

Comment
Que todo el pluralismo es sueño,
y los sueños, vida son:¹ ethnolinguistic
dreams and reality

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1. A personal commentary on language as an essential component of my identity: my father and Calderón de la Barca

The title of this commentary to John Edwards's insightful paper on ethnolinguistic identity is based on very famous lines from *La vida es sueño*, a seventeenth-century play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, the most baroque Spanish playwright of the *Siglo de Oro*. There are two reasons for recalling the verses now, "que toda la vida es sueño, y los sueños, sueños son" [that life is but a dream, and dreams, are dreams]. On the one hand, I was reminded of them as I read Edwards's criticism of what he calls the "poetic" approach to language and ethnicity and his characterization of Canadian efforts to resolve the conflicts and discontents associated with pluralism as a "utopian dream" (quoted after Sloan 1990, from Edwards's References). Calderón's paradoxical metaphors reflect the contradictions inherent in all life, at the same time that they communicate the message that life is but poetry and dreams. These are important lessons to remember when reading Edwards's treatment of pluralism and his understandable wish for less conflict and fewer dreams. The second reason for recalling Calderón's lines has to do with my wish to follow Edwards's enviable task of presenting the Canadian experience in order to contextualize the generalities that he presents in the first part of the paper. Only by contextualizing for the reader my Spanish voice as a Cuban-born New Yorker will my general comments be understood.

At the age of 11 I arrived in New York with only a Spanish voice. I lived in Queens, among other recent Hispanic immigrants, other Cubans, Dominicans, Colombians, Puerto Ricans, and went to high school in the Bronx where my friends were other Latinas and where my academic voice quickly became only English. I read Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Hemingway, while I continued speaking Spanish at home, in the subway, even in the school cafeteria where my friends spoke Spanish. I became

an academic person in English, a social person in Spanish. Eight years after my arrival in New York, I entered Hunter College, a public college in the city of New York. And it was there that I struggled with my first literary text in Spanish, attempting to gain back an academic voice that had been silenced, Spanish literacy skills that had been lost. I became convinced that my English voice would continue to develop with little effort, that I would understand and naturally know more about the country in which I now lived and of which I became a citizen, but that additional effort would be needed in order to understand Latin America, and in order to make sense of the circumstances that brought me from Cuba to the United States. I needed to understand all this in my own terms, neither in the Spanish voice of my parents, which justified their need for exile, nor in the English voice of US society, which castigated Cuba with an economic embargo. My voice needed to capture both cultures, both realities, both worlds, and thus needed to be bilingual.

During the second Spanish course I took in college I read *La vida es sueño*. I read it in an edition that had an Introduction and Notes in English to facilitate the reading. I needed the English to inform my Spanish, just as I needed the seventeenth-century Spanish verses to validate my father's colloquial Spanish. During those early hard times, whenever one of us complained of something we didn't have, my father would answer by telling us the story of a poor wise man. This wise man was so poor he only had herbs to eat, and he would complain about his lot by asking himself if there was anyone as poor and sad as he. He found that answer when he turned his head and saw that another wise man was picking up the herbs that he had thrown away.² This colloquial story, recited by my father, only became meaningful to me as I recognized it in the second scene of *La vida es sueño*. Until then, it had been a mere story told at home with a voice from the immediate Cuban past and a harsh US Latino present, but as soon as it acquired literary legitimacy, it became a reflection of an important universal and eternal value. Not only did I then learn it, but I can now recite it to my children today.

It is perhaps the lessons learned in *La vida es sueño* in that early reading while still at college, and in my most recent reading of it after going through Edwards's paper, that inform much of what I have to say about the role of language in identity. If language were solely an instrument for synchronic communication and if ethnic groups were monolithic and static, then of course, as Edwards reminds us, one's original group language would not be necessary for continuity of group identity. But as Edwards also reminds us, identity changes and is fluid. One's identity is shaped not only by contemporaries in experience, but also by those who came before and those who come after. Furthermore, language, with its

written as well as oral mode, is also an instrument for diachronic as well as introspective communication. Language is not only a system of signs for direct communication at one point in time and space, but in *multiple times and spaces*. And it is this *dynamic* quality of language that makes it an essential component of a "whole" identity, an identity shaped by experiences not only in relation to that of a different group with which it finds itself in conflict, but also in relation to itself in time and space.

I agree with Edwards that "language is mutable." My own identity and language are different today from what they were when I first came to the United States. My Spanish has been influenced by my English and by the different varieties of Spanish of the many different Latinos in New York. Furthermore, it has not remained static throughout the years, and, depending on personal circumstances, it has become more or less dominant in my life. But the reason Spanish is important for my identity is that it enables me to link up with my father's familiar voice, with my country's distant voice, with the struggling voice of all of Latin America, with my New York Latino community's immediate voice, at the same time that it links me with the voice of my ancestors, with that of poets and writers and men and women of the past. And it allows me to live, if only in my imagination, a Latino experience that is not a minority experience, but that is common, shared, and "whole."

2. A commentary on language as an essential component of New York and US Latino group identity: linking Tato Laviera to Calderón de la Barca and to the man in the street

The concept that the ethnic language is an essential part of a "whole" rather than "scarred" minority identity can be better understood when studying the New York Latino community. It is true that second and third generation Latinos in New York don't need Spanish to communicate among themselves. The acquisition of English and the probable shift to English are natural outcomes of a school experience that at best uses Spanish only as a transitional measure, and that makes English monolingualism an avowed goal. However, despite English monolingualism, New York Latinos, especially males, continue to fail in schools, and specifically the Puerto Rican dropout rate from New York City High Schools has been reported to be as high as 80 percent (Aspira 1976). Second and third generation Latinos continue to be the backbone of New York's low-paid work force, and many are unemployed. Most have encountered prejudice and racism. In the case of English-speaking Latinos, it is the conflict with majority society, a product not of language difference, but

of difference in resource control, that creates and maintains the solidarity that Edwards, speaking in general, observes after language shift.

The case of New York Latinos confirms Edwards's contention that group identity can exist after language shift. The ethnic solidarity of monolingual English-speaking Nuyoricans has been attested in studies conducted by the Language Policy Task Force of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (1978) and most specifically by Attinasi (1979). But we must recognize that the new identity that has been forged without the old language is based on conflict with the Anglo majority because of racism and prejudice, rather than on thorough knowledge of ourselves as a people with heroes, patriots, poets, writers, and even "common," unmarked, men and women. And the new identity is also based on the conflict that lack of Spanish fluency, a sure outcome of the US educational experience, brings about with the old monolingual society.

This inability to be part of either culture, this "bicultural ambivalence," as Jim Cummins (1981) calls it, this "scarred" and conflicted identity is evident in the poetry of the Nuyoricano, Tato Laviera. In his "my graduation speech," a poignant attack on an educational system that fails to give Nuyoricans an authentic voice, Laviera speaks of his "bicultural ambivalence," of his "scarred identity":

.....
i want to go back to puerto rico,
but i wonder if my kind could live
in ponce, mayaguez and carolina

.....
hablo lo inglés matao
hablo lo español matao
no sé leer ninguno bien

And he ends by exclaiming, "¡ay, virgen, yo no sé hablar!" [oh, God, I don't know how to talk!].

As I said before, ethnolinguistic identity is fluid and a product of a particular societal context. There is thus no reason to expect Nuyoricans to speak Spanish like Puerto Ricans, just as Puerto Ricans cannot be expected to speak English like Nuyoricans. But if US Latinos want to maintain a sense of peoplehood that is much more than a minority one (a conflicted one) or much more than one purely based on poetry (a longing for one), then efforts must be expended in holding on to some degree of Spanish fluency. A minority group, and especially one with whom the majority society has had a colonial relationship, cannot be expected to gain knowledge of itself through the dominant language. Well-known Puerto Rican writers such as José Luis González may have

their work translated into English. But knowledge of popular culture, a central aspect of peoplehood, is only available in Spanish. Spanish is essential in linking Nuyoricans not only to Tato Laviera, José Luis González, or even Calderón de la Barca, but also to the monolingual Spanish speaker, poet, or conga player in the streets of New York.

Lost to the English-speaking New York Latino is the "whole" identity associated with the possibility of language to involve other times and spaces. No longer is it possible to communicate with those in the old country, to hear the folktales of one's ancestors, to read the literature of the past and present, to understand the words to the music, to the poetry. No longer is it possible to communicate with those who have recently arrived maybe even from the same towns and villages, now lost forever, or with those from distant Latin American countries. In fact, rather than providing the possibility of communication, connection, and usefulness that newcomers to a society seek, English monolingualism has brought about isolation. In a society where residential segregation is still rampant, most Latinos live in Latino neighborhoods, where many of the neighbors are Spanish-speaking. These English-monolingual Latinos are then an island in themselves, unaccepted by the dominant society, as well as by other Latinos with whom they can no longer communicate.

It is true, as Edwards has said, that "the natural desires of minorities" are "survival, personal security and well being" (Edwards 1985: 98). That is precisely why Latinos come to the United States, leaving families and friends behind. But there is ample proof to show that in a society where linguistic and racial prejudice is rampant, one's personal well-being is tied to that of the group. It would be naive to assume that the sociohistorical relationship that the United States has had with Latin Americans in their countries would change once these Latinos are in the United States. The same United States policies that create the conditions that cause many Latin Americans to leave their countries continue in effect in this country. Thus, despite individual efforts to achieve economic equality with other North Americans, most US Latinos continue to be shoved out of the economic mainstream. And despite being coopted into giving up their language, Latinos remain socially marginalized. Although many assume that shedding their linguistic characteristic (in this case speaking Spanish) would achieve the integration that would bring them "survival, personal security and well being," the majority often continues to categorize these *individuals* as different, thus justifying, as we will see, their exclusion as a *group* from meaningful socioeconomic participation (for a full discussion of the process of categorization-by-others, see Allardt 1979).

We must then agree with Edwards that in the process of trying to gain

acceptance in majority society, many Latinos see Spanish as a “negotiable commodity” (Edwards 1985: 89). Language is the most marked and concrete feature of one’s identity. And those who speak Spanish only or who speak English poorly have been repeatedly told by the dominant majority that speaking English natively would improve their lot. In fact, some of the intraethnic conflict over the remedial use of Spanish in transitional bilingual education in the US has to do precisely with this. Understandably, newcomers want their children to learn English natively, and some are not convinced that using Spanish in the classroom will bring about the rapid acquisition of native English they would want for their children. We cannot blame minority parents for these views. After all, majority society justifies socioeconomic differences by pointing to language as the cause. It would be unrealistic in a capitalist economy to expect a dominant group to blame itself for controlling societal resources and to unselfishly share them with others. And so, language becomes an easy culprit for differences, and minorities are instructed to shed their language or else suffer the consequences of inequity. (For a discussion of the distinction between cultural and linguistic assimilation and economic-structural assimilation, see Skutnabb-Kangas 1979.)

This view that language is responsible for group differences is not only held by the general public, but is repeated by government officials and scholars in a climate of scarce economic resources coupled with support for an English Only movement. For example, since 1980 the National Commission for Employment Policy (NCEP) has been sponsoring economic research that focuses on the relationship between English language ability and income differentials of Latinos (Gould et al. 1982; Stolzenberg 1982). These studies support the findings of the NCEP report: “A lack of fluency in English is the major source of the labor market difficulties of all [Hispanic] subgroups” (1982: 2). And the message to Spanish speakers is that those “who are more structurally assimilated” “use Spanish less” (Bean and Tienda 1988: 44). One of my recent studies (García i.p.) presents quantitative evidence to the contrary and rejects the myth that poverty among Latinos is a direct result of their linguistic characteristic as Spanish speakers. A nondominant language is not always the *static problematic characteristic* of a minority group to which it has been traditionally relegated by majority society. Sometimes, the same minority language can be *negotiated as a resource, not only of the minority community, but also of the majority community* (for the difference between ethnicity as characteristic and relation, see Skutnabb-Kangas 1991). This is, for example, what has happened with the Spanish of Dade County, which has gained prestige as the language of a powerful business community, doing business not only with the ethnic group but also represent-

ing US majority interests in Latin America. The problem with Latinos is not their Spanish ability, but how US society is willing to see the minority’s Spanish ability in relation to the life of the majority.

The US Latino experience shows that the real dream, then, is not the one held by the language activists whom Edwards chastises for being “poetic,” but that of members of minority groups whose “pragmatic concerns,” as Edwards says, bring about their language shift. Unfortunately, the *Spanish-speaking dream* of first generation (im) migrants has been mostly answered by the *English-speaking harsh reality* of their second generation offspring, often one of poverty and continued prejudice, and limited to a “scarred” identity in conflict with that of the dominant society and that of the old country. It has all been a *pragmatic dream*, a paradox, an unresolved contradiction that results from a political tradition that emphasizes the equal rights of all individuals and an economic tradition that emphasizes the prerogatives of individuals to accumulate wealth and thus creates inequality. (For a fuller treatment of US political equality vs. economic equality, especially with regard to the education of children, see De Lone 1979.) Especially minorities who have been historically oppressed or those who have arrived recently in a period of economic decline (most often from Third World countries) are victims of this pragmatic dream, a wanting to share in the “good” life without understanding that it will always be good for some, as long as it remains bad for others. And that, therefore, the economic boundary has to be drawn tightly around minority *groups* even when they shift to the majority language, although, of course, some *individuals* will be allowed to escape. These individuals act as the “escape valve” in the social pressure cooker, making it then possible to keep the lid on others. (For a fuller discussion on the role of boundaries in ethnicity, see Allardt 1979, based on Barth 1969.)

3. The minority voice: giving voice to Calderón as well as to Marlowe

I finished my last reading of Calderon’s *La vida es sueño* aloud, to my husband, as our family arrived at the home of close friends to share the Thanksgiving holidays. I still consider it a privilege to have such wonderful Anglo friends who can share their home and holidays with a Spanish-speaking family. During our endless conversations the subject turned to poetry, but the images and verses that were recalled were of Marlowe, of Whitman, of Frost. I became poignantly aware of how I had not only different language codes at my disposal, but also different images, different metaphors. Thanksgiving is very much my holiday, although

sometimes the turkey has been accompanied by the traditional Cuban pork and *frijoles negros* and by sounds in Spanish and Afro-Cuban rhythms of *maracas* and conga drums. Likewise, for me, Marlowe's images, messages, and rhythms can only blend in with those of Calderón, both mine, both giving meaning to each other.

But although I can eat turkey or pork, and read Marlowe or Calderón, my Anglo friends have only one option. Not that they wouldn't be interested in knowing this other world, they are very enlightened people, but they simply have not had the opportunity to learn Spanish or live in a Hispanic context in a society that values English only and that practices residential segregation. And thus, for ease of communication, my voice with them carries not only half my words, but also half the images, half the metaphors. Perhaps it is this awareness on the part of minority people, that their majority voice only projects some of who they are, that is responsible for Edwards's assertion that minorities feel they're "not telling their own story." Their own story is difficult to tell to those who do not share their images and metaphors.

I agree with Edwards's statement that "outsiders have always been able to sympathize and empathize with 'foreign cultures'." In fact, the role of outsiders in legitimizing the voice of minorities has been crucial. But although they can sympathize, empathize, understand, even promote minority issues, it would be difficult for outsiders to have as much *knowledge* about minority issues as minority scholars themselves. The reason for the differential knowledge is only natural in a segregated and unjust social context. Majorities are always in control of educational systems, and it is natural to assume that only limited room would be made for the academic study of minority groups. But beyond schools lies society, and even if schools made efforts to translate the history and literature of minority groups, there would be the everyday web of social events that gives meaning to life and that majority scholars would have limited access to. Just as the personal well-being of an individual is embedded in the well-being of a group, the group's collective sense cannot be grasped unless one also knows the individuals who make up this group. One may read about the minority group, but it is difficult to know what happens inside a family who speaks another language and lives in a different social context. It may even be difficult, depending on the groups' imbalances, to become intimate with an individual from the minority group. And without personal knowledge, it is difficult to give meaning to a more impersonal text. Even if efforts were made to include Calderón in every first-year college literature course in the US, there would still be Tato Laviera, and the conga player in the street. Real knowledge comes from a partaking of experiences that is simply not

easily available to the majority when the minority has an unequal place within that society. There are few who can gain the required knowledge.

I agree with Edwards that ethnic studies should be done by both insiders and outsiders. But I disagree with the statement that "ethnic studies — like all other social research — should therefore be done by both" (after Gans 1985: 304, from Edwards's References). Edwards complains that others chide him for no "nostalgia," no "rose-tinted glasses." Yet, I find his position on this issue highly romantic and idealistic. Yes, this would be the ideal in the best of worlds. But in reality, mainstream social research is hardly ever done by minorities. Those of us who have academic degrees in very traditional disciplines have often been shocked at how institutions limit our ability to teach and study unmarked topics. I recently met an African American who had a Ph.D. degree in French history. He had been hired by an American university to teach history and was quite surprised when he was assigned all the courses that dealt with the African American experience, a subject about which he knew little. Despite our academic training, institutions continue to place minority scholars in departments related to ethnic studies. It is then not surprising to find "the domination of ethnic studies by ethnic insiders" about which Edwards complains. Many times this is an academic reality that very closely reflects the process of categorization-by-others that we discussed in the previous section. In academic studies, as in real life, many Latinos try to achieve equality by "relinguifying," becoming familiar with the images of the majority disciplines, but then, many find that the majority still categorize their knowledge as different from and inferior to theirs. And thus, they're relegated to a minority position even in academic disciplines that they have studied only from a majority perspective.

This forced categorization-by-others of minority scholars is evident in Richard Rodriguez's insightful autobiography, *Hunger for Memory, The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. As an English Renaissance literature specialist, Rodriguez sees himself as having "made" it beyond the working-class origin of his Mexican immigrant parents. Yet, despite his efforts, he cannot escape his categorization-by-others as a Chicano as a graduate student, an instructor at Berkeley, or even a famous writer. Speaking of his graduate student experience, Rodriguez tells us,

I was invited to Chicano student meetings and social events sponsored by La Raza. But I never went. I kept my distance. I was a scholarship boy who belonged to an earlier time. I had come to the campus *singly*; they had come in a *group* (1981: 160, my emphasis).

Rodriguez's error is to think he could separate himself from the group to which he has been assigned by the majority. About his faculty experience he says, "I continued to receive invitations to conferences to discuss the problems of the disadvantaged. Envelopes found their way to my apartment addressed to *Señor Ricardo Rodriguez*. I heard myself introduced at conferences as a 'Chicano intellectual'" (1981: 162). It is certainly true that Rodriguez's voice as an author would not have been heard if it had not told a Chicano success story in English.

It would be important to point out that the control of information and knowledge by insiders is a universal phenomenon that is not limited to ethnic studies. For example, the majority controls knowledge of their own group and what is taught to their children. And as we have seen, rarely are outsiders given a voice, for their expertise is not considered authentic. And neither is the majority experience different from that of the minority with regard to who makes decisions for the group. Edwards complains that "romantically minded intellectuals and group 'spokesmen' speak for the group." But this is also exactly what happens with majority groups. The danger here is to see what happens naturally in a majority setting as being devious in a minority setting. When minorities gain control of their resources and behave like majorities, they are suspect. But it would be important for us to remember that what they're doing is the natural behavior of groups who start to function with a "whole" identity. It is this "whole" identity, this solidarity that comes from understanding itself, and not just from conflict with the majority, that enables the minority to change the process of categorization-by-others that we have been talking about into one of self-categorization in which they're in control of not only spokespersons but also resources. (For a discussion of categorization-by-others and self-categorization as boundary maintenance processes, see Allardt 1979.) As Edwards says, "closure is not an ultimate goal." But closure is what has been offered by the majority to many minority groups. And it may be the only goal that makes sense for some minority groups, for themselves, for now, until majority society gives them a fairer share of the pie.

4. Tolerance vs. promotion: promoting Calderón

Edwards summarizes his criticism of positive action with regard to minorities by saying, "[I]n many ethnic matters, the best policy is none at all, coupled with that tolerance already mentioned ('benign neutrality,' as Glazer 1983 would have it)." It is true that tolerance is better than restriction, which overtly cuts off an ethnic group from its history, culture,

and language. Restriction of all non-English ethnic languages was certainly an official policy in the US at least in the period surrounding World War I (For an historical account of language policy in the US, see García 1985; Grant 1980; Heath 1977). And overt restriction of Native American languages, African languages, and languages of US colonies has certainly been in effect from the beginnings of historical contact. For these latter groups, groups that Ogbu (1978, 1987) characterizes as "caste minorities" because of the longstanding oppression suffered, the eradication and dislocation experienced makes them, to use Basso's (1990; Edwards's References) metaphor quoted by Edwards, "blow away like leaves." And for these groups, tolerance is certainly not enough, for they will continue blowing away indiscriminately. Needed then is the breath of the majority that would direct them and give them protection. Tolerance is not enough to redress oppression and victimization; more positive action, indeed promotion, is needed if equality among groups is to be the goal. If we merely said that first-year literature courses in college could "tolerate" nondominant authors such as Calderón de la Barca or even Tato Laviera, it would be highly unlikely that professors would select them over, or even along with, Jane Austen or Hemingway.

Especially in our US market society, official promotion seems to be the only way to introduce a new product, catch the attention of general consumers, and get them to use it. We need to educate the general US population not only about the value of knowing a non-English language and being familiar with the culture and history of the group, but also about the important role that many of these language minorities have had in the shaping of US history, culture, and language experience. And this educational campaign must be launched and promoted by the majority, not just for the children of language minorities, but for their own children. Only then, through promotion, will the whole nation become consumers of the many languages, images, and metaphors that give the United States our sense of peoplehood. The nation's "whole" identity depends on our ability to actively include its many ethnolinguistic groups.

The best criticism of why tolerance is not enough is given by Edwards himself in his insightful analysis of multiculturalism in the Canadian context. Edwards provides us with the following quote from Breton et al. (1980: 384; Edwards's References): "The majority of Canadians tend to support multiculturalism as an ideal, so long as it does not affect their own lives, the sociocultural institutions in which they participate, or their pocketbooks." This criticism of multicultural education as being only a palliative has been raised by many (see, for example, Cummins 1988; Mullard 1985). Tolerance, the position that a multicultural policy sup-

ports, does little more than make people feel good about an ideal. It does not actively encourage people to embody that ideal.

It is in this context that one must then understand the considerable tension between bilingualism and multiculturalism as official policy in Canada, a topic to which we will return in the next section. Interestingly enough, this tension between multiculturalism and bilingualism as an educational practice is also felt in the United States. While bilingual education in the United States requires positive action, that is, the hiring of a teacher who speaks the non-English language, often an ethnic herself, nothing but good will is needed for multicultural education. A multicultural curriculum usually only tolerates and includes different cultures and groups without attempting to change the educational goal of anglo-conformity and the inequality among groups. In contrast, a true bilingual curriculum should use the minority language as a resource for socioeconomic justice and increased knowledge of the group.

When tolerance is the objective, all ethnolinguistic groups are recognized as equal. Since the power structure will not change and resources will not be redistributed, everyone is happy to include everyone else. But promotion is more conflicted precisely because it contains the possibility for redistribution of resources and real change. The majority rarely reveals their real objection to promotion, the fact that they would want to maintain a clear socioeconomic boundary between themselves and minority groups, thus keeping the resources to themselves (for a perceptive analysis of the socioeconomic role of boundaries between ethnic groups, see Banton 1977). Instead, the majority emphasizes their supposed continuity with minority groups and attempts to create boundaries among different minority groups. This is a common argument used against promotion. Edwards himself repeats after Isaacs (1972; Edwards's References), "[I]t is another matter for officialdom to actively intervene in support of ethnic claims. Some of the main difficulties here include spreading resources fairly among often-competing groups." The real competition, however, is not among the have-nots (Calderón, Tato Laviera, and the conga player in the street), but between the haves and the have-nots (Marlowe and Calderón).

5. The Québécois: a pragmatic dream fulfilled

I am grateful to Edwards for his very informative and clear account of the present Canadian context. I can only interpret the Canadian situation through readings and its contrasts to the US Latino experience. My

comments here are then limited to the generalizations about language and identity made by Edwards and drawn from recent Canadian events.

Edwards opens his paper with two quotes, one related to the generalities he presents, and the second by Max Weber on the French Canadian situation. It would perhaps be appropriate to recall the quote by Max Weber (1968[1910]: 397; Edwards's References): "The loyalty of the French Canadians toward the English polity is today determined above all by the deep *antipathy against the economic and social structure*, and the way of life, of the neighboring United States" [emphasis added]. At the end of the paper Edwards remarks, "Perhaps we could see the most recent events, then, as a change in this balance of negativities."

Indeed the balance of power has changed not only between the US and Canada but within Canada itself. The US economy is in shambles. And Anglophone Canada no longer controls all the Canadian economy. In fact, Edwards quoting Pelletier (1990; Edwards's References) reminds us that "whereas there was only 47 percent francophone control of the Quebec economy in 1960, this had risen to 60 percent by 1990." This in itself is an important achievement. The *Québécois* have, by a process of self-categorization, drawn boundaries that allow them to control their own resources within their region. Their ethnolinguistic identity is no longer dependent on conflict with either the US or Anglo Canada, but on socioeconomic, as well as ethnolinguistic, independence. This greater acceptance and less conflict with Anglo Canada is reflected in the quote by Fortier (1985: 183; Edwards's References) reproduced by Edwards: "As its linguistic self-assurance has grown, the Francophone community has generally responded with greater openness toward English-speaking fellow-citizens." This is not the case, however, for anglophone Canadians, who see this process of self-categorization as a threat to their economic dominion. Edwards himself makes mention of the hostility from English Canadians as popular support for sovereignty within Quebec has grown. Summarizing Thorsell's (1990: 110; Edwards's References) position, Edwards says, "Never in recent times has English regard for the francophones been lower, and equally, never have Quebec's 'political, intellectual and economic elites' felt more *common* cause." The link between increased intolerance for the *Québécois* and their increased economic strength is rather straightforward. The ideal of a united Canadian nation is what is put forward, but in reality what anglophones are complaining about is the sharing of resources with francophones who had been previously excluded.

What the *Québécois* have done is engage in the same process to which they have been historically subjected. Historically, francophones have been told that their economic differences with anglophones were a result

of their non-native English ability. Using the same language weapon, although changing the bullet from an English one to a French one, the *Québécois* have engaged in battle for socioeconomic survival. The weapons, the instruments, have been language and ethnicity; the goal, however, has been the forced redistribution of resources, at least within Quebec. Edwards is right in saying that there is a "lack of appreciation and trust" on both sides, but this is not a result of language policies or pluralistic policies in Canada, but of longstanding sociohistorical conditions created when the British conquered the French in 1759.

The *Québécois* are a conquered minority in the same sense that the aboriginal inhabitants in Canada were conquered. Both groups have been subjected to deliberate assimilationist policies, yet they have remained socioeconomically marginalized. And both groups have recently understood that in order to become structurally incorporated into Canadian society, a separate but equal identity would have to be negotiated. The *Québécois* have been able to use the French language in order to self-categorize. But as Edwards explains, Canadian native people have had to rely on the reserve system for their categorization, since their language shift has been so massive. It is not surprising that the lack of regard for the distinctiveness of Canadian native people became an issue when Quebec's status as "distinct society" was considered. But the native Canadians' objection to English-French bilingualism has been quickly responded to by a mild, good-feeling multicultural policy that will do little to include either the francophone or Canada's natives. There must be recognition that these "caste minorities" in the Canadian sense are equal coparticipants in Canada and that emphasizing *group* interests may be the only way of advancing *individuals* within those minority group. Rather than supporting a "vertical mosaic of social status and power" which is Edwards's position, cultural pluralistic policies that allow self-categorization may be the only way to redistribute resources among groups and redefine Canadian nationalism as a consortium of "whole" identities working together.

In short, rather than support Edwards's generalities, it seems to me that the Canadian context lends support to the position about language and identity exposed previously in relation to the US Latino experience. I will summarize these points briefly:

1. Language is essential to identity because its dynamic quality allows communication in multiple times and spaces, an aspect that is essential to a "whole" rather than "scarred" identity.
2. Ethnolinguistic groups who have experienced oppression do not become socioeconomically integrated after language shift because the majority continues to keep them out, categorize them as different, so as

to remain in control of resources. A minority language can be negotiated as a resource as a means to self-categorize and draw the boundary for the minority's benefit.

3. The process of categorization-by-others by which the minority is oppressed often occurs in the academic world as well, where minorities are often limited to minority studies.

4. For a "caste minority" to go from a process of categorization-by-others to one of self-categorization the majority must promote rather than simply tolerate their categorization.

In a paradoxical world of majorities and minorities, dreams of personal well-being, harmony, and peace are the same for both groups. But often, the majority, lacking experience and knowledge of how language and culture are necessary for identity, denies the minority its dream for a separate socioeconomic justice while justifying its reality as a separate marginalized group. A quote by Joshua Fishman (1976: 118) might be the answer to the dream of minorities within the dream of majorities and the broader dream of socioeconomic justice and unity: "Ethnicity grows stronger when denied, oppressed, or repressed, and becomes more reasonable and more tractable when recognized and liberated." The earlier quote by Fortier (1985; Edwards's References) justifies this position in the Canadian context. It turns out that the majority's active promotion of self-categorization by minorities may be the only way to eventually break the closure that is characteristic of unequal societal groups and live the dream of equality and unity in differences.

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Notes

1. "That all pluralism is a dream, and dreams are life."
2. Following are the actual verses from *La vida es sueño*, Act I, scene 3:

Cuentan de un sabio que un día/ tan pobre y misero estaba,
que sólo se sustentaba/ de unas yerbas que comía.
¿Habrà otro — entre sí decía —/ más pobre y triste que yo?
Y cuando el rostro volvió,/ halló la respuesta, viendo
que iba otro sabio cogiendo/ las hojas que él arrojó.

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