



Centro Journal

ISSN: 1538-6279

centro-journal@hunter.cuny.edu

The City University of New York

Estados Unidos

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Centro Journal, vol. XIV, núm. 2, 2002, pp. 181-197

The City University of New York

New York, Estados Unidos

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When 'I' Became Ethnic: Ethnogenesis and Three Early Puerto Rican Diaspora Writers

JOSÉ L. TORRES-PADILLA

ABSTRACT

Criticism of Esmeralda Santiago's use of the past tense in the title *When I Was Puerto Rican* revealed the ambiguity of debate about Puerto Rican identity and uncovered the essentialist perception of "Puerto Ricanness" that still lingers. Looking at the development of Puerto Rican "ethnicity" and "nationality" from a sociohistorical perspective, we see that there are strong reasons for Puerto Ricans in the United States to emphasize the former over the latter, a phenomenon that critics must take into account in understanding the literature of Puerto Ricans in America. To illustrate this point, this study analyzes the "ethnogenesis"—the production of ethnic signs—in the texts of three early diasporic Puerto Rican writers. The studied texts of the three writers—Jesús Colón, Pura Belpré and Graciany Miranda Archilla—demonstrate that each writer has a different view of, and rhetorical purpose for, Puerto Rican ethnicity. The texts also show that whenever ethnicity has been emphasized, nationalistic concerns were displaced or minimized. That the ethnic project differs in the case of each writer affirms the idea that ethnic identity, as social and textual construct, is perceived and valued differently. These three early Puerto Rican diaspora writers enhance our current understanding of how they faced the same issues of identity that continue to vex our contemporary writers, and their work sheds new light on how Puerto Rican ethnicity is constructed textually. [Key words: ethnicity, ethnic studies, diaspora studies, American literature, Puerto Ricans in New York, narrative]

In 1993 Addison-Wesley published Esmeralda Santiago's autobiographical work, *When I Was Puerto Rican*,¹ to favorable reviews and healthy sales. The response by Puerto Ricans, however, was not completely positive. Geoffrey Fox, author of *Hispanic Nation: Culture, Politics and the Constructing of Identity*, writes that the title of Santiago's memoir "disturbed some American-reared descendents of migrants from the island, for it seems to imply that one can cease being Puerto Rican."² If "mainland" Puerto Ricans responded in this manner, Santiago's work received even more hostility from "islanders." In an article on *caribeña* writers in the United States, island-based critic Michele Dávila Gonçalves notes that the book, especially its title, "*chocó mucho con la sensibilidad patriótica-nacionalista de los puertorriqueños de la isla.*"³

According to Lisa Sánchez González, island feminists in particular took Santiago to task for what they perceived as the work's effacement of the collective. This feminist perspective holds that the text contains "feminist trappings" which appear compelling and positive but which in reality "feminize poverty" and embrace "assimilationist tenets of the 'American Dream,'" all of which "tends to satisfy a certain hegemonic thirst (and market demand) for the subaltern woman's acceptance—even celebration—of colonial paternalism."⁴ Sánchez González's comments would indicate that for once in recent memory island feminists have waived their traditional agenda and have actually come out to denounce the *machista*-bashing in Santiago's work in a concerted defense of the *patria*. This intriguing reaction apparently situates the feminist position within a seemingly larger, more imperative "national" one. Sánchez González claims that Santiago's memoir, along with the two other narratives analyzed in this particular chapter of her book—Carmen de Monteflores's *Cantando bajito* and Judith Ortiz Cofer's *The Line of the Sun*—represent texts that "speak from the margin" only to validate the North American center.⁵ These texts are thus deemed politically "insufficient," especially in comparison to the earlier feminist works (of Luisa Capetillo, for example) in Sánchez González's tenuously constructed literary history of the Puerto Rican diaspora. Planting Santiago's memoir within a politicized context (and given Puerto Rico's ambiguous and highly politicized condition this seems inevitable), Sánchez González derisively dismisses it along with other "novels of assimilation" where the "uppity white female 'I... might like to be in America without qualification,'" but "the brown and down female 'we' outside has many valid reasons *not* to."⁶ That critical stance and the reaction the book has received from some Puerto Ricans contrast sharply with how Santiago views her own work.

In responding to the criticism of her book, it is revealing that Santiago refers to "immigrants who have returned to their countries" and who, she argues, accept and understand the irony of the past tense in the title, and the

feeling that, while at one time they could not identify themselves as having any identity but the nationality to which they were born, once they've lived in the U.S., their "cultural purity" has been compromised, and they no longer fit as well in their native countries, nor do they feel completely comfortable as Americans.⁷

Here Santiago refers primarily to questions of ethnicity rather than nationalism. She, like her book, articulates that odd Puerto Rican experience of transforming oneself from a "national" to an "ethnic" subject with the act of boarding a plane. In an interview with Carmen Dolores Hernández, Santiago recounts the strangeness

of being renamed and refigured from “Puerto Rican” to “*hispano*.” “It was the sense,” she says, “the minute you arrive—that you lose your culture because *you’re no longer from a specific place*, you’re now lumped into this morass of Spanish-speaking people.”⁸ For Puerto Ricans who have constituted the diaspora in actuality, what Santiago observes here is only the beginning. Like so many of her *compatriotas*, Santiago could not help but assimilate some of the “American” ways while still feeling a deep sense of *puertorriqueñidad*. “I don’t know of any Puerto Rican who wants to be American,” she asserts, “Every Puerto Rican I know wants to be Puerto Rican.”⁹ Moreover, like many “mainland” Puerto Ricans, she has experienced the bittersweet return to the “homeland,” an experience that only reinforces the adage that you can never return home. For Santiago, that *retorno* marked a significant revelation for her, namely, that “home was no longer home,” and that she had changed dramatically enough for Puerto Ricans in the island to see her as different: “*los puertorriqueños mismos me negaron* because I was so Americanized.”¹⁰ And this rejection becomes ironically bitter when the prodigal son or daughter realizes how assimilated the island has become:

Puerto Rico was so Americanized...I thought, how can *puertorriqueños* who have never left the island accuse us when they allow the American contamination I was seeing all around? There were McDonald’s, Pizza Huts, and so on. I used to think this was not our culture. Big Macs are not our cultural legacy. We in the States at least have an excuse for being Americanized. This ambivalence was part of what drove me away...¹¹

For many Puerto Ricans who have spent a good portion of their lives in the United States, Santiago’s words resonate as validated truth. The title of her memoir attempts to describe the many complex nuances of that experience. Unfortunately, it is that title, with its suggestion of national and cultural abandonment, which irks some Puerto Ricans, especially those who cannot fully comprehend and accept a hybrid form of ethnicity that retains only traces of some perceived original “purer” form. It was precisely the Nuyorican poets who began to articulate this uneasy disjunction with their island brethren. Miguel Piñero’s poem, “This Is Not The Place Where I Was Born,” is an angry diatribe centered on the “*retorno*” theme. In that poem, Piñero portrays Puerto Rico as “this slave blessed land/where nuyoricans come in search of spiritual identity” and “are greeted with profanity.”¹² Like Santiago, he too points to the irony of being considered an outsider by his own people, who are colonized and, from his perspective, do not have a genuine respect or pride in their own culture:

puertorriqueños cannot assemble displaying the emblem
nuyoricans are fighting & dying for in newark, lower east side
south bronx where the fervor of being
puertorriqueños is not just rafael hernandez (Lbsd 14).

Similarly, Miguel Algarín’s “A Mongo Affair” attacks the misconceptions and American Dream-inspired delusions that some islanders may have of life, and of Puerto Ricans, in the United States. Significantly, the poem also exhibits anger at recognizing and accepting the loss of “home,” an anger that eventually finds a target in what the author perceives to be Puerto Rican dependency. In response to an old

man's claims that Puerto Ricans in the States are doing better than their island compatriots, the speaker in the poem lashes out that this dependency has actually sucked the virility and spirit out of the Puerto Rican man, as represented by the extended metaphor of the flaccid penis that informs the poem's title:

mongo means *flojo*
mongo means bloodless
mongo means soft
mongo can not penetrate
mongo can only tease¹³

Like Algarin's poem, Tato Laviera's well-known poem, "Brava," contains frustration and anger that explode when the Nuyorican female speaker defiantly confronts those who would dare question her puertorricanness:

go ahead, ask me, on any street-
corner that I am not *puertorriqueña*,
come *dimelo aquí en mi cara*
offend me, *atrevede, a menos*
que tu no quieras que yo te meta
un tremendo bochinche de soplamoco
pezcoza that's gonna hurt you
in either language, ...¹⁴

These poems, written more than two decades ago by three prominent Nuyorican poets, represent a strong, harsh response to an island identity that in these poets' minds eludes and alienates them. In certain ways, Santiago's memoir follows this Nuyorican tradition in narrative form. In an original and insightful approach to Santiago's autobiography, Hugo Rodríguez Vecchini argues that Santiago's "ethnographic autobiography" contains picaresque qualities, with the significant difference that the generically expected conversion in her work is a partial one. Rodríguez Vecchini sees in the title the complexities of Santiago's attempt to narrate an incomplete past ("*un pasado inconcluso*") that defines "a chronological and cultural limit" at the heart of the author's perception of her hybrid identity and the narrative's "halfway conversion."¹⁵ The book thus illustrates the contemporary Puerto Rican identity conundrum, what Rodríguez Vecchini calls the "cultural constant" of "the life destined to live simultaneously between two languages and two cultures."¹⁶

Rodríguez Vecchini claims that Santiago creates in her book a history of survival, a counter-history of the American Dream.¹⁷ If this is the case, then it is intriguing to note the response to Santiago's attempt at narrating this "halfway conversion" and describing her "hybrid" experience. That her memoir, and its provocative title, aroused a "nationalistic" resistance against this construction of hybrid puertorricanness in a nineties' narrative suggests that the anxiety over identity so prevalent in Puerto Rican culture has re-surfaced yet again to spill onto mainstream consciousness. More importantly, however, the critical murmurings over this text uncovered the fixated, essentialist perception of identity still alive within a section of the Puerto Rican community. According to Agustín Laó, the present schemata conceptualizing the Puerto Rican national formation tend to value this very essentialized cultural identity, which almost always has an "inner" authenticity in

danger of being annihilated by cultural imperialism. This “purity” is thus constructed as a “privileged space of resistance from an indigenous ‘high culture.’”¹⁸ It can be argued, as most of the essayists in *Puerto Rican Jam: Essays in Culture and Politics* do, that the island’s elite, the so-called *blanquitos*, continue to support and promote these essentialized schemata as a diluted nationalist project that demonstrates, more than anything, their failure to accomplish their historically assigned task of building the nation-state. Indeed, this seems an established critical position, one that José Luis González expounds in his seminal essay “*Literatura e identidad nacional en Puerto Rico*,” which links this nationalist agenda, and its attendant literary production, to racism.¹⁹

In the absence of a nation-state, and with the masses wary of and resistant to the traditionally conservative tendencies of nationalism in Puerto Rico, what has developed in the island, through its various ideological apparatuses, is a national identity based on an illusory “nation.”²⁰ The present *Estado Libre Asociado* facilitates and promotes that illusion because it gives the sensation that the Puerto Rican people are controlling an “internal space” outside of hegemonic capitalist control,²¹ when ultimate power remains in the hands of the United States Congress and President. In turn, the Puerto Rican diaspora has complicated matters, because now nearly half of the Puerto Rican population resides outside of the “homeland.” The distancing of Puerto Ricans from this illusory “nation” (which nonetheless affords a concrete geographical site) has led to the “imagining” of community based on “ethnicity” and national identity:

“The Puerto Rican people share a feeling of nationhood that has not translated into traditional nationalist claims to form a nation-state. Puerto Ricans have formed an ‘imaginary community’ with an imaginary belonging to a territory that spans the island as well as certain areas on the mainland (e.g. South Bronx, Spanish Harlem, North Philadelphia). This imaginary community oscillates between feelings of nationhood and ethnicity; that is, Puerto Ricans simultaneously imagine themselves as a nation and as an ethnic group. Puerto Ricans’ self-perception does not fit either the concept of a ‘nation’ or that of an ‘ethnic group.’ I believe the concept of ‘ethno-nation’ accommodates the Puerto Ricans’ diverse and peculiar subject positions better than that of ‘nation.’”²²

However, Puerto Ricans imagine themselves as an “ethno-nation” with different emphasis on both sides of the hyphen: self-representation is thus possible as a deterritorialized ethno-nation in the United States, and a territorialized ethno-nation in Puerto Rico.²³ The significance of this point cannot be overstated; the flexibility available to Puerto Ricans for their own self-representation gives us a clue to comprehending the fundamental differences between the literary production of boricuas on the island and the United States. It is important to consider Ramón Grosfoguel’s comment that “the historical context of the Puerto Rican communities in question and what objectives are sought at any particular juncture” influence “the hegemony of ethnicity over nation or nation over ethnicity.”²⁴ Most assessments of “ethnicity” support this assertion. Social anthropologists tend to view the construction of “ethnicity” as a response to a collective need. In fact, the term “ethnic” is rooted in the “othering” process.²⁵ A group will often define and represent itself so as to distinguish itself from others and therefore protect the collective and

insure its survival. There is, then, a political basis for ethnicity,²⁶ and as Werner Sollors argues, it is this political drive, fueled by the competition for power, which moves an ethnic collective to “recreate” their distinctiveness.²⁷ To accomplish such a “distinctiveness,” groups establish boundaries and mechanisms, which Manning Nash calls “cultural markers of difference,” that maintain those boundaries; and where the common ones of kinship, commensality, and common culture are not immediately present or visible, the collective will resort to secondary symbols that “make recognition at a distance.”²⁸ Sometimes it is the preservation of that key cultural construct “tradition” that motivates and unites an ethnic group, although one cannot completely disassociate this concept from political concerns.

Returning to Grosfoguel’s remark about the emphasis placed on “ethno” or “nation,” we can readily see that for Puerto Ricans in the United States there are obvious reasons behind the emphasizing of their ethnicity as opposed to nationality. Separated from their geographic base, “their homeland,” and “othered” by North Americans, it is not surprising that Puerto Ricans in the States will seek ways of recreating *puertorriqueñidad* for reasons of survival and political necessity. The ethnic signs produced in this process will not always jibe with the cultural production of the island, and they probably represent hybrid forms, but they do demonstrate a desire to keep a cultural connection alive. The murals in *El Barrio* are a wonderful example of the process and symbolic manifestation of “Puerto Rican” ethnicity.²⁹ With these murals, as with the “ethnic” literary texts produced by writers of Puerto Rican ancestry residing in the United States, it is crucial to note that what makes “ethnicity” a very real, living, and human process is not the content but rather the importance that individuals within the group ascribe to it.³⁰ More importantly, the cultural production of these two sets of United States-based Puerto Rican artists demonstrates Stuart Hall’s idea, one that we should not ignore, that ethnicity and its signs acknowledge the place of history, language, and culture.³¹

The idea that Puerto Ricans constitute a “floating nation” has emerged as a viable metaphor for the Puerto Rican diasporic condition.³² However, it is evident that with every passing generation firmly rooted in the United States the metaphor loses relevance and currency. The present and future generations of Puerto Rican ancestry in the United States do not and will not necessarily adhere or subscribe to the idea of a “floating” nationhood. Writers representing these generations, such as Abraham Rodriguez, create literature grounded in a Puerto Rican “ethnicity” that follows the beat of a different *timbalero*. It is quite possible that these writers view Puerto Rico from a widening distance that foments weary recognition of—if not disinterest in— island culture, politics, and current events. In an interview, Rodriguez declares that “the island is a myth...It doesn’t exist for me at all.”³³ Rodriguez, and writers like him, may not feel any profound responsibility towards the Puerto Rican “nation,” and they might not even see their literary work as part of a Puerto Rican national literature. Instead they see themselves as following the ethnic and immigrant traditions of American literature—even as they consider themselves *boricuas*. Despite these significant developments, the essentialization of Puerto Rican national identity continues, and apparently so does the desire to nationalize all literature written by people of Puerto Rican ancestry.³⁴ The adherence to this stubborn essentialization on the part of some Puerto Rican critics and writers belies the actual emergence of a diasporic Puerto Rican literature which has always operated within a framework of hybridity,³⁵ and which has primarily followed the dictates of ethnicity and entogenesis—the semiotic process of producing signs that create or recreate

ethnicity.³⁶ The misunderstanding and mishandling of the literature, written from the diasporic subject's perspective, underlines a deeper cultural chasm that can only continue to widen. The nationalistic project and rhetoric lingering in the cultural space inhabited by Puerto Ricans "*de aquí y de allá*" holds some power in the Puerto Rican imaginary. However, our questions over the false totalization of Puerto Rican identity become even more pressing and crucial when we realize that early writers of the diaspora were also compelled to create texts from an "ethnic," rather than nationalistic, position, as they engaged their new surroundings and met the demands placed on them. From these earlier writers, and their texts, we begin to appreciate how the stark differences between the populations residing here and on the island grow more glaringly apparent with the consequent creative production of each generation. These differences will eventually necessitate resisting the nationalistic impulse to unite all writings created by any writer of Puerto Rican descent, and will require establishing a space for that literature written by Puerto Ricans born and residing in the United States.

In actuality, then, Santiago's contribution to the diasporic—perhaps we should call it "diasporican," following Maria "Mariposa" Fernández's lead—represents the latest in a series of literary texts written by authors more comfortable embracing a different brand of *puertorriqueñidad*, one that typically represents a stronger identification with ethnicity than with nationality. As we have seen, the textual formation and expression of that identity is most recognizable in the Nuyorican writers, but there were precursors—Bernardo Vega and Guillermo Cotto-Thorner quickly come to mind—and others who, for the most part, have remained in obscurity. Jesús Colón, known but under-theorized, Pura Belpré, a children's book writer, and Graciany Miranda Archilla, an estranged island poet, are three writers whose lives overlapped as they migrated, resided, and wrote in New York City during a period that covered most of the twentieth century.³⁷ These three writers represent part of only a handful whose work we have available from the first wave of migration. In truth, selecting these writers does not represent a question of choice, as much as it follows the logic of dealing with what Sánchez González calls the Puerto Rican diaspora's "paperlessness."³⁸ Each of these writers also produced narrative, a literary mode recognized for allowing members of a collective to represent their rhetorical exigencies and draw possible resolutions for the social dramas concerning their group. Their work, although only a limited and partial representation of the possible literary production of all Puerto Ricans living in the United States at the time, nonetheless illustrates how three Puerto Ricans recreated ethnic identity through narrative in this new land, not only as a way of making sense of their respective and collective experience, but also as a means of fulfilling political collective need.

One of the earliest and most prolific Puerto Rican voices in the United States was Jesús Colón, who arrived as a stowaway in 1918, and five years later was contributing to several of the Spanish newspapers in the city. Colón was a life-long communist and defender of Puerto Rican independence who held various unskilled jobs while writing. Eventually, he became a journalist and columnist for *The Daily Worker*, where he produced most of the material found in the two important volumes bearing his name: *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches*, originally published in 1961, and *The Way It Was and Other Writings*, a posthumous collection published in 1993 under the auspices of The Recovering the United States Hispanic Literary Heritage Project and the Center for Puerto Rican Studies. In total, Colón wrote more than 400 pieces throughout his life, according to Edna Acosta Belén and Virginia Sánchez-Korrol.³⁹

His sketches, the focus in this essay, are often narrative pieces written in a *costumbrista* style that sometimes contain fictional techniques such as dialogue and characterization.

Being a communist and internationalist, Colón reflects in his writing an intense concern for issues related to global capitalism and the working class. Despite his unyielding support of Puerto Rican independence, his writing rarely focuses on nationalist themes. We hardly ever witness a running display of signs appropriated from the Puerto Rican cultural encyclopedia to prop up a sense of national identity. The idea of a cultural encyclopedia refers to signs established within a group, available to the ethnic subject through “the processing system of Memory and Project.”⁴⁰ The latter is rhetorical in nature, since it involves the strategic method of recalling these ethnic signs from memory and imposing them within the ethnic sign’s new terrain. Although Colón brings up some of these signs, it is rarely ever done nostalgically to praise the homeland. In fact, some sketches actually criticize the island, such as “The Fanguito is Still There,” which describes the famous San Juan slum, and “Angels in My Hometown Church,” which criticizes the racism in the island.

Indeed, most of the sketches in *A Puerto Rican in New York* contain an undercurrent of loss—those signs representing ethnicity, or Puerto Ricanness, often are lost, stolen, or appropriated. Colón thus constructs a representation of Puerto Rican ethnicity based on the minority status of his group, one that takes into consideration its victimization and oppression. Notably, though, he openly opposes U.S. hegemonic power through the construction of ethnicity. In “How to Know the Puerto Ricans,” for example, he writes about the bells of the cathedral in San Juan, which were stolen by pirates and sold to the town of New Amsterdam, New York. This incident moves him to quip that when Puerto Ricans are asked why they come to the United States, they should reply: “We came to take back our bells.”⁴¹ In another sketch titled “José,” Colón narrates how a friend and fellow Puerto Rican has his idea for a Spanish tune stolen and it becomes a hit.

Even language, a distinct identity marker, functions textually to show victimization, alienation, and loss. The sketch “Because He Spoke in Spanish” relates the real incident of how Bernabé Nuñez, a soldier returning from Korea, is killed in a bar for speaking his native language. The sketch does not wax on the nationalistic pride of Spanish, “the language of the Puerto Rican nation” (PR in NY, 126), but uses linguistic difference to highlight the discrimination faced by Puerto Ricans at the hands of North Americans and the need to unite against their violence:

What we are saying now is that in order to avoid future murders and violations of rights, we have to organize the broad forces of decency in the neighborhoods for simple democratic rights (PR in NY, 128).

Colón often inverts signs to achieve rhetorical purpose. In “Carmencita,” for instance, his mother-in-law’s devout religiosity, including her rosary reading, become Puerto Rican signs appropriated for the defense of communism and Stalin. In the sketch, Carmencita slowly draws away from the tainted, commercialized forms of Catholic ritual found in the United States (accepting money for reading a rosary, bingo in the Church, for example), and by the end of the narrative, she is performing ‘The Prayer of the Eleven Thousand Virgins’ as a way to ask “the Lord that nothing will ever happen to Stalin” (PR in NY, 110). When a sign has a clear association with the island, as in “Castor Oil: Simple or Compound,” it tends to illustrate the hybrid novelty of the diasporic condition. For example, when Colón writes about castor

oil—“the purgative given to us by our grandmothers when I was a kid at Cayey, my home town in Puerto Rico”⁴²—he does not attempt to evoke nostalgia, but rather uses it to stress the cultural difference between the two geographic sites. Asked by the pharmacist if he wants the “simple” or “compound” version of the purgative, Colón chooses the worse-tasting one out of ignorance and mistrust:

I drew a note of consolation when I congratulated myself for having chosen the castor oil simple, instead of the castor oil compound. Only my dead grandmother and the devil himself would have known all the fiendish oils and ashes that this yankee chemist would have mixed into the simple innocently crystal clear castor oil! (Tiw, 34).

William Boelhower writes that “who you are” is a function of “where you are” and “where you have been,” or what he calls *habitare*, “the spatial unfolding of the proposition, ‘I Am.’”⁴³ This is what gives uniqueness to the diasporic expression: the forging together of past and present spatial-temporal ontologies into one new one. In the ethnic text, awareness of geographic surroundings marks a high point, a moment of belonging if not owning. It certainly demonstrates an assertive superimposing of identity or self onto the cultural terrain. We see these ideas clearly operating in the sketch “Wanted—A Statue,” in which Colón argues for the dedication of a statue honoring a Puerto Rican figure and placing it “in the very heart of the city” (PR in NY, 136). Even here, though, we must note that Colón has opted, not for recalling an existing sign that celebrates Puerto Ricanness, but for dwelling on what is absent. Yet it is equally evident, especially from this sketch, that Colón’s sense of ethnicity, and the semiotic production or recreation of it, is quite centered on his coming to grips with his immediate geographic location.

The sketch that contains the most revealing insight into Colón’s position on ethnicity is “Nice to Have Friends in All Walks of Life.” In it, Colón narrates how the club *Vanguardia Puertorriqueña*, for which he served on the executive board, decided to rent a larger than usual boat to get to its annual picnic at Bear Mountain. This sketch contains the most dominant Puerto Rican “national” signs of all those written, and the Puerto Rican enclave projecting so much nationalism is aboard a ship, floating, moving along a river, temporarily isolated from borders. Within this contained atmosphere, people eat the Puerto Rican delicacies which they have brought—while using the American hotdogs served onboard as baseballs—they sing songs reminiscent of the island, dance *danzas* and *rumbas*, listen to guitar playing, sprinkle their conversations with Spanish, and chant Puerto Rican children’s songs. In this text we have signs that come very close to those primary “markers of difference” described by Nash, particularly those related to kinship and commensality that are most often associated with national culture. This scene recalls Boelhower’s idea of the *typescene*—“a hypercodified, pre-fabricated script” describing and defining ethnicity that illustrates ethnic cultural practice, usually for instructional purposes.⁴⁴ The Feast is such a *typescene*, of the sort which one finds in many ethnic texts, and which emphasizes kinship and commensality. Most interesting, however, is Colón’s humorous but sobering criticism of the club members’ false ambition and foolish pride. The final message of this sketch alerts us to the value of pragmatism and common sense over the false allure of ethnic pride. The subtext in this narrative exemplifies Colón’s restrained approach to shallow nationalistic fervor

and his preference for an ethnicity that represents political opposition and struggle, especially from a Marxist perspective.

If Colón's narrative contains ethnicity, Pura Belpré's ethnic project served a more mediating political and social role. Belpré migrated to New York City in 1920, and shortly after began working with the public library. In 1926, she began formal studies in the Library School of the New York Public Library, where she found her talent and desire to write children's books. Her main concerns were writing multicultural books and reaching the young Puerto Rican audience. Her first objective was to translate Puerto Rican folktales into English so that children could enjoy them and, through them, learn about their heritage. Belpré's first book, published in 1932, was a translation of the popular Puerto Rican folktale *Pérez y Martina*. In 1946 she published *The Tiger and the Rabbit and Other Tales*, the first collection of Puerto Rican folktales written in English. Among her other numerous books are included a collection of Juan Bobo stories and various translations, in both languages, of Latin-American folktales and children's stories. Belpré's work is now beginning to attain the recognition it justly deserves. Arte Público recently published a manuscript of her novel about adolescence, written in the forties, titled *Firefly Summer*; and in 1996 The American Library Association honored her by naming an award for multicultural literature after her.⁴⁵

Children's literature is not usually included among the more traditional literary canon and rarely, if ever, within ethnic literary studies. However, Belpré's work should interest scholars of Puerto Rican diasporic literature. Her translations of Puerto Rican folktales serve as a fascinating study of how a transplanted Puerto Rican views cultural material from her homeland and how it is re-instated in the translated, "diasporican" text. The one text, though, pertinent to what has been discussed in this essay is her book *Santiago*.

Published in 1969, and written in English, the story narrates how a little Puerto Rican boy, the Santiago of the title, tries to make everyone believe the existence of Selina, a pet hen that he left on the island before moving to the United States. This situation is made more complicated when Santiago tells everyone that he saw another hen on his way to school. Santiago's desire to prove this hen's existence, as well as Selina's, becomes a desire tantamount to self-affirmation. Miss Taylor believes that "there was something else besides Selina, important as she was, that really mattered now."⁴⁶ The teacher realizes that the boy was living in "two places at once" (3), but instead of criticizing him, she accepts that his imagination is the bridge between those two worlds. Eventually, the boy, with the teacher's support, proves the existence of both hens.

Unlike Colón, Belpré utilizes the ethnic sign to advance a more hybrid and certainly less leftist ethnic project. The incorporation of this particular "fowl" ethnic sign into the New York cityscape perhaps represents the "working out" of Belpré's own fantasm—Frederic Jameson's concept of a familial text cum master fantasy narrative—as she herself ventured from *campo* to metropolis.⁴⁷ This rather fossilized view of the island asserts itself, textually speaking, into the new terrain and serves as a form of resistance that recalls Homi Bhabha's theorization of hybridity and its power to "destabilize the colonizer's disavowal of difference."⁴⁸ The ethnic sign in this story also materializes the absent presence of Puerto Rico, which certainly affirms Boelhower's idea that the ethnic project needs memory for validation. To understand the concept of "absent presence," one needs only to recall Piñero's line, "I tasted mango many years before the skin of the fruit /ever reached my teeth."⁴⁹ In *Santiago*, the act

of remembering is heightened by one other ethnic sign, a gourd carved with the important events in Puerto Rican history, and to a lesser extent The Hispanic Museum, which the children pass on the way back to school. The textual re-creation of this absent presence conjures up a possible world that is rife with ideological content because it promotes a hybrid world, where the “diasporican” subject’s past and present, his “here” and “there,” come together to coexist. Surely, this possible world represents Jameson’s “complex term,” that part of Jameson’s hermeneutic instrument, the “semiotic rectangle,” appropriated from A.J. Greimas’ work.

Jameson utilizes the semiotic rectangle “for exploring the semantic and ideological intricacies of the text.”⁵⁰ The semiotic rectangle represents the binary oppositions and their contradictions within a text, and by analyzing the “mapping out” of these semes, the critic can better “read” the ideological content of the text. The complex term represents the “ideal synthesis of the two contraries” and in *Santiago*, these would be “the United States” and “Puerto Rico,” with the subcontraries being “campo” and “metropolis” or “city.” The complex term in this text, then, would consider the “ideal synthesis” of both the United States and Puerto Rico; textually, it is a hybrid world where a hen could inhabit an urban space, but at a deeper level it is the representational solution for the political, cultural, and ideological conflict represented by the two contraries.⁵¹ Following Jameson’s ideas, we can see how Belpré has transformed her fantasm into a narrative that constructs a “wish-fulfilling text,” which in turn contains ideological content significant for her collective. And even as this text hints at resistance from a hybrid subject position, one can propose that a subtext tacitly supports the ideological underpinnings of the status quo, the *Estado Libre Asociado*, suggesting that hybridity doesn’t always resist politically even as it does culturally. Despite vestiges of linkage to the island, Belpré’s “ethnicity” demonstrates a strong desire to engage the realities that constitute her new environment, unlike our last writer, Graciany Miranda Archilla.

Miranda Archilla migrated to the United States in 1951, at the height of political repression of *independentistas* on the island. Miranda is known as one of the founders of a poetic movement in the island, called “Atalaya de los dioses,” that attempted to break away from romanticism and revolutionize Puerto Rican poetry in form and content. The poets supported socially conscious poetry and easily gravitated to the growing independence movement. The repressive political climate of the fifties, plus the desire to find better job opportunities, prompted Miranda to leave the island for New York City. While there, he worked for magazines and newspapers and actively participated in many Puerto Rican cultural and political clubs and organizations. His many works include essays and several books of poetry, written in both Spanish and English.

Among his less known works are three fictional pieces found in his archives at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies. These three short stories are written in English under the pseudonym Mars Hillmar. Two of them—“The Shadow” and “When Lightning Strikes”—are in manuscript form, the third—“Brambles”—is a handwritten, at times unintelligible, rough draft.⁵² It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss these three narrative works in depth, but it should be noted that collectively they presented highly puzzling and challenging texts for the analysis of Puerto Rican ethnogenesis. One of the stories does not include any Puerto Rican sign or subject, and the other two include ethnicity that is not Puerto Rican. The glaring absence of the Puerto Rican sign and subject in these narratives actually make them necessary additions to our study of Puerto Rican ethnic semiosis.

Miranda's work naturally compels one to wonder why a nationalist *independentista* such as he would so blatantly efface any sense of Puerto Ricanness in these texts.

At first glance, one would imagine that Miranda's stories might share some similarities with those written by Pedro Juan Soto and José Luis González during the same period.⁵³ Both Soto and González wrote from the perspective of island Puerto Ricans looking at the diasporic subject. Theirs is a sympathetic gaze that views the Puerto Rican in the States as victim, but the reader senses a certain authorial distance. José Luis González, an early defender of diasporican literature, writes that it is those Puerto Ricans living in the States who will produce the "most authentic" literature of the diasporic experience, and adds that it will be necessarily written in English.⁵⁴ The Nuyorican writers, often cited as writing about the Puerto Rican from the standpoint of those who are here to stay, constitute a confirmation of Gonzalez's comment. Soto and González lived for a relatively short time in the States. Soto returned to the island and González lived a good portion of his life in Mexico. Miranda lived close to forty years in New York City and finally returned to live out his last years in Puerto Rico. In all of that time he seems to have retained, and even cultivated, the persona of an exile, and these narratives reflect that to an extreme. Though he lived considerably longer in the United States than Soto and Gonzalez, his literary production in English does not integrate a Puerto Rican subject, not even one from a sympathetic distance.

There may be practical reasons why Miranda wrote short fiction in English under a pseudonym. He might have wanted to try his hand at making money in the genre, and so used a pen name to protect his reputation as a poet. Maybe, he did it for pleasure or as a challenge for his English language skills, which were considerable. Whatever the reasons, we learn from Miranda's exercise in popular fiction that the ethnic project is only possible to the extent that there is a felt rhetorical need for constructing it. And such a need must necessarily emerge from the author's direct engagement with the new geographical site. The author must have a purpose to play the ethnic game, and how can this happen if he takes himself off the playing field? Ethnogenesis can occur only if the ethnic subject willingly enters what Boelhower calls the "frame," a concept similar to "border"—that place where the ethnic subject experiences the new world and recalls the cultural encyclopedia of his or her group to re-invent ethnicity within a new cultural context or space.⁵⁵ Denial of the frame or border necessarily preempts the possibility of any ethnic project for any potential text written by a writer within the ethnic group who stubbornly clings to a descent perspective of ethnicity.⁵⁶ Miranda's null Puerto Ricanness in these narratives must lead us to conclude that he held on tenaciously to a nationalistic sense of identity that clashed with the hybrid identity embraced by contemporaries. In other words, Miranda believed in an "essentialized" Puerto Ricanness built along nationalist lines, one that would not allow him to "recreate" in narrative form a subject he could only see as false.

Even as Miranda fights to retain an essentialist image of homeland alive in heart, spirit, and mind, the overpowering force of *habitare* drives him towards an imaginary text that still attempts to mediate, however obliquely and tentatively, the conflict of here and there. In the story, "The Shadow," for example, the character Pete Kultske, a Polish immigrant, is used to subvert and resist the attraction of what Werner Sollors calls "consent," which seems like a euphemism for assimilation. Peter Kultzke is drawn as a typical immigrant, a stowaway whose "hardships at home led him to hit the road" and who eventually arrives in America, "mother of exiles," to lead "a life of hopeful horizons and helpless toils."⁵⁷ Kultzke's story follows the pattern of a

traditional immigrant story: he takes on odd jobs, and through hard work and saving, opens up a meat market. His downfall is an American woman, Mabel Jones, with whom he falls in love and marries.

Miranda shapes Mabel into an unflattering character, a negative anthropomorphic representation of the United States. Miranda describes her as some sort of Medusa: “serpent-like” with “witchery black eyes, as though created to petrify man” (3-4). Mabel is also “narcissistic” and “debauched,” a succubus who “behaved like a bird of prey” (4). Miranda intimates that Mabel’s beauty and attractiveness, like Kultzke’s new home, is deceptive and perverse and will never belong to someone like him. Two signs in the text support this reading: Kultzke’s knife and apron. Both of these signs are “ethnicized” by their association with Kultzke’s station and immigrant status. They represent working accoutrements, strongly linked to the type of unskilled labor that most immigrants traditionally perform. Miranda describes the apron as “white, with red dots and stains, like a banner” (3). The apron, tainted as it is with blood, recalls the emphasis placed on “blood” as the inexorable connection to one’s ethnicity. Thus, it is quite revealing when Mabel yells out “I hate his apron...” (5). Similarly, the knife at times personifies Kultzke, as when short-lived happiness is described as “happy days for the butcher’s knife” (7). In the text the knife often works as a synecdoche for Kultzke’s class and ethnic status, and it is significant that the butcher hesitates to part with it. The knife “is a friend, silent, reliable, penetrating” (6). When he runs after his adulterous wife, Kultzke takes the knife with him. With that knife, he “dismembers,” “dissects” and “rends” the apartment in a jealous rage until he finds a “batch of photographs” (sic) depicting “abnormality and monstrosity” and “perversion. The sort of thing Nature shudders at” (9).

At the end, Mabel has apparently run off with the woman in the photographs, and Kultzke torches himself in the process of burning the eye-opening evidence. It is unfortunate that Miranda utilizes this heterosexist strategy even as it is situated within an ideologically oppositional agenda. It is clear, however, that even though the Puerto Rican subject is absent, the text channels the author’s ideological and political stance through another ethnicity. Unable to imagine an ethnic Puerto Rican separated from his geographical space, Miranda resorts to a circuitous method for creating an ethnic subject victimized and deceived by the false promises of the American Dream. In a passage from the story, Miranda writes: “A man often goes astray when fate plunges him into the realm of no return or when a blindfold runs down to naught in a fool’s paradise”(8). Perhaps these words afford a glimpse into how Miranda saw his own exiled life in the United States. They may also offer some insight into the reasons behind the absence of the Puerto Rican subject in his short fiction.

The writings of these earlier “diasporican” writers enhance our current understanding of how they faced the very same issues of identity that continue to vex our contemporary writers. Since they represent the first wave of migration, their narrative sheds new light on the issue of Puerto Rican identity and its textual representation. Whether the identity is actually represented in the text, or absent, as in the case of Miranda’s work, it is clear that each writer has a different view of, and rhetorical purpose and use for, Puerto Rican ethnicity. It is also evident that whenever ethnicity was emphasized, such as with Colón and Belpré, nationalistic concerns were displaced or minimized in the process. Conversely, Miranda’s insistence on a nationalist sense of identity perhaps inhibited his ability to perceive and conceive of a Puerto Rican subject functioning within a hybrid textual world. That the ethnic project differs in the case of each writer affirms the idea that ethnic

identity, as social and textual construct, is perceived and valued differently. Even as we understand this, the lives and work of these writers also illustrate that the struggle for the ethnic subject to reconcile group and personal identity is fundamentally historical. These ideas suggest that we can view ethnogenesis as a diachronic yet synchronic process. Taking such an approach would almost require reading Puerto Rican diasporic literature from a dialogic perspective that would emphasize listening to the many voices that speak of the many “*puertorriqueñidades*” across the continuum. If we listen carefully, we will come to understand that the point is not when we are, were, or became Puerto Rican, as suggested by the controversy over Santiago’s book, but that we are always becoming Puerto Rican differently yet together. With this understanding should also come the acceptance of the cultural differences between Puerto Ricans “here” and “there” and respect for the future literature that those inherent differences may create.

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NOTES

- ¹ In 1994 Vintage picked up the book and published an English and Spanish version. Under Vintage the English version sold 16,000 hardcover copies, a good showing for a first book.
- ² (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1997), 201.
- ³ “La voz caribeña femenina en la literatura de los Estados Unidos,” *Exegesis* 37/38 (2001): 44.
- ⁴ Lisa Sánchez González, *Boricua Literature: A Literary History of the Puerto Rican Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 159.
- ⁵ Sánchez González, 160.
- ⁶ Sánchez González, 160.
- ⁷ Reading Group Center, “Esmeralda Santiago, A Note to the Reader.” <<http://www.randomhouse.com/vintage/read/Puerto/Santiago.html>>. Accessed December 11, 2000.
- ⁸ Carmen Dolores Hernández, *Puerto Rican Voices in English: Interviews with Writers* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 165. My emphasis.
- ⁹ Hernández, 166.
- ¹⁰ Hernández, 165.
- ¹¹ Hernández, 163.
- ¹² Miguel Piñero, *La Bodega Sold Dreams* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1985), 14. Subsequent notes will be in parentheses.
- ¹³ Miguel Algarín, “A Mongo Affair,” in *Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican Writings—An Anthology*, ed. Roberto Santiago (New York: Ballantine, 1995), 109.
- ¹⁴ Tato Laviera, *AmeRican* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1986), 63.
- ¹⁵ Hugo Rodríguez Vecchini, “Cuando Esmeralda ‘era’ Puertorriqueña: Autobiografía etnográfica y autobiografía neopicaresca,” *Nómada*. 1 (1995): 145-60.
- ¹⁶ Rodríguez Vecchini, 156.
- ¹⁷ Rodríguez Vecchini, 154.
- ¹⁸ Agustín Laó, “Islands at the Crossroads: Puerto Ricanness Traveling between the

Translocal Nation and the Global City,” in *Puerto Rican Jam: Essays on Culture and Politics*, eds. Frances Negrón-Muntaner and R. Grosfoguel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 172.

¹⁹ José Luis González, *El país de cuatro pisos y otros ensayos* (Rio Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1980), 43-84.

²⁰ For illuminating discussions of ‘nationalism’ in Puerto Rico, see the introduction to *Puerto Rican Jam*, “Beyond Nationalist and Colonialist Discourses: The Jaiba Politics of the Puerto Rican Ethno-nation;” as well as Mariano Negrón-Portillo’s “Puerto Rico: Surviving Colonialism and Nationalism,” and Ramón Grosfoguel’s “The Divorce of Nationalist Discourses from the Puerto Rican People: A Sociohistorical Perspective,” both in the same collection.

²¹ Ramón Grosfoguel, Frances Negrón-Muntaner, Chloé S. Georas, Introduction, in *Puerto Rican Jam*, 12.

²² Ramón Grosfoguel, “The Divorce of Nationalist Discourses from the Puerto Rican People: A Sociohistorical Perspective,” in *Puerto Rican Jam*, 74-5.

²³ Grosfoguel, et. al., 17-19.

²⁴ Grosfoguel, et. al., 18.

²⁵ See the Foreword in *Theories of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: New York University Press, 1996), especially pages x-xii and the section on the etymology of the words “ethnic, ethnical, ethnicity,” etc., pages 1-12. Also helpful in understanding the development of the term is the introduction to *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1996), particularly pages 4-5.

²⁶ See Paul R. Brass, “Ethnic Groups and Ethnic Identity Formation,” in *Ethnicity*, 85-90.

²⁷ Sollors, *Theories of Ethnicity*, xv.

²⁸ Manning Nash, “The core elements of ethnicity,” in *Ethnicity*, 24-28. Nash states that the secondary features or “surface pointers” include dress, language, and culturally denoted physical features. Beyond these secondary features there are also other “subsidiary indices of separateness.”

²⁹ See Elsa B. Cardalda Sánchez and Amilcar Tirado Avilés, “Ambiguous Identities! The Affirmation of *Puertorriqueñidad* in the Community Murals of New York City,” in *Mambo Montage: The Latinization of New York*, eds. Agustín Laó-Montes and A. Dávila (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 263-289. Not surprisingly, most of the murals in this study were political in nature.

³⁰ Sollors, *Theories of Ethnicity*, xviii.

³¹ Stuart Hall, “The New Ethnicities,” in *Ethnicity*, 162.

³² In “Puerto Rican Identity: Up in the Air: Air Migration, Its Cultural Representations, and Me ‘Cruzando el Charco.’” Alberto Sandoval Sánchez explores the “floating nation” metaphor in this very personal essay, in *Puerto Rican Jam*, 189-208.

³³ Hernández, 141.

³⁴ In *Boricua Literature: A Literary History of the Puerto Rican Diaspora*, Lisa Sánchez González analyzes the “nationalizing” moves of critics Yanis Gordils and Juan Flores, who both try to argue for the incorporation of “mainland” Puerto Rican literature into a wider national canon. See pages 18-21. Sánchez González rightly criticizes this strategy because it ignores the “obvious and profound differences between these two literary histories,” yet in further discussion of various “mainland” texts it is evident that there is a nationalizing undercurrent to her own arguments.

³⁵ In his seminal essay, “Puerto Rican Literature in the United States: Stages and Perspectives,” Juan Flores writes that the literature’s most “distinguishing” feature is precisely its “straddling” of “two national literatures and hemispheric perspectives.” *Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1993), 145. Despite Flores’ clear understanding of the hybrid nature of this literature, he argues for

subsuming it under a national Puerto Rican literature. See note 34.

³⁶ ‘Enthogenesis’ comes from the work of Werner Sollors and William Boelhower. In *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), Sollors introduces the term and credits it to Andrew Greeley, who, in his book *Ethnicity in the United States* (1974), used it to describe “the phenomenon of emerging ethnicity,” 56–59. In his book, *Through a Glass Darkly: Ethnic Semiosis in American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), Boelhower expands the concept through a semiotics approach to mean how ethnic signs are produced and how they operate rhetorically within a text.

³⁷ Jesús Colón migrated to New York City in 1918, Belpré in 1920 and Miranda in 1951. The three writers lived and worked contemporaneously in New York City from 1951 up to 1974, the year Colón died.

³⁸ *Boricua Literature*, 68–70.

³⁹ For information about Colón and his times, see their introduction to *The Way It Was and Other Writings* (New York: Center for Puerto Rican Studies, 1993), 13–30.

⁴⁰ William Boelhower, *Through a Glass Darkly*, 87.

⁴¹ Jesús Colón, *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches* (New York; Masses & Mainstream, 1961; New York: International Publishers, 1982), 148. Subsequent citations will be in parentheses.

⁴² Colón, *The Way It Was and Other Writings*, 34. Subsequent citations will be in parentheses.

⁴³ Boelhower, 43.

⁴⁴ Boelhower, 99.

⁴⁵ For more biographical information on Pura Belpré and a critical analysis of her work, see Lisa Sánchez González’s chapter 3, “A Boricua in the Stacks: Pura Belpré,” in *Boricua Literature*, 71–101.

⁴⁶ Pura Belpré, *Santiago*, 6. Pagination refers to a manuscript of the book found in the Pura Belpré archives (Reel #12) in the Center for Puerto Rican Studies. The bibliographic information for the book is as follows: (New York: Frederick Warne, 1969). This book is also available in the Center’s library. There is also a Spanish version of *Santiago* published by the same publisher but released in 1971. Subsequent citations will be from the manuscript and placed in parentheses.

⁴⁷ Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 180–181.

⁴⁸ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁴⁹ Miguel Piñero, *La Bodega Sold Dreams* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1985), 13.

⁵⁰ Jameson, 47.

⁵¹ Jameson, 166.

⁵² Graciany Miranda Archilla, archives, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, City University of New York, New York (Reel # 4, Box 5).

⁵³ In particular, I refer to Pedro Juan Soto’s collection of short stories, *Spiks* (1961) and Jose Luis González’s stories in *En Nueva York y otras desgracias* (1973) and *Veinte cuentos y paisa* (1973).

⁵⁴ See “El escritor puertorriqueño en exilio,” in *El país de cuatro pisos*, 99–106.

⁵⁵ Boelhower, 110.

⁵⁶ As defined by Werner Sollors, “descent” means the perceived notion of ethnicity having “blood,” “natural,” or inherited traits or characteristics. Sollors opposes this concept to “consent,” which refers to relations based on marriage or law. See *Beyond Ethnicity*, 5–6.

⁵⁷ Miranda Archilla, “The Shadow,” 2 and 7, manuscript from archives. Subsequent notes will be in parentheses.

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Pop Latinidad: Puerto Ricans in the Latin Explosion, 1999 Licia Fiol-Matta. Sobre dominicanos y puertorriqueños: movimiento perpetuo? Rita De Maeseneer. La Vida, Moynihan, and other Libels: Migration, Social Science and the Making of the Puerto Rican Welfare Queen Laura Briggs. Edward Rivera, The "Culture-Conscious Scribe" & Introduction Lyn Di Iorio Sandán. A Little Lavabo Eduardo Rivera. When 'I' Became Ethnic: Ethnogenesis and Three Early Puerto Rican Diaspora Writers José L. Torres-Padilla. Petra's Kingdom: The Cellar of The House on the Lagoon RoseAnna Mueller. Narrating Memories: Discourses of Development and the Environment in a Puerto Rican Coastal Region Ricardo Pérez. Leanings Katie Miranda. Browse Journals. Part I: Earlier Voices. 1. Evolving Identities: Early Puerto Rican Writing in the United States and the Search for a New Puertorrique. pp. 31-51. Download. 2. For the Sake of Love: Luisa Capetillo, Anarchy, and Boricua Literary History. pp. 52-80. Download. 3. When "I" Became Ethnic: Ethnogenesis and Three Early Puerto Rican Diaspora Writers. pp. 81-104. Download. Part II: Political and Historical. 4. Anarchism in the Work of Aurora Levins Morales. pp. 107-124. Download. Ethnogenesis is "the formation and development of an ethnic group." This can originate through a process of self-identification as well as come about as the result of outside identification. The term is a mid-20th century neologism, and refers to the observable phenomenon of emergence of new social groups that are identified as having a cohesive identity, i.e. an "ethnic group" in anthropological terms. Relevant sciences do not only observe this phenomenon but search for explanation of its causes. The