-ink drawings given color by Elaine Bay, are infused with rich border culture, humor, and comic forms. He can boast of at least seven picturebooks he has illustrated that represent a range of readers--from baby board books to middle-grade titles. Raúl the Third also contributed to the SpongeBob comics series and created book covers for Jason Reynolds' New York Times bestselling titles, *Stuntboy in the Meantime* and *Stuntboy In-Between Time*. ("Raul the Third").

Sara Palacios describes her artwork in multiple picturebooks as requiring significant research before starting her preferred style of mixing media. In an interview for Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, she said she prefers to paint backgrounds with gouache and acrylic, and then to include cut paper before finally mixing digitally.

Cuban American illustrator Carman Agra Deedy started illustrating picturebooks in the early 1990s, and her portfolio includes at least 15 books (both Latinø-themed titles and otherwise) for young readers. Her oversized *Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale* is available in both English, Spanish, and an audio format and even has its own website. The book is described on Deedy's website as a "sweet and witty retelling of a Cuban folktale" that "delivers a deliciously inventive Cuban version of the beloved Martina folktale, complete with a dash of *café Cubano*" ("Carmen Agra Deedy").

The 2023 artistic and literary production yielded some of the strongest Latinø-themed and Latinø-created youth literature to date across genres, themes, and formats. For example, the graphic novel *Mexikid: A Memoir* by Pedro Martín garnered a 2024 Newberry Honor and two Pura Belpre Awards, one for illustrator and one for the children's author, among many other starred reviews and accolades. The success of this title with its cultural specificity is due in part to the way its humorous, laugh-out-loud narrative is wound through, intertwined even, with detailed, time-period illustrations, and loving family dynamics wrapped into a graphic novel format. This title is a beautiful tribute to the intersectionality of identity, language, and generational status in one Mexican American family and how these are all impacted by the geographical locale where each member was born. Although set in the author's childhood, *Mexikid* reflects the realities of many Mexican American children and their parents today. For one thing, the border in this story is still a metaphorical and physical reality, and secondly, it recounts the common tale of a family summer vacation to visit distant relatives, only for Martín, the trip involved returning to his parent's birthplace in order to bring abuelo to their home in the US.

In the last 14 years, picturebooks created by Latinø artists about Latinøs finally received recognition by mainstream awards, with Yuyi Morales and Juana Medina-Neale receiving Caldecott Honors for their titles, *¡Viva Frida!* in 2015 and *Alma, and How She Got Her Name* in 2019 respectively. Rudy Gutierrez also received a Caldecott honor in 2020 for *Double Bass Blues*, an African American-themed title written by Andrea J. Loney.

CONCLUSIONS

This overview of the history of children's picturebooks with Latinø themes and created by Latinøs reveals several important trends for this body of books and their creators. First, the focal picturebooks in this study have primarily become the products of authors and artists for whom creating children's books is a profession rather than that of established adult authors concerned for children of the 1990s. Second, small, independent presses and grassroots organizations played a crucial role in getting Latinø children's illustrators and authors noticed with most now having opportunities to publish with mainstream presses. However, their presence in the field created opportunities for those that followed, opportunities that did not exist in the twentieth century or the first decade of the twenty-first century. Third, the Latinø children's authors and illustrators of the late 1990s and early 2000s, some of whom have works now part of the elementary literature canon, such as *Esperanza Rising* and *Family Pictures/ Cuadros de familia,* helped start the slow increase of Latinø youth books published annually, especially since 2015. The pressure on publishing companies by educators, librarians, scholars, authors, and illustrators through WNDB, and data from the Cooperative Children's Book Center and the Lee & Low Baseline Surveys did seem to result in greater numbers of Latinø-created books in the 2010s. Other phenomena such as the US Census data, the success of the *Hamilton: An American Musical* created by Puerto Rican Lin-Manuel Miranda, together with Disney's recent movies *Coco*, (Unkrich 2018) and *Encanto* (Bush 2022), and even the growing fandom for Inter Miami soccer team's star player, Argentine Lionel Messi are all contextual factors snowballing to bring visibility to Latinø cultural values, beliefs, language(s), sports, music, and children's Latinø-authored and illustrated picturebooks more visible in the U.S. overall.

In sum, the literary world is recognizing that Latinø children and their families are readers and that this population is not a monolith with familial roots solely from Mexico, Puerto Rico, or Cuba, and that all Latinøs do not speak Spanish the same way or are solely bilingual because they may speak other indigenous language and Spanish variants. Although some of these factors are realities, they are only a small section of the many intersecting identities, histories,

languages, and values of those who are Latinø in the US. In other words, as Latinø-themed and created children's literature titles are continuing to expand beyond the traditional tales first produced by Children's Book Press in the 1970s, and they provide readers with more than a "single story" about US Latinøs and individuals of Latin America, Mexico, and the Caribbean (Adichie 2008). Now young Latinø children can better see their heritages and intersectional identities mirrored in picturebooks across all genres and formats with the range of geographies, professions, strong gender examples, and heroes of Latinøs in the US.

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NOTES

1 In this study, the term multicultural literature references books "about groups of people that are distinguished racially, culturally, linguistically and in other ways from the dominant white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, patriarchal culture" (Cai and Sims Bishop, qtd in Cai 2002).

2 For a thorough discussion and framing of LatCrit theory in education, see Chávez-Moreno, Laura C. "Examining Race in LatCrit: A Systematic Review of Latinx Critical Race Theory in Education." *Review of Educational Research*, Sept. 2023, p. 00346543231192685. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543231192685.

3 In Guatemala, the term limones is used for both limes (green) and lemons (yellow).

4 The term Chicano is an identifier for individuals of Mexican descent born in the United States which gained traction in the 1960s and signifying a sense of pride and hope.

5 It is interesting that Godoy spelled the name of this Aztec King as, "Montezuma", which is an English language rendition (Bowles 2018). Additionally, there were two Mexican leaders with this first name, but she does not indicate which one she references in her text. According to scholar, educator, and young adult author David Bowles (2018), this king is known as Moctezuma in Spanish, and Motēuczōma in Nahuatl (Medium "The Names of the Mexica Kings" https://davidbowles.medium.com/the-names-of-mexica-kings-f8ece74d7e09 Accessed September 5, 2024). Nahuatl scholars James Lockhart in *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians od Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford University Press, 1994) and Stephanie Woods in *Transcending Conquest: Nahua Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2003) confirm Bowles in this matter. Taken together, it is curious that Godoy used this particular spelling and raises the question as to whether it was her choice or that of an editor at Lothrap, Lee, & Shepherd to be more recognizable to young US readers.

6 See Roosevelt, Franklin D. "History Resources: Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, 1936: A Spotlight on a Primary Source." The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. https://www.gilderlehrman.org/

7 As Robert de Anda (2012) points out, two of Galarza's titles were inspired by Mother Goose rhymes, namely, *Poemas párvulos* (1971) and *Más poemas párvulos* (1972); two were his own original nursery rhymes, *Rimas tontas* (1971) and *Chogorrom* (1973); and the other three all presented themes of nature, *Zoo-risa* (1971) and its English edition, *Zoo Fun* (1971), and bilingual Spanish-English, *Poemas pe-que pe-que pe-queñitos: Very, Very Short Nature Poems* (1972). The remaining four texts were nonfiction and included: *Un poco de México* (1972), *Aquí y allá en Californi*a (1971); *Historia verdadera de una gota de miel* (1971), *Historia verdadera de una botella de leche* (1972); and *Todo mundo lee* (1973). Six of these books were intended for younger readers while

the rest were for upper elementary students. All of these works were published by Ernesto Galarza's press, Editorial Almadén.

8 See the American Library Association's Website Page Banned and Challenged Books for a wide range of information and resources on this topic at https://www.ala.org/bbooks.

9 For a full report of statistics on books received for review over time, see CCBC Diversity Statistics, https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/literature-resources/ccbc-diversity-statistics/

10 La Bloga. ("Interview with Rodolfo Anaya." (May 4, 2012). https://labloga.blogspot.com/2012/05/interview-with-rudolfo-anaya.html.

11 George Ancona. (n.d.). "Children's Books: My Story." https://georgeancona.com/about/.

12 See Rebolledo, Tey Diana. "Prietita y El Otro Lado: Gloria Anzaldúa's Literature for Children." *PMLA*, vol. 121, no. 1, 2006, pp. 279–84.

13 Black Warrior Review. "Interviews: 2023 Contest: Interview with Poetry Judge Gary Soto." August 14, 2023. https://bwr.ua.edu/2023-contest-interview-with-poetry-judge-gary-soto/.

14 For more details on the history of WNDB and its work, read Gabriela Costa's December 6, 2022 article "Championing Literature for All Young Readers: We Need Diverse Books on Creating Industry-wide Change" at https://www.abovethetreeline.com/edelvoice-wndb-championing-literature-for-all-young-readers/.

15 For a complete discussion of Lee & Low's Diversity Baseline Surveys, see https://www.leeandlow.com/about-us/the-diversity-baseline-survey