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Decentering Whiteness and Monolingualism in the Reception of Latinx YA Literature

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Abstract: Discussions of multicultural literature often center on the notion of cultural authenticity. Significantly less attention has been paid, however, to how implicit expectations of cultural authenticity shape the reception of Latinx literature. Through analysis of Isabel Quintero's *Gabi: A Girl in Pieces* and an online discussion of its suitability for the Printz Award in the context of changing understandings of the role of Spanish in Latinx YA fiction, this article demonstrates how stakeholders made use of an online forum to contest the presumed centrality of Whiteness and monolingualism to the reading experience.

Keywords: Latinx young adult literature; social media; reviews; online community; critical race theory

Introduction

What can the reception of Isabel Quintero's 2014 YA novel *Gabi: A Girl in Pieces* show us about the discursive practices that frame cultural authenticity in children's literature in traditional book reviews and in newer online spaces? The incorporation of Spanish has long been treated as a cultural marker in reviews of Latinx literature, often with a stress on how it does—or doesn't—lend immediate access to monolingual (implicitly White) readers. This pattern persists in librarian Karyn Silverman's assessment of *Gabi* for the blog *Someday My Printz Will Come*, which is hosted by the *School Library Journal* website and has as its explicit purpose the evaluation of various potential contenders for the American Library Association's Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature. We show how the comments section of this blog serves as a vital, dialogic site for disrupting White-dominant evaluations of cultural authenticity.

Reviews carry considerable weight with librarians, teachers, and other stakeholders, especially when these assessments are published in leading journals such as *Kirkus Reviews* and *School Library Journal*. Traditional print book reviews generally offer a single perspective, one shaped by the constraints and tropes of the genre. Typically less than 250 words in length, these reviews often function as authoritative judgments on the merits of a book and are carefully coded to communicate recommendations regarding implicit audience, purchasing, and collection development. Whereas print reviews are read in magazines and through journal websites or online databases, blog reviews are published only online. They are sometimes sponsored by journals—as is the case in the blog we analyze—but blogs that review books are directly accessible without subscriptions and are less bound by restrictions of length. Even as monologic reviewing practices are still common in journal-sponsored blogging, online posts participate in broader online conversations, often referring to previous posts and exchanges elsewhere online. Further, these blogs explicitly invite readers to respond in the comments, creating space for discussion about the merits of books and the implications of reading and reviewing practices.

Educational research on children's literature and diversity may well inform some reviewers' understanding of cultural authenticity. Elizabeth Howard (1991) framed cultural authenticity as the expression of a universal experience via characters and setting linked to a particular cultural reality. In another influential definition, Kathy Short (2003) described it as the embodiment of a specific cultural group's worldview, accompanied by authenticating details. In these and other approaches to diverse or culturally relevant literatures, the content of a work is frequently taken as the site of authenticity (Cai, 1995; Yoon, Simpson, & Haag, 2010), and there is a tendency to stress the role of cultural insiders' intuition in establishing authenticity (Bishop, 2003; Smolkin & Suina, 1997).

Such understandings of cultural authenticity, however, are often in tension with contemporary theories of cultural repertoires (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003), itineraries of cultural practices (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998; Pennycook, 2010), and figurations of identities in imagined worlds (Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). By figuring cultural authenticity as a dynamic, negotiated reality, these approaches disrupt dominant evaluations that would seek to fix the "right" amount of culture in a work in relation to the needs and desires of a presumed White reader. Reviewers' responses to cultural markers, especially Spanish, position them as real estate, objects with differential property value. This valuation in assessments of novels themselves and in references to the labor required to engage with their narrative worlds. Acts of reading and reviewing have labor value, confer property value on the literature, and have real

consequences for how and to what degree works become visible in classrooms, libraries, curricula, and beyond (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

In what follows, we analyze a reviewer's unexamined expectation that cultural authenticity should appear in ways that are "manageable" for a White readership, and we look at how online commenters intervened and reframed cultural authenticity through a multi-vocal analysis. We show how, in response to Karyn Silverman's online assessment of the novel *Gabi*, librarians, publishers, authors, and professional reviewers joined in a rapid and effective effort to decenter Whiteness as a framework for interpreting the quality and accessibility of cultural content.

Complex Language Negotiation in *Gabi: A Girl in Pieces*

Gabi: A Girl in Pieces presents us with Gabi Hernández's diary of her senior year, which is itself a collage of reflections, rants, recollections, recorded conversations, lists, and poems. Gabi has her sights set on UC Berkeley for college, but she also has to learn how to negotiate between her needs and desires and the expectations of others. Gabi uses her diary to improvise her belonging and to chart a path forward for herself despite dysfunction in her family and upheaval in the lives of her two best friends. Her friend Sebastian has just come out, and their other best friend Cindy is pregnant. Gabi's father is a meth addict and sometime-derelict, her mother becomes pregnant after a brief reunification with him, and her religious aunt alternates between communicating repressive sexual mores to Gabi and conducting her own steamy affair in secret. For many readers, all of this drama indexes connections to the telenovela tradition, a form Quintero thematizes in the novel. Far from repeating *telenovela* drama, however, Quintero mobilizes key tropes to remake and reshape the structure and meaning of the genre.

Even before readers enter the narrative itself, the cover art for *Gabi* (see Figure 1) reflects the novel's emphasis on the significance of improvisation to the work of developing and navigating identities, which include culture, gender, sexuality, and linguistic belonging. The cover's collage of female anatomy bespeaks a willingness to tolerate disjunction: the body parts are out of proportion with one another and "misplaced" by standards of anatomical correctness. The cover also signals Quintero's strategic incorporation of what others might perceive as stereotypes of Mexican American identity (as in the sombrero) as well as elements of everyday experience and youth culture (the bag of Cheetos). The text on the cover foregrounds identity negotiation as a process of ongoing revision. The main title, "Gabi," is followed by three descriptive phrases, the first two of which ("Gordita" and "Fat Girl") are crossed out. The relationship between these terms under erasure reflects Gabi's performance of self-fashioning. Further, it anticipates Quintero's dynamic deployment of Spanish and English, where utterances in neither language are sufficient but become uniquely meaningful through their interplay and tensions.

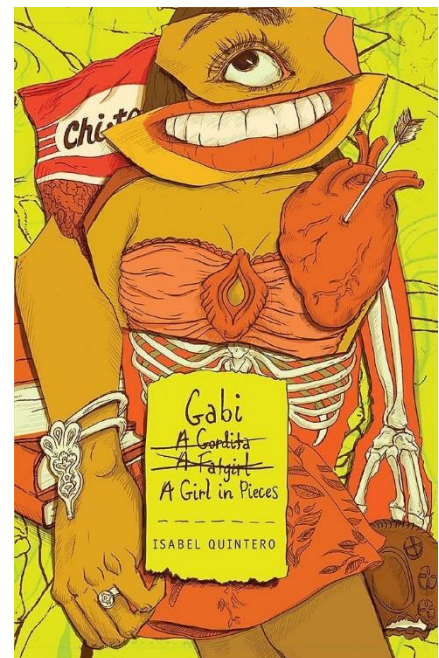


Figure 1: Cover art for *Gabi: A Girl in Pieces* (courtesy of Cinco Puntos Press)

In its strategic improvisations with identity and language, Quintero's novel can be seen as a leap in artistry for young adult Latinx literature. Drawing on work by Doris Sommer (1994), Allison Fagan (2012), and Lourdes Torres (2007), we position *Gabi* on a hypothetical spectrum from “cushioned” to “radical” incorporation of Spanish. (See *Figure 2*.)



Figure 2: Spectrum of Spanish incorporation in young adult fiction

Until recently, most YA has occupied the territory of “cushioned” or “contextualized” inclusion, with relatively little challenge for monolingual readers of English. *Gabi* pushes the horizons of possibility outward. Quintero mobilizes language in multiple ways, and she does so to considerable stylistic and thematic effect. How and when Spanish is used relates to the novel’s broader engagement with identity as strategic improvisation. Languages and cultures are shown to be plural, complex in their interactions, and often in tension with one another. Stylistic dimensions of Spanish incorporation can be seen, for example, in how Spanish is not directly translated but plays powerfully off Gabi’s use of English. Quintero also uses English and Spanish to generate poetic and emotional specificity in the novel.

Similarly, the cultural identity Gabi enacts is connected to her Mexican American heritage through language and practices that do not simply “add something” to her identity or function as objects to be shifted from here to there. Indeed, with the benefit of Cinco Puntos Press’s cultural commitments, Quintero deftly portrays Spanish as an integral and dynamic part of Gabi’s identity, never reducing language to a cultural “additive” (see Martínez-Roldán, 2017). Instead, Gabi’s language and cultural repertoires are entangled and remade as she moves across spaces including school, home, a slam poetry venue, and favorite diners. Language and culture create possibilities that Gabi draws on as she refashions herself as both a writer and a woman. From the start of the novel, the reader is invited to recognize the negotiations, playful and serious, that attend Gabi’s movements between Spanish and English and among a range of registers. Spanish is not italicized, translated in the narration, or glossed at the back of the book.

Even in instances where the novel’s text takes up the same concerns in English and in Spanish, what we see is counterpoint and subtle contrast, not a duplication of content in the two

languages. For example, in one passage the phrase “andar de locas” [run wild, run crazy] is juxtaposed with the far more graphic “have wild monkey sex” (p. 232). Throughout the book, Gabi’s mother issues warnings and reprimands in Spanish (e.g., “ojos abiertos, piernas cerradas” [eyes open, legs closed], p. 77), whereas Gabi drafts her private list of “Questions I Would Like to Ask My Mother But Am Afraid To” in English (p. 141). In these instances, Spanish emerges as the language of euphemism and decorum whereas English is the language of extroversion and directness. Yet the possibilities of both languages remain mobile, kept in play by Gabi’s prose and her own ongoing negotiations.

On other occasions, Spanish serves as a source of poetic and emotional specificity. This is evident in the affective landscape of Gabi’s favorite foods, which she mentally traverses after a disappointing trip across the border: “I wanted a hamburger. Double scoop of coconut pineapple and Rocky Road. Hot Cheetos with lemon and hot sauce. A huge dark chocolate bar. A carne asada taco o torta o las dos cosas” (p. 224). Here, “a huge dark chocolate bar” occupies space alongside a “carne asada taco,” yet the movement is clearly toward Spanish as the space of emotional expansiveness, where the need to choose (“o” [or]) resolves into the possibility of having both (“las dos cosas” [the two of them]). Spanish also appears as a marker of emotional immediacy when Gabi discovers her father, dead: we read, “I knelt next to my dad and shook him. My father. My papi. But he was gone” (p. 151). Here, the movement from “dad” to “father” to “papi” performs Gabi’s longing for a now irretrievable intimacy. In the world of the novel, “Papi” does not index “Mexicanness” but rather the particularity of a relationship that, because of her father’s addiction, Gabi has begun mourning long before his actual death.

Our understanding of the novel deepens and shifts when we attend to how Spanish functions in the cultural and affective world of the novel as well as in its stylistic dimensions. As we’ve briefly illustrated, in *Gabi: A Girl in Pieces*, Spanish is embedded, unglossed, unitalicized, and uncolonized. Quintero’s use of Spanish reflects relational complexity and the role of language in negotiating relationships, and it produces poetic specificity and traces itineraries of emotion. This deployment of Spanish contributes to the novel’s key thematic engagement with the cultural, familial, and societal disjunctures and continuities that Gabi grapples with as she makes and remakes herself as a young Latina.

Framing Spanish and Cultural Authenticity in Reviews of Latinx YA

Now that we have briefly examined a selection of the sophisticated language negotiations in the novel, we can turn to the question of how these negotiations are understood and evaluated in book reviews and in conversations about which books merit award recognition and why. Implicit expectations and evaluations of cultural authenticity frequently appear in both print and online reviews of YA fiction. When Spanish is mentioned, it is generally talked about as a marker of cultural authenticity. To better understand both the blind spots and insights revealed in the *School Library Journal* blog reviewer’s evaluation of *Gabi*, it is useful to engage briefly with how Spanish language has been framed in reviews of YA literature in years past. Through analysis of reviews excerpted below and many others, we identify three critical questions that are implicitly asked and answered by monolingual English reviewers in terms of their comfort, knowledge, and history of reviewing: What quantity of cultural content is acceptable? Who does the labor? Whose references and discourses are validated?

The following citations from works of YA literature that incorporate Spanish highlight the persistence of certain tropes in reviews across several decades, with phrases that are especially relevant to our discussion marked in bold:

In 1993: “the narrative is **sprinkled** with Spanish words and idioms, defined at the back--**excellent flavoring** but, for many, **extra work**.” (review of *Local News* by Gary Soto)

In 2001: “Vivid, poetic language **liberally spiced** with Spanish” (review of *A Small Goodness* by Tony Johnston)

In 2012: “Spanish and Spanglish words and phrases **sprinkled** throughout the text so **seamlessly** that a glossary would be moot.” (review of *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano* by Sonia Manzano)

In 2015: “Older’s **comfortable** prose **seamlessly** blends English and Spanish.” (review of *Shadowshaper* by Daniel José Older)¹

There is a clear tendency to treat language as a static cultural object, one that is an additive to the narrative rather than integral to it. This is especially apparent in the culinary lingo: “flavoring,” “spice,” and “sprinkled.” These presentations of Spanish as (merely) supplemental call to mind daily dietary recommendations and limits. Enough? Too much? According to whose reading experience and desire are these norms set? Martínez-Roldán (2017) notes how the targeted inclusion of very limited (even “mock”) Spanish may reflect a misguided or cynical attempt at “inclusion” on the part of publishers interested in market expansion, yet Latinx or multilingual readers rarely seem to be the audience of concern in the reviews of YA literature.

Instead, reviews typically frame the presence of non-English language as a source of labor, challenge, and potential discomfort for monolingual English speakers. Consider that mention of “extra work” in the early review of Gary Soto’s *Local News*. More recently, reviewers reflect this concern by implicitly reassuring monolingual English readers that they won’t have to work too hard, as signaled by terms such as “seamless” and “comfortable.” In the terms of critical race theory analyses of ownership and property value, Spanish in YA literature may be read as a problematic form of property: it takes up cognitive and imaginative space yet cannot be wholly owned by the monolingual reader. The language is half someone else’s, and—from a Bakhtinian perspective—it always will be (Bakhtin, 1990). But White dominant reviewers’ sense of lack, of having to work harder, and of not fully “getting” the content, leads to facile equations according to which legible cultural authenticity depends on sufficient—but not “excessive”—language placement and quantity. Such a crude calculus misses the literary and linguistic complexity of works like *Gabi*.

Complex Language Negotiation Dismissed as a “Design Flaw”

Nowhere is this limitation more evident than in Karyn Silverman’s review of *Gabi* in a post for *Someday My Printz Will Come*, a blog hosted on the *School Library Journal* website in the months leading up to the American Library Association’s announcement of the Michael L.

¹ All excerpted from *Kirkus Reviews*. Open access makes *Kirkus* reviews especially visible in online communities. Similar rhetoric and patterns are visible in *School Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *HornBook*, and other reviewing outlets important to school and library markets.

Printz award committee's selection of a winner and honor books. Here, as in other *School Library Journal* mock award sites like *Heavy Medal* for the Newbery, librarian authors attempt to replicate the debate and dynamics of a committee discussion of award nominees. Like other books brought forward for serious consideration, *Gabi* could be seen as occupying valuable real estate on the final contenders' table. And in her role as curator of this vetting process, Karyn Silverman's discussion of "flaws" in *Gabi* reflects an implicit goal of "disqualifying" it as a contender for the Printz. Whereas her discussion of other books focuses on their strengths as a means of justifying their continued place on the Printz committee table, her discussion of *Gabi* is clearly oriented around the notion that it should not be considered for the American Library Association's literary award for excellence in young adult literature. It may be helpful to note that Silverman's review of *Gabi* was part of a longer post focused on books that had been named as finalists for the William C. Morris YA Debut Award (another ALA award). A slightly abridged version of the relevant portion of Silverman's post on *Gabi* follows, with portions most relevant to the discussion at hand placed in bold.

Gabi definitely wins the popularity vote, at least as far as critics and librarians go. **It was cheerleading from you all that brought it to our attention initially**, and then it snagged [four starred reviews](#) and made at least three year-end reviews based on the [last big data collection](#) I did.

And I really respect the people who are raving about this book.

I really respect this book, too. I think it's bold and has a fantastic voice and **it's really important. But important is not the same as Printz worthy**, and a strong debut that fulfills the [Morris criteria](#) may not live up to the Printz expectations.

Which about sums up how I would classify this one: a great Morris, but an unlikely Printz.

My first peeve is mild from a writing perspective — **no glossary. I don't speak Spanish**. True to *Gabi*'s character, she peppers her journal with Spanish, especially when she is recording things her mother has said. The context sometimes gives the non-Spanish-speaking reader the gist of the statement, and occasionally the actual meaning, but **sometimes the words are just there without quite enough context**. Given that these are also conversations that are important (that word again, I know) — about women and body image and expectations — **this was frustrating**. By itself, looked at as part of the writing, I don't think this is a fair reason to knock the book down — again, the voice is great and this is a consistent and accurate detail for the voice. But **the lack of a backmatter glossary does strike me as a significant design flaw**, and it's really a shame.

My second issue is a bigger one. **This book is just crowded**. Two pregnant teens, an addict dad and a pregnant/single mom, rape, coming out — yes, all of this is life, it's all going on around us, but the way in which *Gabi* is this still point amidst a veritable playbook of teen issues seemed artificial. It was **too much like a telenovela**, a point *Gabi* makes, but **I'm not sure calling out the flaw in the text mitigates it sufficiently**. It meant that the emotional beats don't always get a chance to finish reverberating [...]

But, again, the VOICE. [...] **The voice is fantastic, and one we don't hear enough**. I completely believe *Gabi*'s growing understanding of herself as a

woman and specifically herself as a woman in the particular context of her Mexican-American identity and community. For the voice alone, this definitely deserves the Morris recognition, but I just don't believe the voice counterbalances the plot issues enough to make this a real contender for the Printz.

Silverman's assessment of *Gabi* might be summed up in the phrase "important is not the same as Printz worthy." She offers two main reasons for disfavoring *Gabi* as a Printz contender. First, "no glossary." Second, "This book is just crowded... too much like a telenovela." Although both of these objections merit closer attention, we focus on Silverman's first objection because our primary interest is in language mobilization—and because commenters who responded to the blog entry also centered their attention most on the assumption that a glossary was needed. Mounting a multi-vocal challenge that unfolded in response to Silverman's post, participants writing in the comments intervene on *Gabi*'s behalf and decenter longstanding assumptions about how Spanish should be written—and read—in literature for young adults.

As *Figure 3* shows, there was an impassioned response to Silverman's post. With more than thirty comments, this post garnered about ten times the typical reader engagement for posts on the blog.

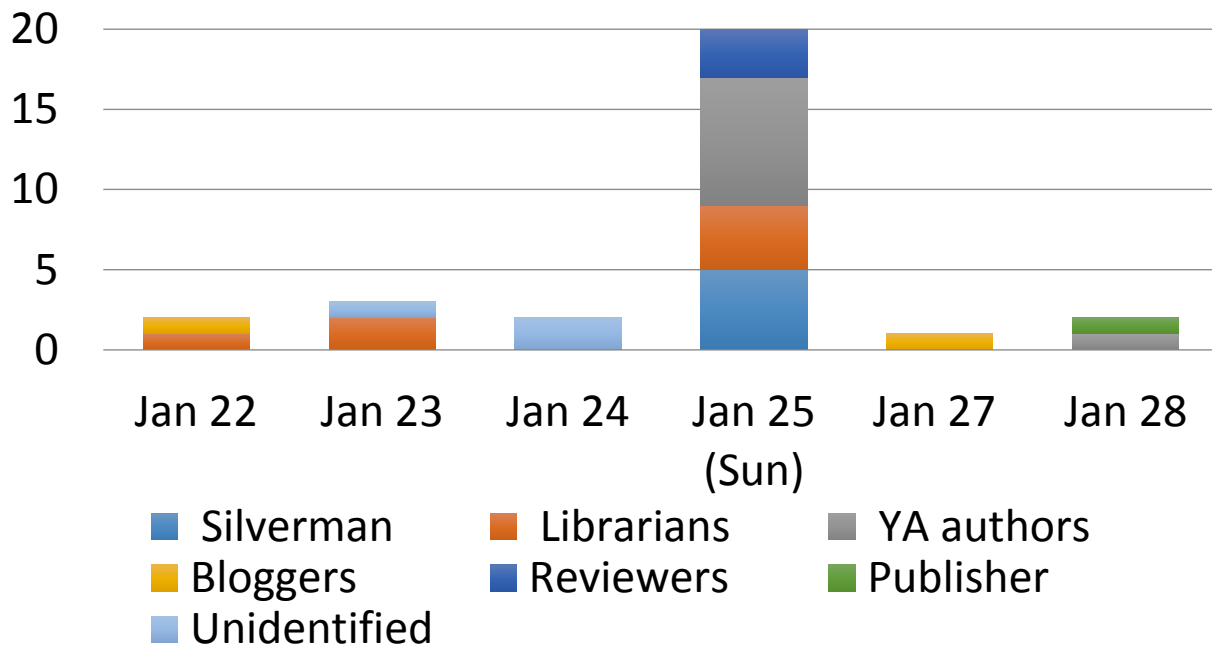


Figure 3: Pattern of engagement in commenting on Silverman's post

Among the participants were five youth services librarians, six YA authors (Carrie Mesrobian, Zoraida Cordova, Rene Saldaña, Laura Ruby, Ashley Hope Pérez, and Malinda Lo), four bloggers, two professional reviewers (Leila Roy of *Kirkus* and Kelly Jensen, editor and reviewer for BookRiot.com), and one publisher (Quintero's publisher, John Byrd, of Cinco Puntos Press). The majority of comments on the post focused on Silverman's blindspots with regard to language and cultural repertoires in the novel. On this point, Richard Ruiz's (1984, 2010) path-shaping analysis of language orientations is especially apt (see Faltis & Smith, 2016; Ullman, 2016).

Whereas Silverman positioned language as a problem to be managed, a number of commenters on the blog figured language as a right and a resource. Their responses object to Silverman's framing of Spanish as a cultural object to be contained and managed and instead position language as plural in its functions, reflective of varied voices rather than a marker of specific content. These commenters collaborate to construct an understanding of culture as entanglement, experience, and journey. Taken together, the comments achieve a powerful critique of White hegemony and of the microaggressive gestures by which it becomes present in the discursive space of reviewing.

Dialogizing and Decentering Whiteness and Monolingualism

In contesting Silverman's analysis, commenters offered alternatives to her presumption of a monolingual, monocultural white readership. As author Laura Ruby noted, "translating the Spanish in the text would have felt clunky and artificial, provided only (and obviously) for the benefit of non-Spanish speaking people." Others stressed the importance of privileging the needs and desires of Latinx readerships for a change: "a glossary... would mark it too much as a book made for non-Spanish-speakers" and would diminish the possibility of a young Latina reader enjoying the "feeling like Quintero... wrote it just for her." Author Carrie Mesrobian drew attention to the differing standards for what constitutes "too much work" for adolescent readers: "John Green can blather about mathematical infinities and labyrinths of suffering and that is apparently no sweat for our theoretical readers? They can swallow that but can't be arsed to do a translation search?"

Several commenters positioned the assumption of a white readership as part of a pervasive history of inequity whereby children from minoritized communities are called upon to do the labor of entering "universal" White narratives even as reviewers like Silverman balk at making comparable efforts to enter worlds marked by other cultural itineraries. Participants also stressed the need to consider teens' views of diversity and hybridity. As some commenters observed, teens may have a substantially more cosmopolitan understanding of cultural contact, difference, and human possibility than adult reviewers imagine (Campano & Ghiso, 2011). One commenter noted that "even teens who don't speak Spanish are growing up around it" (kelly); another highlighted the accessibility of online tools and other resources for navigating the presence of Spanish in the texts.

Occupying Online Space, Evolving Assessments, and the Question of "Civility"

Responses to Silverman's dismissal of *Gabi* accumulated energy as participants refined and extended each other's positions in a collaborative rhetorical performance. Below, we abridge one interaction between commenters to illustrate this dynamic:

"Asking for a glossary is hegemony, plain and simple. Utterly unsurprising, but problematic and microaggressive all the same" (mclicious)

"This is the problem I have with the way people review or look at books that are already considered 'Other.'" (zoraida)

"Z, white people falling in love is UNIVERSAL. Brown people being in love is niche. Brown people go to prison." (mclicious)

Here, zoraida (Zoraida Córdova) and mclicious (Hannah Gómez) critique reviewing practices that treat non-White experiences as “Other.” As this exchange illustrates, conversation in the comments was not simply—or even primarily—about dialogue with the original poster. Instead, Silverman was able to “listen in” on a mutually supportive dialogue in a public space.

Decentering Whiteness can be fun, collective, and effective, and there is an energetic and even joyous character to the shared work taken on in the comments. Yet, for the original author whose post serves as the catalyst for this critique, the call to shift perspectives entails a potentially painful reckoning with unacknowledged privilege.

Even as Silverman remains protective of her initial perspective, her responses to these comments show a distinct evolution in her stance on language in *Gabi*, as shown in the following excerpts from Silverman’s original post and in her participation in the discussion:

1/21/15 (original post): the lack of a backmatter glossary [is] a significant *design* flaw”

1/25/15 10:18 am: “glossary would...open the book up to readers who need a little handholding”

1/25/15 10:25 am: “if I have to go explicitly outside the book to Google to understand the book, it can be argued as a flaw”

1/25/15 2:54 pm: “the glossary question was ever only a minor issue... I wanted a book this good to be readable by as wide an audience as possible.”

1/25/15 9:00 pm: “I did not understand that glossaries were a politicized inclusion and therefore that asking for one was by extension political.”

After first insisting that the absence of a glossary is a significant design flaw, Silverman shifts to framing the possible benefits of a glossary, then to asserting that “the glossary question was ever only a minor issue.” She finally acknowledges that “glossaries [are] a politicized inclusion and therefore that asking for one [is] by extension political.” At the same time, in apologizing “for any discomfort or pain” she may have caused and stressing her position as a forward-thinking and engaged professional (“I take my charge as an educator very seriously, and I work with a widely diverse population”), Silverman reasserts her right to be understood, viewed as sympathetic, and protected from discomfort. Further, her final gesture of thanks to “those who engaged thoughtfully with me” implicitly figures some commenters as outside the bounds of civil discourse. We suspect that she refers to commenters who openly stated that her review included unexamined aggressions, as seen in the exchanges between zoraida and mclicious. By stressing her right to be comforted as a reader and reviewer, Silverman attempts to reassert Whiteness and attendant sensibilities as authoritative. Her response reflects how, in the words of Kelly and Thiranagama (2017), “civility can be deeply enmeshed in forms of exclusion,” especially since “what counts as civil behavior has historically favored white, bourgeois, male, and heterosexual ways of being in the world.” With her implicit critique of those whose engagement was not “thoughtful,” Silverman reflects the tendency to demand civility when efforts to challenge White hegemony are perceived as too bold, whether that demand comes in an online blog space or in response to live protests (Itagaki, 2016).

Conclusion

Online dialogic spaces can accelerate important conversations about diversity. In particular, responses to Silverman’s post challenged the framing of culture as a quantifiable

substance that is either too much or not enough. Commenters articulated a contrasting understanding of culture as *lived* itineraries of experience. As part of a much broader conversation, this exchange contributed to increased attention to the demographics and positioning of reviewers. Author Malinda Lo's compelling four-part essay, "Perceptions of Diversity in Book Reviews" extends and elaborates key points from the Silverman discussion, in which Lo participated, and she has noted the importance of this conversation in catalyzing that series (personal correspondence, March 27, 2016). Lo's online intervention in turn prompted an extensive response by *Kirkus Reviews* children's and YA review editor, Vicky Smith (2015). In recent months, as these conversations have continued to gain momentum, both *School Library Journal* and *Booklist* have solicited new applications from potential reviewers with an explicit goal of diversifying the reviewing pool, which currently include only minimal (6%) representation of Latinx reviewers (Lee & Low, 2015). These concerted online conversations have led to changes that we hope will alter the possibilities of legibility and reception for books like *Gabi*.

Online spaces make possible forms of response that differ substantively from what has traditionally resulted from published book reviews. The dynamic exchanges in response to the Silverman post on *Gabi* highlight how broader impacts can unfold from specific contributions and dialogue. Commenters stressed the different forms of labor required to sense, desire, and *belong* through the language—or *languages*—of one's home and everyday worlds. In their collaborative theorizing, they insisted on prioritizing cultural *resonance* over ease of access for monolingual readers. Readers and reviewers unaccustomed to the labor of multilingual belonging may initially experience this shift as a disconcerting dislocation from their position of linguistic privilege. Nevertheless, the vibrant discourses around diversity in children's literature challenge stakeholders of all backgrounds to take up the work of refiguring our shared world of reading and reviewing. Given the centrality of improvisation, play, and self-fashioning in Quintero's *Gabi: A Girl in Pieces*, it is especially fitting that participants took hold of a dismissive assessment of the novel and transformed it into an opportunity to embrace expansive engagements with narrative, discourse, and the world.

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