

Journal #4 Caramelo

As I read on through the book, I noticed how appealing to Americans was something that Inocencio sought to always do, whether in Chicago or in Texas. In Chicago, he desperately wanted to get out of jail, and what better way than to enlist in the army? When he first learned how to speak English, he translated his Spanish directly; to show his appreciation he would always say “you are very kind, thank you..” when in the United States the “muy amable” that often follows a thank you in Mexico is rarely included after the thank you. This take on language was very interesting because in the beginning Lala would explain how her father and his brothers would not succumb to their bosses, but it seems that Inocencio did in fact cater to Americans. This is a stereotype that I’ve seen in the United States: how Mexicans are hard workers who due to language and class barriers are complacent within their jobs as long as they could keep it. This was the case in Texas. In order to do a sale, Inocencio catered to the white man by telling him “white lies” about how he knew his father in the army from the same base. Since this of course made his customer happy, he was able to smoothly make business and keep his work going. These lies were unapproved by his wife, who is unexperienced in the workforce and therefore, I conclude, she doesn’t realize the necessity of them.

Another observation about Mexicans is how all people from Mexico City are liars on page 353 and similar other quotes throughout the book. This is a mean stereotype. The previous example shows clearly how they lie, but the excuse is that its “being polite.” Other lies that may be included in this stereotype can be

about identification, hyperbole, and infidelity. All illegal Mexicans that cross the border come to work and usually have to acquire illegal identification, lying about their names, stealing other's social security numbers, making use of the United States benefits. Mexicans are also said to be over exaggerated; Inocencio and the Awful Grandmother lie about the house they bought and the store that he "owns", leaving Lala and her mother disappointed. Infidelity may be the most common, but that seems to occur in most Hispanic cultures very frequently. Why would Cisneros choose to include this? As a Mexican, does she want to make her people look bad by telling the "truth" and if not then what purpose does it serve to provide all these stereotypes?

One reason that I can suggest is that she wants to against the stereotype, somehow. She obviously doesn't want to be a hypocrite, and plus the story is like an autobiography and you wants to tell truth, yet not. She is also one who exaggerates and throughout obviously makes up stories. The difference is that we know when she's lying while the white man and Lala and her mother don't know that they're being lied to at the time. We get a great story too, which gives Cisneros justification. I'm still "iffy" about the concept of lying and how Mexicans lie.

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