

**Rates of U.S. Latin Poetry Titles at the Four Senior C.U.N.Y. College Libraries that Service
M.F.A. in Creative Writing Students**

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U.S. Latino Poetry

The interchangeability of English and Spanish in verse is employed by U.S. Latino Poets as a literal representation of their bilingual identity. Also known as code-switching, it “serves to legitimize the much-maligned practice of mixing codes in vernacular speech” and is “not only metaphorical, but represents a reality where segments of the population are living between cultures and languages” (Torres, 2007, 75). U.S. Latino Poets find themselves between modes; forced to tread water in American Straits until lingual allegiance is determined, they use English and Spanish interchangeably, sometimes simultaneously, despite the risks of losing monolingual, American readers. However, their vernacular reality is neither completely English nor solamente Spanish, so code-switching abounds.

While many monolingual American readers can cope with having to construct a context from words they don't know (in a language they don't speak); many more readers avoid this lector scenario by shying completely away from the works of U.S. Latino Poets. Ultimately, both sides lose out because the poetry produced by U.S. Latino Poets is an important U.S. artifact, and monolingual, American readers as well need to engage with U.S. Poetry as a whole if it is to survive. But, U.S. Latino Poetry seems to stand in opposition to wholesale lingual assimilation. It almost seeks the nuance of English talked in Spanish, or the Spanishization of an English-language adage. U.S. Latino Poetry seeks the liminal and intermittent—the threshold where one language stops and another language sizzles.

Luckily, U.S. Latino Poetry is eminently pluralistic, engendering a cultural curiosity and respect almost by default; it is also sonorous, complex, and singular—you can't really mistake the register. Perhaps the most interesting thing about U.S. Latino Poetry is that it is either a record of the degeneration of Standard American English, or the prototype for a new American

dialect, like Spanglish. Regardless, “The Conference on the Relation between English and Foreign Languages in the Academy, held at New York University in April, 2002...urged a recognition that Spanish is in fact the United States’ second national language” (Castillo, 2005, 190). In *Redreaming America: Toward a Bilingual American Culture*, Debra A. Castillo (2005) concludes with an appeal for the invention of a new discipline, Hemispheric American Studies, possibly as a means to study the literary works of U.S. Latinos.

The Importancia of Code-Switching

In *Redreaming America*, Castillo affirms that “The context determines the language,” (2005, 187) and her tenet is the basic operating principle behind the thousands of poems produced by U.S. Latino Poets. This means that they pluck “material” for their poems from two distinct cultural pools, while at the same time realizing the cultural singularity of certain events, rites of passage, and celebrations. In other words, how do you translate “homecoming queen” into Spanish? What is the English equivalent of a Cuban *quiciniera*, or an Argentine *asado*? Code-switching is situational because it relies on who is doing the talking and who is doing the listening. But there are a slew of other criteria (status, education, age) that affect the propensity of U.S. Latino Poets to use code-switching. However, if U.S. Latino Poets wish to optimize the amount of readers they reach, it might prove prudent to stick to English.

Maybe code-switching is the way in which U.S. Latino Poets have learned to anchor their readers to the page, or maybe, “The use of vernacular becomes critical for the writer who attempts to construct an image of a cultural group and to reach out to that specific readership” (1995, Mendieta-Lombardo & Cintron, 565). Regardless, code-switching allows U.S. Latino Poets to maximize their freedom of textual expression; it also redefines poets as “creative actor[s]” who use code-switching as a, “linguistic/literary device to accomplish an end, for

instance, to engage the reader/audience in a culturally significant or culturally intimate way” (1995, Mendieta-Lombardo & Cintron, 567). The controversy surrounding code-switching involves the lingual chauvinism inherit in both camps, but is complicated by the insistence on English in schools and other public spheres.

Historically, Spanish-speaking immigrants that come to the U.S. have had to learn English because their success as new Americans depended on it. However, the children of Spanish-speaking immigrants have a radically different relationship with English. The children of Spanish-speaking immigrants have grown up speaking English at school, and *hablando* Spanish at home. To call the children of Spanish-speaking immigrants bicultural only scratches the surface; they are not only bicultural and bilingual, in their own special way they are bicerebral, employing two distinct brains. In addition, they have managed to sidestep associating self-worth with English acquisition because they have been acquiring English steadily since birth, regardless of whether or not Spanish is spoken at home. In other words, U. S. Latino Poetry has made it possible for Americans, whose first language is not English, to disassociate their feelings of worth with their level of English proficiency, and enjoy the literature produced by members of their community.

While there are myriad reasons why a U.S. Latino Poet might choose to employ code-switching, in “Metalinguistic References in a Spanish/English Corpus” Laura Callahan delineates the major motives behind code-switching. Callahan believes that there are predominantly two reasons why Latino authors choose to employ code-switching: “linguistic competence and language choice” (Callahan, 2001, 417). This means that in the thirty texts that she studied “explicit mention is made of a character’s ability to speak, read, or write Spanish or English, or to the fact that a particular language is being spoken or ought to be spoken”

(Callahan, 2001, 417). In addition, Callahan discusses four motives within “linguistic competence and language choice” that explain the rationale behind code-switching,

These two categories can be further subdivided into the themes mentioned above: heritage language loss, the use of Spanish at school and work, speaking Spanish as an ethnic marker, intergenerational use, and attitudes toward different varieties of Spanish. (Callahan, 2001, 418).

Etiology of U.S. Creative Writing Programs

In "The Lesson of Creative Writing's History" (1994) D.G. Meyers writes that there are "two distinct ways to account for a literary text". Meyers believes that you can account for a literary text as "determined" or "created" (1994, par.1); according to Meyers, the literary scholar chooses to look at literary texts as finished and "determined"; writers choose to examine and treat all textual artifacts as "created" (1994, par.1). Therefore, the "larger impersonal forces" that the writer must have dealt with are of less importance to the writer, than the literary scholar (Meyer, 1994, par.1). This particular truth informs the history and methodology of creative writing programs in the U.S. In addition, Meyers believes that "What is now called creative writing is a historical effort to treat literature as a creative activity rather than an object for interpretation"(1994, par.2).

U.S. Creative Writing programs operate under the premise that the production of Literature is a biological necessity. The pedagogy is geared towards the production of a book-length manuscript that students have tussled with for the past two to three years. Creative writing programs are writer factories; they prompt burgeoning writers to create oeuvres that are important, despite the propensity to be derivative or borrow ignominiously. The instruction is heavy on technique; Creative Writing necessarily aligns itself with Aesthetics. The aesthetics of a piece is exercised in "workshop" classes where a professor facilitates peer feedback of a work

(whose author is known or anonymous). Students in Creative Writing programs are encouraged to develop a style and a language of their own, and many go on to publish heavily and establish themselves as writers. But, there are just as many professional writers that don't pass through M.F.A. programs and are still able to make an honest buck from writing.

In many respects, creative writing "owes its existence to an anti-scholarly animus that was originally directed against philology" (Meyer, 1994, par.2) so it is no surprise that historically, "Creative writing in fact evolved out of the genre of English composition that was taught at Harvard starting in the 1880s, and it reached its maturity at Iowa in the 1930s when it was installed in the curriculum of a graduate school of criticism"(Meyer, 1994, par.5). Creative Writing was "professionalized" about thirty years later (Meyer, 1994, par.6); in 1967, the Association of Writers and Writing Programs was established at George Mason University to aid in the intent and direction of U.S. Creative Writing programs, a journal, the *AWP Chronicle* was created a year later. While it might be difficult to establish the number of Creative Writing programs that offered M.F.A.'s in 1967, by 1975 there were 15 ("About AWP", 2009). This means that either the Association of Writers and Writing Programs and the *AWP Chronicle* were ahead of the trend, or that they helped to create it.

According to the Association of Writers and Writing Program's website, there are currently 822 Creative Writing programs in the United States ("About AWP", 2009). That figure represents the spectrum of institutions: from those that grant A.A.s, to those that grant B.F.A.'s or B.A.'s, to those institutions that grant PhDs in Creative Writing. However, the bulk of the number, 318, represents programs which offer creative writing as a minor with a B.A. or B.S. ("About AWP", 2009) Maybe Creative Writing is not a marketable degree, or one that might prove practical—pragmatic. If the bulk of Creative Writing Programs in the U.S. service students

who only wish to “minor” in Creative Writing that does not necessarily speak to the viability of that discipline, does it? However, in 2009, there were 159 programs that offered a B.F.A. or B.A. in Creative Writing (“About AWP”, 2009); this is roughly half of how many “minor” programs there are in the U.S., which at least suggests a vibrant future and trajectory for Creative Writing as a program of academic rigor. With the advances and gains that Latinos have made in education, it would be foolish not to assume that many Latinos will want to pursue careers as professional scribes.

The numbers of M.F.A. programs in the U.S. have pretty much doubled every ten years from 1975 to 2009. To begin, in 1975, there were only 15 programs that offered an M.F.A. in Creative Writing and only 5 PhD programs in the whole country; in 1975 there were 15 but by 1984 there were 31 programs that offered an M.F.A. in Creative Writing (“About AWP”, 2009). By 1994 there were 64 programs nationwide. The latter part of the 1990’s slowed the growth of programs nominally because by 2004 there were only 109, not quite double the 1984 figure (“2009, About AWP”). Overall, in 2009, there were 153 programs nationwide that granted Masters of Fine Arts degrees in Creative Writing, and 37 programs that offered PhD’s. Even though we won’t know until 2014 if the trend has stuck, from 2004 to 2009, there were an additional 44 Creative Writing programs created in the United States which makes the projection a conservative inference (“About AWP”, 2009).

The important thing to realize is that demand for programs in Creative Writing show no signs of abating; in fact, demand will likely grow as the idea of obtaining an M.F.A. becomes a more practical academic decision. For example, Daniel Pink, “A contributing editor at Wired magazine and former chief speechwriter for Vice President Al Gore” believes that the new Master’s in Business Administration degree is the Master in Fine Arts degree because the M.F.A.

underscores “abilities that matter most...[abilities]...we’ve often overlooked and undervalued: artistry, empathy, seeing the big picture.” (Pink, 2005). If the C.U.N.Y. wishes to reap the benefits of a renewed interest in M.F.A.programs, then it must ensure that there is a diverse cross-section of titles available for their perusal. An M.F.A. program without an adequate collection is not only a disservice to the students, but to the faculty as well who must continue to publish and conduct research. And it doesn’t prepare the program for what Pink calls “The Coming Right-Brain Economy”.

Table: Growth of U.S. Creative Writing Programs

Year	A.A.	B.A./B.S. minor	B.F.A./B.A. major	M.A.	M.F.A.	PhD	Total
2009	11	318	159	144	153	37	822
2004	7	320	86	154	109	39	715
1994	5	287	10	139	64	29	534
1984	0	155	10	99	31	20	315
1975	0	24	3	32	15	5	79

M.F.A. from One of the C.U.N.Y.’s

Of 153 Creative Writing programs in the U.S., four belong to the City University of New York system. The four schools which award M.F.A.’s in Creative Writing are Hunter, City College, Brooklyn, and Queens (“About AWP”, 2009). Each of these four programs have a varied and distinct history; their strength lies in the notoriety of their faculty and the success of their students. All of these programs garnered excellent faculty to teach their creative writing

classes. For example, Brooklyn College is where Alan Ginsberg taught for many years; the program is buoyed by a state of the art library and progressive interaction with the Education Department and the greater Brooklyn community. Every year they sponsor the Day-of-the-Poet, an all-day poetry seminar (and youth summit?) that concludes with a very energetic reading. In 2005, for example, Bob Holman exceeded the reading portion of the event; he is the owner of the Bowery Poetry Club and the editor of *Aloud*, one of the titles suggested by *Resources*.

Hunter College is also buoyed by a state of the art library; in addition, students who pursue their MFA in Creative Writing at Hunter would have access to the archives at the Centro PR. Peter Carey is the director of the M.F.A program and Eva Hoffman and Meena Alexander both teach there. In addition, Hunter has one of the best collections in the C.U.N.Y. system and can count on the help of Friends of the Libraries, an organization whose main focus is the integration of four of Hunter's libraries, "The Jacqueline Grennan Wexler Library, the Health Professions Library, the School of Social Work Library and the Art Slide Library" ("Friends of the Library," 2009). It is situated in the middle of the Manhattan and straddles the domain of established uptown writers with the bohemian racket of the downtown scene.

Students pursuing their M.F.A. at Queens College greatly benefit from the fact that it totes an alternative slant in Literary Kimiko Hahn, an Asian-American poet of international stature, has recently joined the faculty, and the director of the program is Nicole Cooley, a recipient of the Walt Whitman Poetry Award. She was interviewed in the November/December 2007 *Poets and Writers* (Larimer, 2007). The program at City is relatively low-key as well, even though it has been around for longer than the Queens program. It has produced a great number of writers, many of which come back to the school to facilitate workshops and assist with student thesis; the City College program even has an M.A. program in Spanish with a concentration in

Creative Writing in Spanish. This coincides keenly with the establishment of the Dominican Archive at City College; once the Dominican Archive is up and running, graduate Hispanic students will surely benefit from the archives, records, and literature collected by the archive. The Dominican Archive at City College can easily replicate and supersede the positive effects that the Centro PR has had on the diversity of Hunter's collection.

These programs are similar in that they service small amounts of heterogeneous students. City and Queens are also similar because of the high numbers of minority students enrolled. City College is located in the threshold between Harlem and Washington Heights; as such, it services thousands of Latino and African-American students. Queens is located in a Hasidic neighborhood but services mostly Asian, East Asian, and Jewish students. In 2003, *N.Y. Times* correspondent, Suketu Mehta, called Queens County, "The Meltingest Pot" because "It is the most ethnically diverse county in the country" (Mehta, 2003, par. 2).

Indeed, current figures from the U.S. Census Bureau demonstrate that of the estimated "2, 263, 858" residents of Queens County "1,093,622" residents were "Foreign Born" (U.S. Census, 2007). This means that almost half of the residents, or 48.3%, of current Queens' residents were born in another country and immigrated to the U.S. More importantly, of the "2,122,988" residents of Queens County that were older than 5 in 2003, "498,948" documented Spanish as the "Language Spoken at Home" (U.S. Census, 2007). In other words, from 2005-2007, roughly 24% of Queens Country residents stated that Spanish was the language that they used at home; this is revealing because most U.S. Latino Poets grow up in homes where Spanish is the primary language, even though they are obliged to speak English once they enter the public domain.

Problem Statement

However, despite the fact that almost a quarter of the residents in Queens choose Spanish as their hearth language (the language they use at home) this type of diversity is not necessarily expressed in the graduate student body at Queens College. For example, in 2008, only 12.2% percent of the graduate student body at Queens were Hispanic. Of that figure, 9.3% were Female and 2.9% were Male (C.U.N.Y. Office..., 2008). However, the C.U.N.Y.-wide figures were not much more reassuring; in 2008, Hispanics constituted 14.2% of the graduate student body (C.U.N.Y. Office, 2008). Of that figure, 10.2% were Female and 4.0% were Male (C.U.N.Y. Office, 2008). The derth in graduate Male graduate students is nothing new for Hispanics, especially if they come from the inner-city where high school graduation rates hover near the 50% mark (meaning only half graduate!). Therefore, the impetus for this study comes from a desire to ascertain whether the four most prominent M.F.A. programs in Creative Writing have competent amounts of U.S. Latino Poetry titles, or if their collections are underdeveloped and do not dutifully reflect the community demographic.

The choice to utilize a core literature list from *Resources for College Libraries (2007)* to determine the quantity of U.S. Latino Poetry titles at the four C.U.N.Y. libraries that run M.F.A. in Creative Writing programs comes from a desire to quantify the efforts of C.U.N.Y. to live up to it's reputation as "the nation's leading urban public university" ("Welcome...", 2009). If it is indeed the country's paragon for what an "urban public university" can accomplish, then its efforts educating the next generation of U.S. Latino Poets is as important as its efforts to educate the next iteration of African-American civil engineers as well. To do this, C.U.N.Y. must ensure that the collections at these libraries are adequately developed and amply stocked. C.U.N.Y.'s predilection for selling itself as a "leader" in "urban" university education means that it must

constantly pony up the money to ensure the knowledge gained from its bibliographic capital is diverse and in line with the features of an urban public university.

Resources (2007) seemed like a good place to begin because *Resources* (2007) is an industry publication tailored for use at academic libraries. Moreover, *Resources* (2007) has been evolving since 1967 when it was designed to simultaneously fill the shelves of three new college libraries (San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Irvine) that the University of California system was constructing. Under the subject heading Latino Studies in *Resources* (2007) readers will find four core literature lists: Anthologies, Chicano/a Literature, Other Latino/a Literature, and Poetry. The titles in the Latino Studies: Poetry core literature list were put on a spreadsheet and the C.U.N.Y.+ catalog was analyzed to determine which libraries possessed each individual title. Then, the average was determined, as well as the percentage of titles held by the four libraries. Hunter's holdings reflect what is available through their Puerto Rican Archives, the Centro PR, and their main stacks. Because the Archive collects all types of media, many of the U.S. Latino Poetry titles suggested by *Resources* (2007) that are not in the main stacks at Hunter can be found in the Archive.

Therefore, Hunter College definitely has material advantages over the other three senior college libraries, but the holdings of the Centro PR archive are reflected in the O.P.A.C., and the archive is open to the public, but especially convenient for Hunter College students. Unfortunately, the holdings of the Dominican Archive at City College have not yet fully been integrated into the C.U.N.Y.+ O.P.A.C., so the ancillary support it could have granted City College is not reflected. Queens College administers the Louis Armstrong House and Museum and has archives located in the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library on "College Records, Private Papers, Artifacts and Memorabilia, and The Digital Metro New York Project" (The Queens...,

2009) Brooklyn College also invests a substantial amount of energy and resources into maintaining their archives, which cover distinct areas of specialization: “Brooklyn College Archives, Brooklyniana Collection, the Hess Collection, Historical Manuscript collection, and the Rare Book collection” (Brooklyn College Archive, 2008)

C.U.N.Y. Grad Students of the Latino/a Persuasion

According to Mike Davis in *Magical Urbanism* (2000), “almost half of Latino and Black students (or a staggering three-quarters of Puerto Ricans in C.U.N.Y.) leave college within the first two years” (2000, pg. 132). This is troubling because Black and Latino students seem to grasp the importance of a college degree, but don’t feel properly prepared or acclimated to the academic intensity of collegiate life. In addition, “there are intense pressures on immigrants’ teen-age children (often the only citizens in the household) to supplement family incomes as soon as possible” (Davis, 2000, pg. 133). Foregoing a college degree for the sake of a good job seems to be a major obstacle in the life of many Hispanics; indeed, because of familial obligations, Hispanics that attend colleges or universities as full-time students typically do so after their roles as wage earners have been fulfilled.

Therefore, every effort must be made to clot the hemorrhage of minority students from the C.U.N.Y. graduate landscape, especially if it is to remain the “leader” in “public university education” (Welcome...”, 2009). Brooklyn College had the lowest proportion of Hispanic graduate students in 2005. In 2005, there were 372 Hispanic graduate students, but by 2007 the number decreased to 320 (C.U.N.Y. Office..., 2006). So, if in 2005 Hispanic graduate students at Brooklyn College constituted 9.5% of the total graduate student population, by 2007 they represented 8.9% of the total Hispanic graduate student population (C.U.N.Y. Office..., 2006). However, from 2005 to 2007 the percentage of Hispanic graduate students fell at the remaining

three senior colleges, not just Brooklyn. The only place where the percentage grew was at Queens College; in 2005 Hispanic graduate students constituted 10.9% of the Queens graduate population, but by 2007 Hispanics represented 12% of the graduate student body at Queens College (C.U.N.Y. Office..., 2006).

Percentage of Graduate Students of Hispanic Origin

	Brooklyn College	City College	Hunter College	Queens College
2007	<i>8.9%</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>14.5%</i>	<i>12%</i>
2006	<i>8.7%</i>	<i>21.9%</i>	<i>14.8%</i>	<i>11.4%</i>
2005	<i>9.5%</i>	<i>22.5%</i>	<i>14.8%</i>	<i>10.9%</i>

Brooklyn College reported 52 less Hispanic graduate students from 2005 to 2007 (C.U.N.Y. Office..., 2008). Queens lost 11 Hispanic graduate students and Hunter lost 29. However, in 2007 they had the third highest enrollment among the programs in the C.U.N.Y. system that offer the M.F.A (C.U.N.Y. Office..., 2006). In terms of enrolled graduate students, from 2005 to 2007, Hunter enrolled 15, 433 graduate students, and consistently had the highest number of Hispanic graduate students (C.U.N.Y. Office, 2007). Queens College enrolled 13, 175 graduate students from 2005 to 2007 but had the second lowest percentage of Hispanic graduate students, never having risen above 12% (C.U.N.Y. Office, 2007). From 2005 to 2007, City College enrolled 9,077 graduate students, but Hispanics have always constituted at least 20% of the graduate student body (C.U.N.Y. Office, 2008). And City College was the only school which reported gains in the numbers of Hispanic graduate students enrolled; from 2005 to 2007 City College gained 13 Hispanic graduate students (C.U.N.Y. Office, 2008).

To be fair, City College actually lost 21 Hispanic graduate students from 2005 to 2006 (C.U.N.Y. Office, 2006), but they also did manage to gain 34 from 2006 to 2007 (C.U.N.Y. Office, 2008). At Queens College, Hispanic graduate students have never surpassed constituting more than 12% of the graduate student body (C.U.N.Y. Office, 2007). It is clear that there are

some programs that excel at integrating Hispanic graduate students, and others where the situation continues to decline. These changes are caused by a multitude of reasons, but the resources available to students through their library surely has repercussions in the retention of those students. The problem is that unless something is done, Brooklyn College can unwittingly garner a reputation for not being inviting to Hispanic graduate students.

C.U.N.Y. Latino Graduate Enrollment

	Brooklyn College	City College	Hunter College	Queens College
2007	320	675	742	493
2006	332	641	754	506
2005	372	662	771	504

Resources for College Libraries

The genesis of *Resources for College Libraries* can be linked to a single logistical hurdle University of California librarians overcame in 1967. That year, librarians working under the aegis of the New Campuses Program sought to simultaneously fill the future stacks of Irvine, Santa Cruz, and San Diego campuses (“History of RCL,” 2009, par. 1).

Drawing upon published library catalogs from Harvard and the University of Michigan, editors Melvin Voight, university librarian, and Joseph Treyez, head of the New Campuses Program, set out to build a new collection of 50,000 core titles. (“History of RCL,” 2009, par.1)

By 1975, “editorial development was led by *Choice* magazine” and the project was funded by the Council of Library Resources; that year “38,651 titles published before early 1973 were included in the six volumes” (“History of RCL,” 2009, par.2). The 2007 edition, “a collaboration between ACRL’s *Choice*, Bowker, and more than 300 editors and subject specialists” runs “62,000 titles

strong” and covers “58 curriculum-specific subjects and for the first time...electronic resources” (“History of RCL,” 2009, par.6).

Resources is a bona-fide acquisitions resource that academic libraries have been freely consulting since the 1970’s. First, it is an organic resource, meaning it has seen various iterations. It has not stayed static since its genesis. Second, the quality of its selection process, as well as standards associated with selection, have continuously improved. For example, the third edition, published in 1988, had “49,662 titles in the same seven main subject areas” selected by “An all-volunteer staff of subject specialists” (“History of RCL,” 2009, par.3); however, by 2005, “*Choice* partners with Bowker to develop...a major collaboration of approximately 60 subject editors, 200 bibliographers, and 60 referees vetting all core title selections” (“History of RCL,” 2009, par.3). *Resources* is a resource that evolves and has continued to evolve; therefore, a core poetry collection suggested by *Resources* carries considerable weight.

For *Resources*, the decision to include certain titles comes from hundreds of editors and more than fifty subject specialists in academic libraries; the service their reference affords is orchestrated by numerous agents, all contributing their bit to the aggregate knowledge peddled by *Resources*. Unfortunately, credibility is not the main factor prohibiting academic libraries from carrying *Resources*, or the books they suggest. When it comes down to it, budget is probably the largest factor deciding whether a library has a specific title or not. However, shouldn’t there be some system in place that assures students of an academic library that every effort has been made to accession books that a publication like *Resources* advises?

The U.S. Latino Poetry Motherlode

C.U.N.Y.'s Union Catalog is easily accessible through the World Wide Web. The page has a drop-drop menu that allows you to search the Union Catalog, or the catalog of the school the user specifies. In addition, C.U.N.Y.'s O.P.A.C. allows students to search by several means: title, author, subject, ISBN, ISSN, etc. Each school's library O.P.A.C. was searched for 29 titles and the results were tabulated. For every title: a check appears in the table if the school library carries that title; if no check appears, then it can be safely assumed that the library does not carry the specified title. For titles at Hunter College: if a check appears then that title can be found in the Wexler Library, but if the title can also be found at the Centro PR then a check and the words CPR appear in the table. If the title only appears in the Hunter catalog then only expect to see a check.

Hunter had 23 titles either in their stacks, or in the Centro PR, which is a separate entity housed inside the Hunter College library. This roughly translates into 79.3%, meaning that Hunter College and the Centro PR, combined, have almost 80% of the titles suggested by *Resources*. Specifically, there were 6 of the 29 titles that solely belonged to the collection at the Centro PR; 9 of the 20 were only to be found in Hunter's Wexler Library only; and, 8 of the titles were carried by the collection at Hunter College and the collection at the Centro PR. If Hunter were to rely solely on its collection, it could only account for 17 of the 29 titles, or 58.6%. Therefore, right off the bat, one can see the empirical importance of an archive like the Centro PR; archives seem to amplify not only the holdings, but the scope of an academic library.

Brooklyn College had the second highest number of titles, 13 out of 29 possible titles. This means that Brooklyn had approximately 45% of the titles suggested by *Resources*. The interesting thing is that if it were not for the Centro PR, the total number of titles that Hunter

would have had is 17, which is only four more than Brooklyn. Therefore, the collection at Brooklyn and Hunter are comparable, especially since Brooklyn does not have an archive like Centro PR which can bolster its holdings. City College had 5 out of the 29 titles, or 17.2% of the titles suggested by *Resources*; and, Queens College had 4 out of 29 possible titles, or 13.8% of the titles suggested by *Resources*. It might be interesting to note that while both City and Queens were at the bottom of the barrel, their numbers were pretty comparable; or, at least, there were not wild variances between the two, suggesting there might be reasons, outside of budgeting or space, why the numbers of titles they contain is nominal.

Table 1

Title Check: Poetry suggested by Resources for College Libraries (2007)

*✓=Title only available through Wexler Library at Hunter College (Main Library)

✓CPR=Title available only through Centro Puertoriqueno at Hunter College.

✓/✓ CPR= Title available through Wexler Library and Centro Puertoriqueno

Title	Hunter	City	Bklyn.	Qns.
<i>Aloud!: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café.</i>	✓/✓ CPR		✓	
<i>Love is Hard Work.</i>	✓CPR		✓	
<i>Nuyorican Poetry: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Words and Feelings.</i>	✓CPR	✓	✓	
<i>Chicano Poetry: A Response to Chaos.</i>	✓	✓		
<i>Landscape with Human Figure.</i>	✓			
<i>My Father was a Toltec.</i>	✓			✓
<i>Emplumada.</i>	✓		✓	
<i>From the Cables of Genocide.</i>	✓			
<i>Terms of Survival.</i>	✓/✓ CPR			
<i>Song of the Simple Truth: The Complete Poems of Julia de Burgos.</i>	✓ CPR	✓	✓	
<i>Floriscanto Si!: A Collection of Latina Poetry.</i>			✓	
<i>Historia de la Nueva Mexico, 1610: A Critical and Annotated Spanish/English Edition.</i>		✓		
<i>Bluestown Mockingbird Mambo.</i>	✓/✓ CPR			
<i>Three Times A Woman: Chicana Poetry.</i>	✓			
<i>Panoramas.</i>	✓ CPR			
<i>Red Beans.</i>	✓ CPR		✓	
<i>The Child of Exile: A Poetry Memoir.</i>				
<i>AmeRican.</i>	✓/✓ CPR		✓	✓

<i>Enclave.</i>	✓/✓ CPR		✓	
<i>Borders.</i>				
<i>Chants.</i>	✓			
<i>Communion.</i>	✓		✓	
<i>Loving in the War Years.</i>	✓/✓ CPR		✓	
<i>Movements in Chicano Poetry: Against Myths, Against Margins.</i>	✓			
<i>Whispering to Fool the Wind: Poems</i>				
<i>The Elements of San Joaquin.</i>				✓
<i>Contemporary Chicana Poetry: A Critical Approach to an Emerging Literature.</i>	✓/✓ CPR	✓	✓	✓
<i>Promesas: Geography of the Impossible.</i>	✓/✓ CPR			
<i>Thirty an' Seen a Lot.</i>	✓ CPR		✓	
Total	23/29	5/29	13/29	4/29
Percentage	79.3%	17.2%	44.9%	13.8%

V. Conclusions

Using the Latino Poetry core literature list supplied by *Resources for College Libraries* (2007), the school with the highest percentage of titles was Hunter (79.3%). And, while almost eighty percent is surely adequate, it is by no means exemplary or what should be tolerated by a leader in “public university education”. Brooklyn College's percentage (44.9%) exemplifies that large variances are permitted between C.U.N.Y. senior college campus libraries. Surely, the holdings of one senior C.U.N.Y library and another senior C.U.N.Y. library should not be identical; the different campuses represent different academic strengths and are spread out through New York City, but one gets the feeling that large variances are not only permitted but systematically tolerated. While you can't judge a whole collection on whether it has 29 titles supplied by an industry publication, the fact that City College and Queens College possessed so few titles sends a clear and transparent message. And believe it or not, that message trickles down to the students because they are the ones circulating the books, driving the organism of knowledge that their libraries represent.

There was an approximate decrease of 30 percent between Hunter (79.3%) and Brooklyn (44.9%); however, this variance was also the case, roughly, between Brooklyn (44.9%) and City College (17.2%). The collection at Queens College possessed 13.8% of the 29 titles supplied by *Resources for College Libraries* (2007). More importantly, the collections of Queens College and City College together could only account for 31% of the 29 core Latino Poetry titles! Even though the Centro PR at Hunter College is part of the “library,” one would not suspect an archive to lend a substantial domain of support to a collection. But, the ancillary support Centro PR provides in ensuring Hunter attain 80 percent of the 29 titles was substantial at best and necessary at worst. For example, 9 of the 23 titles possessed by Hunter were only available at the Wexler Library, and 6 of the 23 titles were only available through the Centro PR, but they were counted together because the Centro PR forms an integral part of Hunter College’s library and is located on the premises.

From these percentages, many Hispanic graduate students might think twice about attending a C.U.N.Y. school, especially if their futures are intertwined with an M.F.A. program because those students in those programs can't rely on their campus libraries to provide the bibliographic support they require. Of course, Hispanic graduate students can request titles through inter-library loan; an M.F.A. student at Queens can request a book from the Hunter library; they can even travel to that campus and check the book out themselves, but that is not the point. The point is that none of the libraries associated with M.F.A. programs in Creative Writing at C.U.N.Y. have the material support to say that they contribute to the pedagogy dispensed therein. Furthermore, based on the percentages of Latino Poetry titles in the collections of senior college libraries associated with the programs, many U.S. Latino Poets might not want to matriculate in any of these programs because of the lack of resources that the libraries offer.

For many burgeoning U.S. Latino Poets this might not prove a criteria--interaction with the faculty or publishing opportunities might hold more sway. But, what about novice U.S. Latino Poets who are not yet aware of the recognition, affirmation, and serious scholarship that awaits them? In other words, by failing to develop a diverse collection that includes the works of Hispanics and Latinos, these libraries cultivate the idea that it's excusable to exclude Hispanic or Latino literature from the periphery of American Poetry? These libraries proclaim, through their material deficiencies, that the dramatis personae of American Literature is primarily an Anglo affair. This do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do approach to collecting multicultural titles should not be tolerated in the libraries of senior C.U.N.Y. colleges. It seems evident that the effort extended in collecting titles outside the Anglo canon is minimal and disorganized; also evident is the championing of volume versus quality for the sake of appearance and appeasement.

What about Latino undergraduate writers that are eminently interested in U.S. Latino Poetry, and don't know it is a viable avenue to further explore, both professionally and aesthetically? What about the Latino community college students that need to write a biography on a poet of their choice and are given a limited array of Anglo poets to choose from? What message does an academic library send when it necessarily can't account for gaps in collection, especially if those gaps can claim a similar ethnicity? What if those gaps never get plugged and create a sort of intellectual segregation wherein materials "of those kinds" are not actively sought, offered, or circulated? While the "what ifs" certainly have it, it might prove helpful to discuss some of the ways in which these four libraries can increase the numbers of U.S. Latino Poetry titles available to students of all persuasions.

The academic library which had the highest number of the 29 titles supplied by *Resources for College Libraries* (2007) was Hunter College. A large part of Hunter's success has

to do with the Centro PR, the Puerto Rican Archive on the premises of Hunter College's Jacqueline Grennan Wexler Library. Technically, Hunter College M.F.A. students can read titles at the Centro PR so as searches were conducted in the C.U.N.Y.+ O.P.A.C., if a title was available at the Centro PR and not the The Jacqueline Grennan Wexler Library then that was noted with a check and the initials CPR (Centro Puerto Riqueno). In 1992, the Dominican Archive was created at City College by “the Council of Dominican Educators, community activists, and other academics from CUNY, to address the lack of reputable information on Dominicans available to students, scholars, and the community at large in the United States” (C.U.N.Y. Dominican Studies..., 2009, par. 1). Unfortunately, the collection at the Dominican Archive has not been integrated into the C.U.N.Y.+ catalog and could not be used in this study; however, further study should be conducted to determine whether the Dominican Archive can replicate at City College the material support that the Centro PR provides to Hunter’s Wexler Library.

As previously stated, of the 23 titles afforded to Hunter: 8 were available at both the Wexler Library and the Centro PR; 9 were only available at the Wexler Library; and, 6 of the 23 were available through the Centro PR only. In other words, Hunter owes a quarter (6 out of 23) of its adequate proficiency to the Centro PR because 6 of the 23 titles could only be accessed through the Centro PR archive. One can easily see the material advantage that Centro PR lends to the Wexler Library. Could one extrapolate a pattern from Hunter’s example that might improve the numbers of U.S. Latino Poetry titles? What does the interaction between the Centro PR and the Wexler Library tell us about the administrative confluence that can transpire? And, surely, there are some programs like the one at Queens College that are more vulnerable to this deficiency in U.S. Latino Poetry titles.

VI. Recommendations

Obviously, emphasis should go to helping cultivate the newest M.F.A. program in Creative Writing in the C.U.N.Y. system. That honor is undoubtedly held by the program at Queens College. That program also has the honor of being the only M.F.A. in Creative Writing program that has an added emphasis on Literary Translation. According to Nicole Cooley, the current director of the M.F.A. in Creative Writing program, in 2009, the M.F.A. program was “entering its second year” (Welcome to Our..., 2009, par. 2) and pouring the concrete mix for a solid foundation. In 2007, Queens College granted 5 M.F.A. degrees while Brooklyn College granted 101. This level of variance only serves to illuminate the degree granting range between a neophyte program and a projection of what it can become. In many ways, the Queens College M.F.A. is the most vulnerable because it displays the most promise, but it has to steadily increase its matriculation so that its graduates can help shape the landscape by penning commercially successful books.

Certainly, the argument could be made that Queens College can overcome the deficiencies of its collection with an increase in budget and resources. However, the idea should be raised as well to assess whether the Queens College library would benefit from amplifying their archives with an archive that details the history of immigrants and immigration. Queens is the most diverse county in the country so it only seems fair that emphasis might be shouldered there. Moreover, any action to raise the numbers of U.S Latino Poetry titles at Brooklyn, Queens, and City College will be met with much jubilation by Hispanic graduate students, especially those trying to make their ways as future U.S. Latino Poets.

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