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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

En(countering) YA: Young Lords, shadowshapers, and the longings and possibilities of Latinx young adult literature

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Abstract Recent Latinx young adult literature (YA) serves as a window into how authors narrate the promises and failures of cultural nationalism of past generations and how they imagine youth participating in revolutionary practices today, including accessing alternative forms of literature and education beyond established academia. This article places YA in its context as a US tradition in which authors have expressed particular notions about the adolescent as a subject in relation to social, state, and family structures. For example, Latinx YA, as an alternative to standard Anglo stories, which founded the medium in the United States, presents adult–child relationships as a kind of intergenerational activist legacy. Employing Richard Delgado's concept of counter-storytelling, and drawing on Ramón Saldívar's ideas about historical fantasy, this essay analyzes current Latinx literature for youth, centralizing the work of Sonia Manzano in historical fiction and Daniel José Older in urban fantasy.

Keywords Young adult literature · Latinx literature · Ethnic studies · The Young Lords Party · Sonia Manzano · Daniel José Older · Cultural nationalism · Puerto Rico · Counter-storytelling

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What is the role of Latinx[1] literature for youth in the Trump era? In young adult literature, a medium known for its propensity toward problem resolution, what problems do Latinx writers for youth seek to resolve? Latinx young adult literature (YA) demonstrates that the promise of a young person transitioning into, though never reaching, adulthood forms part of how Latinx writers imagine the work of recovering from racial and colonial violence. Whereas earlier generations emphasized stories of migration and assimilation, recent Latinx YA serves as a window into how authors narrate the promises and failures of cultural nationalism of past generations and how they imagine youth participating in revolutionary practices today, including accessing alternative forms of literature and education beyond and apart from established academia.

Latino studies, as part of the larger project of ethnic studies, serves as a challenge to the traditional pedagogical project of the American canon, particularly as it is presented to young readers. As has been the case since ethnic studies movements rose in the US, recent contentions in states such as Arizona and Texas usually center on reading materials and curriculum for youth—in which Latinx youth literature plays a pivotal role. Yet, the role of Latinx children's and YA literature has been largely unexplored in Latinx studies, and Latinx literary studies as a whole, though scholarship in this area is growing (Brady 2013; Jiménez García 2014, 2017; Millán 2015; Matos 2017). Latinx YA also receives little attention from scholars in children's and YA literature, particularly in the humanities. Mary Pat Brady, in her chapter on children's literature in *The Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature* (2013) highlights that "how 'the child' is conceptualized remains important to the theater of national power struggles and to the formation of boundaries of belonging" (p. 375). Brady asks Latinx scholars to consider, how have "Latino/a writers imagined the child as a vehicle to imagine the social? More specifically, how have Latino/a writers utilized literature for children as part of this effort to envision a different world?" Currently, Latinx YA, in which historical fiction and urban fantasy are trending, showcases how Latinx authors use the tropes and tenets of YA as a medium to lament the loss of cultural nationalism as preserved in earlier protest movements, and to imagine, through the role of youth, the potential steps forward to recovery and transformation.

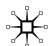
This essay analyzes recent Latinx young adult literature as in conversation with the historical tradition of American young adult literature. Beyond marketing and popularity, YA, since about the late 1960s, functions as a literary medium in specific ways in the American literary landscape. For example, scholars have highlighted YA as an intellectual space wherein writers work through themes of institutional and state power, social struggles, trauma, and history in American culture (Trites 2000; Tribunella 2010; Ulanowicz 2011; Alexander and Kidd 2017). YA literature

[1] "Latinx" emerges as a term in public and academic scholarship in 2015 with articles such as "The Case for Latinx: Why Intersectionality Is Not a Choice" by María R. Scharrón-Del Río and Alan A. Aja, *Latino Rebels*, 5 December. http://www.latinorebels.com/2015/12/05/the-case-for-latinx-why-intersectionality-is-not-a-choice/. "Latinx" reflects a desire for more gender-inclusive language and has also been interpreted as an homage to indigenous heritage.

also represents adolescence as a time of experimentation and dissent, a pattern that resembles national discourses of revolution and independence (Ulanowicz 2011). However, YA literary scholarship has historically centered Anglo authors and characters, drawing valuable comparisons between concepts of youth and the nation, yet without considering authors and youth protagonists of color. The work of centering authors and protagonists of color, or "multicultural" YA, has traditionally fallen on education and library science scholarship (Sims-Bishop 1990; Harris 1990, 1992; Nieto 1992, 1995, 2000). My analysis here builds on Sandra Hughes-Hassell's work on multicultural YA as a form of counter-storytelling, which in turn draws on critical race theory, specifically Richard Delgado's work on counter-storytelling and counternarratives. In highlighting Latinx YA, my work ties to Ramon Saldivar's essay on ethnic US writers, including Latinx, in what he calls historical fantasy, specifically his contention that, "in the twenty-first century, the relationship between race and social justice, race and identity, and indeed, race and history requires writers to invent a new 'imaginary' for thinking about the nature of a just society and the role of race in its construction" (2011, p. 574). Latinx YA currently serves as a dynamic space in which to reflect on how Latinx authors negotiate new ways of imagining social justice and alternative, interactive forms of literature and education.

I call attention to how Latinx authors employ counter-storytelling by disrupting the "single story" about what it means to grow up as American in YA (Adichie 2009). In both the texts I examine, Sonia Manzano's *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano* (2012) and Daniel José Older's *Shadowshaper* (2015), key adult figures, though not necessarily parental, perform counternarratives for youth of color, emphasizing local knowledges and ancestral legacies that awaken youth to radical activism. My analysis is not meant to provide an analysis of all YA, Latinx, multicultural, or otherwise, but presents Manzano and Older as examples of how Latinx authors build on longstanding YA norms, particularly the ways youth rebel against adults and experience trauma as analyzed in YA scholarship. Indeed, my use of the terms "adolescent rebellion" and "trauma" here specifically tie to the work of YA scholars so as to build a conversation among fields. I see Manzano and Older as writing a collective story about how YA serves as a space for contemplating the problems and possibilities about the Latinx past and present. My essay is ultimately an invitation for scholars to continue exploring the nuances of Latinx YA as an aesthetic and political medium, and as part of the greater tradition of Latinx literature.

I organize this essay around the two literary tropes in American YA receiving the most critical attention in literary scholarship: the adolescent as rebelling against adult authority, and the adolescent in crisis and working out personal traumas. Such tropes, as Roberta Trites (2000), Eric Tribunella (2010), and Julia Mickenburg (2006) suggest, stem from a Cold War fear of youth and communist ideology. In adopting YA as a medium, Manzano and Older insert youth protagonists in a literary tradition that historically carries subversive qualities, while at the same time collapsing traditional concepts of adult–child relationships and refiguring adolescent "trauma," as understood by YA scholarship, as rooted in colonialism. This new generation of Latinx writers attributes the ruptures in the Latinx protagonist's world not just to a greater dystopian state power, but also to US imperialism in Latin America and the Caribbean. Moreover, colonialism extends to the contemporary ways it



continues to affect urban youth, such as through racial and social inequality, historical erasure, and gentrification.

I argue that Latinx authors essentially use the master narratives that made YA a distinctive and revolutionary medium for American white audiences in the 1950s as a means of questioning and disrupting narratives of US colonialism for young readers. The current trend in Latinx literature for youth contains a potent argument against colonial oppression, stolen histories, and territories—all things that the Latinx protagonist resists through activism on the road to adulthood. Ultimately, Latinx adults cosign on this resistance, which is a clear diversion from Anglo YA. Here, I explore the interrelationships among youth, adults, rebellion and maturity, as outlined by YA criticism, with respect to the uses of local histories and counter-storytelling in Latinx texts. First, I underscore how Manzano's *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano* and Older's *Shadowshaper* function as counter-stories to traditional YA storylines by underscoring adult passivity (rather than authority) as a source of adolescent rebellion and historical traumas (rather than solely personal ones) as a catalyst for maturity. Second, I analyze how characters such as the Young Lords Party (YLP) in Manzano and Grandpa Lázaro in Older provide counter-stories forcing Evelyn and Sierra, respectively, to confront a family history of passivity in the face of injustice—including the nationalist uprising in 1930s Puerto Rico and the gentrification of the 2010s in tandem with cultural and historical erasure in Latinx Brooklyn. Both Evelyn and Sierra work with adults and other teens in their communities to lift oppression and complacency, working toward an intergenerational activist legacy. This is a significant deviation from traditional YA norms, wherein youth are often divided and work apart from the adult world (Hinton 1967; Rowling 1997; Collins 2008). Third, I conclude by problematizing the trend in Latinx YA to explore the Latinx past in relationship to YA's tendency toward problem resolution. *Evelyn Serrano* and *Shadowshaper,* together, tell a story of lament about the inability of cultural nationalism to effect lasting social change, and dwell on the possibilities of youth as creating alternative means of literature, education, and liberation. I end by presenting *Shadowshaper*, an urban fantasy, as a space in which readers may participate in the creation, even the writing, of those alternative means.

The dynamics of American YA and Latinx adolescent rebellion against adult passivity

I focus on *Evelyn Serrano* and *Shadowshaper* because of the centrality of both texts in mainstream conversations about YA as a Latinx medium and the books' reception by reviewers, readers, and educators (NYPL 2015; *Kirkus Reviews* 2015; NYC DOE 2015). However, along with a trend of fantasy, the sense of reclaiming history is a recurring theme in contemporary Latinx literature for youth since at least 2002, which starts with Julia Alvarez's *Before We Were Free*, on the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic. Ashley Hope Pérez, the winner of the 2015 Printz Award—the premier prize for "excellence in" American young adult literature—focuses her *Out of Darkness* on the New London school explosion, a forgotten chapter in Texas history that claimed the lives of hundreds of teens including Mexican

youth. In addition, Duncan Tonatiuh (2015), Margorie Agosín (2014), Margarita Engle (2008), Meg Medina (2016), and Lila Quintero Weaver (2012) also take on Latinx and Latin American historical events in Latinx literature for youth. The rise of urban historical fantasy in this group is parallel in terms of the recent success of Zoraida Cordova's *Labyrinth Lost* (2016) and Older's *Shadowshaper* (2015), both of which will become fantasy series. These works unite with an overall call for "own voices" narratives and voices of people of color in youth literature. Each author reflects on history but, particularly with Alvarez (2002, 2004), Agosín (2014), Engle (2008), Medina (2016), and Quintero Weaver (2012), as in Manzano and Older, the tendency is to linger on the complications of adult and youth responsibility in action for social change, and on "who lives, who dies, who tells your story" (Miranda et al. 2015). Rita Williams-Garcia's *One Crazy Summer* (2010), a YA novel on the Black Panther Party, debuted just three years before *Evelyn Serrano,* and Ilysah Shabazz, daughter of Malcom X, wrote, with Kekla Magoon, *X: A Novel* (2015) about the radical civil rights leader in the same year as Older, suggesting a concurrent interest by African American and Latinx writers to explore the role of youth in specifically radical histories. All recount narratives from the perspective of questioning authority, as in traditional YA, but from the dually marginalized position of both a young person and a racial and ethnic minority.

In tandem with Rudine Sims-Bishop's groundbreaking metaphors of "mirrors, windows, and doors" for studying youth literature, Sandra Hughes-Hassell considers the power of multicultural, culturally relevant literature as something beyond enabling youth to "identify" with characters and storylines (Sims-Bishop 1990; Harris 1992; Hughes-Hassell 2013). Hughes-Hassell writes, "Multicultural literature can do even more. As an integral part of the social and academic context, I believe multicultural literature can act as a counter-story to the dominant narrative about people of color and indigenous peoples" (2013, p. 214). Violet Harris (1990) also reminds us that a kind of "scholarly canon" has emerged around multicultural youth literature, after the 1970s movement for ethnic studies, including the work of Sims-Bishop, Harris, Debbie Reese (2016), and Sonia Nieto (1992, 1995, 2000). Yet, scholarly canons regarding mainstream and multicultural YA rarely intersect, calling into question a lack of scholarship in the humanities on multicultural YA. Scholarship on American YA literature continues to grow; however, Roberta Trites's work on youth, authority, and subjectivity (2000) and Eric Tribunella's scholarship on youth and trauma (2010) have outlined a scholarly agenda that defined YA as a US phenomenon. Julia Mickenberg's *Learning from the Left* (2006) and Mickenburg and Phil Nel's *Tales for Little Rebels* (2010) also helped reframe the history of US youth literature and culture, including its radical tendencies. Mickenberg (2006) highlights the project to transform the "all-white world" of youth literature as a radical venture in the 1970s. The civil rights and ethnic studies movements led to the founding of the Council on Interracial Children's Books by "old Leftists" many of whom were black and Latinx, and worked in other radical forms of education such as the Freedom Schools (Mickenberg 2006). Multicultural YA has always sought to challenge dominant master narratives. However, the bulk of scholarship on YA, including the books and authors critiqued in scholarly works, has prominently defined the medium as Anglo. Few scholars take into account how racial and

national associations complicate the notions of adolescence, rebelling, authority, and maturity central to YA.

Public conversations tend to focus on the popularity of YA, tracing its rise to the late 1990s and J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series (Diaz 2015), and it cannot be denied that series fiction such as Rowling's Harry Potter and Stephenie Meyer's Twilight series triggered publishing trends making YA a prominent, promising market for both adult and young readers into the 2010s, in which Latinx authors play an important part. However, Trites and Tribunella would point to the formation of YA in the late 1960s, with novels such as S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* (1967), although some scholars place the beginning of YA as early as (1942), with *Seventeenth Summer* by Maureen Daly. Trites emphasizes the YA novel as different from a bildungsroman or coming-of-age story, calling it instead entwicklungsroman, since "the protagonist has not reached adulthood by the end of the narrative" (2000, p. 225). A YA novel hinges on the process of development of the young protagonist—emotional, psychological, perhaps physical—not the transition or fulfillment into adulthood. *The Outsiders* established YA as a didactic medium associated with trauma and problem resolution. Tribunella argues that trauma in American YA is especially associated with loss—whether loss of a person, object, dog, or even an ideal. YA novels also hinge on an adolescent figure in crisis, working through issues of personal and national traumas, all the while in opposition to adult ideological institutions such as the church, the state, the family, and the school. YA literature's pedagogical role in young readers' socialization means that institutional power and socialization may be represented in specific ways, perhaps even due to a desire to, as Trites writes, "indoctrinate adolescents into a measure of social acceptance" (2000, p. 433). Trites outlines the "biases" of Anglo-dominant YA as she writes that "since Anglophone cultures, by and large, usually accept as a given the premise that adolescents must separate from their parents in order to grow, the literature of these cultures reflect that same bias" (2000, p. 790). This bias about the separation from parents or adults shapes how Anglo authors imagine youth, separation, rebellion, and growth and, in turn, the youthscapes in literature. A main difference in Latinx literature for youth comes through an emphasis on strong family relationships. The separation from the adult world is not protocol in a Latinx adolescent's journey, and may not be for other youth of color, precisely since they live in a world in which adults in their communities are not empowered in the traditional sense. "While U.S. and European literatures train their children to become better members of the dominant class," as Ann González has previously argued about Latin American and Caribbean youth literature, "[Latinx] children, who have a long history of domination, first by Spain and then by the United States, have other lessons to learn" about negotiating in systems in which they are marginalized (González 2009, p. 1).

Manzano and Older create teenage characters that in many ways model the typical, jaded American teen, yet, as readers, we often get a sense that Evelyn and Sierra's angst is rooted not just in a general "parents just don't understand" or "rebel without a cause" trope, but in deep feelings about racial and social inequality. Evelyn narrates the opening: "I had fixed up my room all by myself without my mother's help. That's why it wasn't decorated in late 1960s Puerto Rican décor—plastic covering all the furniture and fake roses everywhere. Which was Mami's way of making

our home look pretty" (Manzano 2013, p. 3). Much of Evelyn's sass and discontent stems from her view of the Barrio as a community isolated from the current, progressive historical moment. Evelyn is fed up with "listening to old people talk about Puerto Rico as they watched Telemundo on television" (p. 2). She asks, "This was 1969, and who cared about Puerto Rico in the old days anyway? Not me" (p. 3). In a later passage, Evelyn asks, "What did hippies in Woodstock have to do with me in *El Barrio*?" (2013, p. 54) The civil rights era and its iconic progressive movement, it seems, were nonexistent in El Barrio, until the YLP and Evelyn's grandmother unlock the local histories that position Evelyn in the movement.

Older's Sierra also struggles with the relevance and significance of the narratives around her, even as she is charged by adults in the community to revive and even complete those narratives. The Bed-Stuy murals bearing the fading faces of Latinx matriarchs and patriarchs in the community beckon her to discover these secrets. In the opening of *Shadowshaper,* Sierra is perplexed by the fading mural of Papá Acevedo, a local Latinx patriarch, which literally "cries" because of generations of commercial, economic, and even academic forces that have encroached in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn: "It seemed to disappear more and more every hour…. It took Sierra a few seconds to find the old man's face peering out from the brick" (2015, p. 1). Anglo YA literature, in the tradition of *The Outsiders,* tends to capitalize on a sense of teenagers as isolated and living on the fringes of society—it's teens against teens, and ultimately, teens against adults. Teens may even have a separate culture and world in which they govern, away from the influences of adults. Manzano and Older counter this tradition by portraying teens who must share close quarters in urban spaces with adults, such as when Evelyn must share a bedroom with her nationalist grandmother, or when Sierra paints her murals in continuous supportive conversations with Manny and the local domino players. Sierra knows the mural represents a transgression, and outright defiance, since it was not solicited by the owners. Manny, however, reassures Sierra by reinforcing the mural's place as an affront to the owners and, perhaps more specifically, the gentrifiers. "'We're sure they *will* be [mad],' Manny chuckled. 'That's why we asked you to do it. We hate the Tower. We spit on the Tower. Your paint is our nasty loogie, hocked upon the stupidity that is the Tower'" (Older 2015, p. 1). With this example, Older sets up the interdependence of youth with adults, and vice versa, particularly when they have the same enemy—the nefarious force of racial and social inequality.

Evelyn and Sierra lack a collective memory and narrative, which counter-storytelling later provides, mainly from adults, including family members. Negotiating in and around power structures becomes further complicated for Evelyn and Sierra because of a sense of disenfranchisement from dominant historical narratives. Evelyn wishes to know her place in the civil rights struggle, and Sierra longs to comprehend her role in the literal, historical erasure of her family and community legacy. Richard Delgado emphasizes how a lack of collective narrative affects community awareness and formation (1989). As Hughes-Hassell explains, "telling (and hearing) counter-stories [of] marginalized groups" allows members not only to "gain healing from becoming familiar with their own historic oppression and victimization," but also to "realize they are not alone; that others have the same thoughts and experiences" (2013, p. 215). More importantly, according to Delgado, counter-storytelling

“can show us the way out of the trap of unjustified exclusion” (1989, p. 2140). Both Evelyn and Sierra witness the undermining of their Latinx communities in different ways in different generations. For Evelyn, in the late 1960s Barrio prior to the YLP’s garbage offensive, she reflects on a landscape that “never changes” and people who literally seem frozen and barred from change, trapped in a world where the NYC Sanitation Department never picks up the garbage: “I couldn’t erase the kids at other windows, too little to go out but dying to be free, with their faces pressed up against the mesh wire that kept them inside” (Manzano 2012, p. 55). For Sierra, in a post–civil rights, and post–Young Lords, New York, it is the disappearing of cultural markers from her neighborhood that we, as readers, are meant to notice and lament. We may also lament that these markers represent a Latinx/Puerto Rican community that seems perpetually in survival mode, even after decades of political and social protest movements in the US.

Evelyn Serrano and *Shadowshaper* provide windows into worlds in which adult status translates into minimal access to local resources and authority. Adults in El Barrio and Bed-Stuy are not the traditional agents of “repression,” which teens must rebel against in order to acquire an identity (Trites 2000). Standard YA would have us remember that parents, teachers, religious figures, and police usually function together as agents of socialization and control over the adolescent. El Barrio and Bed-Stuy’s adults, however, seem just as limited and subjugated as the young people, if not more so. Manzano and Older provide us not with a host of absentee adults who are disconnected from the lives of youth; instead, we have adults who are very present in youth’s lives—cooking meals, asking questions (though at times not answering questions), worrying about teen’s futures. Yet, these adults reflect back on youth similar limitations on rights and agency. As a teen, how do you “rebel” against adult authority when the adults in your life do not seem to possess any control over the systems around you? In Manzano, two Barrio parents in particular who illustrate the impotence and subjectivity of adults are Mami and Señor Santiago, the Barrio’s piragua man and father of Evelyn’s friend, Angel. Evelyn’s impressions of these characters reflect her understanding of social authority and how she imagines her place in a sociopolitical hierarchy. The chapter introducing Mami is titled, “My Mother the Slave,” emphasizing the subjugated way in which Evelyn views her mother’s actions. Evelyn fumes with frustration at her mother’s tendency to resolve conflict by offering her and others more food and drink:

> I hated that beggy voice of hers. She sounded like a slave. I just wanted to go to the bathroom and then back to my room like I did on any other normal morning, not hear her pitiful *beggy* voice offering me more coffee. Besides, I knew she was mad at me. *She* knew she was mad at me—as mad as she ever had the nerve to get. Why couldn’t she act mad if she felt mad? She could at least not speak to me, or shoot me a dirty look. Instead, she wanted to give me more coffee. (Manzano 2012, p. 1)

Evelyn’s unresolved anger intensifies at what she sees as Mami’s inability to assert herself, even against her own daughter.

Contrasting with Mami, when Manzano first introduces Señor Santiago, he is a disciplinarian and bully. Señor Santiago “could be really mean,” a man who

disciplined his son by "mak[ing] him kneel on raw rice while holding a pot of boiling water over his head." The humiliation "made Angel always look like somebody was going to hit him between the eyes" (p. 12). Later, Evelyn watches as policemen question Señor Santiago for selling piraguas without a license. The policemen imply that Señor Santiago's piraguas are "contaminated" and "dirty," issuing him a ticket for noncompliance with the Board of Health. When Señor Santiago exclaims that he can't pay the ticket, the police simply reply, "You gotta, buddy. It's the law" (p. 24). Evelyn looks on as Señor Santiago seems oddly emasculated in front of her: "He looked around like he needed to tell somebody something, but didn't know what or who to tell. His *esperanza de un pobre* eyes looked like they were going to cry" (p. 25). The line "what or who" suggests Señor Santiago as beyond impotent, but also separate from any kind of common group or advocacy. The Barrio, as a community, had no story and no voice. Evelyn and its residents went about their lives in total disconnect from society and the political climate of the late 1960s. The policemen, as agents of the state, represent a hypocritical legal system—a system that fines a Barrio businessman for being "dirty" while overlooking the denial of trash removal services in the area.

Both Manzano and Older suggest that parents and other adults do not represent the traditional agents of state socialization, but actually occupy positions similar to those of children, which is perhaps why adults such as Evelyn's grandmother and, later, even Mami, also participate in, and benefit from, events leading to liberation. In *Shadowshaper,* Sierra also witnesses the same kind of passivity in her mother, which implies a critique of Latinx mothering, particularly a mothering that would instruct Latinx women in submission over generations. Interestingly, when we first meet María Carmen Corona Santiago, Older introduces her as somewhat of a spitfire. Maria, a teacher, boasts to Bennie, Sierra's friend, about defying the headmaster over "banned books" (p. 10). Although Maria objects to censorship in her classroom, she seems to approve of it in her home with her daughter, since she refuses to answer Sierra's questions about Grandpa Lazaro's comments about the shadowshapers: "Suddenly, it was like some invisible barrier sprang into place." Sierra's thoughts on her mother's passivity reflect Evelyn's almost identically: "It would've been so much better if she'd just yell and scream like a normal mom. Instead, she didn't even raise her voice. Sierra knew that was that—the conversation was over, the battle lost. 'Fine.' Sierra turned. 'C'mon, Bennie.' 'Sierra, come back,' María called, but her voice sounded empty" (Older 2015, p. 11). A "normal mom" would perhaps be the typical YA mom who restricts her daughter to the rules and regulations of societal norms. Instead, Maria is silent. The battle between mother and daughter ultimately points back to the battle over Bed-Stuy and those that would see Sierra's Latinx neighborhood transformed into the next hot Brooklyn destination. The loss would also cut off generations of shadowshapers, a kind of indigenous legacy that awaits Sierra, and comes with a supernatural ability to channel spirits into art. The spirits, in Older's vision, lend an integrity to the neighborhood, and an indelible presence that speak specifically to the neighborhood's history, including its heroes and its tragedies. In addition to Papá Acevedo, the story of Vincent's mural speaks to a history of police violence. The mural memorializes Vincent as a carefree teen (something perhaps denied to teens of color) with "a terrific cheeseball grin." It

is only when this grin begins to deform that Sierra realizes the danger in remaining ignorant and passive (p. 33). Older also highlights the subjectivity of Latinx adults, through the character of Uncle Neville. When Sierra travels to Columbia University to investigate the shadowshapers, Uncle Neville "plays the fool" in order for Sierra to make it past library security by leaving an empty suitcase. "Why'd everyone go running and security get all upset?" Sierra said. "Cuz a black man put a bag down and walked away." "But…." "It worked, didn't it?" Regardless of Uncle Neville's wit, his clever pass capitalizes on the racist power structures that view him and Sierra, as AfroLatinxs, as outsiders on an Ivy League campus. Sierra needs Uncle Neville, but ultimately Uncle Neville needs Sierra, because youth will ultimately bring a new order. Youth rebellion in both novels becomes a case study in revolutionary practices.

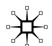
The Young Lords, the shadowshapers, and the impasse of colonialism

Manzano and Older demonstrate how youth, with the help of adults, interrupt the narratives of ignorance and complacency in El Barrio and Bed-Stuy through strategic ways involving literacy and counter-storytelling. Evelyn finds a flyer reading. "Come to a Young Lords Rally/Do not be oppressed/Freedom for Puerto Rico/Enough exploitation of the poor" (Manzano 2013, p. 57). Evelyn refers to this and other flyers and leaflets throughout the novel (p. 105). As in Delgado's theory, the leaflets function as a means of creating community for marginalized youth by allowing access to others' testimonies of frustration and outrage. In turn, acknowledging injustice allows youth to "stop blaming themselves for their marginal position and construct counter-stories to challenge the dominant story" (Delgado 1989; Hughes-Hassell 2013). The YLP also begin collecting stories from adults: "This kid with long hair who could barely speak Spanish asked us what we thought the neighborhood needed" (Manzano 2012, p. 53). This oral storytelling performed by the YLP may have been one of the first times Barrio adults had an opportunity to discuss grievances with other community members in their native language. Once again, the YA tradition would tell us that the YLP as a group of young people are uniquely positioned for revolutionary work. However, these "college students" and "long-haired kids" show a sincere interest in the needs of Barrio adults, which breaks from the customary YA pattern of adult versus youth, although adults initially express fear at their disheveled outward appearance (Manzano 2012, p. 53). Although normative YA thrives on the figure of rebellious youth, it is interesting to see how Older and Manzano revise this trope into youth figures who specifically resist Americanization. Evelyn and Sierra both "rebel" to the extent that they resist assimilation, including assimilationist narratives in immigrant literature and multicultural YA.

Although Sierra receives counter-stories through her interactions with Grandpa Lázaro and his constant calls for "Lucera," a missing, powerful spirit that has been manipulated by a kind of evil anthropologist, Dr. Wick, her access to culturally relevant writing and personal research and investigation ultimately unravels the mystery of the shadowshapers and Sierra's power. The scene at Columbia University Library demonstrates how youth of color must transgress limitations in order to

gain access to literature, education, knowledge, and even academic study, given that Sierra, an Afro-Puerto Rican young woman, is excluded from a library that contains knowledge about her. Columbia University serves as a portal between Manzano and Older's texts. It served as a site of historical struggle for ethnic studies movements in the late 1960s, particularly Black and Latinx studies, and a university in which some YLP leaders were enrolled during the height of the group. When Sierra walks into the library, she witnesses the simultaneous triumphs and failures of the cultural nationalism that brought ethnic studies to Columbia: "Sierra had never seen so many books. *Economic Development in the Third World*, one title proclaimed loudly from a display table. *Studies in Puerto Rican Literature* said another. It'd never even occurred to her there was such a thing as Puerto Rican literature, let alone that it would be worthy of a thick volume in a Columbia University library" (Older 2015, p. 48). Older positions the character of librarian Nydia Ochoa strategically in this seat of academic knowledge. Nydia, a young revolutionary Puerto Rican woman in her early thirties, makes the space accessible to Sierra. Nydia is on the inside of academic knowledge so as to make it available to those the academy would keep out: "'Eventually, Imma open my own library up here in Harlem, but like a people's library, not just for academics. And it'll be full of people's stories, not just jargony scholar talk. This is like practice, really, and to boost my standing in the eyes of certain potential funders.' 'You have a whole plan, huh?' Sierra said. She'd never met anyone like Nydia before." In a moment of imagined intertextuality, we can imagine that Older's Nydia, a generation later, is a product of revolutionary movements by youth organizations in NYC such as the YLP—who emphasized "the people's" stories and histories. Nydia, like Uncle Neville and Grandpa Lázaro, encourages transgressing societal protocols for the benefit of Latinx communities. Ultimately, Nydia gives Sierra a library ID similar to those made for Columbia University interns, so Sierra may continue her research on the documentation of shadowshapers in her community (Older 2015, p. 50). It is Nydia who asks one of the most intriguing questions in the novel, which connects to the consequences of colonialism for the marginalized: "'Who gets to study and who gets studied, and why? Who makes the decisions, you know?' 'I don't know at all,' Sierra said" (p. 50). As a representation of some of the most marginalized groups in Latinx societies, AfroLatinxs, Sierra confronts the reality of an academy that has appropriated the knowledges of those it seeks to study and critique (hooks 1994).

Manzano and Older shape Latinx YA into a medium that questions the limitations of established history and institutional knowledge and advocates for the necessity of counter-stories and alternative modes of literature and education resisting academic models. Manzano and Older challenge the dominant narratives about Latinx youth as "reluctant readers" and politically apathetic community members by underlining questions of access and subjectivity. Nydia, Grandpa Lazaro, and the YLP's strategies rupture adult and youths' perspectives, enabling the community to stop looking at limited space and services as normal. Indeed, Delgado notes counter-storytelling as serving marginalized communities in its ability to "destroy" the norm (p. 2410). In *Evelyn Serrano*, members of the YLP, as characters in the book and in real life, also tie together a history of political oppression from the island to the diaspora, placing the origins of conflict and suppression in Puerto Rico's colonial status—and



a lack of community resulting from a lack of knowledge. At the First Spanish Methodist Church, during the uprising, the main scuffle—the moment that ultimately breaks the silence on behalf of adults—begins not so much because of the church's denial of space in the church for the breakfast program, or the neighborhood's lack of proper trash removal and public services. Instead, I read the riot as escalating because of a desire on behalf of youth for community solidarity. The Young Lord who initially stands during the church service, after asking several times for permission for the breakfast program, shouts, "There is something wrong here! This is not a community!" (Manzano 2012, p. 114). The brawl, standoff with the police, and nailing shut of the church doors is reframed as a show of force in order to bring about solidarity.

New meanings and counter-stories redeem the sense of meaninglessness and disconnect that Evelyn testifies to early in the novel. The church, renamed the People's Church by the Lords, is reinvented into a place where locals congregate to have material and, to an extent, emotional and socials needs met. One of the greatest needs is for history, something the YLP emphasized almost as much as medical treatment and food. Evelyn begins to want to "go to church." Evelyn and her friend Angel have a reaction similar to Older's Sierra at the Columbia library, as they visit a YLP history class that makes Angel cognizant of his previous void: "I never thought of Puerto Ricans as having a history. How stupid is that? I mean—everybody has history, right? People don't just come from nowhere" (Manzano 2012, p. 152). The YLP's counter-storytelling also opens up a collective history for El Barrio, which Manzano portrays as both personal and community-wide. These counter-stories create new imagined possibilities and prepare Evelyn and her family members to confront the family's past and construct their own counter-histories, which bring healing and restoration to personal breaches, something Delgado emphasizes in his plea for storytelling practices (Delgado 1989). Delgado writes, "For stories create their own bonds, represent cohesion, shared understandings, and meanings. The cohesiveness that stories bring is part of the strength of the outgroup. And the outgroup creates its own stories, which circulate within the group as a kind of counter-reality" (p. 2412). In *Shadowshaper,* Sierra transgresses the academy to conduct personal research that re-centers her community as a site of knowledge. She devours the research notebooks she finds at the library, realizing that her and the community's lack of access to academic discourses and knowledge has actually led to the misuse of her community's history by the academy. Dr. Wick has found a way to harness and cut off the power of the shadowshapers, thus Sierra finds her quest, and the fading of the murals takes on meaning.

The need for collective stories and recovery of lost histories in the novel parallels the traditional socializing project of YA literature, though I will demonstrate some key diversions for Latinx YA. Returning to Adichie's "danger of the single story" in terms of scholarship, scholars should analyze how lessons on socialization and power shift with regard to the racial and sociopolitical position of marginalized groups, authors, and implied readers. YA scholar Eric Tribunella refers to the pedagogical tendencies of YA as "problem resolution." Tribunella, applying psychoanalysis and trauma theory, explores how lessons learned usually come from a traumatic circumstance, personal and/or historical. Ulanowicz emphasizes the normative YA

audience as a "largely sheltered, middle class readership," whose literature provides exposure "to circumstances they might not initially imagine or anticipate" (201, p. 3). This dramatic loss causes a confrontation with "the brutalities of life"—including the breaking away from the family—and doubles as the story's climax. Tribunella highlights this Freudian trope as "the child-protagonist's love for some cherished object—a dear friend, a dog, a possibility, and ideal—the loss of that loved object, and his or her subsequent maturation through the experience of loving and losing it" (2010, p. xi). More specific to the kinds of trauma depicted in *Evelyn Serrano* and *Shadowshaper* and the current Latinx YA scene, contemporary YA lit reflects a desire to instruct and even discipline young readers through confrontations with historical violence, such as the Holocaust and 9/11, as part of this pedagogical literary project. Such literature has even been called the "children's literature of atrocity" (Kidd 2005; Ulanowicz 2011; Schwebel 2014). The normative pattern is that loss "induc[es]" the teen protagonist, and readers to a certain extent, into maturity. Tribunella asks, "Why does American culture seem to consider trauma an appropriate, indeed, necessary tool for 'ushering children into adulthood'"? (2010, p. xi). However, I ask, how does Latinx YA interrupts narratives of trauma and "sheltered" youth approaching maturity? How is historical violence treated differently by Latinx authors for youth?

Latinx YA represents a coming to terms with oneself as a product of US oppression and colonialism rather than a general "sheltered" understanding of global oppression and personal loss. *Evelyn Serrano* and *Shadowshaper* also function in a sort of hyper-canonical way, in that a traumatic event is key to Evelyn and Sierra's realizations and growth. Yet, both Manzano and Older counter this trope as we learn that the source of violence is Puerto Rico's historical oppression and the aftereffects for the people of the Puerto Rican diaspora, as a multiracial, multilingual, othered group residing in the US metropolis. As in normative YA, Latinx authors for youth also focus on "the dark side of history" (Alvarez 2004). This trend perhaps begins with Julia Alvarez's Belpré Medal–winning *Before We Were Free* (2002). However, a notable difference comes through how Latinx authors emphasize US-supported oppressions in Latin American and Caribbean countries, such as in the work of Marjorie Agosin and Alvarez. Alvarez has stressed that "most [Latin American] dictatorships were put in place and supported by the United States—all the more reason why young Americans should know this dark side of their history…. Where are our Latin American Anne Frank and our Harriet Tubman?" Alvarez calls these moments of historical trauma "the holocausts on our side of the Atlantic" (2004, p. 14). Alvarez implies that Latin American history is American history, and that American readers, including but not exclusively Latinx, should have a "memory" of it (2004, p. 14). Although this is not a comprehensive essay on memory and trauma studies, nor an extensive analysis of how all Latinx authors employ memory and trauma studies, it is important to note how this trend of having youth grapple with atrocity, both in mainstream and Latinx traditions, continues to find a literary home specifically in YA.

Applying Tribunella's theory to this common thread in Latinx YA, of examining "the holocausts," transforms a young protagonist's desire to amend the loss of a love object, especially when considering that it is the protagonist's neighborhood,

culture, history, and ultimately freedom that has been lost. Freedom is the loss that requires healing and counter-memory, which may speak to why Latinx authors, as part of multicultural literature, explore the problem-resolution component of YA as specifically radical. Loss in *Evelyn Serrano* and *Shadowshaper*, however, is a pre-existing condition, instead of a sudden twist in the plot. The young protagonist's awareness of this loss of freedom, and the fight to recover it, takes precedence in both Manzano and Older.

Recovering the loss of freedom comes through the retelling and, in turn, regaining of local, radical histories. Sierra and Robbie, both youth of color, practice these retellings as they continue the work of painting the murals. With a newfound interest and confidence provided by the presence of the Young Lords, Evelyn begins unraveling the stories of the adults in her home and reconstructing her own stories of survival. In particular, Manzano upholds long-standing notions of the important role of grandparents in Latinx households, beyond parental, through the character of Abuela, who is the prime counter-storyteller and the most radical in Evelyn's family. Older also features a similar pattern, in which Sierra, the protagonist, grows in tandem with the information she receives from her Abuelo and "the ancestors," also rooted in strong nationalism based in indigenous culture and spirituality. Evelyn's Abuela, a nationalist and supporter of Puerto Rican independence, plays opposite to the subservient Mami. However, the 1937 Ponce Massacre, a dark moment in island history, is the story that binds Evelyn, Abuela, and Mami together. It is the trauma they must all overcome, particularly as a result of the treason-like involvement of Abel, Evelyn's grandfather, Mami's father, and an ex-member of the Puerto Rican civilian guard. Manzano bases the core of Puerto Rican history on this event, as the massacre functions as a way of uniting the island and Puerto Rican diaspora experiences for Evelyn and readers. The story of the massacre also functions as a possible harbinger, since it stands for a moment when passivity, once again, allowed the destruction of a community.

The Ponce Massacre, as Evelyn learns from Abuela's pictures and stories, happened on Palm Sunday in 1937, in Ponce. Puerto Rican Nationalists wearing black shirts and white pants (symbolic of the nationalist party) began marching for nationalist solidarity and protesting the imprisonment of Pedro Albizu Campos, the nationalist party leader. Though protesters were unarmed, the Puerto Rican civilian guard opened fire on the group, killing nineteen people including children. Evelyn first encounters the incident in Abuela's photo album, which she fumbles through on her dresser. These pictures interrupt the culture of silence in the Serrano home: "It was a photo of a sunny street in what looked like a small town in Puerto Rico. There were policemen shooting in that image… only you could tell what they were shooting at—a crowd of terrified people" (Manzano 2013, p. 49). As is the case with Evelyn early in the novel, she does not self-identify with the "terrified people" as *her* people. Yet, the images of police firing into a crowd in Ponce haunt Evelyn beyond her ability to comprehend connection to her community.

Abuela and Evelyn partner in storytelling, as Abuela makes Evelyn read to her from the newspaper about the Young Lords, while Evelyn sits and listens to Abuela recount her oral history and the incident. With each exchange, over tea and *galletitas,* Abuela reveals more of her story, aided by the pictures:

> Abuela spoke so slowly and quietly. Her words were like soft drops of sad rain.
> "And in 1937, those *policias sinvergüenzas mataron a..*"
> She pounded a fist on her knee.
> "Calm down, Abuela."
> "How can I calm down? Those police shot at innocent people just because they were marching to support the Nationalist party."
> "What is that?"
> "Nationalists are people who want Puerto Rico to be independent from the United States," she said with a sigh. (Manzano 2012, pp. 77–78)

Abuela's oral history reframes the current unrest in the Barrio as the culmination of long-standing injustices. Involvement in the Young Lords revolt transforms into Evelyn removing her family's history of staying silent in the face of injustice. A copy of the *New York Times* describing the Young Lords "garbage offensive" divides the two women as Evelyn sits listening to Abuela. Evelyn sees herself and Abuela as "torn between the old photos and the *New York Times*" (p. 78). The ghostly pictures of the Ponce Massacre further counter Puerto Rico's erasure from current events for Evelyn and continue her trajectory toward restoring a sense of place and history. The retellings lead to the restoration of Abuela and Mami's relationship and, to an extent, the social reawakening of Mami, who begins participating in the cause.

The past and present, much like the relationships between youth and adults, are intertwined and interdependent in *Evelyn Serrano* and *Shadowshaper*. Grandpa Lázaro, Uncle Neville, and Maria are all to an extent paralyzed until Sierra and Bennie uncover the past and the mystery of the shadowshapers and restore order to the community. For Sierra, the same patriarchy that is celebrated on the murals in Bed-Stuy also transforms into a source of ignorance and trauma. Sierra learns from Manny that Grandpa Lazaro kept Sierra from learning about her legacy because of "some machismo crap" (Older 2015, p. 109). Indeed, Abuelo asks Sierra to complete the murals, recognizing her gift, but also requests that she ask Robbie for help. Robbie, as a Latinx male, seems to have more insight from her family about his role in the shadowshapers legacy. Sierra asks Grandpa Lazaro, "Did you really think you could protect me by keeping me in the dark all this time?" (p. 111). Sierra signals at the inability and impotence of adult systems to keep youth "safe" from colonialism, including internalized colonialism manifesting as sexism. The influence of counter-storytelling and the recovery of a radical, decolonial history also suggests an interdependence between activism and growth or maturity. The recovery of lost histories and bonds—things lost through the colonial encounter—lead to a sense of agency, growth, and maturity. Evelyn's later sense of "being somebody" comes from participating in rituals that support her stake in American democracy and resist the historical erasure of her community, including attending the YLP's educational programming at the People's Church and interviewing Abuela (Manzano 2012, p. 122). Sierra's belonging comes through participating in rituals and personal research that tie her to a counter-reality in which community preservation, including restoring of ancestral knowledge, rituals, and "powers," results in social and societal preservation. Sierra literally feels (spiritual/emotional/social) power swelling inside her toward the end of the novel. The implication in *Evelyn Serrano* and *Shadowshaper* is

that an individual, regardless of age, is infantilized and erased to the degree that he or she has no sociopolitical or sociocultural agency or sense of history.

Latinx YA, the problem with problem resolution, and fantastic possibilities

Evelyn Serrano and *Shadowshaper* tell a collective story about the Puerto Rican community's struggle for liberation, the failure of cultural nationalism, and the new pathways to liberation, which may include exploring the radical possibilities of fantasy, spirituality, and nontraditional modes of education. In particular, nontraditional modes of education should resist academic spaces that would own Latinx narratives and knowledges while simultaneously marginalizing Latinx communities. I do not imply that Young Lords Party, nor its generation, touted cultural nationalism. On the contrary, as Wanzer-Serrano argues, the YLP adhered to a form of revolutionary nationalism that differed from the Puerto Rican nationalism of the island in its ability to reject anti-blackness, unite with other Third World liberation movements, and call for decolonialization (2015, p. 1190). Felipe Luciano writes, "Culture without revolutionary politics is like a sword wrapped in foam rubber" (Wanzer-Serrano 2010, p. 134). However, Manzano and Older's young adult texts, imagined as a timeline, suggest that these revolutionary movements were contained and sanitized by neoliberal institutions and even well-meaning community members, such as Evelyn's mom and Sierra's grandfather, and preserved as cultural nationalism, leading to the demise of the truly revolutionary political implications of such movements.

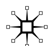
While Evelyn witnesses the rise of the Young Lords Party, with its revolutionary agenda of providing culturally relevant literatures and histories into the hands of the people, Sierra witnesses how those same "people's" narratives can become the property of institutions that would exclude youth of color. To an extent, if Evelyn's problem was that the sanitation department never visited her Latinx neighborhood, Sierra's concern is that developers seek to overly "sanitize" Latinx neighborhoods, leading to displacement. Similarly, in the library scene, Sierra's history and culture seems sanitized and contained by university institutions to the point that Dr. Wick is able to "study" her community out of its legacy and its existence. The places and institutions that the YLP's generation fought to enter seem to have turned on the Latinx community. The goals of providing and empowering people with history, literature, and education have horrifically led to the empowerment of the elite. One generation after the YLP, Latinx youth, as Older depicts, literally fight for visibility and are no longer seen as experts in their own stories.

Together, Manzano and Older seem to celebrate and mourn the rise of revolutionary nationalism and the collapse of cultural nationalism, dwelling on the radical promises and failures of a generation to effect lasting structural and sociopolitical change. The Young Lords, Nydia, and the books in the Columbia University library stand in for the greater panorama of black and brown liberation, including the Nuyorican movement and the rise of ethnic studies movements, which sought to organize and empower communities of color who ultimately gained a presence in US institutions, the historical narrative, the canon, and the university. Yet, by employing

YA as a medium, Manzano and Older can freeze the frame and maintain readers in a moment in which the ideologies, indeed the revolutionary politics, behind these movements seem ripe with possibilities. Older in particular seems to imply that somewhere between the 1960s and the present day, revolutionary education for liberation and even ethnic studies became academic commodities disconnected from the communities they sought to empower. However, the ideologies behind these movements have not lost the potential to challenge colonialism for youth willing to reclaim community spaces and knowledge. This is a potential that Older, working in the realm of urban fantasy, can gesture toward much more than perhaps Manzano. He, as Saldívar writes about fantasy for writers of color, is able to "link the realm of public political life to the mysterious workings of the heart's fantastic aspirations for substantive justice, social, racial, poetic, or otherwise" (Older 2015, p. 526). Indeed, the online fan fiction following *Shadowshaper* testifies to youth writing back to Older's narrative and imagining their own adventure and survival strategies for Sierra. In *Shadowshaper*, we see how Sierra must take back ownership of her community's history from academic spaces and find ways to perform her own research and reflection about that history. In this way, Latinx YA, outside formal schooling, becomes an invitation to finish writing the story.

Tribunella might remind us that YA comes with a built-in tendency toward problem resolution—a productive exchange, a sense that a lesson was learned. In a medium imagined as radical, Latinx authors revise the tenets of YA as working toward a critical reconsideration of Latinx history and underlining a tradition of activism and dissent directed at US imperialism. *Evelyn Serrano* and *Shadowshaper* reflect traditional YA tales through their use of the medium to convey youth dissent and recovery of trauma, yet convey the specifics of how Latinx youth experience those processes differently as marginalized youth of color. More work is needed on Latinx YA as a historical and continuing tradition, but I have provided here a literary and historical context in which we may continue examining this window of YA. This essay represents a challenge for more intersectional work in the areas of youth literature and culture, as well as in Latinx studies and ethnic studies, where often works for younger audiences go unnoticed.

The revolutionary possibilities of a protagonist finding a sense of meaning and place in US history through activities that specifically recover a radical, decolonial history, such as those represented by the YLP, the Black Panthers, and indigenous movements, needs further analysis by the YA industry including YA audiences, authors, publishers, and scholars. For example, we are meant to cheer, and perhaps experience a sense of nostalgia, over the images of young people as fearless soldiers, armed and ready to march the streets, not as a figurative army, but a literal army of teenaged rebels, such as when Manzano describes Evelyn marching with the YLP: "We laughed, happy to be part of the sea of army jackets, purple berets, and Puerto Rican flags" (p. 121). Ultimately, these texts ask us to contemplate what is at stake politically, socially, and even legally if youth participate, indeed, initiate education for liberation in black and brown communities today. Furthermore, what is at stake when these youth and community-led projects do interact with academic institutions? The lines between criminality and justice, sanctioned spaces and unsanctioned spaces, young and old blur in



Shadowshaper and *Evelyn Serrano*, and what does this mean for those interested in a more inclusive, literary history of American YA? Older and Manzano also challenge the entire notion of separate worlds for youth and adults. How radical also is this literary experiment for young readers, if Latinx authors are, in a sense, still directing and interpreting the means by which youth should resist and interact with adults and the state? Regardless of whether youth take up the radical offerings of YA, Latinx authors such as Older and Manzano are taking on the revolutionary promises that literary YA has always offered, yet applying it to actual moments of racialized violence and social unrest in which it would seem that youth truly do rule the world, even for a moment.

Actually, the tenets of YA prevent us from seeing the outcomes of revolution in books like *Evelyn Serrano*. How can a short novel "solve" the problem of freedom? It is not the sort of problem that can offer a clear outcome, though the use of counter-storytelling provides tools for resistance. Much like the YLP—which in many ways embodies the idealization of radical possibilities of youth—YA allows its readers only a glimpse at the potential, never the full-force outcomes or difficulties, such as the kinds of challenges the YLP encountered when trying to proliferate their political agenda after the initial uprising. As Darryl Wanzer-Serrano writes on the Young Lords Party, the reputation, stories, and images of the Lords left Puerto Rican communities with a "countermemory of resistance… memory of a hopeful future," even if the outcome the group proposed, the liberation of Puerto Rico from colonial rule, has yet to occur (2015, p. 938). In *Shadowshaper,* which continues as a series by Older, we see a post-YLP Latinx society still fighting for the same things Evelyn's generation seemingly obtained by the end of Manzano's novel—space, solidarity, and historical identity. Older, in the realm of fantasy, holds perhaps the greatest advantage for imagining what those new radical possibilities might be—which is rooted somewhat in the importance of alternative educational experiences offered by family histories and personal research and investigation. Through his social media and blog, Older sets up YA as an invitation to readers to write back to *Shadowshaper,* emphasizing how young readers and writers adopt YA as an interactive medium and work through solutions for their communities (http://ghoststar.net/blog/2-storifies-on-shadowshaper). During this current rise of Latinx literature for youth, which runs parallel with the beginning of the Trump era, it remains to be seen how authors will continue crafting YA, and whether they will choose to dwell on the complexity and intersectionality of Latinx history and the work of social justice. Considering that intergenerational relationships take precedence in these texts, specifically that adults imagine youth doing most of the work of revolution, we see how adults place this burden on Latinx youth—a burden their white counterparts may perhaps remain sheltered from. Yet, the greatest burden may be on those adults who are forever in search of what could have been.

Dedicated to my Titi Nidia.

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