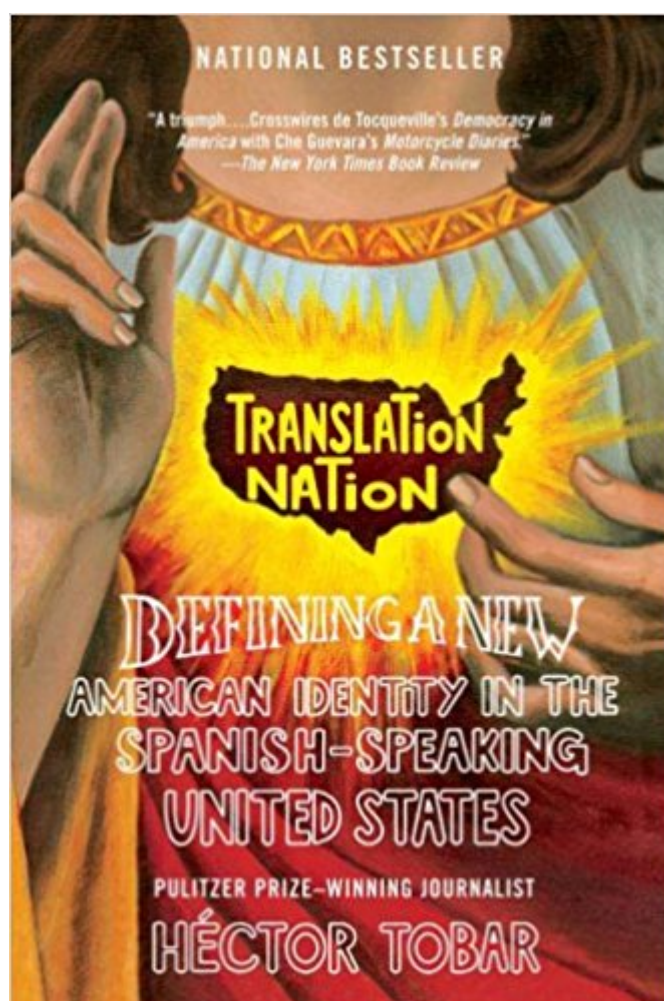


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# Translation Nation: Defining A New American Identity In The Spanish-Speaking United States



## Synopsis

In the national bestseller *Translation Nation*, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Hector Tobar takes us on the definitive tour of the Spanish-speaking United States—a parallel nation, 35 million strong, that is changing the very notion of what it means to be an American in unprecedented and unexpected ways. Tobar begins on familiar terrain, in his native Los Angeles, with his family's story, along with that of two brothers of Mexican origin with very different interpretations of Americanismo, or American identity as seen through a Latin American lens—one headed for U.S. citizenship and the other for the wrong side of the law and the south side of the border. But this is just a jumping-off point. Soon we are in Dalton, Georgia, the most Spanish-speaking town in the Deep South, and in Rupert, Idaho, where the most popular radio DJ is known as "El Chupacabras." By the end of the book, we have traveled from the geographical extremes into the heartland, exploring the familiar complexities of Cuban Miami and the brand-new ones of a busy Omaha INS station. Sophisticated, provocative, and deeply human, *Translation Nation* uncovers the ways that Hispanic Americans are forging new identities, redefining the experience of the American immigrant, and reinventing the American community. It is a book that rises, brilliantly, to meet one of the most profound shifts in American identity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The nation's growing Hispanic population constitutes a "Latin Republic of the United States," contends this engrossing survey of Latino America. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Tobar

chronicles the surge in Central American immigrants to a Los Angeles where "Oliver Twist had escaped from London and was now a Spanish-speaking Angeleno in the age of crack"; listens in on the debate among Cuban exiles over Elián Gonzalez; and interviews undocumented migrants about to brave the ferociously defended Tijuana border crossings. He also follows Latinos, and their influence, into the heartland, finding a well-settled immigrant community in Dalton, Ga.; Nebraska corn farmers vying for the tortilla market; and a white Anglo Mormon who reinvents himself as a Mexican deejay for an Idaho Spanish-language radio station. Tobar insists that, thanks to their great numbers and easy access to cultural wellsprings in nearby homelands, Latinos will avoid assimilation. But he struggles to define the self-confident "Latinoness" he believes will "change the course of American history," locating it variously in a supposed resistance to "good, Protestant, money-making order"; a rejection of cultural boundaries; a taste for bright colors; and the iconography of Che Guevara. These don't really amount to the Tocquevillean insights he's aiming for, but Tobar's nuanced reportage vividly conveys the complexity and pathos of the Latino experience. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** Born in Los Angeles of Guatemalan immigrant parents in the early 1960s, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Tobar blends his personal story of binational identity with a riveting account of how Latinos are changing the U.S. now. And not just in California, but also in the Midwest, the Great Plains, and the Deep South. Traveling from west to east across the country, he speaks to a rich variety of Spanish-speaking Americans about their stories, ideas, and hopes: illegals crossing the desert from Mexico; Cuban exiles in Miami; Puerto Ricans in New York; the Guatemalan family of a green-card Marine killed in Iraq; and many more. He also goes undercover and works the nightshift at minimum wage in a poultry factory in Alabama. Latinos are now the nation's largest minority group, but far beyond the statistics, Tobar shows that theirs is a quintessentially American story, stretching back to Tocqueville and Du Bois, Steinbeck and Upton Sinclair. Yet leaving home is not what it used to be, no longer a one-way journey across the border to a self-confident, optimistic America, but now a more ambiguous process involving constant travel back and forth, physical and emotional. In plain, stirring prose, this landmark documentary brings close the universals of exodus and displacement, as Tobar reveals the unsettling particulars of Americans who are restless and always longing for home, whatever that is. Hazel Rochman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Muy buen libro y lo bueno es que es basado en cosas reales y actuales, tan actuales que yo personalmente conozco a varias de las personas en él mencionadas.

This book is relatively easy to read there are a lot of interesting stories in it, it was very captivating it kept my attention. It is a quick read since it is not too long of a book.

The package arrived on time and as described. The book is needed for University for my kids that are students.

Perfect for my study abroad program!

Good

Hector Tobar is a journalist now living in Argentina who also happens to be a fine writer. Probing his own past as the son of immigrants from Guatemala as a baseline and investigating like families and individuals, TRANSLATION NATION is one of the more interesting, readable, and informative books about the current rise in the number of Latin Americans who in their immigration to a new country have made a solid impact on the cultural, artistic, gastronomic, and political face to the USA. Tobar interviews and follows histories of some fascinating and courageous people, documenting their diaspora-like web across the country. From the Cuban exiles in Florida and the massive Los Angeles and Southern California Hispanic population we all know to the enclaves and pockets of 'latinidad' communities sprinkled across the entire United States, Tobar gleans a feeling of identity, of success stories, of the numbers of Hispanics who have gained national importance and prominence to the beautifully persistent folk traditions that remain intact despite the surrounding environs. The importance of 'futbol' (soccer), the explosion of cuisines not only from the ubiquitous Mexican fast food chains but also the increasingly popular cuisines of Central and South America, the popularity of Chicano painting and crossover music, the on-going debates about border control - Tobar manages to define just what impact 'latinidad' has had and will continue to have as the Latino population grows faster than any other group in census studies. In a time when the government seems to be polarizing the nation about the Latino influx it is refreshing to read Tobar's eminently optimistic evaluation of this newest aspect of the Melting Pot concept of America. An informative and fine read. Grady Harp, July 05

Translation Nation by Hector Tobar is an absolute must read considering all that is currently happening with immigration litigation and the bills that are being proposed regarding illegal immigration into the United States. Tobar, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, takes a look at the insurgence of Mexican and Central American immigrants across the border into the United States; he looks at their motivations for doing so and tells their stories. To do so, he interviewed a few illegal immigrants and their guides, listened to Cubans debate the Elian Gonzalez matter, travelled to Central America, and infiltrates the various markets in Nebraska and the South where many migrant workers go to find work. Tobar eloquently describes the process that many face in coming to the United States. You leave the book feeling like you have followed various people through their experiences and motivations. I put this book down feeling like I had a better grasp on the complexities of these sorts of issue. However, the book did have a weakness: towards the middle of the book, before Tobar gets into his experiences working in factories, the stories told get repetitive. I also have to wonder how "authentic" of an experience that Tobar had while working in these factories being that he was an educated man that could draw on a safety net if he had to, whereas the people that he was writing about and working with don't necessarily have that safety net. All in all, an important and highly recommended read.

An eye-opener for those of us who live in areas where hispanic immigrants are needed and present in significant numbers. Gives a needed perspective on the point of view of those seeking to share in the American Dream in a new and unique way. Essential reading for anyone whose ancestors were also immigrants (and weren't they all?).

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