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TO REACH THE ISLE:
POETICS OF THE ISLAND IN PUERTO RICAN LITERATURE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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BY

JUAN DIEGO MARIÁTEGUI

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A mi madre, padre, hermano y abuela

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Summary

This dissertation investigates the way in which the geographical condition of insularity has been represented in Puerto Rican literature of the twentieth century. The central idea is what I call the "poetics of the island", using the term "poetics" in the etymological sense of *poiesis*, "to create" or "to make". The "poetics of the island" is a concept that maintains that in the case of Puerto Rican literature, insularity is not an absolute, a *priori* space but rather a phenomenon that is discursively produced by authors of differing sociocultural and ideological positions. Throughout the twentieth century, intellectuals and poets on and off Puerto Rico have turned to the figure of the island in their texts to confront pressing cultural, economic, and political questions. In doing so, they have produced widely varying accounts of Puerto Rico's history, the present circumstances in which they found themselves, and its future. Recurrently, these different poetics of the island have been marshalled to examine, and often propose explicit solutions to, one of Puerto Rico's most intractable issues, that of its relationship to the United States. That link is predicated on the juridical status of "non-incorporated territory", which makes the island a possession of the United States without formally belonging to it, a dynamic that has produced a host of political and socioeconomic problems for Puerto Rico and its people. I analyze the dialogue that literary representations of insularity establish with the fact of "non-incorporation", as well as with other important concerns, through texts that develop a gamut of ideological and cultural perspectives with respect to Puerto Rico's internal and external affairs. I begin with Antonio Pedreira's essay about national character *Insularismo: Ensayos de interpretación puertorriqueña* (1934), move on to María Zambrano's essay *Isla de Puerto Rico: Nostalgia y esperanza de un mundo mejor* (1940) and Juan Ramón Jiménez's heterogenous *Isla de la simpatía* (1981), pass through to Francisco Matos Paoli's poetic work *Luz de los héroes*

(1954), and end with José Luis González's essay "El país de cuatro pisos" (1979) and novel *La llegada* (1980). The most fundamental idea this dissertation develops through its investigation is that both the "non-incorporporated territory" and the literary response to it form conditions of possibility for imagining what Puerto Rican culture and society can and should be. The richness of the poetics of the island stems from how these conditions sometimes overlapping and other times conflict.

The historical frame covers roughly forty-five years, from the mid-1930s to the late 1970s. The reason I selected this timeframe is that during it, Puerto Rico experienced a number of socioeconomic and political crises that were intimately related to its status as a "non-incorporated territory". The period begins with the economic devastation of the Great Depression and rising financial control by United States companies, passes through the crucible of World War II and the early Cold War with its projects of democracy and industrialization, and ends in the decade in which those socioeconomic and political programs start to fail. It is in these moments that the figure of the island appears in influential Puerto Rican texts, and often explicitly engages with the issue of Puerto Rico's dynamic with the United States. The condition of crisis, in which a society's cultural, economic, and political structures are weakened by either internal or external forces, is important to this project because it serves as the set of circumstances that places the territorial status of Puerto Rico in dialogue with the literary portrayals of insularity. Changing with and growing from eras of instability, the "non-incorporated territory" and the rhetorical figure of the island have often functioned as proposals for the future of Puerto Rico, and will continue to do so until this pressing issue is resolved.

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A dissertation is never written in a vacuum, and this one is no exception. Completing this process has involved not just one kind of dialogue but many different ones, each with their own character, and I hope to account for all of them here. My first word of thanks goes to my mother, father, brother, and grandmother, who have followed me throughout graduate school with unwavering love and patience. They have not only given me a great life, they have also taught me to live it well.

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Introduction. Tracing the Shorelines

"we live in the description of a place, and not in the place itself"–Wallace Stevens, in a letter to Henry Church, 1945

"Cada isla nos seduce, nos obliga a naufragar, a llegar, llegar, llegar, a inventar un verbo nuevo"–Manuel Ramos Otero, *Invitación al polvo*

The winds were roaring. From the eyes of the satellites the masses of clouds unfurled massively, as if to blank out whatever lay beneath them. Hurricane María was already devastating the Caribbean, but in the images you could still see a piece of land. In some Puerto Rico seemed terribly vulnerable, in others it looked grimly steadfast. As I viewed these images, I increasingly noted how the contours of the massive storm seemed to reshape Puerto Rico's geographical outline even as it engulfed it, almost like the island were changing beneath the storm. Soon after, the destruction carried out by the hurricane would become apparent, as well as the continuing political dynamic between Puerto Rico and the United States. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, the United States Navy, and the Air Force mobilized to provide emergency aid, though in a notably deficient way. In the days after the catastrophe, the then-president of the United States noted that Puerto Rico was an island in order to defend against critiques that his administration's response was lagging.[1] While Puerto Rico's geographical status as an island came across as glaringly obvious at the time, what was not immediately clear was the lived experience of insularity and its cultural representations in Puerto Rican history.

Prompted by the ravages of the hurricane, the highly flawed North American response, and the image of Puerto Rico seemingly mutating beneath the storm, a series of questions began

[1] Shugerman, Emily. "Donald Trump says Puerto Rico is 'an island surrounded by big water'". *The Independent*, September 29, 2017, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/donald-trump-puerto-rico-hurricane-maria-comments-island-big-water-a7975011.html. Accessed February 22, 2021.

to come forth: has the island been as protean within Puerto Ricans' discourse as it had been in those images of Hurricane María, and if so, what is the significance of this malleability? More specifically, how have Puerto Ricans imagined insularity throughout the twentieth century, ever since the advent of North American juridical control? In their cultural representations of the island, what have been the rhetorical uses and ends that this figure has made possible, and who has mobilized it? In what ways has insularity been used to think through the dynamic between Puerto Rico and the United States, especially with regards to political forms like the nation, commonwealth status, and "non-incorporated territory"? As a scholar of literary studies, I resolved to search for answers in Puerto Rican literature written from the 1930s to the 1970s.

I chose this historical framework because I would argue that the status issue became more intricate and fundamental to the island's development in the middle decades of the twentieth century. To give a brief overview of this matter, the United States Supreme Court creates the status of "non-incorporated territory" in 1901 through the so-called Insular Cases, a collection of legal decisions with respect to how the United States Constitution applied to the new lands and people placed under its rule after the Spanish-American War of 1898. In the few interim years, two main schools of thought had formed to address this pressing question: those who argued that the Constitution automatically applied in full (*ex propio vigore*, or "of its own force") without mediation from other governmental bodies, and those who asserted that the Constitution could only be adapted through the plenary powers given to Congress by Section 3, Article IV to "regulate" new territories. In the case *Downes v. Bidwell* (1901), the Supreme Court found that for tariff purposes, Puerto Rico was not a part of the United States, instituting a difference between "incorporated" and "non-incorporated" territories. In the formulation of Justice Edward White, Puerto Rico was "foreign in a domestic sense", belonging to the United States while not

forming a part of it. However, the Court also ruled in *DeLima v. Bidwell* (1901) that Puerto Rico *did* form part of the U.S. for purposes of duty collection, placing the island in a highly ambiguous juridical position. This vagueness was not resolved in the next major decision, *Balzac v. Porto Rico* (1922), in which it was decided that although the Jones Act of 1917 had bestowed U.S. citizenship on Puerto Ricans, this had not incorporated it into the Union.

Although the structure of the insular government has changed significantly with the passage of the Foraker Act (1901) and the Jones Act, Puerto Rico does not enjoy full political autonomy or even federal representation. The U.S. Congress still retains veto power over any piece of insular legislation, and despite the fact that Puerto Ricans have a Resident Commissioner in the House of Representatives, this member cannot cast a vote. Even from such a schematic presentation, it is clear that "non-incorporation" has had profound effects on Puerto Rico's economy and governmental structure that continue to exert great influence today. One of the central claims of this dissertation is that the alternative islands we will explore allow us to understand how a significant part of the debates in and transformations of Puerto Rican culture from the 1930s to the 1970s was a series of responses to North American control founded upon this status. Literary representations of insularity are fundamentally entangled with how subjects of varying sociopolitical positions viewed Puerto Rico's link to the United States.[2]

Indeed, the trope of the island is fundamental for understanding the region of the Antilles,

[2] It should be noted that I do not explore insularity through the viewpoint of North American writers or institutions, but through that of Puerto Rican subjects or Spanish exiles integrated into the island's cultural sphere. I do this to counter a possible vision of the island that Godfrey Baldacchino refers to as the *terrae nullius*, spaces "waiting, wanting, to be possessed; potential laboratories for any conceivable…human project" (6), a discourse that has often attended colonial designs. My principal interest in this dissertation has been to tease out the many internal logics and consequences of representations of insularity by Puerto Rican writers, who have demonstrated the density of their island against any possible attempt to hollow it out.

although in this work I will be focusing on the Hispanic portion's cultural domain. In the case of Puerto Rico, insularity appears in its literary production early in the twentieth century with a poem like Luis Lloréns Torres' "Canción de las Antillas" (1913), in which the former colonies of Spain are personified and celebrate the Hispanic descent of their peoples. It appears again in a very different poetic context, Luis Palés Mato's *Tuntún de pasa y grifería* (1937), where all the islands of the archipelago are portrayed as human characters and mythic figures like the Mulata-Antilla that exalt the region's African legacy and racial mixture. Cuba also has a number of influential texts that explore the development of its society and political system through the island, where it is commonly portrayed as a degraded, insufficient space. Virgilio Piñera's *La isla en peso* (1943) represents Cuba as a prison from which its culture must escape in order to safeguard its vitality. A novelist like Reinaldo Arenas in *El color del verano* (1982) depicts the island nation as a site of sexual repression and brutal political control that ends in apocalypse. With regard to the Dominican Republic, the figure of the island is also significant in Juan Bosch's historical work *De Cristóbal Colón a Fidel Castro. El Caribe como frontera imperial* (1970) that envisions the region as a zone of encounter and struggle between various European colonial projects. The notion of a distorted insularity is likewise central to Joaquín Balaguer's essay *La isla al revés: Haití y el destino dominicano* (1983) that calls for the maintenance of the border between the two nations in order to save the Dominican Republic from racial "contamination". Time and again, Antillean authors have taken recourse to the figure of the island to explore recurring, central questions for their respective societies.

Studying the disparate contexts and rhetorical purposes that this figure has been activated for in Caribbean literature means that the object of this work is exploring a "poetics of the island". I use the term "poetics" not to signal a strict preoccupation with a particular genre like

poetry, but rather in its etymological sense of *poiesis*, "to create" or "to make". The "poetics of the island" is a concept that maintains that in the case of Puerto Rican literature, insularity is not an absolute, a *priori* space but rather a phenomenon that is discursively produced by authors of differing sociocultural and ideological positions. Each one of the primary texts included in this dissertation presents a particular vision of the island, and in each case their aesthetic representations enter into enriching dialogues with the socioeconomic, political and cultural debates of their time. The "poetics of the island" will seek to chart and explore the engagements and points of rupture between these different realms, joining the protean development of the literary figure of the island to Puerto Rico's gradual integration to North American economic and political circuits after 1898. In this way, I aim to show that insularity has been not just a condition of possibility for Puerto Rico's historical course, but also a significant hermeneutic for that very course as well as for its literary tradition. Puerto Rico has been many varying islands, and each one must be reckoned with on the way to a more comprehensive understanding of it. From this notion stems the title of the work, *To Reach the Isle*, a phrase that suggests "reaching" or understanding a space like the island is an ongoing process because spatiality is always under construction materially and discursively, and so is always open to change.

The "poetics of the island" that I elaborate here has quite a lot in common with Johannes Riquet's "poetics of (the) Island(s)" that he puts forth in *The Aesthetics of Island Space: Perception, Ideology, Geopoetics* (2019). We both understand space to be responsive to social and ideological forces, and are both concerned with tracking the political valences of aesthetic practice with regards to representations of insularity. However, there are some key differences in our approaches. For one, Riquet is partly interested in the geographical materiality of the island, and especially how such a materiality can resist specific textual depictions, whereas my focus on

the rhetorical use of insularity within Puerto Rican literature does not engage with such questions. Riquet also claims that he is not "primarily interested in what islands mean. I am more interested in the spatial energies they generate, and the ways in which they resist what they are made to mean" (16). The author does not explain what he understands to be the "meaning" of islands, nor does he expound upon why exploring the signifying power of insularity would distract from their "spatial energies", which apparently are the only phenomena that can create a particular space. In contrast, I would argue that while "spatial energies" cannot be reduced to pure "meaning", neither can they be separated; in each case, the kinds of spatialities that the texts studied here offer for Puerto Rico are directly tied to varying connotations of insularity. This is especially the case in the works explored in the first half, given that these texts' perspectives on the island would participate in a political discourse that would hold sway in Puerto Rico for nearly three decades. In this sense, I align myself with Lisa Fletcher's concept of "performative geographies", a notion that "would begin with the presumption that the meaning of islands is not so much apprehended as produced through language" (27).[3] To this valuable point I would add that language not only creates meaning, it also produces space through that very meaning. To utter something about an island is to contribute to making that island.

State of the Field

This dissertation seeks to place into dialogue two distinct fields of investigation, that of Caribbean studies and that of space studies. More specifically, I wish to engage some central

[3] Fletcher uses the term "performative" more in the sense of "performative utterance" developed by J.L. Austin than in the sense of a bodily performance. The author indicates this approach when she defines "performative" by quoting the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which gives the meaning of the word as "designating or relating to an utterance that effects an action *by means of being spoken or by means of which the speaker performs a particular act*" (Fletcher 26, my emphasis).

notions of space studies in conjunction with Puerto Rican literature to explore the fluctuating dynamics between aesthetic discourse, processes of subject formation, and their political and sociocultural contexts. By doing so, I hope to contribute to current debates in Caribbean studies regarding the intersection of geography, literature, and politics. Because my principal field is Caribbean literature, I will detail first my engagement with some of the relevant critical work from this area of study and then later address how my dissertation interacts with the concepts of some principal theorists of space.

Given its geographic importance in the Caribbean, the figure of the island has attracted critical attention, perhaps most notably in Antonio Benítez Rojo's *La isla que se repite: el Caribe y la perspectiva posmoderna* (1989). In this work Benítez Rojo approaches the subject through the lens of Chaos, a notion emphasizing the flow and instability of signification that in turn characterizes Caribbean culture as malleably repetitive, reproducing tropes with differences that points to the region's historical synthesis of many civilizations. Despite its apparent formlessness due to its "fluidez sociocultural" and "turbulencia historiográfica" (17), the author asserts that beneath all this one can discern an "isla que se repite" (idem) that supersedes any geographical borders and generates unexpected links between critical social forms such as the Plantation, the kinds of societies built upon slave-based sugar economies. Crucially, Benítez Rojo quickly notes

> ¿Cuál sería entonces la isla que se repite: Jamaica, Aruba, Puerto Rico, Guadalupe, Miami, Haití, Recife? Ciertamente, ninguna de las que conocemos. Ese origen, esa isla-centro, es tan imposible de fijar como aquella hipotética Antilia que reaparecería una y otra vez…Esto es así porque el Caribe no es un archipiélago común, sino un meta-archipiélago…y como tal tiene la virtud de carecer de límites y de centro (17-18)

While this formulation has a broad reach that aims for a comprehensive understanding of the Caribbean, it makes of the island a metaphor that effectively homogenizes the region. Though

undoubtedly there are significant parallels between Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guadalupe, and other parts of the Antilles, the historical, socioeconomic, and political specificities of these places cannot be ignored. Benítez Rojo does acknowledge this point when he writes that the impact of African culture on each island differs (45), yet he insists on using insularity as a figurative hermeneutic that too often emphasizes similarity over particularity. By focusing specifically on Puerto Rico and developing a "poetics of the island" through its literature, I aim to demonstrate how the concept of insularity can be used to explore the singular histories of each of the Antilles in order to ensure that these fundamental differences are not lost from view.[4]

Another theorist who more recently has addressed insularity is Juan Carlos Quintero Herencia in *La hoja de mar (:) Efecto archipiélago I* (2016), where he develops the idea of the archipelago as another metaphorical hermeneutic for the distinct cultures of the Caribbean. According to the author, the archipelago is created by the interplay between land and water, in the interstices between various islands that rather than being empty space are actually the site in which new perspectives can be developed. Indeed, the archipelago is a source of epistemological freedom due to its decentered character that stems from that fluid relation between land and water: "El archipiélago desorganiza metodologías en la medida que literalmente arrastra y descompone los modos de pertenecer, identificar y nombrar una ciudadanía" (29). Quintero Herencia's concept, in much the same way as Benítez Rojo's, purports to create a framework with which to understand the Caribbean that is grounded on principles of relativity and fluctuation symbolized by the hazy border between sea and shore. However, in formulating the

[4] In an interview, Arcadio Díaz Quiñones puts forth a similar idea when he reacts to some verses by the Puerto Rican poet Lola Rodríguez de Tío, "Cuba y Puerto Rico son/de un pájaro las dos alas". Asserting that such a view should not cloud the fundamental variances between them, Díaz Quiñones refers to Benítez Rojo when he states "La isla se repite, pero no tanto" (209).

archipelago as a tool with which to overcome dated hermeneutic models, Quintero Herencia also winds up homogenizing the space of the island, casting it as the site of uniformity that must be complemented by new knowledge in order to maintain relevance. In fact, the author portrays the archipelago as a kind of Derridean supplement to the island when he claims "La isla es un pluriverso cuando la recoge el archipiélago" (27), because the latter is defined by openings between land and sea that produce a fluid dynamic, openings that "separa[n] la isla de su mentira yoica" (54), a phrase that suggests the island could not harbor more than one meaning on its own. The corpus of literary texts I explore in this dissertation demonstrate that there is no "mentira yoica" that can be attached to insularity, due to the often starkly contrasting visions of the island these works produce and the rhetorical uses for which they mobilize it. This dissertation does not wish to wholly reject Quintero Herencia's notion of the archipelago, since it shares the notion that a geographic figure can be utilized as a hermeneutic with which to understand the cultural and political affairs of a specific area. It also partakes in the author's idea that literature can develop a political imaginary independent from that of political parties and official institutions (64), although I would argue that these imaginaries are not as divorced from such organizations as Quintero Herencia claims they can be (idem). I do, nevertheless, react against the idea that a hermeneutic can be applied to the Caribbean in an indiscriminate way that erases the possibility for difference in a particular space, such as insularity. In contrast, I trace the poetics of the island to insist that the interplays between each island of an archipelago must be grounded on the historical, socioeconomic, and cultural particularities of each so as to safeguard their complexity and achieve as nuanced a view of their dynamic as possible.

To that end, the "poetics of the island" I aim to formulate here seeks to investigate metaphor and its rhetorical uses rather than distrust it. In this sense, my dissertation traces a

middle course between the interpretations of the Caribbean put forth by Benítez Rojo and Quintero Herencia and another scholar like Silvio Torres-Saillant. In his 2011 keynote speech to the 36th Annual conference of the Caribbean Studies Association, titled "Conocimiento, legitimidad y el sueño de unidad caribeña", Torres-Saillant also argues against a highly figurative approach to the complexity of the Caribbean. He states that viewing the region through a concept like Benítez Rojo's "isla que se repite" narrows the critical field to just the Antilles and thereby ignores relevant continental sites like parts of Mexico or Colombia (25-26); in order to avoid this, it is necessary to take "las precauciones conceptuales necesarias para regular nuestra imaginación por medio de la concreción temporal y espacial" (25). This is without doubt a valid critique, but towards the close of the address Torres-Saillant, in his call to salvage knowledge about those previously neglected continental areas, begins to homogenize the insular in much the same way Quintero Herencia does: "Cuando pensamos en islas, las discusiones sobre identidad etnorracial, ascendencia cultural, producción intelectual y empoderamiento politico asumen a menudo una etnografía estable que presenta a negros, mulatos y blancos…con grados variables de conflicto, colaboración, entremezclamiento, tension y coexistencia" (27). Such a perspective once again identifies the insular as a domain of inert uniformity that must be complemented by some outside element (in this case, the continental Caribbean) in order to produce knowledge that is not suspect.

With respect to Torres-Saillant's suspicion of metaphorical approaches, I would argue that figurative language is actually a useful tool with which to make the ostensibly homogeneous island a much more differentiated site. What political and sociocultural programs stem from a philosopher like María Zambrano, in exile on Puerto Rico after the Spanish Civil War and in the early years of World War II, referring to her island refuge as an Edenic paradise and a "magnet"

for the Western hemisphere?[5] How might this contrast to the vision of Puerto Rico as a "Green Hell" from the viewpoint of a North American character in a novel by José Luis González in the late 1970s? My dissertation thus pursues a middle ground between the schemas given above by approaching metaphor not as the encompassing framework that ultimately subsumes difference, but as a significant element of cultural discourse that can be used to historicize and explore the particularities of that very discourse. By modeling such an approach on Puerto Rico, I hope to contribute to an understanding of the Antillean archipelago's cultural production that emphasizes each island's unique historical development.[6]

This dissertation is also directed at countering some other charges about the study of islands, the role of metaphor in such projects, and who uses those metaphors that seem altogether too binary. In 2006, a group of scholars founded the *Island Studies Journal*, a scholarly publication that sought to supplement the institutional recognition of the field by placing in dialogue geopolitical, ecological, developmental, and cultural issues that affect islands.[7] From its inception, however, the ways in which its founders were imagining their interventions in the field

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[5] As the above question might suggest, I am focusing exclusively on literature and not on aesthetic objects like popular songs, though there are certainly texts from this sphere that would provide important material, like Antonio Cabán Vale's widely disseminated song "Verde Luz". The principal reason for why the realm of popular culture is excluded is that it is too vast to fit comfortably in this dissertation alongside the literary works that I examine. Tracing the figure of the island in manifestations of popular culture would fruitfully supplement this project.

[6] Such a method can be likened to an idea proposed by Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens in their introduction to *Archipelagic American Studies* (2017), a volume that moves to "decontinentalize" United States studies by analyzing North America's political and cultural relationships to various nations or territories outside of its contiguous borders, such as the Philippines, Guam, Jamaica, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Roberts and Stephens briefly posit "a more networked idea of *island interchange* [that] suggests that islanders have always…been…able to distinguish themselves from their connections to formations beyond their island shores" (30).

[7] For a thorough rundown of the institutions that have supported these intellectual ventures, see Baldacchino's editorial in the founding issue of *Island Studies Journal*, "Islands, Island Studies, Island Studies Journal" (2006).

rested on some questionable presumptions. Godfrey Baldacchino asserts in his opening editorial in the first issue that the journal joins a growing trend in which "Islanders are reclaiming this field from mainlanders, and embracing more participative methodologies while doing so" (7). Besides drawing a rigid line between those who inhabit an island and those who do not, this assertion also suggests that the latter exclusively produce knowledge about the island that is inherently flawed or in the service of an unequal power dynamic. In the very first article of the journal, Peter Hay articulates this more explicitly as he rejects the use of metaphor in island studies, claiming that figurative representations of insularity often ignore the "realness of island lives" and as such are "continental, colonial constructions" (30). While it is undeniable that literary depictions of island have accompanied imperial projects, this does not mean that only "mainlanders" or "continental" agents are capable of such portrayals, nor that metaphor necessarily belongs to a colonial logic. The majority of the texts this dissertation explores were written by Puerto Ricans while on the island and, with the possible exception of Zambrano and Juan Ramón Jiménez, all of the authors studied here trouble the unyielding breach between the supposed ideologies of Baldacchino's "islander" and "mainlander", as well as the status of these figures: José Luis González, for example, produced a pro-independence spatiality that includes the island in texts written while in exile in Mexico. As for the function of metaphors, Hay does recognize a potentially generative aspect, but only when they "rebound upon *real* islands and influence life there" (idem). As has already been noted, all of the texts in question here present a metaphorical understanding of insularity that purport to have a degree of influence on the "real" Puerto Rico, but some of those works do not put forward a vision of insularity that categorically renounce the United States' juridical control over Puerto Rico, as we might expect if we accepted Hay's proposals.

The approach I undertake to these debates in Caribbean studies also animates my engagement with critics who have theorized more broadly about spatiality. My contention that Puerto Rico's insularity is not an *a priori* space, but rather one created through the unique social praxis of literature, is firmly grounded on French Marxist Henri Lefebvre's work *The Production of Space* (1974). In this work, the author sets out to provide a unitary theory of how "social space" is produced by focusing primarily on the means and relations of production, the way in which different social agents experience and interact with a given environment, and the dynamic between space and aesthetic representation. By doing so, Lefebvre aims to counter philosophical and academic trends that respectively present space as an inert, absolute phenomenon and that artificially divide the study of space amongst disciplines, offering a fragmented account of its workings that he claims benefits the perpetuation of the capitalist state (89-90, 93-94). One of the most significant "logics" of these trends is what the author calls "constant metaphorization", a deliberate use of figurative language that transforms the concrete into abstractions; within this particular way of mobilizing language "letters, words, images or sounds, signs are rigid, glacial, and abstract…[they] threaten the visible world" (134). Lefebvre's claims regarding this suspect use of language forms an important part of my methodology, since my engagement with theorists like Benítez Rojo and Quintero Herencia's hermeneutics closely mirrors his indictment of abstraction. That is, I locate in Lefebvre's insistence that aesthetic representation should never be divorced from concrete, material contexts a way to tread that middle path between those critics who rely excessively on metaphor and those like Saillant who express apprehension of it. My purpose in this dissertation is to examine how literary discourses about insularity dialogue with their socioeconomic and political circumstances to demonstrate that the metaphors with which the authors conceived the island did not exist in some closed-off aesthetic realm. In this way, I

can appreciate the nuances of figurative language without losing sight of the fact that for Puerto Rico, insularity has always had a material dimension on and off the page.

Furthermore, I aim to think alongside Marxist geographer David Harvey's claim that notions like space, place, and environment are not just individual concepts but also "conditions of possibility for all forms of knowing" (130). The corpus I have assembled here allows us to explore different "forms of knowing" with respect to Puerto Rico: principally, the figure of the island has attended very influential instances of authors and intellectuals attempting to understand Puerto Rico's cultural dynamic with respect to the United States and, in doing so, formulating it. Due to this, the literary *topos* of insularity has played an active role in the development of political discourses both within Puerto Rican literature and in more official channels. Indeed, as Jacques Rancière argues, there is an ineradicable aesthetic aspect to politics in the etymological sense of *aisthetikos*, "of or for perception of the senses". From this perspective,

> aesthetics can be understood…as the system of *a priori* forms determining what presents itself to sense experience. It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and stakes of politics…Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak (13)

As we will see, each text studied will identify a subject or collective that it deems most apt to represent Puerto Rican society and transform it. Those texts that will be taken up in the first half will be particularly influential in that they contributed to an official political disposition that became entrenched for nearly three decades. Those of the second half represent perspectives that have never held institutional power, but that still contain a significant political dimension given that they engage in a struggle to "delimit" what kind of social space Puerto Rico should be, especially in contrast to the preceding visions. The aesthetic representation of insularity will be

directly tied to each work's constructing of the ideal subjects to meet Puerto Rico's pressing issues and guide it towards a more fruitful future, such that space becomes an essential component of Puerto Rico's political development.

Implicit in Rancière's definition of aesthetics is the productive tension between description and prescription. The confluence of these two uses of language can be glimpsed in the term "delimitation", which can mean either depicting the way something currently is or the way it ought to be. I would argue that the literary texts in this dissertation's corpus are a useful source for exploring the aesthetic engagement with space precisely because their poetics of the island hinge upon both description and prescription, given that their depictions of insularity bear an important political charge. The generative dynamic between these uses of language is also what lead me to select the two epigraphs to this introduction, which turn upon Stevens' idea of a "description" of a place and Ramos Otero's notion that every island greets a castaway with an "obligation" to produce discourse. Works like Pedreira's essay *Insularismo* or José Luis González's novel *La llegada* introduce crucial nuances not only to the idea of "description" but also to Stevens' claim that "we" exist in it: who is this "we", and what social agents or groups get to speak in its name? Likewise, those texts and the others in this dissertation modify Ramos Otero's unidirectional portrayal in which only the island interpellates the subject that approaches it; though authors like Pedreira, Zambrano, and Francisco Matos Paoli certainly respond to Puerto Rico's insularity, they do so in a way that also exerts discursive and even political influence upon this space. It is from this encounter between island and social agent, as well as the resulting push and pull between the description of a space and (re)modeling of it through literary praxis, that the multifaceted and protean insularity of Puerto Rico springs.

View(s) from Borinquen: Insular Contributions

So far, I have detailed how my dissertation aims to engage some broad theoretical concepts about the Caribbean and spatiality in general. In this section, I turn to Puerto Rico in particular and what kind of knowledge tracing the figure of the island in its literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries can provide. First, I will justify my choice to focus specifically on Puerto Rico and the historical era beginning in 1898. Then, I will briefly explain how the figure of the island allows us to construct a historical and cultural narrative of Puerto Rico's development under United States control and to re-contextualize of some key texts in the island's literature. A more exhaustive presentation of the crucial ideas and questions to be analyzed in each chapter will thereafter conclude the introduction.

The principal reason I focus exclusively on Puerto Rico is that, perhaps more so than any other site in the Hispanic Caribbean, its history has been marked by a continual negotiation between varying politic-juridical forms.[8] Since the turn of the twentieth century, forms like the independent nation, federated statehood, and status of associated free state have all stemmed from its complex juridical relationship with the United States. What is striking is that in the texts in question throughout this dissertation, the figure of the island is utilized to explicitly or implicitly argue for either national sovereignty or some form of associated statehood, though curiously a pro-annexation perspective does not surface. It is this flexibility with respect to political form that drives my contention that the space of insularity should not be understood as a monolithic one. This is because the island as an independent nation, associated free state, or fully integrated

[8] It should be noted that very similar negotiation between political forms has also taken place in former French colonies of the Antilles. For example, Haiti is a sovereign nation since the nineteenth century, while Guadeloupe and Martinique are "overseas departments", which have the same juridical status as the regions of Metropolitan France. This is why I reserve the claim of Puerto Rico's unique history with spatial political forms to the Hispanic Caribbean.

member of the United States would be radically different versions of Puerto Rico in juridical, political, and socioeconomic ways. Examining how these social spaces are advocated for through the figure of the island, and historicizing the appearance of this figure through the twentieth century, means that insularity can be a useful hermeneutic for exploring how these distinct spaces were conceived in critical moments of Puerto Rican history. In other words, it is not necessary to set the island aside as a source of knowledge about the Caribbean, in the way that Juan Duchesne Winter calls for due to his claim that this figure has been used as a site for colonial expansion and the development of repressive regimes (14); the tropology that arises from it is more comprehensive than this. Even monographs that attempt to investigate how pliant literary representations of insularity can be, such as Dara Goldman's *Out of Bounds: Islands and the Demarcation of Identity in the Hispanic Caribbean* (2008) inadvertently marginalize other specific political forms that an island can assume. By exploring "queer subjectivities, territorial disputes, and migration" Goldman argues against the rigid equation of the island and the nation (16), but focuses on nationhood as the only option. Analyzing Puerto Rico's diverse possibilities allows us to study the many ways in which Caribbean authors and intellectuals (and foreign ones in exile there) have negotiated the often-fraught political relationship with the United States.

As stated above, a central concept in this dissertation will be that of Puerto Rico's status under United States law. This is also a central component of Puerto Rico's particularity in the region, as it is only one of two members of the Antilles (the other being the U.S. Virgin Islands) that is officially a "non-incorporated territory" of the United States, and therefore not a sovereign nation. All of the political forms discussed above are intimately related to Puerto Rico's territorial status, and one of my claims is that due to this connection, the literary representation of insularity can also be used to historicize and understand the development of Puerto Rican engagement with

the United States. A number of highly fruitful and thorough monographs by legal scholars have charted the history of "non-incorporation" under United States law from its developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the present day (Sparrow [2006], Raustiala [2009]), and some have concentrated their efforts on Puerto Rico's specific case (López Baralt [1999], Duffy Burnett and Marshall [2001], Rivera Ramos [2007]). These studies focus on the juridical aspect of the island's "non-incorporation", and do so often from a top-down approach that focuses on the issue from the perspective of the United States, although more recently Sam Erman (2019) has demonstrated how a few influential Puerto Rican politicians, lawyers, and labor leaders used the profound ambiguities of the island's legal relationship to the United States in order to further their own goals. This valence of the dissertation aims to complement the valuable work that has been down so far in a twofold way: to continue exploring how Puerto Rican social agents negotiated the "status question" and how they did so particularly through literary discourse. In other words, I hope to demonstrate that there is a significant cultural aspect to the debate that so far has not been covered, and that studying the development of the figure of the island can allow us to do so. For example, the discourse of Hispanophilia, the veneration of Spanish cultural legacy, plays a central role in constructing Puerto Rico's relationship to the United States in many of the texts we will analyze. The shift in how this cultural legacy was viewed tracks with the emergence of the Partido Popular Democrático, the political party that held legislative and gubernatorial dominance between 1940 and 1968, and its increasing acquiescence to maintaining Puerto Rico's status intact after World War II and the first stirrings of the Cold War. As we will see, shifting poetics of the island hover around such crucial junctures.

With respect to the field of Puerto Rican literary studies, tracing a poetics of the island permits us to reconsider several key texts in this tradition, either by altering interpretations of some

of their fundamental ideas, contextualizing them historically in a way that has so far not been done, or by situating them in wider debates about the Caribbean. The island, for example, has been mobilized to rethink the relationship between geography and cultural production, a dynamic that despite its fraught nature can provide a way to avoid constraining discourses like geographic determinism and to structure Puerto Rican society to ensure its cultural development and modernization. The island can also serve to resituate the significant work of exiled intellectuals in the region, which at a critical moment used this figure as a discursive nucleus to imagine Puerto Rico as socioculturally antithetical to the sovereign nation, in dialogue with important changes in its political sphere. Likewise, a poetics of the island can bring to the surface a related problematic that emerged at this time regarding Puerto Rico's role in the Cold War, particularly its conscription into the Korean War, and the reaffirming of its territorial status. In this context, insularity furnishes a response to these circumstances by imagining Puerto Rico as a divine homeland through which its inhabitants surmount the political subordination that has ostensibly plagued them. Finally, insularity can serve to develop a series of alternative political spaces aimed at rescuing marginalized cultural traditions and foregrounding issues of class and race, in a bid to integrate Puerto Rico with its Caribbean neighbors and separate it from North American control. In each case, framing a reading of the texts through the perspective of the island allows me to open up new avenues in the works themselves and to illustrate how they responded to the pressing issues of their time by developing cultural and political imaginaries that either coincided with Puerto Rico's juridical status or openly challenged it.

The historical context I have chosen for this dissertation runs roughly forty-five years, from the middle of the 1930s to the end of the 1970s.[9] The reason for this particular framework

[9] Unfortunately, one dimension of Puerto Rican history that this dissertation has not been able to

is that in this period, Puerto Rican society underwent fundamental shifts in cultural, socioeconomic, and political terms, which often registered as times of profound crisis. Although the term crisis has a long history of theoretical and aesthetic representation, too extensive for me to explore here, I define the concept generally as a historical juncture in which a society's cultural, economic, and political structures are weakened by either internal or external forces. In other words, a crisis is a time in which aesthetics in the sense that Rancière uses the term, those *a priori* forms that delimit what can be imagined in a cultural and political sense, are made relative or pass through transformations that make new forms possible. Puerto Rico's status as "non-incorporated territory" is related to the condition of crisis because the socioeconomic and political arrangements made possible by North American juridical control in part have helped to bring about that very condition. Furthermore, I would argue that the "non-incorporated territory" can be understood as an aesthetic since it has functioned as a set of limitations in the island's political and socioeconomic spheres that has effectively institutionalized some dynamics while making some other options impossible. The instances of crisis that frame this dissertation also provoked intellectuals to revisit the topic of insularity, such that the figure of the island has been used to understand and propose solutions to the emergencies that Puerto Rico has endured, which leads me to categorize the poetics of the island as a collection of aesthetics that at times concur with that of "non-incorporation" and at other times break with it. The moments of crisis that punctuate the four decades studied here are thus stages upon which Puerto Rico's juridical status and literary discourse construct and dispute its past, present, future. The richness of the "poetics

include is that of the diaspora that has continued throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. The richness and complexity of this dimension is enough for an entire monograph on its own, and so lies outside the scope of this work. For those interested in the figure of the island in literature written by Puerto Rican immigrants, especially those in the United States, see chapter four of Goldman (2008).

of the island" stems from the confluence of these three phenomena that in their perpetual interactions have acted as major conditions of possibility for Puerto Rican culture's development throughout the twentieth century.

As has been indicated above in the discussion of the phrase "poetics of the island", I do not limit my analysis to a particular literary genre, but instead range across a few of them to explore insularity. In addition to my argument that the "poetics of the island" is an idea focused primarily on an etymological understanding of *poiesis* and therefore on how the island is imagined, the variety of genre is also related to Rancière's connection between *aesthesis* and politics. A genre is a specific approach to language and thus a particular form of *aesthesis*, of apprehending and forming social phenomena like space through the unique constraints and structures that distinguishes it from others. The genre of each text can therefore be placed in dialogue with how it understands insularity and the political stance that it assumes. Due to the impact that these contrasting literary forms have on the representation of Puerto Rico, the inclusion of differing genres is aimed at keeping with the central thematic contention of the malleability of space and its political and cultural stakes.

Chapter 1 focuses on Pedreira's *Insularismo: Ensayos de interpretación puertorriqueña* (1934), and its central contention is that behind the geographical insularity that the author identifies as such an inhibition, there lurks another kind of island that represents Puerto Rico's unrealized cultural potential. This demonstrates that the geographical determinism that Pedreira does admittedly assert is not as unconditional as most critics have alleged, and it also indicates that the author does not form a nostalgic view of Puerto Rican culture; his gaze is firmly fixed on the future. In order to secure a more promising one, the work undertakes an infamously racist and sexist evaluation of Puerto Rican society geared towards privileging the university-educated youth

who are the twentieth-century counterparts of those nineteenth-century cultural and political leaders who made that coveted island fleetingly possible. One of the most salient points of this analogy is that the nineteenth century figures that Pedreira values so highly were mainly proponents of *autonomismo,* the political discourse that pressed for home rule without independence from Spain. *Insularismo* continually implies that the educated youth, by focusing exclusively on aesthetic matters, would take a similar position with regards to the United States, since a political question like Puerto Rico's territorial status can ostensibly be settled only after the island has achieved a certain level of cultural development. Out of his search for a renewed insularity, Pedreira thus formulates a language that would prove useful for the Partido Popular Democrático's dominance that would determine the island's course for the next several decades.

Chapter 2 addresses two texts by Zambrano and Jiménez jointly for thematic reasons. The purpose of studying these authors in combination is to explore how they navigated the immediate circumstances of their exile in Puerto Rico, which has not been thoroughly analyzed with respect to their work.[10] Both Zambrano and Jiménez produced texts at crucial historical periods, and their sense of insularity leads them to assume political and cultural positions that were slowly becoming entrenched in official channels in the decades of the 1940s and 1950s. Zambrano's *Isla de Puerto Rico*: *Nostalgia y esperanza de un mundo nuevo* (1940) imagines the island as the natural source of democracy, and so considers Puerto Rico to be a potential nexus of hemispheric solidarity that can rise up to defeat the fascism that was sweeping across Europe at the time. Jiménez's *Isla de la*

[10] It's important to mention that in the decades in which Zambrano and Jiménez produced their texts, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean was a refuge for a considerable number of Spanish Republican exiles, as well as a hub for other Latin American intellectuals. Some other notable figures include Pedro Salinas (who wrote one of his more renowned poems "El contemplado" [1946] in Puerto Rico), Pablo Casals, Jorge Guillén, and Gabriela Mistral (who wrote a number of poems and articles about the Caribbean, like "Las Antillas" [1930] and "Mar Caribe" [1946]).

simpatía (1981) likewise views the island as a space of aesthetic delight, which leads him to argue for Puerto Rico functioning as a linguistic and cultural hub for the Americas. As we will see, these perspectives will closely parallel the juridical logic for Puerto Rico's colonial status as they posit that insularity and national independence are irreconcilable.

The following chapter takes up Francisco Matos Paoli's *Luz de los héroes* (1954), a collection of mystic poetry written by the author during his incarceration after the Nationalists' failed Jayuya Uprising. The majority of the criticism on Matos Paoli's work focuses on its connection with Pedro Albizu Campo's party and his poetic response to governmental repression. While I too read this work in such a context, I also seek to place it in dialogue with other literary sources and historical circumstances that so far have not been duly considered. Specifically, at the time in which the Nationalists rebelled against the possibility of the Estado Libre Asociado and Matos Paoli extolled the mystical sacrifice of those rebels, Puerto Rico was participating in the Korean War and still experiencing the process of militarization that had begun in World War II. This produced a series of discourses regarding bodily sacrifice and death from various perspectives. The first I include regarding Korea is the Partido Popular Democrático's, which understood Puerto Rican engagement as proof of the island's commitment to democracy and capitalism, as well as its close bonds with the United States; the second is that of authors like José Luis González and Emilio Díaz Valcárcel, who represent the war as a wasteful enterprise that recruits Puerto Ricans to fight for a government that actively subordinates their homeland. *Luz de los héroes* imagines the island as a space of divine connection for which Puerto Ricans must shed their blood to guarantee its national independence. The casting of an inherently political struggle as a search for mystical transcendence develops a strikingly unique language with which to understand this crucial period, and formulates a distinct space from which the Puerto Rican

experience of the Cold War can be investigated.

Chapter 4 focuses on José Luis González's essay "El país de cuatro pisos" (1979) and his novel *La llegada: crónica con "ficción"* (1980). These texts will be studied in conjunction because they both meditate on the same issues; indeed, *La llegada* can be considered a novelization of the earlier essay. In both of these works, González formulates a series of political spaces (the independent nation, the island, the plantation, and the "país") and associates them with particular socioeconomic classes and racial-ethnic groups that have been key in Puerto Rican history, though the available criticism has not addressed the function of these spaces. Allied to his argument about the fundamental role of African cultures in that of Puerto Rico's is the author's Gramscian Marxism that seeks a productive harmony between the intellectual class and the proletariat, which will be the principal agent of independence. The "país", and not the island, is the space that makes possible the kind of democratic socialism, predicated on the resurgence of Afro-Antillean cultures, that will lead to national sovereignty and then to a Pan-Caribbean confederation that will guard the region against colonial depredations. "El país de cuatro pisos" and *La llegada* are useful because they relativize the notion that the island is the site from which political projects should spring; the novel will argue that it is a space that should be marginalized due to its associations with a colonial gaze. Furthermore, the "país" offered by both works is significant because it introduces a necessary phase in the transition between colony and nation. That is, González implicitly argues that for independence to be truly effective, issues of race and class have to be foregrounded beforehand, undermining the logic of political organizations like the Nationalist Party that posited an immediate transformation from subjugation to sovereignty. If the first two chapters present a narrative of the historical development of a discourse that aligns itself with Puerto Rico's colonial condition, the last two trace the nuances of a discourse that opposes those

circumstances by advocating liberation from them.

The authors that make up this dissertation's corpus are separated by historical context, ideological positions, literary genre, and other significant elements. And yet their visions of what Puerto Rico has been, is, and can be all cluster around the island in an unstable, protean matrix. The many islands that Puerto Rico has been are the spaces where its people and its culture have steadfastly, painfully, and innovatively imagined themselves and the paths that lie before them. Let us set out for the first shore.

Chapter 1. Towards a Future Isle: *Insularismo* and the Voyage Home

A ship, passing wearily over the waves, approaches an island barely visible against the horizon. A small number of men amongst its crew begin to stir and quicken their actions in preparation for the landing, calling out the sight of their new homeland. As they near, they see the beaches are covered with unloaded ships carrying striped banners. Suddenly the waves begin to surge and leap about the ship, bearing it farther from shore despite the crew's attempts to right their course. Soon the island is lost over the skyline, and the ship finds itself facing the open sea with no clear direction.

This brief narrative dramatizes one of the most memorable images of Puerto Rican intellectual Antonio S. Pedreira's seminal work, *Insularismo: Ensayos de interpretación puertorriqueña* (1934). The image is that of Puerto Ricans nearly arriving at the shores of a 'patria' (168), a space of political autonomy and national identity, before an unexpected military power prevents them from reaching this longed-for place. The ship that has been knocked off course from a promising route is a central metaphor for Puerto Rico in Pedreira's text. In the author's historiographical recounting of its past, Puerto Rico has been "navigating" its long history of colonialism ever since the sixteenth century, passing through a long period of stagnation and lack of development that lasted until the eighteenth century, during which the ship wandered aimlessly. During the nineteenth, thanks to the emergence of an autochthonous culture and political participation from the inhabitants of Puerto Rico, the ship neared its coveted port that was the "patria", until the United States gained control of the island at the close of the Spanish American War of 1898. Here, the ship loses sight of its target, entering the twentieth century adrift and searching for a way to reorient itself amidst a sharpening feeling of crisis. The notion of a truncated process of regeneration, in which a group of people find their hopes of

building a new space that would correspond to their own sociocultural and political desires, haunts this work.

A sensation of loss and confusion was prevalent in some intellectual circles in the years that Pedreira composed *Insularismo*. The first thirty years of North American stewardship was a period of shifting economic fortunes and marked political and social ambiguity. By 1901, free trade was established between Puerto Rico and the United States, a development that helped to foment growth in various sectors of the island's economy, such as the sugar, coffee and needlework industries. Despite the notable prosperity in many sectors, Puerto Rico was eventually deeply affected by the Great Depression of 1929. Between 1930 and 1933, per capita income fell by 30%, unemployment grew, and generalized labor protests shook various industries, such as tobacco, sugar, electric power, needlework and gasoline (Ayala and Bernabe, 96). Furthermore, the first three decades of United States rule witnessed the rise of 'Americanization', the process by which North American culture, political structures and the English language were implanted. These conditions menaced the negation of the island's Hispanic ethnicity and culture, prompting artists and intellectuals such as Emilio S. Belaval in *Los problemas de la cultura puertorriqueña* and Tomás Blanco in *Prontuario histórico de Puerto Rico*, both published in 1935, to trace the development of a distinctly Puerto Rican identity and ascertain the most effective ways of overcoming the difficulties facing it.

By the decade of the 1930s, Pedreira had positioned himself as one such intellectual dedicated to formulating a more concrete idea of Puerto Rican culture. He graduated in 1923 from the University of Puerto Rico, at the time an institution mainly geared towards the preparation of high school English teachers; he also completed post-graduate studies at Columbia University. In 1925, the Dean of the University of Puerto Rico Thomas Benner created a

Department of Hispanic Studies, motivated by the notion of the "Pan-American university" that sought to act as a point of contact between Latin and North American cultures (Rodríguez Beruff, 15-16). Pedreira gained a post in this Department, becoming its director in 1927 and helping to generate a number of principal initiatives, given by Rodríguez Beruff as: "énfasis en la creación intelectual propia", "creación de los recursos bibliográficos necesarios para el estudio de la realidad nacional…y la legitimación de la investigación sobre temas puertorriqueños", and a greater contact with the intellectual production "de la España republicana y de América Latina" (16). Through his many publications, Pedreira contributed greatly to many of these impulses. He helped legitimate Puerto Rican literature, culture, and history as a field of study through works such as *Hostos, ciudadano de América* (1932), *Un hombre del pueblo: José Celso Barbosa* (1937), and *La actualidad del jíbaro* (1935). Two of his works, *Bibliografía puertorriqueña (1493-1930)* (1932) and the posthumous *El periodismo en Puerto Rico* (1941), were some of the first texts to systematically compile and archive information regarding crucial written material from the island's history.

His most influential text, *Insularismo*, was an attempt to grapple with the sense of social crisis and political ambiguity that the process of "Americanization" and the economic collapse of the Great Depression had created. Like other intellectuals of the time, Pedreira responded to these pressures by attempting to formulate a systematic representation of a Puerto Rican "spirit" that could serve as the foundation for an ethno-cultural nationalism. He had attempted to fulfill such a function some years before, when he co-founded the magazine *Índice*: *Mensuario de historia, literatura, arte y ciencia* in 1929.[1] In the third issue, under the heading 'Definición y

[1] Pedreira's thinking, and *Índice's* approach to the issues affecting Puerto Rico, were very influenced by the Cuban cultural journal *Revista de Avance* (1927-30), directed by leading intellectuals like Jorge Mañach, Alejo Carpentier, Juan Marinello, Martí Casanovas, Francisco

orientación', there appeared a brief survey that asked the readers to identify and define a Puerto Rican "collective character". While the question of a Puerto Rican national character was central to other contemporary intellectuals, this chapter concentrates on Pedreira's text because among the essays concerning national interpretation written in this period, it alone meditates on the history, the cultural development and the future of Puerto Rico through the spatiality of the island.[2] It is around the discursive figure of the island that the text's claims regarding Puerto Rico's stagnant colonial past, its troublingly ambiguous present, and its tantalizing fate cohere.

Throughout the text, Pedreira formulates two distinct but related concepts of spatiality, that of insularity and "insularismo", which act as two semantic fields that name Puerto Rico's deficient, underdeveloped and painfully constrained spatiality. Insularity refers to the geographical condition of Puerto Rico being an island, which for the text implies a host of flaws and inadequacies that severely hamper the development of a robust and autonomous society, such as a lack of land, a dearth of natural resources, and a stultifying distance from other

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Ichaso, and others. *Revista de Avance* was concerned with issues like national character, aesthetic vanguardism, and the role of the intellectual in modern society, which would all preoccupy Pedreira in his later texts. Perhaps most importantly, *Revista de Avance* utilized some metaphors to portrays its cultural mission that would be fundamental to *Insularismo*, especially that of the ship starting out on a journey of renewal. In the opening editorial to the journal, the founders passionately announce their adventure: "¡Mar afuera, hasta que se sienta un hervor de infinito bajo los pies!" (1). The image of venturing out into the unknown will be a central element around which *Insularismo's* call to reconstruct Puerto Rico's cultural spatiality will turn. Even before that, it is clear that Pedreira was well aware of this Cuban publication; although it does not bear him name, *Índice* published an editorial on March 13, 1930 that responds to a brief description that the editors of *Avance* made of their Puerto Rican counterpart they year prior, in which they praise their efforts. For more on *Revista Avance*, see Masiello 1993 and Manzoni 1993.

[2] "Injecciones a la lengua". *Índice*: *Mensuario de historia, literatura, arte y ciencia*, 13 June 1929, 97-98. This text formed part of a series named 'Aterrizajes', which were written anonymously. However, in his article "Los aterrizajes de Antonio S. Pedreira: El pretexto de *Insularismo*", Juan José Beauchamp has traced the ideological content of these articles to Pedreira's essay, demonstrating a convincing continuity between them.

Caribbean islands that breeds isolation. “Insularismo” refers to a historical phenomenon of cultural, economic and political paralysis imposed upon Puerto Rico by colonialism, mainly by the centuries of Spanish rule but also renewed by North American control of the island. These twin semantic fields are defined by the density of their figurative language, as *Insularismo* is a highly metaphorical work.[3] Although insularity and “insularismo” are not equivalent, their principal metaphors are very similar, repeatedly emphasizing through images of restriction like the cage and the crypt how Puerto Rico has been constricted due to its geography and its subordinated relation to foreign metropoles. Between the two terms, the author focuses principally on “insularismo”, and it is because of this that in his view Puerto Rico still has the capacity to overcome the many obstacles that inhibit its proper development. The ability for renewal arises because as opposed to insularity, which due to its geographical nature is immutable, “insularismo” is not an inherent aspect of Puerto Rico, but rather a condition imposed upon it historically by colonial policy and its social agents; its most important metaphors, the corner and the bridge, are those that indicate Puerto Rico has been marginalized and used at the expense of its society’s evolution. This means that, given the right conditions in which an autochthonous Puerto Rican culture and an attendant economic and political structure can be formed, the oppressive constraints that the island has grappled with for so long could be

[3] In focusing on the importance of figurative language in the text, I align myself with Juan Gelpí’s approach that highlights “los aspectos retóricos y discursivos del texto” (20). Gelpí assumes such a method in order to avoid treating *Insularismo* as a “classic”, which according to him is a work that has been so institutionalized within literary, and possibly political domains, that it ceases to be read as a representation of reality with its own biases and particular language and is instead thought to be unmediated reality itself (18). According to the author, this is exactly what occurred with *Insularismo* in the decades following its publication under the sway of the Partido Popular Democrático. In this chapter and the rest of the dissertation, I aim to demonstrate that Pedreira’s understanding of Puerto Rico and insularity is just one of many perspectives, as well as why it proved so favorable to the PPD’s discourse.

overcome. For Pedreira, there are two versions of Puerto Rico: the island stymied in the present and another, more vibrant island that briefly existed prior to 1898 and that could be built again, exemplified by metaphors like the portrait that suggest a subject worthy of aesthetic representation.

In other words, *Insularismo* argues for the primacy of the historical over the geographical in its project to remake the spatiality of Puerto Rico. This chapter will focus on Pedreira's ideal version of the island in order to demonstrate how this figure underwrites and organizes the most salient parts of its social program, how it leads the text to view economic modernization, and what temporality it wishes to ascribe to Puerto Rico. Such a reading seeks to counter the perspective of some critics like Rubén Ríos-Ávila, Juan Carlos Quintero Herencia, Juan Flores, and Rafael Bernabe, who ascribe to Pedreira's text a stifling geographical determinism, a defeatist and ahistorical perspective that does not consider the flow of history and the possibilities afforded by it, or a nostalgic relation to the past. While *Insularismo* regards Puerto Rico's past as overwhelmingly marked by its colonial relations, it also understands history as a realm of potential renewal in which the concerted efforts of social actors and movements can restructure the island's society, as its account of the *autonomista* political party in the nineteenth century attests. My argument thus aligns itself with the work of other critics like Arcadio Díaz-Quiñones who note *Insularismo*'s push for modernization and insistence on securing the future of Puerto Rico, but who have not fully explored the manner in which spatiality interacts with such an initiative. Furthermore, exploring *Insularismo*'s desired space will indicate its ambiguous relation to the possibility of a sovereign Puerto Rican state. Although Pedreira does not devote much attention to this issue, this is where the stakes of its understanding of spatiality surface most clearly, because *Insularismo*'s approach to Puerto Rico's colonial status is the

aspect of the text that arguably had the greatest influence on later generations of politicians.

The principal tool with which to create a new space for Puerto Rico in the text is "high" culture, which for Pedreira refers specifically to aesthetic production such as poetry, music, and the plastic arts (225). Indeed, it is through the advancement in culture that Puerto Rican social agents can create an entirely new spatiality, one independent of the geographical condition of insularity. Cultural production is much more conducive to the kind of alternative island that the author desires for three reasons: it serves to define a Puerto Rican character; it connects the island to greater cultural scales, and it differentiates groups of people into definite and clearly-bounded nations, which for Pedreira was necessary in Puerto Rico's period of crisis. The first of these, articulating an autochthonous Puerto Rican culture, is the key directive of *Insularismo*. When discussing Puerto Rico's circumstances at the time in which he was writing, Pedreira states that the increasing links between Anglo and Hispanic cultures should not be viewed with suspicion, as long as this process occurs "sin contrariar la libre y natural emergencia del boricuismo, que a la larga será nuestra contribución autóctona a la cultura" (162). Autochthony is presented as the phenomenon that, if cultivated appropriately, will overcome the geographical and historical obstacles that have so constrained Puerto Rico because through it, the island will make its mark in the realm of the universal. When first discussing the universal, the author adopts the hierarchical meaning of the term when he cites Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, placing it above the national and the individual "zones of culture" (14), presenting it as the cultural scale that is all-encompassing and most representative of some kind of human essence. The passage makes evident the weight of creating a national expression when it states that doing so will be Puerto Rico's contribution "a la larga", as though only this gesture will prove its quality by extending into the future against the fluctuations of history.

Due to the importance of autochthony, it merits a critical exploration. Carlos Alonso has convincingly argued that although discourses surrounding it present themselves as having unmediated access to the cultures they intend to represent, the very act of labeling something as "autochthonous" creates a mediated relationship with that culture (3). That is, autochthony is a rhetorical construct whose purpose has served to legitimate Latin American intellectuals' efforts to identify and explore the origins of cultural identity. There are two effects of this process described by Alonso that are especially apt when considering the concept in relation to Pedreira's text. Firstly, Alonso claims that all autochthonous discourses attempt to recover an essentialized notion of identity lost in the past, transforming history into a teleological narrative of redemption (9). Secondly, he asserts that autochthony has served as a "rhetorical formula that could be readily appropriated by any potential 'speaker'" (17). In the case of *Insularismo*, I would extend Alonso's point that autochthony manipulates historical time by adding that it also changes space; as we will see, Pedreira's notions of autochthonous culture will seek to reconstruct Puerto Rican spatiality into the opposite of insularity. Furthermore, I would contend that the rhetorical formula of autochthony is not quite as egalitarian as Alonso claims, as this discourse will allow Pedreira to identify the subject of Puerto Rican culture by marginalizing other inhabitants who are regarded as unable to contribute to this project (descendants of Africans, *mulattoes*, and women). In fact, the remaking of space and the selection of an appropriate agent are intimately connected, because it is only the university-educated *criollo* youth who can appreciate the autochthonous culture created by nineteenth century *criollo* leaders and continue it into the future. For *Insularismo*, "autochthony" is a cultural tradition built from the past to establishes a discourse of social power in the present in order to then transform the island into a future "patria".

This "patria" is the Puerto Rican nation as the authors envisions it, which is to say an

autonomous entity based on ethnic and cultural particularity, but not necessarily independent of a foreign metropole in the sense of founding a sovereign state. What this means in terms of spatiality is that in *Insularismo,* the island and the nation are largely irreconcilable. Indeed, insularity and culture are two polar extremes, end points of a protracted and frustrated process of social, political, and economic development. In other words, the discursive figure of the island is central to *Insularismo* because its geographical and historical inadequacies provoke a search for an alternative cultural spatiality, which according to the author is grounded in the legacy of Spain. The Hispanophilic bent in turn provides the basis for a crucial differentiation between North American society and Puerto Rico's, which Pedreira and other intellectuals at the time felt was in danger of being subsumed by the latter. The development of a discrete Puerto Rican cultural expression is thus not a just a purely aesthetic initiative, but rather one that bears a significant political dimension that will play a role in determining the question of Puerto Rico's status with regard to the United States. In fact, Pedreira ties his call for a vital and distinctive culture to a marked preoccupation with economic advancement; Pedreira supports modernizing the island, especially its agricultural sector, as long as such a transformation is directed by its inhabitants and not by absentee corporations who profit from Puerto Rico's subordination to the United States. By harmonizing the aesthetic and the economic dimensions of Puerto Rican production, *Insularismo* aims to fully supplant the geographic bane of insularity and to alter the historical condition of "insularismo" so that Puerto Ricans will experience a more beneficial space, one free of the material and cultural constraints that prevent them from achieving full social vitality. Only once this is done will the ship arrive at its intended shore.

The Island in Shackles

The main purpose of *Insularismo* is to provide a coherent interpretation of a Puerto Rican

character, to effect a timely intervention in the sociopolitical and cultural situation of the island through a hermeneutic gesture. As Pedreira himself points out, "A la larga, el tema responde a un ¿cómo somos? o a un ¿qué somos? los puertorriqueños globalmente considerados" (10). The term "globalmente" suggests that the text is searching for a comprehensive and fully-rounded depiction of Puerto Rican society, and in *Insularismo* Pedreira offers an exhaustive report of the island's course from its colonization to his present time. This account is geared to exploring the manifold reasons for Puerto Rico's lack of cultural and economic development relative to other nations; its purpose is to identify the material and historical circumstances that have acted as obstacles to creating a Puerto Rican collective "spirit", as well as to identify the conditions of possibility for the flourishing of such a "spirit" in the past and present. The three middle sections of the five that comprise the text, titled "Geografía, Biología, alma", "El rumbo de la historia" and "Viejas y nuevas taras", are dedicated to this task. In the course of these sections *Insularismo* outlines the two main concepts of the work, insularity and "insularismo", and articulates the metaphors that most clearly represent them. In its portrayal of Puerto Rican history and these twinned ideas the text carefully scrutinizes the nineteenth century, a time in which the concerted efforts of a group of elite Puerto Ricans contributed to the prospering of an autochthonous identity and its attendant cultural expression, a development that nearly overcame the insularity and "insularismo" that had plagued the island for centuries. This era is crucial because the text uses it as the model for developing the cultural and social program with which to guide Puerto Rican society in the moment of crisis it is experiencing in the 1930s. That is, *Insularismo* is not content with merely describing and lamenting the stagnation it identifies, but rather wishes to steer the Puerto Rican ship away from these sluggish waters. The crux of the three sections mentioned above is the building of a narrative that moves from a seemingly absolute lack to the

tempered promise of a more vital future.

The first step in this narrative is distinguishing the causes of Puerto Rico's perennial torpor, the first of which is the geographical condition of insularity. For *Insularismo* the fact that Puerto Rico is an island, and a relatively small one compared to Cuba or Hispaniola, is one of the most determinant aspects of its society's experience through time. Indeed, it is the one hindrance that has remained constant in the course of the centuries and that will have to be confronted in the future, even if Puerto Rico manages to form itself into a nation. An important feature of the way *Insularismo* represents insularity is that it treats the concept as a semantic field, generating various but related metaphors to figure Puerto Rico's condition of being an island as a serious impairment to its cultural development. In Pedreira's view, the island in its geographical dimension is a deficient, cloistering space that must be escaped, for it can never truly contribute to securing a stable future for Puerto Rico.

Insularity is mainly explored in the second section of the text, "Geografía, biología, alma", especially the second subsection, "La tierra y su sentido". The principal deficiencies that Pedreira identifies with regard to Puerto Rico are a lack of territorial extension, material scarcity, and a sense of precarity based on geographical location. Soon after beginning the second section, the author turns a critical eye to the business ventures that have steadily been deforesting the island, a mistaken initiative that has in turn led to a marked loss of species of bird. Meditating on this, Pedreira uses a telling metaphor: "poseemos menos pájaros–la jaula, además, es muy pequeña–que cualquiera otra isla antillana" (41). The metaphor of the cage represents Puerto Rico as an undesirably constrained space that limits its inhabitants' capacity for constructing a culture, an economy, or a political structure with which to organize their existence. This notion is reinforced when the author affirms that Puerto Rico lacks "volumen épico" (42), and that "A

nuestros hombres próceres…les falta el bulto de la tierra tan propicio para aclarar y *engrandecer* las figuras (47, emphasis mine). The close association between territory and cultural achievement is repeatedly emphasized throughout *Insularismo*, and given that the island is portrayed as a kind of cage or prison, its inhabitants continually languish in a space of negation, of continual suspension of all productive activity. Even worse, this condition is not subject to change through time; the text examines the geography of Puerto Rico and its noxious effects in the present tense ("la jaula…*es* muy pequeña", "A nuestros hombres próceres…les *falta*"), suggesting that there is no escape from this effect, that Puerto Ricans will have to perennially struggle against such a hindrance. Insularity is presented here as a condemnation.

Indeed, *Insularismo* places special emphasis on the notion that the geographical order of insularity is especially harmful to its cultural flourishing. Every feature of Puerto Rico's territory is understood by the text as a deterrent, such as when it claims that the island "levanta su paralelograma casi uniforme, rodeado por un roto collar de islotes, inhóspitos para la tertulia" (150). As we will see later on, for Pedreira culture is a beneficial and versatile force that effects a twin movement: it works to cohere a previously inchoate society into a more stable and developed version and also grants a more wide-ranging spatiality that overcomes the limitations of geography. The "tertulia" here functions as a metonym for the cohering effect of culture, given that the objective of such an event is for learned individuals to gather and discuss issues related to aesthetic production and appreciation. In the above passage, insularity offers nothing of the kind, given that the "roto collar de islotes" is characterized by fragmentation, instead acting as a dislocating force that prevents the kind of congregating that is the basis of cultural affairs like the tertulia. *Insularismo* reads the very geography of Puerto Rico as the negation of any initiative that seeks to create the barest social or cultural structure on the island.

One more important term that *Insularismo* adds to the semantic field of insularity is that of finality. The text does so in a brief discussion of what it refers to as the various theories regarding "la misión especial de las islas" (157). According to the text, the literature that through the centuries has occupied itself with considering the figure of the island has done so through a perspective altogether too optimistic. In reality, the geography of the island can only result in a cultural and social weakness that stems from the island's isolation: "Desgarradas de los núcleos continentales, mares procelosos eternizan su divorcio…ancladas fatalmente en medios geográficos de variable estrategia política, económica y cultural" (idem). Pedreira asserts that as a consequence of the true character of insularity, the Puerto Rican people have evolved to be defensive and resistant to external influences (157-58)[4]. The two most significant aspects of insularity indicated in this passage are marginalization and a sense of immutability concerning the island's many disadvantages. According to the text, islands are "torn away" and "divorced" from their respective "núcleos continentales", a notion that presents the continent as the center of economic, political and cultural production. The island is therefore always ex-centric, destined to fill a secondary and therefore inferior role in human history. The impression of a lesser and inescapable insular "destiny" is reinforced by the diction of the passage, which states that the seas "eternizan…fatalmente" its peripheral location, meaning that life on an island acquires an "angustia trágica" (157). As opposed to the realms of history and culture, Pedreira presents the order of geography as deterministic, as almost wholly conditioning in a negative way the

[4] By stating so, the text enters into dialogue with the Spanish philosopher Ángel Ganivet, a thinker who meditated on the history and collective character of the Spanish people and who influenced Pedreira's approach to his subject matter. Ganivet's most influential work was *Idearium español* (1897), in which he put forth the idea of a "territorial spirit" that corresponds to each national group and that springs from the interaction between a particular territory and the culture developed by its inhabitants. In his *Idearium* he asserts that island societies are naturally aggressive, which *Insularismo* rejects in the case of Puerto Rico.

possibility of an insular society of reaching a greater level of sophistication.

As if this were not enough, insularity is not the only element in Puerto Rico's continual prostration. In spite of *Insularismo*'s extremely critical view of the island's geographical situation, its main preoccupation is with the phenomenon that serves as the work's title. "Insularismo" appears to be almost identical to insularity, given that it refers to a political, economic and cultural backwardness, but refers more specifically to a condition of lack due to historical reasons, principally Spanish and later North American colonialism. Even so, it is necessary to understand that the text does not establish a clear dichotomy between the geographical and the historical that would separate them; rather, it links them quite explicitly: "La posición geográfica de Puerto Rico determinó el rumbo de nuestra historia y de nuestro carácter" (45). I thus read "insularismo" as a product of the interplay between the fact of insularity and the various social and political forces that have held Puerto Rico in its grasp for centuries. The crucial difference between the two terms is that because "insularismo" belongs to the realm of history, and history is created by the relations between social agents and political movements, there is always the possibility that the inferiority associated with this particular condition can be improved and even overcome in the future. The text hints at this potential in the introduction when discussing the Puerto Rican "ademán", or form of expression that indicates a cultural and ethnic particularity. Pedreira writes that "esto que llamamos nuestro ademán…es lo que constituye el único motivo de preocupación de lo que aquí llamamos insularismo. Todo el sistema de condiciones en que históricamente flota es lo que aquí entederemos por cultura puertorriqueña" (16). Whereas insularity represents the complete negation of culture, "insularismo" can be understood as a negotiable obstacle that can be surmounted by Puerto Rican society, especially through the participation and leadership of learned men.

Like insularity, “insularismo” functions in the text as a semantic field, one populated by metaphors related to Puerto Rico’s spatiality. These metaphors also emphasize the confinement, circumscription or marginalization of Puerto Rico that has occurred due to the extractive logic and demands of colonialism, which have through the centuries also lead to the degradation of the island due to its deficient geography. For example, Pedreira notes of Puerto Rico that “Siendo geográficamente el centro de las dos Américas, su falta de volumen, su carencia de puertos y de comercio en grande la convierten en rincón” (46). Notably, the causes of the text’s lamenting tone are more historical than geographical. In this passage, the “falta de volumen” that would characterize insularity is only mentioned once, whereas the remaining source of Puerto Rico’s reduction to a “rincón” are the lack of ports and commerce, which are man-made phenomena. As an explanation of the relative economic underdevelopment of Puerto Rico, Pedreira points to a historical event that had a decisive effect on the island’s status within the burgeoning Spanish empire: the discovery of the Latin American continent, especially México and Perú and their riches. When this occurred, the spatiality of the Spanish empire itself shifted, as the text claims that “la atracción novomundana varió de centro, con incalculable perjuicio para nosotros” (85). This meant that the metropolis dedicated the majority of its financial and administrative resources to that new “center”; Pedreira points out that a university and a printing press were established in México and Perú in the sixteenth century, whereas Puerto Rico received its first printing press in the nineteenth and built its first university in the twentieth (idem). The spatial metaphor of the island as a “corner” or “niche” within the larger empire indicates its status as a largely forgotten point in a much greater whole. Puerto Rico as a “rincón” far from a “center” is akin to the island that is “torn away” from the “nucleus” of the continent, but again due to historical processes of colonial administration rather than geography.

The spatial metaphors of confinement and suppression that the semantic field of "insularismo" utilizes continue to appear as the text examines the historical trajectory of Puerto Rico up until its own time. In the course of its analysis, the series of metaphors can be read as forming a narrative that indicates the progressive worsening of the island society's degradation. Given the irruption of North American imperialism in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico has had to contend over the first three decades of the twentieth century with the clash between the cultures of the United States and Spain. This contest leads the text to claim that Puerto Rico finds itself "emparedado entre dos culturas opuestas" (97), another spatial figuration that refers to an anxiety that *Insularismo* expresses in relation to its particular historical moment. When the United States assumed control over the island, metropolitan policy began the process of "Americanization" at various levels, such as the political and educational. For example, in 1917 the Jones Act officially extended United States citizenship to all Puerto Ricans, a move interpreted by many politicians as a clandestine way to maintain Puerto Rico's colonial status[5]. In these years the educational system also became a point of heated debate, as North American policies imposed the use of English at nearly all pedagogical levels[6]. "Americanization" thus threatened to steadily diminish any sign of an autochthonous Puerto Rican culture; the metaphor of Puerto Rico being "emparedado" suggests this threat, given that what is located between the walls is effectively imprisoned and unable to develop itself.

[5] Indeed, following the approval of the Jones Act, officials of the Bureau of Insular Affairs demanded that then dominant Partido Unión relinquish all policies related to independence from its platform that had been added in 1912, which the party did in 1922 (Ayala and Bernabe, 57-59).

[6] For a more detailed study of the debate surrounding the teaching of English in Puerto Rico at the time, see Aida Negrón de Montilla's *La americanización de Puerto Rico y el sistema de instrucción pública, 1900-1930* (1977) and Solsiree de Moral's *Negotiating Empire: the Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898-1952* (2013).

The crisis that Puerto Rico faced in the decade of the 1930s, as understood by cultural commentators such as Pedreira, was the mounting possibility of the island's society becoming once again an outpost of another imperial power. Such a condition would result in a nearly complete suppression of a Puerto Rican character, a situation that the text portrays through the spatial metaphor of the bridge. As Jorge Rodríguez Beruff notes, in the decade of the 1920s several of the professors and administrators of the University of Puerto Rico began to conceive of the institution as a conduit for a "pan-american" union of the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin American worlds (16-17). *Insularismo* expresses guarded approval, stating that this should be done "siempre que no corramos el riesgo de convertirnos en puente para que todo el mundo nos pase por encima" (162). The bridge as presented by the text is a purely instrumental space, one that does not possess its own differentiated identity but that rather serves as a means with which to arrive at another point. An instrumentalized Puerto Rico, one geared towards the economic profiting of the metropole or other places to the detriment of the island, is the exact destiny that *Insularismo* wishes to avoid. Indeed, such a condition is considered to be so loathsome that it is figured through yet another spatial metaphor: "la cripta de nuestra postración politico-económica" (163). In the text's examination of its colonial history, Puerto Rico has transformed from a "niche" in an empire to a walled-in space to a bridge, arriving at last to the crypt, an empty space that harbors only the negation of death.

The most harmful effect of "insularismo" is that Puerto Rico's economic and political weakening leads to the equal impairment of its culture. As mentioned above, the fact that Puerto Rico did not offer material advantages to its first metropole resulted in imperial capital being allocated to more profitable sites, meaning that sources of aesthetic and intellectual creation like the printing press and the university did not appear until late in its history. Discussing the relative

aesthetic achievements of some authors in the nineteenth century, Pedreira concludes that the dominant posture was that of pure imitation of Spanish letters (67). Strikingly, the text utilizes two spatial metaphors to discuss the inadequacy of Puerto Rican literature: "A lo extramural, ¿qué hemos impuesto?" (idem). The figurative site of the "extramural" indicates the tantalizing existence of a space beyond the narrow confines of the island's geography and its colonial status; it is the inverse of the Puerto Rico "emparedado" by its past and present subservience. In the domain of literature and journalism, access to this valued space was greatly hampered by Spanish censorship, which according to Pedreira traced "su órbita oficial" (idem), a figuration that points to a circumscribed space drawn by the unequal power dynamics of metropole and colony.[7] The contrast between the "extramural" and the "órbita oficial" points to the notion of a hierarchy of scale that dominates *Insularismo*'s metaphors of space. A society that is cramped and restrained, either due to a diminutive insular geography or a history of political suppression, is presented as weak and underdeveloped, whereas those that reach the space of the "extramural" are clearly much more vital precisely because they do not experience the imprisonment that so torments Puerto Rico. The central point of *Insularismo*'s overview of the island's history is to demonstrate that, to its detriment, Puerto Rican society has remained within the walls of colonialism, its economic and cultural "insularism" placing it squarely within the bounds of that official "orbit".

However, in contrast to the wholly negative and immutable effect of insularity, the text

[7] Luis Fernando Coss provides an important periodization of such censorship in relation to the press in the nineteenth century. In 1814 a royal decree imposed a ban on the free press, and such a state of affairs persisted until the Glorious Revolution of 1868, which established a liberal government that favored a freer press. Coss points out that official censorship of Puerto Rican newspapers lightened considerably until the restoration of the Spanish monarchy in 1874, which reinstituted the ban, although in the interim years journalism on the island had flourished to the point that it was able to withstand the pressures of censorship much more effectively (131).

asserts that "insularismo" and its claustrophobic spatiality are not absolute. This is because "insularismo" is the product of policies and initiatives realized by social agents, whose acts shape the very space they inhabit. A theorist of spatiality such as Foucault reminds us that space is not an *a priori* phenomenon, but rather one constructed by the interplay between its material elements and the agents who populate it: "it is somewhat arbitrary to try to dissociate the effective practice of freedom by people, the practice of social relations, and the spatial distributions in which they find themselves…Each can only be understood through the other" (356). Despite the zealous censorship that beleaguered Puerto Rican letters (an instance of a harmful colonial social practice), Pedreira claims that through a few works of literature published in the nineteenth century "hemos podido…tender…unos cuantos jirones disimulados de nuestra entraña. De ellos, y solamente de ellos, ha de partir algún día nuestra emancipación" (67).[8] For *Insularismo,* literature and other forms of aesthetic production are social practices that can lead to emancipation when they help express the distinctive character of a people against the very forces that would erase such a character. The aesthetic forms the bedrock of culture, and it is culture that will help Puerto Rican society surmount the degradation brought about by "insularismo". This is because culture effects a twofold movement: it establishes an alternative spatiality to Puerto Rico's stifling insularity, one that accesses the higher ranks of the text's hierarchy of scale; and it works to differentiate groups of people into nations, which is a necessary development in the struggle to triumph over the period of uncertainty Puerto Rico faces in this decade.

[8] It should be noted that from the perspective of *Insularismo,* the suppression of journalism in the nineteenth century amounted to the suppression of its letters, including literature. Pedreira writes that "la mejor parte de la producción intellectual nativa no está en los libros publicados, sino en las páginas de los diarios y las revistas. Es en nuestra prensa donde mejor quedó exprimido el jugo de la conciencia colectiva" (181).

Opening a New Horizon

As demonstrated above, insularity is for the text a curse, an immutable condition that will always work against the development of a more culturally and materially prosperous Puerto Rican society. However, there is one aspect of insularity that functions as a potential source of renewal: it leads the text to seek another kind of spatiality that might compensate for the many drawbacks of the island's deficient geography. When discussing these limitations in the second section, Pedreira asserts that because it is impossible to increase the territory of Puerto Rico due to the barrier of the ocean, the only viable recourse is a kind of "vertical expansion": "ir hacia arriba, hacia adentro, hacia abajo, para cultivar ideas y sentimientos viriles. De no aumentarnos culturalmente estaremos condenados…Hay pues, que defender nuestro subsuelo espiritual" (45). The most salient aspect of this passage is that the directions proposed are not found in the geographical realm, but rather in the cultural one, where it is possible to form "ideas y sentimientos viriles" that will resist the weakening effects of insularity. The fortifying influence of culture in a spatial sense is revealed in the warning given in the second sentence of the passage, where Pedreira states that if Puerto Ricans choose not to "augment" themselves culturally they will only find further degradation. The term "aumentar" points to an expansion or enlargement, implying that fomenting an autochthonous culture is a movement towards the unbound space of the "extramural" that contrasts sharply with the Puerto Rico walled in by insularity and "insularismo".

The positing of a substitute spatiality reaches its apex with the figurative "subsuelo espiritual". This is a metaphor that imagines a kind of territory underneath the physical island itself that, because of its spiritual nature, belongs to the domain of culture and the aesthetic. The fact that this layer of cultivated spirituality is imagined as a kind of "subsuelo" imparts to it an

originary character, because the text suggests that it lies below any kind of geographical or material dimension of Puerto Rico. Culture and its attendant spirituality are presented as the primary substrate of the island, even anterior to its insularity; like an underlying cap of earth, it is the ground that makes the geographical dimension of the island possible. By virtue of being primary, it is the first and most important aspect of Puerto Rico. The "subsuelo" can therefore be read as a way for the text to reorder the relationship between culture and insularity: if the fact of Puerto Rico being an island is a constant, then the culture that so enhances the spirit of the Puerto Rican people is even more so. Rearranging the dynamic between culture and geography by making the former more fundamental allows the text to continue formulating that spatiality that differs from insularity, because the primacy of the spiritual means that culture can ultimately overcome the deterring force of geography.

The text's insistence on defending the "subsuelo espiritual" can shed light on its perspective regarding the possibility of an improved Puerto Rican society and its temporal orientation. *Insularismo*'s unforgiving perspective regarding Puerto Rico's insularity and its continual identification of its cultural, political and economic underdevelopment can impart the impression of unrelenting pessimism. Indeed, some critics such as Rubén Ríos-Ávila have argued that it expresses a defeatist outlook regarding an enriched future for the island: "Pedreira termina por ontologizar el disparate…la "peregrinación hacia la patria" está condenada de antemano al fracaso" (125). Regarding "el disparate" as ontological would mean making the state of confusion and disorder innate to the island's society. However, Pedreira himself indicates that the various issues that confront Puerto Rico and prohibit it from reaching the "patria" are rather the result of historical events. He writes in the second section that in the beginning stages of Puerto Rico's occupation by Spanish forces, the land was fertile and

provided all the material necessities; it is only when "las demandas de la vida colonizadora" appear and begin to require more than the land is capable of granting that "se presentó *en la historia* un hormiguero de problemas que hemos arrastrado como lastre hasta la época contemporánea" (38, my emphasis). *Insularismo*'s emphasis on the historicity of the "hormiguero de problemas", a phrase that parallels "el disparate" mentioned by Ríos-Ávila, means that such a condition could not be inherent because as discussed in the section on "insularismo", colonialism is a condition imposed upon Puerto Rico by external forces. The course of history could have been otherwise, and according to Pedreira it was otherwise until the extractive logic of imperialism changed the economic status of the island. The moments of rupture and redirection in Puerto Rico's history, such as the one presented in the passage above and North America's expansion into the Caribbean after 1898 weigh heavily on the island, but Pedreira does not demonstrate the same type of determinism in the realm of history and culture that he applies to the domain of geography. In the third section of the work, "El rumbo de la historia", the text demonstrates a willingness to gaze into the future with tempered optimism: "Evidentemente carecemos de Edad Media y de Renacimiento, ya que nuestro siglo XIX no puede ser considerado sino como despertar–nacimiento…El Renacimiento, pues, nos queda por delante" (80). Despite its perpetual diagnosis of inadequacy and crisis, *Insularismo* is a text geared towards making possible that longed-for rebirth.

Before delving into what that renewal entails, it is just as important to briefly define the elements that the work explicitly identifies as unnecessary or inimical to its project. A fundamental aspect of Pedreira's social program is the identification of the most viable political and cultural subjects that can realize Puerto Rico's transformation, and it is here that the text's infamous sexism and racism come to light. With regards to education, the author explicitly

denies women a leading role, stating that they do not possess the necessary strength of will to transmit culture and that they are content to "arañar las cosas sin penetrar en su meollo" (128). While in terms of sex Pedreira deals with two homogenous blocks of men and women, with matters of race his analysis is more specific, since he differentiates between the *negro,* the *mulato,* and the *grifo.* Tracing the history of race relations back to the beginnings of Spanish colonization, Pedreira portrays the white Europeans as "La raza superior que daba la inteligencia y el proyecto" and the African slaves and their descendants as "la llamada raza inferior", generalizing both camps and introducing a hierarchical dynamic between them (22). While the *negro* is described as inferior, the *mulato* is a constitutively divided and weak subject due to his mixed ancestry, a condition that produces "un tipo de fondo indefinido y titubeante…colabora y no crea…sigue y no inicia" (24). Finally, the *grifo* is likewise an "unbalanced" mixture of African and European, whose lineage ostensibly leads him to unavoidably search for a "reinvindicación del esclavo" (26). What binds all of these assertions is an uncompromising essentialization of their objects that within the logic of the text makes it impossible for them to present any other characteristic. Placed squarely within their deficiencies, these subjects are at best superfluous to *Insularismo*'s vision of a renewed Puerto Rico, like the woman who should be relegated to domestic duties (130) or the *mulato,* who is inherently incapable of the kind of social impetus that would make him a "capitán" (24).[9] At worst, they are an active threat: the

[9] It should be noted that while Pedreira does speak of the woman in a general sense when referring to her domestic duties, he does offer a somewhat more detailed understanding of this figure when considering its potential contributions to Puerto Rican culture. Turning the majority of his attention to "las mujeres intelectuales, influyentes, organizadoras", the author differentiates them from the housewife, the "agrietada obrera" who is too hampered by economic necessity, and "las niñas bien" who are solely preoccupied by banal social events and status symbols (132). Although Pedreira states that female intellectuals are the women who "están en condiciones de rendir mejores servicios a la cultura" (idem), he criticizes their supposed lack of organization into a beneficial social force with markedly disdainful terms: "Alguna que otra

grifo's racial resentment, for example, leads him to favor democracy (27), a political system that Pedreira views with suspicion due to its egalitarian pretensions. The overarching point I wish to make here is that the text's search for an autochthonous expression necessarily means that these subjects are not legitimate inhabitants of that desired island *Insularismo* wishes to found anew.

The principal way *Insularismo* works to secure Puerto Rico's future is by formulating a social program that will foreground culture and the aesthetic appreciation, and this too proves to have a spatial sense. One of the cornerstones of this program is the reconstitution of the pedagogical system on the island, for Pedreira claims that one of the most pressing issues before Puerto Rican society is not the instruction, but rather the education, of its citizens (124). The difference between instruction and education for the author is that the former is the inert transmission of information that converts a man into a professional, while the latter aids an individual in refining their aesthetic tastes and spirit. The text entrusts the redirection of the educational system to the exalted figure of the *maestro*. Much more than a mere professional, a man imbued with "facultades socráticas" (127) and the ability to "oir el rumor de la vida" (idem), the *maestro* is the preferred candidate for the crucial task of transmitting cultural learning and appreciation. Given his association with culture, the *maestro*'s effects on his pupils is also described in terms of space: he is capable of "penetrar con luz orientadora en el recinto virgen del carácter" (126). As seen above, the metaphors that distinguished the semantic fields of insularity and "insularismo" all emphasize the painful confinement of Puerto Rico to smaller and therefore inferior levels of the text's hierarchy of scale; as the author writes, "No somos

flirtea con la cultura…Cultivan unas ideas chiquitas y llevan en el vanity unas cuantas preocupaciones de ocasión" (131-32, emphasis mine). Therefore, even this most promising faction of Puerto Rican women finds itself circumscribed by *Insularismo*'s sexism, which suggests that their influence is still only a remote possibility.

continentales, ni siquiera antillanos: somos simplemente insulares que es como decir insulados en casa estrecha" (46). In breaking through to a previously untapped and sheltered site, the *maestro* as an avatar of culture works against the constriction that geography and history have imposed. Moreover, he reveals two important and connected dimensions of culture: it promotes a spatiality characterized by metaphors of aperture and fosters an ideal Puerto Rican type who will be able to produce an autochthonous aesthetic production.

These two aspects of culture converge in one of the most crucial figures in the entire text, the educated youth, who are the charges of the vaunted *maestro*. The Puerto Rican youth appears throughout *Insularismo*, and is always associated with both hope for the future and a sense of duty to foster the island's cultural development; he is the superior of all those marginalized subjects noted above. Perhaps the most noteworthy effect of this figure, just like the *maestro* whose role is to penetrate into the spirit of his pupils and guide it, is to break through the types of confinement that has plagued the island for so many centuries. The fourth section "Viejas y nuevas taras", in which the text examines the various obstacles preventing Puerto Rico from achieving political and cultural autonomy, ends with a hopeful note predicated on the unique role of the educated youth:

> La juventud…ha de buscar en los repliegues de nuestro vivir aquellos puntos concretos en que se apoya nuestra personalidad; y…lanzar a voleo *sobre nuestra murallas oficiales* las larvas de nuestra esencia productora…Un poco de ejercicio–aprendizaje del *extrarradio*, acabará con nuestra rigidez. *Romper las murallas de este aislamiento, para mirar en torno*, es el deber de la juventud puertorriqueña (162-63, my emphasis)

In the passage above, the notion of saving Puerto Rico is repeatedly expressed through spatial metaphors that emphasize the liberation from a constrained environment that leads to a more expansive and richer one. The educated youth prove that its geography and a colonial past can be overcome by helping the collective spirit of Puerto Rico leap over the "murallas oficiales" that

curtail its spatiality. The result of this is the ability to enjoy enlarged and freed surroundings, to "mirar en torno" and to experience the "extrarradio", both figurations for a multinational and multicultural space that broadens and augments the island's provincial perspective. Through this, Puerto Rico gains access to "inquietudes universales" that for Pedreira are necessary for enhancing the vitality of any society (163), the universal being the highest point in that hierarchy that privileges those scales that encompass more space over those that cover less. The broadening that culture effects is also an intensification, an enriching of the local through a connection to what lies beyond it.

However, establishing a new spatiality for Puerto Rico through the cultural achievements of an educated youth is not enough; it is also fundamental to provide a sense of directionality through this newfound space. Pedreira mostly develops his opinions regarding the importance and necessary direction for the educated youth with relation to the most important source of their cultural development, higher education. Centers of learning such as the University of Puerto Rico were fundamental, for it was there that through the pedagogical reform suggested by the text, the youth of the island would ideally encounter the *maestro.*[10] This is crucial for the

[10] Pedreira's insistence on the central role of the educated youth and the *maestro* reveals the influence of José Enrique Rodó's seminal essay *Ariel* (1900), in which the author identifies the basis of Latin American culture (that of Greece and Rome) over and against the utilitarianism of North American society as it encroached on its southern neighbors. For Rodó, the only way with which to keep intact the spirituality of Latin America was through the efforts of a *maestro* imparting a knowledge of and appreciation for aesthetic creation to an elite cadre of young men, who would utilize their learning to guide their societies. Rodó in turn was influenced by Nietzsche's views on education (Ette, 58) that the latter put forth in his lectures *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* (1872). In this text, Nietzsche states that education has shifted towards an instrumental approach focused on producing officials for the State rather than inculcating in students a rigorous appreciation for language and aesthetic experience. Such an environment, coupled with the increasing number of schools staffed by inadequate instructors, means that the few potential geniuses in the student body are unable to cultivate their inherent talent, thereby depriving German society of the leaders who should reign over its "natural"

accurate guidance of young students because according to the author, the educational system of Puerto Rico is currently unable to form its pupils into viable political subjects, due to the murky status of the island in relation to the United States: "Sin la certeza de un futuro politico estable, la escuela no ha podido lanzar al ciudadano puertorriqueño con definida orientación" (100). As Jorge Rodríguez Beruff indicates, for the first two decades of its existence the University of Puerto Rico functioned not only as an institution dedicated to producing teachers, it also worked to neutralize opposition to North American rule through the transmission of a "política cultural triunfalista" based on the dissemination of the English language and a colonialized version of United States patriotism (9). Neither of those elements would help the youth formulate a distinctly autochthonous Puerto Rican society, and so it was indispensable that their potential be channeled away from such deviating ideologies. The *maestro* is precisely the figure to do so, because by penetrating into his pupils' spirits, he is able to "potenciar latencias y encauzar sus proyecciones" (126). The "encauzamiento" that the *maestro* provides should steer his students away from North American culture and towards its Hispanic counterpart, for this is the base of Puerto Rico's own character. What this reveals is that culture for Pedreira is not to be produced for its own sake; rather, it plays a crucial political function in that it helps to guide a society along the path of its development. The ultimate goal of *Insularismo*'s urging for cultural refinement and its identification of key social agents like the youth and the *maestro* is exactly this, to help Puerto Rico escape its stifling insularity and "insularismo" by directing it towards what will be the opposite of those two conditions: the form of the nation.

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hierarchical structure. Pedreira clearly echoes Nietzsche in his positing of education as the guarantor of the youths' protagonism in the development of Puerto Rican culture.

The Ship Nears the Patria

Arcadio Díaz-Quiñones argues that Pedreira's great passion was to "inventariar, poner las cosas en su lugar" ("Isla de quimeras: Pedreira, Palés y Albizu", 235). I would add that a similarly strong impulse to steer and to orient is present throughout the work, a desire to realign Puerto Rico's historical trajectory with the course obtained in the nineteenth century, a time in which Puerto Rico briefly gained political autonomy under the Spanish empire.[11] As intimated through the avatar of the *maestro*, it is culture once again that provides the necessary sense of direction. The text defines culture as "El repertorio de condiciones que dan tono a los sucesos y cauce a la vida de los pueblos; esa peculiar reacción ante las cosas…que diferencia en grupos nacionales a la humanidad" (14). If culture provides a new spatiality to Puerto Rico and a way to find its bearings in such a space, it also makes possible the goal of this orientation, which is the nation form. This is fundamental to *Insularismo*'s understanding of the future because the nation, which is predicated on an autochthonous cultural production, is the fullest expression of Puerto Rican society's overcoming of the condition of being an island.

Indeed, the vitality of culture possesses the ability to renew Puerto Rican society's relation to its insularity by lessening its status as an obstacle. One of the key elements that contributes to the geographical degradation of Puerto Rico is the sea, which as we saw in the section of insularity contributes greatly to the marginalization of the island from "nucleos

[11] This can be seen even in the very structure of the text itself. The titles of the subsections, which are metaphors drawn from the semantic field of the maritime journey, speak to a search for direction: the introduction is "La brújula del tema", and the third is "El rumbo de la historia" with subsections like "Levando el ancla", "Buscando el puerto" and "Intermezzo: Una nave al garete". The metaphor of Puerto Rico as a ship central for Pedreira because it is everything geographical insularity cannot be. The ship is defined by motion, while the island is condemned to stasis; the ship is the man-made product of a culture immersed in the flow of history, while the island belongs to the deterministic order of geography; and the ship can direct itself towards a more promising location, while the island always hampers any attempts at societal advancement.

continentales". Literary critic Juan Carlos Quintero Herencia has stated that *Insularismo* does not understand the sea as a site of potential development, given that "el mar no *edifica* el cuerpo isleño, sino que exhibe su condición de agente patógeno (139, author's emphasis). While this is true throughout most of the text, the drawback of such a view is that it essentializes the figure of the ocean as a space of obstruction, a discursive gesture that *Insularismo* does not always perform. This can be most clearly seen in the subsection "Nos coge el holandés", in which Pedreira emblematizes Puerto Rican society's corrosive withdrawal from the outside world through an anecdote in 1644 by Damián Lopez de Haro, bishop of Puerto Rico, that states the inhabitants will not fish for fear of being attacked by Dutch pirates (161). Such a note presents the sea as a space of constant danger and onerous limitation, but soon after the section ends in a hopeful way by turning its attention to the renovating potential of the educated youth and their ability to supersede the confinement of Puerto Rico. Given the fruitful nature of this ability, the fourth section concludes "Salgamos a pescar, aunque nos coja el holandés. ¡Puede ser que alguien regrese un día con las redes llenas!" (idem). The call to move out upon the sea reveals that the text's relationship to the ocean, and thus its insularity, is predicated upon the vitality of its society: the outer world has seemed so threatening to the island because the strictures of colonialism and geography have perpetually hampered its growth. Only when this oppressive dynamic is eliminated through historical processes does the majority of the negative connotations of insularity, such as its hermeticism caused in part by the imposing presence of the sea, transform into images of possible abundance, symbolized by the "redes llenas".

However, while fomenting aesthetic production is crucial, Pedreira also indicates that changing Puerto Rico's relation to the fact of being an island also depends on similar improvements in the economic and political spheres. According to the text's historiographical

recounting, the only period in Puerto Rico's history that such a fertile combination was achieved was the nineteenth century, where a series of political changes in Spain beginning with the establishment of the Cortes de Cádiz in 1810, which in its Constitution of 1812 enshrined various liberal ideas, were then extended to Puerto Rico and other overseas possessions.[12] [13] This helped bring about a flourishing of many aspects of society on the island due to the liberalization of economic and social policy. In 1815, for example, Puerto Rico obtained the right to direct commerce with nations other than Spain with a *cédula de gracia*. In these years journalism began as a social practice, which according to Luis Fernando Coss helped to found what Jürgen Habermas has called the "public sphere", a space of deliberation and rational debate where social agents can discuss pressing political and social matters (145-48). For Pedreira, an autochthonous literature begins midway through the nineteenth century with the publication of Manuel Alonso's *El Gíbaro* (1849), a collection of verses and literary sketches of everyday Puerto Rican customs. Perhaps most importantly, during this period political parties began to be established after Spain again adopted a liberal constitution in 1869: the Liberal Reformist Party was founded in 1870 and favored self-government while remaining under the auspices of the peninsula, while the Conservative Party organized in 1871 advocated for Spain to preserve complete control over the island (Trías Monge, 10-11). All of these facts point to an increasing participation of Puerto Rican *criollos* in the political, economic, and cultural life of their island.

[12] The text's privileging of the nineteenth century is made manifest in the connotations it assigns to its tripartite division of history, where Puerto Rico's past is split into three historical epochs: the fifteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth is a time of "formación y acumulación pasiva", the nineteenth is a period of "despertar e iniciación", and twentieth one of "indecisión and transición" (15).

[13] For Pedreira this transformation was so important to the creation of a local *criollo* identity that he notably downplays the influence of more radical movements like the French, North American and Latin American Revolutions, stating that "Directamente, el triunfo del liberalismo en España nos pone en marcha" (169).

Notably, *Insularismo* presents these achievements as constructing another kind of island, one that is not bound by the crippling strictures of insular geography. The text claims that during the nineteenth century, the growing power of the *criollos*[14] and the liberalization of imperial economic policy meant that "la idea insular se yergue…frente a la idea peninsular. La actitud criolla responde más a una voluntad interior que a una presión exterior" (93). Likewise, in his discussion of the beneficial influence of journalism, Pedreira writes that "la isla va apareciendo…preparando los óleos que algún día puedan servir para el retrato" (173). What's most significant about the figure of the island in this passage is that it does not refer to the material, geographical island that the text so readily condemns, but rather an analogous version mediated by culture. Pedreira locates the source of the developing criollo attitude in an "interior", a term that is associated with aesthetic production because it indicates a refined subjectivity. The island that appears does so in relation to a potential portrait, a form of art that is clearly a cultural object. This figure implies that the only version of Puerto Rico that is worthwhile (because it deserves to be a subject of aesthetic representation) is the one in which its populace engages in creating an autochthonous culture that is also complemented by political and economic advancements. The sociopolitical and cultural achievements of the nineteenth century move Puerto Rico away from its status as a geographical island and bring it closer to becoming a nation, because all of these developments actively transform the space from one of lack to one of social cohesion, aesthetic refinement, and economic promise.

Pedreira's treatment of the nineteenth century and its relation to Puerto Rico's dilemmas in the 1930s is central to understanding his social program's temporality and its link to the

[14] Pedreira presents this burgeoning influence as a result of criollos gaining posts in the *cabildos*. Although these were not the highest chambers of insular government, it was there that these men began to "encauzar oficialmente nuestras aspiraciones" (93).

nation. The text's glorification of the nineteenth century has led many critics to categorize *Insularismo* as a nostalgic text, one whose critical perspective and aspirations for Puerto Rican society are mired in the past. Rafael Bernabe contends this when he situates Pedreira in what he claims to be Romantic tradition within Puerto Rican literature that develops both a critique of capitalist modernization and a pessimistic view of the future (47). Both of these aspects lead to a kind of "añoranza…nostalgia…evocación a un regreso o de intento de recuperar lo que se cree haber perdido" (39). Bernabe's interpretation misconstrues *Insularismo*'s relationship to the past, which is not nostalgic but rather instrumental, one that is geared to using Puerto Rico's history as a source of sociocultural orientation for the present. In the final section of the work, titled "La luz de la esperanza", the text identifies social customs and aesthetic practices that should serve as a foundation for a Puerto Rican ethno-cultural nationality. There, the author writes "Hay quien quisiera hacer polvo del pasado, hay quien pretende cargarlo intacto, como una roca insustituible, sin tener en cuenta su parte envejecida y ya superada" (209). The ability to discern those aspects of the past that are to be abandoned does not point to a nostalgic viewpoint, which would rather understand the past as a site of perfection. *Insularismo*'s gaze is firmly turned towards the present and the future, as it declares "Echad todo el cuidado a la vanguardia, porque vivimos en la época de lo imprevisto" (210). The investment in the future is evident throughout the text in rhetorical figures like the educated youth, whose adolescence represents the promise of a cultural renewal, and metaphorical proclamations like the call to venture into the ocean to fish, which indicates a potential bounty in the days to come. While *Insularismo* locates Puerto Rico's cultural apex in the nineteenth century, it does so in order to organize the island's society and thus create the conditions for a nation that lies just over a temporal horizon. The insistence on futurity is crucial for the building of a nation because the function of culture, which is the basis

of nationality, is to orient and to provide a path forward, not backwards in time.

As another indicator of its dedication to a more stable future for Puerto Rico, *Insularismo* does not oppose economic modernization. Pedreira states that despite the political ambiguity brought about by North American control, the fact that Puerto Rico has been integrated into its economic circuit has led to a great improvement in material conditions (97). However, he is also quite aware of the fact that foreign influences have gradually infiltrated the island's economy at the expense of local business. *Insularismo*'s critique of external finance centers on the agricultural industry, especially sugar production, which in the twentieth century played an increasingly important role in the island's economy.[15] In the last quarter of the nineteenth century and up to the 1930s, the smaller plantation known as the *ingenio* gave way to the more technologically advanced *central*, a shift that was made possible by the introduction of North American finance. The growing investment of North American capital also represented a rising presence of United States owned *centrales*, many of which belonged to absentee corporations.[16] It is the seizure of land by United States capital that deeply troubles the text: "La tierra…hoy se nos cae de las manos en los vaivenes de la compraventa, alternado su patriótico sentido por uno exclusivamente económico" (48). The "nos" and the "patriótico sentido" in the above passage indicate a yoking together of economic progress and the national. Placing *Insularismo* in a Romantic tradition based on a rejection of modernization misses the fact that the text does not reject modernization in itself. Rather, it argues that if Puerto Rico is to build itself into a stable nation, this project must be supported by a material layer whose capital and production is

[15] Bernabe and Ayala write that by 1935, sugarcane crops accounted for almost one-third of all arable land, while coffee and tobacco occupied another third (35).
[16] By the 1930s, 11 of the 41 *centrales* in Puerto Rico operated under four North American sugar companies. These enterprises owned about 25% of all cropland and produced about 50% of the island's cane (Ayala and Bernabe, 38).

controlled by its inhabitants and destined for the enrichment of the island itself.

Insularismo's attitude towards economic modernization is especially relevant to its nation-building project because it reveals how Puerto Rico can take measures to diverge from North American rule other than reclaiming its land. In the section titled "Intermezzo: Nave al garete", Pedreira explicitly associates a purely economic and industrializing drive, which it terms "civilization", with the United States and warns that civilization should not be confused with culture (97-98). In his discussion of the most salient differences between these two concepts, the author once again takes recourse to spatial figuration: "la dimension más entrañable de la cultura no es la del largo ni del ancho, sino la del espesor. La civilización es horizontal; la cultura, vertical" (99). The notion of culture representing a type of "espesor", a density or thickness, means that culture works to suffuse a given space with a spiritual and aesthetic charge that fosters identification with it, which ultimately aids in the construction of a national space. The "espesor" of culture is consonant with *Insularismo*'s desire to maintain a "patriótico sentido" in an economic resource like land; this "sentido" would add a national valence to the material that would not be reducible to the "exclusivamente económico", which is the realm of civilization. Critics like Bernabe have tended to follow Pedreira's own intense focus on the importance of culture and his antipathy to civilization too closely, which has led them to conclude that *Insularismo* understands economic modernization as antithetical to Puerto Rico's nationhood. More accurately, Pedreira calls for a Puerto Rican-led modernization that is to be complemented by the spiritual advancement of culture, because by developing both the island will be better equipped to resist the looming threat of complete assimilation to Anglo-Saxon culture.

The significant point of this idea is that contrary to the claims of critics like Ríos-Ávila, *Insularismo* does attribute a considerable degree of agency to Puerto Rico in its quest to establish

a nation. In fact, Pedreira asserts that a principal way to develop an autochthonous Puerto Rican character is to adopt an instrumental relationship with the cultures of North American and Spain, to "manipular ambas culturas" in order to realize an "ordenación y selección de los elementos de ayer y de hoy que nos convenga guardar para mañana" (210). A clear example of selecting among the aspects of both metropolitan culture for those most adequate to Puerto Rico is *Insularismo*'s approach to democracy, a North American import that Pedreira rejects because the participation of the masses weakens the influence of "los selectos" (103), the most cultured and spiritually developed men (such as the educated youth) who should lead Puerto Rico.[17] By rejecting the implanting of a foreign political system that originates in an Anglo-Saxon culture, *Insularismo* seeks to better preserve Puerto Rican society's Spanish roots; in the introduction, the text states unequivocally "Nosotros fuimos y seguimos siendo culturalmente una colonia hispánica" (16). The most significant function of this "manipulation" is that it works to guarantee a future for Puerto Rico, as the act of selecting and ordering its society is explicitly meant to safeguard the most salient cultural elements "para mañana". Furthermore, the futurity that the text wants to create for the island is not deprived of a history, since *Insularismo* advocates for cultural practices that originate in or are associated with Spanish culture, which means that preserving them establishes a temporal continuity with Puerto Rico's cultural past and present. In this way the island's historical course, which was abruptly altered by North American

[17] Pedreira's criticism of democracy as the political system that promotes "la mediocracia" and "confusión y el desorden" (102-04) points to the influence of José Ortega y Gasset, the Spanish philosopher who published *La rebelión de las masas* (a work referenced in *Insularismo*) in 1929. In this text, Ortega y Gasset alleges that Spanish society has been weakened by the "hombre-masa", a figure of negligible cultural and spiritual preparation, accessing the spaces of social power previously occupied exclusively by the elite. For a more thorough exploration of Pedreira's connection to Ortega y Gasset, especially through the publication of the *Revista de Occidente*, see Juan Flores' *Insularismo e ideología burguesa en Antonio Pedreira* (1979).

imperialism, can be mended into a linear plot of unbroken sociocultural, economic and political development. The fostering of an autochthonous Puerto Rican culture by navigating the influence of Spain and North America does not only bestow upon the island a more open spatiality, a sense of direction in that very space, and a goal to reach in the figure of the nation. It also provides the sense of a possible future, so that Puerto Rico need not condemn itself to a stagnant and useless nostalgia.

Such a desire for temporal cohesion, which takes into account the past and present to look towards the future, contradicts the assertions of critics like Juan Flores, who in his Marxist interpretation of *Insularismo* claims that the text's bourgeois perspective produces an ahistorical account of Puerto Rico (34, 84). As we have seen in the discussion on "insularismo" and economic modernization, the text is keenly aware of Puerto Rico's history and its need to create a more culturally enriching set of conditions to found the nation. Arcadio Díaz-Quiñones has stressed *Insularismo's* drive towards modernity, especially by focusing on the term that Pedreira uses to characterize the island's experience of the twentieth century: "Para él, se trataba…de una brusca y ambigua transición" (*El arte de bregar*, 99), a notion that can be fruitfully paired with what Díaz-Quiñones regards as the text's central discursive figure, the frontier (idem). The frontier appears when Pedreira addresses the nature of the generation currently in charge of Puerto Rico: "Somos una generación fronteriza, batida entre un final y un comienzo" (209). While I would contend that *Insularismo* is such a highly figurative text that any one metaphor cannot be privileged over the others, I turn to the frontier as the final spatial metaphor with which to understand *Insularismo*'s national project. The frontier, because it is the site where two or more cultures or societies border one another, can be understood as a space of ambiguity given that those societies may enter into conflict over the right to claim this space. The political

status of the frontier is thus usually undecided, and the ambivalence that marks it is the principal idea that guides *Insularismo*'s view on Puerto Rico's political relation with the United States.

Throughout this chapter, we have explored what Pedreira imagines the Puerto Rican nation to be, which is an ethno-cultural group that through its aesthetic and economic production has differentiated itself from others. Notably, by "nation" Pedreira does not refer to an independent state that is not beholden politically to any other. Indeed, despite its fervent impulse to provide an orientation for the island's society, the text largely evades answering the question of Puerto Rico's official political status. This is evident in the only explicit reference made by *Insularismo* to the topic: "¿Cuál ha de ser el status definitivo de la isla? ¿Estado federal? ¿República independiente? ¿Autonomía con protectorado?" (100). The series of rhetorical questions leaves the issue as ambiguous as before, but even more remarkable is the fact that in the series of different political forms, the term "nation" is not mentioned. The omission of the term suggests that for Pedreira it is not a form identical to a federal state or an independent republic.

The key to understanding Pedreira's approach to the question of the island's status lies in his veneration of the *autonomistas*, a political party formed in the nineteenth century that advocated for a greater degree of control over the island while maintaining Puerto Rico subject to Spain. The leading members of the *autonomista* movement prior to 1898, such as Salvador Brau, Román Baldorioty de Castro, Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón, and Luis Muñoz Rivera are all cited by the text as exemplary members of Puerto Rican society who contributed greatly to its culture (35); all are epitomes of the "hombre egregios" (36) that the educated youth of the island should aspire to be. Their political efforts contributed greatly to Spain granting Puerto Rico the Autonomist Charter of 1897, which maintained the island under the category of an overseas

province of Spain.[18] The Autonomista Charter can therefore be conceived as a document that fostered a kind of political ambiguity, as it led the *criollos* to briefly claim significant power over Puerto Rico, as if they were forming it into an independent state, without fully breaking away from the Spanish Empire. Because *Insularismo* regards this as the cultural and political apogee of the nineteenth century, the text's temporal project becomes one of amending the historical course of Puerto Rico so that the present trajectory can neatly align with this moment. As Díaz Quiñones points out, the historical discourse of the *generación del treinta*, which included Pedreira, predicated itself on the notion of analogy ("Recordando el futuro imaginario", 26), of recreating a political dynamic in the present similar to the one achieved in 1897. However, the need to maintain historical continuity effectively forecloses for *Insularismo* the prospect of negating Puerto Rico's colonial relation with North America. For the text, analogy takes on the force of a straitjacket.

Insularismo's emulation of the *autonomistas* creates a discontinuity between culture and political independence, between the ethnocultural nation and a sovereign state. In this, Pedreira once again follows the *autonomistas*, whose political project focused on realizing cultural change and economic modernization without constructing an official state apparatus (14), as Silvia Álvarez-Curbelo affirms.[19] In order to overcome insularity and "insularismo", Pedreira opts for

[18] This piece of legislation created an insular parliament that could pass legislation relating to education, economic development, import and export duties, banking and the monetary system, and municipal administration (Trías Monge, 13).

[19] Álvarez Curbelo demonstrates this tendency by analyzing the careers and policies of various leaders of the *autonomista* movement, such as José Julián Acosta, Román Baldorioty de Castro, and Salvador Brau. In comparison to the separatist movement, which did advocate for establishing a State in order to make a final break from Spain (14), the *autonomista* movement focused more on updating Puerto Rico's economy by abolishing slavery, industrializing the island, elaborating a discourse of progress, and organizing the cultural sphere by constructing a literary-historical archive and institutions like the Ateneo in 1876.

more expansive spatiality that for him is only available through culture. This is not to say that in the text culture is apolitical, given that for the author forming an autochthonous Puerto Rican mode of aesthetic expression will safeguard against North American encroachment. But *Insularismo*'s focus on the ethnocultural definition of the nation and the spatiality it affords seems to exclude the spatiality that would be associated with a fully structured and official state, or the possibility that these forms of space might overlap. The author himself indicates that a State would be beneficial to developing Puerto Rican culture when he criticizes the lack of such an initiative, which he associates with the advent of United States power: "La despreocupación oficial por los aspectos más finos de la cultura…se dejó sentir en el país desde el comienzo de la invasión" (109). In order to plot a more auspicious course, *Insularismo* obtains its orientation largely from the *autonomistas,* a discursive move that also allows it to try and amend the island's historical course into what it could have been without the North American invasion, which negated the Autonomic Charter of 1897 and apparently placed the period's advances in doubt. The desired island that Pedreira hopes to reach would be a recreation of that era's cultural vitality, although one that would necessarily take into account the circumstances arising after 1898 rather than erasing them. However, this pretended alignment recreates for *Insularismo* one of the tenets of the *autonomista* party, namely the acceptance of a continuing colonial dynamic. In other words, by making culture the primary compass, *Insularismo* steers the ship of Puerto Rico towards the ethnocultural nation-island and away from an independent State.

Insularismo begins as a flight from geographical insularity and ends as a tempered but hopeful movement towards the nation. The text starts this process by reimagining the spatiality of Puerto Rico, identifying culture as the principal means to create regional, continental and universal horizons beyond the restrictive geography of the island and to reorient the island's

society. The shift that the text wishes to realize in Puerto Rico and the movement towards futurity it calls for demonstrates that *Insularismo* is not nostalgic, geographically deterministic, pessimistic, or ahistorical as some critics have claimed. Rather, it is a work whose keen sense of geography and colonialism lead it to identify a way to escape these conditions, not to make them absolute, in a bid to ensure Puerto Rico's stability in a richer future. None of this would be possible without that longed-for island that is an alternative to insularity and "insularismo", but the true stakes of Pedreira's desired space and its temporality are revealed when it addresses the burning question of Puerto Rico's political status. Although the text elaborates a new space and presents it as unbounded and liberating, it is actually not without its limits; for Pedreira, it seems that because his preferred version of the nation emerges from a program centered on cultural change, it cannot embrace the spatiality that would characterize a fully independent republic. Ultimately, Puerto Rico remains within the ambiguous bounds of the frontier between the legacy of Spanish colonialism and North American control because of the discontinuity between nation and State. Such a model would prove to be quite influential in the following decades: *Insularismo*'s vision of a new Puerto Rico based on this type of nationalism would act as a theoretical framework for the Partido Popular Democrático's establishment of the Estado Libre Asociado (Ayala and Bernabe, 208). As we will see in the following chapter, Pedreira's understanding of insularity through a cultural lens and his implicit assertion that island and independent nation are incommensurate would be echoed explicitly by some renowned Spanish intellectuals as Puerto Rico and the world experienced the tumult of war. In its moment, *Insularismo* sought to right the course of the ship, to burst through barriers both natural and historical on its path towards the future and the broader space that hovers just over the horizon.

Chapter 2. Tracing Faded Borders: The Territoriality of Spanish Exile Writing in the Caribbean, 1940-1954

Bombs, shots and cries ring out as a gathering darkness falls on Spain. As the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) runs its bloody course, thousands of supporters of the democratic Second Republic (1931-39) flee the encroachment of the fascist Nationalist Falange. Throngs of citizens board ships and trains, and many others cross borders under the cover of night, fleeing the growing violence by heading north to other European countries. Still others set sail west, arriving at the shores of the United States and Latin America, with some of them settling in the Hispanic Caribbean. In the four years of conflict, many of Spain's most renowned intellectuals, poets, and artists joined the swelling ranks of exiles relocating to far-flung countries, some returning to Spain only after several decades.

In the midst of this a philosopher and a poet, both bound for the Caribbean at different times, have a similar experience. As their travels end for a time they see an unshaped mass grow out of the horizon, and as they draw nearer their sight sculpts it clear: an island. Puerto Rico rises up before them, granting them a sanctuary and a space of intellectual vitality that would leave a lasting imprint on their work. From there, they would focus on the past, present and future in a geopolitical and cultural sense. One of them, María Zambrano, would urgently attempt to restore order to a world fast becoming unmoored and fractured by thinking of the historical role of Puerto Rico and the relation between the Americas and Europe. The other, Juan Ramón Jiménez, would dedicate himself to developing the aesthetic and spiritual capacities of the Puerto Rican people, in part to support a supposedly more equitable form of government in relation to the United States.

Beyond their shared situation as exiles, what links these two figures is their formulation

of a poetic, phenomenological viewpoint on the figure of the island, the territoriality they ascribe to Puerto Rico that results from this viewpoint, and the way in which such conclusions integrate themselves into the prominent discourse on the Puerto Rican political scene from the 1930s to the 1950s, that of cultural nationalism. The two texts that will serve as the focal point of this chapter will be Zambrano's essay *Isla de Puerto Rico: Nostalgia y esperanza de un mundo mejor* (1940) and Jiménez's collection of lyrical fragments, interviews, and vignettes titled *Isla de la simpatía* (1981). In these works, the authors would provide influential perspectives on Puerto Rico's political status at two critical junctures in the island's history: during the years of the Second World War and immediately after, and amid the founding of the Estado Libre Asociado in the beginning of the 1950s. These perspectives contributed to the rhetoric and policy of the most dominant political party at the time, the Partido Popular Democrático, which eventually engineered the creation of the Puerto Rican Commonwealth. This official status has been sharply criticized as continuing the colonial dynamic with the United States that the island had been experiencing since the close of the nineteenth century.

María Zambrano wrote *Isla de Puerto Rico*: *Nostalgia y esperanza de un mundo mejor* under the sign of crisis. The Nationalist Falange had triumphed in Spain the year before, and in 1940 the rest of Europe was mired in conflict with a rising wave of fascism. Zambrano had entered into exile in 1939, arriving first in Mexico but promptly leaving to Cuba and Puerto Rico in search of employment at the University of Havana and the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras. While still in Spain in the decades of the 1920s and 30s, Zambrano had established herself as a promising philosopher at the University of Madrid, where she became a pupil of José Ortega y Gasset and contributed to his influential cultural magazine, the *Revista de Occidente*. In *Isla de Puerto Rico*, the author calls for a democratic Pan-American union that would join the

forces of Latin and North America in the fight against fascism. Puerto Rico would have an especially important role at this historical juncture because it would act as the nexus between the United States and Latin America, given that it was ostensibly the point of encounter between Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic cultures. Furthermore, and most importantly for this chapter, Zambrano bestows a privileged position to Puerto Rico because of its insularism, claiming that islands are the perfect image of the human "solitude" that undergirds a true democracy.[1] Based on the need for Puerto Rico to act as the exemplar of Pan-Americanism, the text ultimately formulates a territoriality for the island that maintains it within the politico-juridical control of the United States.

Juan Ramón Jiménez's *Isla de la simpatía* reaches the same conclusion, though within the circumstances of the founding of the Estado Libre Asociado in 1952. Jiménez had first relocated to Puerto Rico and Cuba in 1936 when the Spanish Civil War first broke out, but also resided in Florida from 1939-1942, in Maryland from 1942-47, and in Argentina and Uruguay from 1948-50, returning definitively to the Puerto Rico in 1950. Throughout these years Jiménez visited Puerto Rico and wrote short, lyrical passages about his experiences there that spanned the years 1936 to 1954 and which would comprise the majority of *Isla de la simpatía*, published posthumously in 1981. Because the 128 segments that comprise the text were written or

[1] It is insularism's political dimension that differentiates Zambrano's view of Puerto Rico from her views on Cuba, where she resided for intermittent periods of time from 1939 to 1953. In Zambrano's writings that deal with Cuba, she represents it as a space characterized by a notable poetic potential, one that leads her to contemplate issues that are manifestly more philosophical than political. This difference may be partially explained by historical circumstances: Zambrano wrote "La Cuba secreta", the essay in which she most fully develops her vision of that island as a fertile source of poetry, in 1948, after fascism had been defeated. Therefore, Cuba did not possess the critical political dimension that Puerto Rico did in 1940. Furthermore, Puerto Rico had more of a direct link to the coalition defending democracy because of its territorial relation to the United States, which Cuba did not have due to its nominal independence, acquired when U.S. military occupation ended in 1902 (Pérez, Jr., 113).

completed at differing times, *Isla de la simpatía* is a more heterogeneous work than *Isla de Puerto Rico*, but there a number of recurring themes that lend it coherence and create a very similar perspective to that of Zambrano's. Among the most important are the elaborating of a viewpoint that emphasizes the abundant sensoriality of the island and the recurring sensation of spiritual transcendence. Jiménez presents the island of Puerto Rico as a markedly aesthetic space, one whose sensorial delights and citizens who intuitively appreciate and produce poetry and other arts occasion a perpetual reverie in the voice of the text. This perspective on Puerto Rico leads Jiménez to understand the relation between culture (understood broadly by the text as the aesthetic expression of a people's character that included poetry, music, plastic arts and architecture, much in the way Pedreira regarded it in *Insularismo*) and politics as a hierarchical one, in which the former always takes precedence. In many of the fragments of *Isla de la simpatía*, Jiménez formulates a program of social development for Puerto Rico founded on instilling and fomenting a greater understanding and enjoyment of aesthetic material, especially poetry. This program of sociocultural development ignores the possibility of complementing aesthetic appreciation with an awareness of Puerto Rico's political circumstances, especially its relation with the United States. Indeed, the few times the text mentions Puerto Rico's association to North America, it focuses solely on the cultural advantages that the new status of the Estado Libre Asociado can offer the island. Like Zambrano, Jiménez ultimately proposes a territoriality for Puerto Rico that does not fully consider the political implications of the ELA for the island and whether this form actually perpetuates the colonial dynamic between the two.

What I want to explore by studying Zambrano and Jiménez in this juncture is a historical arc that moves from the beginning of World War II to roughly the first decade of the Cold War. During this period of about fifteen years, Puerto Rico underwent a number of fundamental political,

social, and economic shifts, all of which add important consequences to how Zambrano and Jiménez imagine the figure of the island. The most significant aspect of these authors' works is that they represent Puerto Rico, because of its insularity, as the nucleus of a hemispheric politico-cultural union that would establish greater ties between North and Latin America. The main result of this role is that for both Zambrano and Jiménez, the island comes to be incommensurate with national sovereignty. That is, in order for Puerto Rico to effectively play its part as the center of an international coalition, it must reject the option of independence that had gained some renewed traction in certain political circles at the end of the 1930s. The island's rejection of national sovereignty would serve two distinct but analogous functions in this period: during World War II it would contribute to the battle against fascism, and during the Cold War it would help align Puerto Rico with capitalism and against communism. Therefore, by juxtaposing Zambrano and Jiménez and forming this historical arc by contextualizing their work within Puerto Rico, it is possible to explore how the figure of the island was used in this period to think through political and socioeconomic issues as well as questions of cultural identity in a hemispheric framework.[2]

[2] Due to this, Zambrano and Jiménez insert themselves in the intellectual and political tradition of Pan-Americanism, a "way of thinking about and representing the peoples of the Western hemisphere as part of a knowable, unified whole" (Park, 2). Beginning arguably with the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 and the 1826 Congress of Panama organized by Simón Bolivar, Pan-Americanism maintained its presence throughout the nineteenth century, especially as the United States began to expand geopolitically after 1848, and then gaining much greater importance after 1898. In the twentieth century, relations between the U.S. and Latin American underwent some permutations: the first three decades can be grouped under the military interventionism of the so-called "gunboat diplomacy", later ceding to the "Good Neighbor Policy" directed by the Roosevelt administration that emphasized economic collaboration and cultural diplomacy. The production of a Pan-American culture became even more crucial in U.S. policy during World War II, since this was seen as a tool with which to preempt the spread of fascism (Fox, 43), and this political valence continued in the early years of the Cold War, when Latin American nationalism was often conflated with potential communism (Hess 6, 143-44). In the eyes of the United States, the warding off of both fascism and communism was necessary for Puerto Rico

Another crucial component to this chapter is the way in which the perspectives put forth in these works integrate themselves into the discourse of cultural nationalism, an ideology that understood Puerto Rico's national characteristics and its political future through the lens of culture. The so-called *generación del treinta* produced much of this discourse that was later appropriated by the PPD (Ayala and Bernabe, 208). In fact, cultural nationalism cannot be completely understood without its institutionalization by the PPD, because it is this political party that transformed it into an official policy that would heavily influence Puerto Rico's social, economic, and political domains by coordinating them further with their United States counterparts. Such a project provides an important insight into how the most powerful sectors of Puerto Rican society in the 1940s and 1950s viewed the idea of the nation: principally, the nation was not to become a political form, but instead remain a cultural category that would not impede the island's increasing connections to North America. Both Zambrano and Jiménez continue the line of thought developed by the *generación del treinta* and the PPD, as the proposals that both authors make in their texts emphasize Puerto Rico's cultural connections to the United States and Spain while at the same time deemphasizing the debate surrounding Puerto Rico's political status and the possibility of it achieving independence. Both of these authors were also institutionally connected to cultural nationalism because they were both at different times employed at the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras, which would become the seat of this ideology.

Indeed, it is difficult to overstate the importance of this institution to the island's political, economic and cultural development through its continual hosting of foreign intellectuals. In the thorough and revealing collection of essays titled *Los lazos de la cultura. El Centro de Estudios*

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because of its status as a "non-incorporated territory" and its crucial position for the defense of the Panama Canal. These imperatives would heavily influence the island's political scene in the decades of the 1940s and 1950s.

Históricos de Madrid y la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1916-1939, the editors and contributors demonstrate how the island's leading university served as a home for many renowned North American scholars and Spanish intellectuals working in the peninsula and in the United States. An illustrative example of this is the career of Federico de Onís, the renowned Spanish philologist and literary critic who acted as a connecting thread between the Centro de Estudios Históricos in Madrid (which he helped found in 1910), Columbia University in the United States (where he worked as professor of Spanish literature beginning in 1916), and the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras. Soon after the founding of the Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos at the University of Puerto Rico, he created a literary publication, the *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, which Juan Gelpí and Laura Rivera Díaz characterize as a platform for the Pan-Americanist views of the school's dean, Thomas Benner (220). The connections forged among the United States, Spain, and Puerto Rico, as well as the discourses like Pan-Americanism to which their academics contributed, helped make it possible for subsequent scholars and literary figures like Zambrano and Jiménez to integrate themselves in Puerto Rican intellectual life and partake of its political scene. Due to the institutional collaborations of these three countries, cultural nationalism and its advocates came to regard the cultural legacy of Spain and the sociopolitical association with the United States as indispensably linked. Zambrano and Jiménez worked in this vibrant intellectual atmosphere, and to it they added their similar visions of Puerto Rico's insularism.

The dimension I want to highlight especially by studying Zambrano and Jiménez in this context is the territoriality of cultural nationalism, that is, how this discourse imagines Puerto Rico's geopolitical and spatial relation to neighboring sovereign states, principally North America. I am interested in determining how certain social actors and social practices, such as

literary representation, contribute to the production of territoriality through their support of, and participation in, a discourse that would inform official government policy in Puerto Rico to a significant degree. Therefore, by examining the territoriality being formulated by these authors I wish to explore in greater detail one of the primary theses proposed by Robert Sack, which is that territoriality is an expression of social power that needs to be continually sustained and renovated. The discourse of cultural nationalism, through the work of authors like Pedreira, Zambrano, and Jiménez, and government officials such as President of the Puerto Rican Senate Luis Muñoz Marín, developed a territoriality that adhered to the legal definition of the "non-incorporated territory". The point is to demonstrate that in the case of Puerto Rico, the category of "territory" is constructed not solely through the hegemonic practice of the United States, but also by the social praxis and discourses of certain agents, classes, and political parties on the island as well. Through this I aim to complement valuable work that has been done on the issue of territoriality in Puerto Rico (Torruella [1985]; Duffy Burnett and Marshall [2001]; Sparrow [2006]; Rivera Ramos [2007]; Brown-Nagin and Neuman [2015]) that examine the legal underpinnings of the status of "non-incorporated territory". Zambrano and Jiménez, in her characterization of Puerto Ricans as innately attuned to democracy and in his privileging of culture over politics in his program of social development, discursively support the continuation of this ambiguous status by actively arguing against national sovereignty.

Exploring the ways in which Zambrano and Jiménez situate themselves in the debate regarding Puerto Rico's political status allows me to re-contextualize some of the work they produced in the years of their exile. The great majority of the criticism regarding Zambrano's and Jimenez's writing while abroad, and specifically in the Caribbean, naturally focuses on placing them within the philosophical and aesthetic production of Spanish Republicans who

escaped Franco's regime. This leads those critics to evaluate Zambrano and Jiménez within the sociopolitical and cultural framework of Spain, and they tend to concentrate exclusively on understanding how these authors viewed the circumstance of exile, without considering the particularities of the cultural and political environments in which Zambrano and Jiménez wrote. Scholars like Javier del Prado Biezma examine the nuances in Jiménez's conception of the figure of the *exiliado* while not appraising the poet's stay in Puerto Rico, the place which he inhabited longest as an exile. In the case of Zambrano, critics such as Damián Pachón Soto focus on analyzing how certain concepts like memory, exile and history operate in her work while largely ignoring how the philosopher's writings may have affected the cultural and political landscape into which she was inserting herself. Exile may be a mobile condition that leads the subject from one point to another, but that does not mean that it abstracts the subject from the concrete surroundings they temporarily inhabit. By focusing on these author's positions within a discourse prevalent in Puerto Rico, I wish to demonstrate that although Zambrano and Jiménez were in exile and their writings do reveal a Eurocentric gaze, it is also necessary to consider the specificities of the places in which they resided and how their work interacted with such environments.

Placing Zambrano and Jiménez squarely in the Puerto Rican context also opens the possibility of reevaluating the political implications of their perspectives on the dynamic between philosophy, culture and politics. Given that both authors were committed Republicans who harshly condemned the rise of fascism, most critics tend to represent them in an unfailingly sympathetic and almost hagiographic light, casting them both as champions of a democratic society. But *Isla de Puerto Rico* and *Isla de la simpatía,* in the territoriality they endorse for Puerto Rico, support a political status that perpetuates a colonial relation controlled by the

United States. Zambrano's Pan-American union, which required Puerto Rico to reject an independent nationalism, directly supports the discourse of Luis Muñoz Marín, who throughout the Second World War explicitly stated in many speeches that the United States was the leader of the pro-democratic forces. Jiménez, in fragments and interviews from 1952 and 1953, praises the Estado Libre Asociado and the cultural connection between Puerto Rico and the United States this new status will allow. Tracing the way *Isla de Puerto Rico* and *Isla de la simpatía* participate in the discourse of cultural nationalism is closely related to the point made above. By focusing on Zambrano and Jiménez as emblematic figures of Spain's liberal exiles, most scholarship has bypassed the colonialist potential of these texts, producing an incomplete account of how they envision the relation between culture and politics. The territoriality formulated by both of these authors sought to ensure a productive and enriching position in global and regional affairs for Puerto Rico, but it also called for the continued deferral of national borders, a proposal that ultimately contributed to the island's subordination.

Recovering a Lost Figure

A sensation of crisis pulses throughout *Isla de Puerto Rico: Nostalgia y esperanza de un mundo mejor*; it is as much a meditation on the figure of the island as it is a call to arms. Faced with the loss of the liberal democratic government in her homeland, Zambrano writes this essay as a means of recuperating a subjectivity, that of the subject of democracy, that she feels has been abolished by fascism. Notably, the author expresses her conception of this subject of democracy in spatial terms, noting that he is marked by an interiority that he balances effectively with the exteriority of the natural and social worlds he inhabits. The crucial function of Puerto Rico in the essay stems from Zambrano's conception of the island, which according to her is the geographic space that most accurately reflects the interiority of this lost subject, making Puerto

Rico the ideal site from which to defend and rebuild democracy. Formulating this subject and identifying the space that is most conducive to its resurgence leads the author to yet another form of geo-cultural organization, the Pan-American system, that requires Puerto Rico's sacrifice of its nationalism. What Zambrano attempts in *Isla de Puerto Rico* is to formulate a philosophical-political vision that would integrate the subject of democracy within the various environments that surround it, such as the natural and the social.[3] Such a philosophical-political vision operates at various connected, concentric scales of spatiality: it begins with the individual himself and the careful equilibrium between his "inside" and "outside", proceeds to the larger geographic location of the island of Puerto Rico, moves to the international union of the Western hemisphere, and concludes at the ultimate scale of the universal, joining these levels with the common thread of the democratic subject. Through this elaboration of scale, as well as her insistence on Puerto Rico's Spanish cultural legacy, Zambrano's essay demonstrates two defining features of the discourse of cultural nationalism (also emphasized by Pedreira), and allows her to forge a territoriality that coincides with this discourse's complicity with the official status of the island as determined by the United States.

For Zambrano, one of the most significant casualties of the Falange's triumph in Spain goes far beyond any one specific individual, concerning instead an overarching cultural mode of living. In the third of the twelve sections that comprise the essay, Zambrano claims that the war

[3] As such, the essay forms part of Zambrano's quest to renovate the liberalism she examined in her first book, *Horizontes del liberalismo* (1930). *Horizontes del liberalismo* is a short treatise on the philosophical defects of liberalism, in which she criticizes its privileging of strict rationalism and claims that man must seek another type of reason that will allow him to integrate himself into Nature instead of seeking to master it. This work is an important precedent for several reasons: it begins to develop the kind of phenomenological, poetic discourse that Zambrano would espouse and elaborate over her career; it demonstrates how the author approaches politics through philosophy and views them as inseparable; and it is the first example of the theme of integration, which would function in various registers throughout her work.

raging in Europe at the time has produced a pervasive feeling of nostalgia, whose object is "una forma de vida, un repertorio de cosas y maneras, un <<estilo>>, es decir; un sistema de atenciones y de desdenes, una unidad de razón y sensibilidad" (37). This system is based on the principles of Democracy and Liberty (idem), which are imagined by the author as spatial phenomena. Zambrano states that there are principles that are "lo que edifica, lo capaz de mantener en pie y al par cubrirnos" (idem). Democracy and Liberty are spatial in that they are depicted as a force that builds a kind of architecture that functions as a space in which human beings can dwell and maintain their existence. The most significant aspect of this space is that it does not divorce itself from human existence, but rather underwrites it; the unification of these principles and those who live under them is most clearly expressed in the verb "cubrirnos", which indicates that Democracy and Liberty serves to protect the essence of humanity. What these pronouncements imply then is the existence of a particular subject of Democracy and Liberty, that is, a kind of human being whose very existence demonstrates the kind of integration with his political and social environment that those two principles foster.

Zambrano soon after begins to detail this subject in an indirect way throughout several sections. The author declares that democracy is the form of government in which the State respects the integrity or completeness of the human being (39), and that creativity flourishes from what she terms "íntegra soledad" (idem), a solitude that is not a complete withdrawal into self-absorption. Instead, it is a disposition that aims to encounter and enter into dialogue with that which lies beyond the subject: "una vida es…soledad hacia afuera…fecunda y llena…abierta…que flota en equilibrio entre la soledad radical, raíz de su propia existencia, y el fuera" (40). A human being only possesses life, suggests Zambrano, if he acts as the point of contact between two different spaces, which is to say if he seeks to integrate his subjectivity with

what he finds outside of it, whether that be the natural world or the society he inhabits. It is important to note that this conception of life is also premised on a spatial metaphor, given that the condition necessary for the flourishing of life is the deliberate balancing of an interiority and an exteriority. Zambrano views Democracy as offering a spatialized integration, and this suggests that for her, mankind finds its fullest expression when it becomes the subject of democracy by the twofold process of nurturing its solitude and directing it outwards, while adopting those political principles that allow it to unite itself to society. The subject of democracy is therefore a figure who produces an existential spatiality that is open and broad, disposed towards the material reality that lies before him and enriched by the interplay between it and his subjectivity.

In *Isla de Puerto Rico*, Zambrano suggests that the isolation of liberalism has reached a destructive extreme by subtly pointing to a connection between this ideology and that of fascism. In the section "La democracia como estilo de vida", she claims that one of the most corrosive effects of the rise of totalitarianism is the erasure of the drive for integration: "Entre los venenos expandidos en la hora actual es…uno de los más activos éste de creer que en la vida humana todo es divisible y aislable" (38). With this allusion to fascism (the main poison "de la hora actual"), Zambrano links it to the existential isolationism produced by rationalism, but she also asserts that fascism actually supersedes the severity of liberalism's drawbacks. The subject of liberalism is one who operates in a limited spatiality, given that he has disengaged with the reality that is external to him due to his overreliance on reason; the subject of fascism lacks any kind of existential space. According to the text,

> en el fondo de todo totalitarismo está el terror del hombre a su soledad. La criatura totalitaria…se esconde de su propia soledad…Es el hombre…enmascarado, replegado, no sobre sí, sino hacia afuera. Hacia un afuera que se ha quedado tambien vacío. Vacío de adentro y de afuera que le exasperan; de ahí…su ansia irrefrenable de dominación (39)

Here there is no space that can be inhabited, since the fascist seeks only to erase what surrounds him rather than integrating himself in it, acting thus as the polar opposite of the subject of democracy.[4] Due to its overpowering impulse to exterminate, fascism as an ideology and form of government is characterized by pure negation; it not only has resulted in the death and displacement of thousands of innocents, it has also lead to the hollowing out of the fascist himself. Totalitarianism is ultimately the repudiation of human life as conceived by Zambrano, given that the totalitarian is constitutively incapable of the solitude and the desire for integration necessary for a productive appreciation of and engagement with reality. The fascist's destruction of existential space has also resulted in the devastation of geopolitical space, as by 1940 Spain had already been engulfed and Western Europe had been almost entirely overrun. It is in this bleak scenario that the island plays its crucial role.

Beyond a Fallen Peninsula: María Zambrano's Insular Refuge

Zambrano's essay begins with a brief meditation on the nature of the island, which is contrasted to the continent. Whereas the continent is for the author the site of trials, work and the kind of destructive history that was taking place in Europe, the island is instead a space of promise and evasion (33-34), to which man retires when the ruin and wreckage of the world threatens to overrun him. Most importantly, the island "nos parece ser el residuo de algo, el rastro de un mundo mejor, de una perdida inocencia…Algo así como el testimonio de que el hombre…ha estado en viviente comunidad con la naturaleza" (34). The Edenic imagery

[4] While a full exploration of the gender dynamics inherent to Zambrano's and Jiménez's texts is outside of the scope of this chapter, it should be noted that both authors understand the subjectivity they are trying to (re)construct to be a decidedly male one. In the Zambrano quote on totalitarianism, she uses the term "hombre" to refer more broadly to human beings, as if the male gender were a transcendental template for the human. For a more developed analysis of gender in Zambrano, see Trueba, 2013; for one in Jiménez's work, see Jaffe, 1990.

associated with the island (which is further emphasized by Zambrano asserting that the continent is where man resides "tras de su condenación" [33]) is significant because the myth of Eden unites the several themes of spatiality and existential integration that have been explored so far. Eden is that space in which man is, as Zambrano herself indicates, completely joined to his environment without pretense of domination. Given this connection to his surroundings, the figure of prelapsarian man that emerges from the author's musings on the island can be understood as an implicit model for the subject of democracy.

More importantly, the island has another crucial and direct connection to democracy, which is its relation to solitude. In an era in which fascism is destroying democratic culture and thus producing a desire for that "estilo de vida" that has been lost, it assumes a greater importance in world affairs: "la terrible nostalgia…nostalgia de nuestra soledad, la isla nos devuelve su imagen. El que vive en una isla tiene la imagen real de su propia vida" (40). The island is represented here as the source from which the basis of democracy, that open solitude that leads man beyond himself, can flourish once again, and this is due to the very nature of insularity. Zambrano claims that islands are the most faithful image of man's solitude "por su ligereza, por su ocupar tan poco espacio, ese estar en la superficie del planeta pidiendo tan poco y ofreciéndonos tanto" (idem). Here, Puerto Rico appears as the paradigmatic example of such a favorable minuteness, as the text indicates its "ternura" and "peso tan leve para tanta belleza" (idem).[5] In Zambrano's estimation, Puerto Rico is exceedingly fruitful as the origin that makes

[5] Zambrano's mode of representing insularity entirely inverts Pedreira's identification of the island's geographic limitation as the greatest obstacle to its society's development. *Insularismo's* focus on Puerto Rico's scarcity of physical space, though it had a cultural dimension, was also firmly locked onto the economic deficits created by this shortage. *Isla de Puerto Rico* wholly ignores this aspect, focusing exclusively on the philosophical and political opportunities the island offers.

possible the recuperation of a fading subjectivity. As we have seen, this endangered subject of democracy represents a spatiality that admits no artificial borders between any dimensions of reality, as he positions himself precisely in the mid-point of his interiority and exteriority, erasing any categorical difference between the two. The significance of this disposition for Zambrano will mean that because the island is the seat of the subject of democracy, Puerto Rico as a geopolitical agent must also adopt this integrative approach and renounce anything that might divide it from a broader international community.

The text's perspective on Puerto Rico in a geopolitical sense stems from its notion that the only way to defeat the rising tide of fascism is through a Pan-American union that would join the United States with Latin America to fight for democracy. Puerto Rico's role in this transnational system is central for two reasons: it's insularity and its historical connections to North America and Spain. Zambrano indicates the most significant aspect of insularity through a spatial metaphor: "en los momentos de crisis históricas las islas juegan de nuevo un papel; el de ser imán que atrae la imaginación hacia algo primario, no corrompido todavía, de la naturaleza humana" (35). The spatial metaphor here is that of the "imán", a device used to manipulate space by drawing previously separate objects together. Analogously, Puerto Rico would act as the nexus that would cohere the Pan-American system through its privileged relationship to the solitude that is the basis of democracy. The motif of integration appears once again, but in this case it functions not in an existential valence at the level of the individual but rather at the much larger scale of the geopolitical, a shift that ostensibly reveals not a rupture but a profound interconnectedness. This is because this instance of international fusion occurs through and in the name of democracy, which for the author is not just a form of government but an entire form of life. As she herself writes, "nada…cuando responde a un estilo, a una forma de vida, anda suelto,

ni podría existir sin profundas conexiones" (37). This linkage reveals an important assumption of the text regarding the need to safeguard the subject of democracy; when this subject upholds democratic values, the society he inhabits will also demonstrate such a disposition to other societies. The parallel between individual and society is especially marked in the spatial sense: the subject of democracy is one who seeks to integrate himself with his many exterior environments, just as Puerto Rico would have to direct its attention to its neighboring nations in order to join the United States with Latin America.

Aside from its condition of insularity that grants it a cohesive power, Puerto Rico is key because it is the prime example of the "necesaria reconciliación de las dos Américas" (47), a status mainly due to the fact that in the past it has formed part of the Spanish empire and is now under the stewardship of the United States. As Zambrano asserts, Puerto Rico cannot fulfill its task of realizing this reconciliation "si no es con su propio ser; su ser que consiste en su tradición y su presente. Tradición española, presente americano" (46). It is this last statement that reveals the first signs of an unwittingly colonial gaze, given that both the "tradición española" and the "presente americano" were both possible for Puerto Rico only through subjugation to a foreign metropolis. Furthermore, in stark contrast to a text like *Insularismo*, in the discussion of the "propio ser" of Puerto Rico there is no overt mention to any kind of autochthonous cultural or sociopolitical expression. In Zambrano's representation of Puerto Rico's role in world affairs the particularity of its colonial past and its fraught political present, the contours that distinguish the island from other members of the Pan-American union, begin to vanish.

The emergence of a colonial gaze is further emphasized when Zambrano reveals the geopolitical consequences of the role ascribed to Puerto Rico in the Pan-American system. The author claims that in order to fully realize its function in the struggle for democracy, Puerto Rico

will have to perform an act of sacrifice: "El destino de la islita…consiste…en renunciar…en cierto modo, a lo inmediato para llegar a la comprensión de algo más trascendente…que está ahí detrás de ese primer horizonte que nos lo encubre" (45). More specifically, the island will have to forego political independence:

> en el orden de las culturas, y aun de las formas políticas, toda universalidad ha sido a costa de ciertos olvidos de lo inmediato nacional. Y por mucho que sea la boga de los nacionalismos, nadie podría persuadirnos de la nobleza de esta universalidad…El lugar, la sede de un acontecimiento universal por su trascendencia…¡Algo más que nación, mucho más que nación, Isla de Puerto Rico! (45-61)

What these pronouncements manifest is a conceptual basis in spatiality, specifically the elaboration of a hierarchy of scale almost identical to the one offered by Pedreira. *Insularismo* had advocated for the creation of an autochthonous, national culture that would ultimately surpass that category and enter the more hallowed realm of the universal, implicitly claiming that aesthetic production was superior if it addressed some aspect of humanity that was not specific to an ethnic or cultural group. In other words, Pedreira considered categories like the universal, a term that suggests an all-encompassing reach, to have greater worth than more limited tiers like that of the national. Zambrano shares in this assumption, describing the universal as situated beyond that "primer horizonte", that of "lo inmediato nacional", that acts to obscure a seemingly greater one; nationalism is imagined as an obstacle to reaching a more advanced societal status.[6] The more definitive geopolitical borders that nationalism establishes would interrupt the process of integration that is necessary for a successful Pan-American union and defense of democracy.

[6] This notion was rendered more explicit by Zambrano in a later work in which she provided a more developed philosophical framework for democracy, *Persona y democracia,* published first in 1958 in Puerto Rico (Obras completas, vol. III, 1269). In this text, the author asserts, once again using spatial terms, "todo nacionalismo tiene su término; por amplio que sea su radio, está condenado a cesar un día. Sólo tiene un futuro ilimitado, un futuro verdadero, lo universal" (idem, 491).

As it happens, Zambrano wrote this text just when the political climate in Puerto Rico was changing, a significant shift championed by the newly minted Partido Popular Democrático and its leader, Luis Muñoz Marín.

An island and an "area": The Partido Popular Democrático's Wartime Strategy

From 1938 to 1940, the island's political scene was transformed by the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD), a party created by Luis Muñoz Marín, who had entered the Puerto Rican Senate in 1932 as a representative of the Partido Liberal. By 1936 Muñoz Marín's relationship with the leaders of the Partido Liberal had become strained, and that year Muñoz Marín organized a pro-independence faction within the party known as the Acción Social Independentista (ASI) (Ayala and Bernabe, 115). When the Partido Liberal lost the general elections of 1936, the ASI was blamed and cast out in 1937; Muñoz Marín swiftly organized this former faction into the PPD, almost immediately entering the campaigns for the 1940 election. However, a critical change in his political stance regarding independence occurred at this time: during the general election campaigns, Muñoz Marín announced that the PPD was abstaining from the debate regarding Puerto Rico's political status. Should the party win the elections, it would focus primarily on necessary social reforms rather than on the issue of independence (idem, 137). Eventually, the PPD would win a majority in the Senate and equal representation in the House compared to other parties. In 1941, Muñoz Marín was chosen as the President of the Senate, placing him in a position to implement his party's social reform platform and effectively ignore the question of the island's relationship to the United States.

Throughout the campaign of 1940, Muñoz Marín toured the island tirelessly, giving many speeches in which he emphasized Puerto Rico's unwavering commitment to democracy, a characteristic that was especially important given that the United States was now directly

supporting Britain in the conflict against Germany. Muñoz Marín's pronouncements continued after the elections, and the most noteworthy aspect of some is that they envision democracy in a spatial sense in a way strikingly similar to the one developed by Zambrano in *Isla de Puerto Rico*. The most conspicuous example is a short speech called "Puerto Rico en el área de la democracia", given at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras on May 28, 1941. In this text, both fascism and democracy are presented as forces that produce transnational blocs that are locked in a battle for supremacy:

> Los conceptos nacionales se van desdibujando según la fuerza bruta va desdibujando las fronteras nacionales. El mundo hoy realmente se divide entro un imperio y una idea: el imperio clásico extendido por la fuerza militar; la idea democrática convertida en área territorial…la idea democrática, en su crisis, va borrando nacionalidades…y produce la extraordinaria realidad de que Estados Unidos e Inglaterra sean práticamente una sola nacionalidad, a la que, por gravitación inevitable, se va sumando en espíritu toda la América (152-53)

The same hierarchical notion of scale as Zambrano's organizes Muñoz Marín's thought regarding the link between democracy and nationalism. The fundamental assumption here is that democracy is inherently international, that is, it comprehends a sweeping geopolitical, cultural and socioeconomic field that includes several countries, such as the ones that comprise the union between the United States, Britain, and Latin America. A nationalism whose focus would be promoting the interests and stability of one country is antithetical to the struggle for a democratic future because its energies would be devoted to a much more limited area and number of people. Given this, Puerto Rico cannot productively insist on settling the ambiguous question of its territorial status through independence, as doing so would threaten the integrity of the "area of democracy".

Like Zambrano's perspective, Muñoz Marín's also neglects to account fully for the unequal economic and political dynamic between Puerto Rico and the United States, the very

nation he now touted as the leader of democracy. He does vaguely indicate the colonial status of Puerto Rico when he recognizes that "la posición de Puerto Rico es peculiar en el área de la democracia. Puerto Rico defiende la democracia, y practica la democracia, sin tenerla plenamente" (153). However, at no point in the speech does its author explicitly name the United States as the primary cause and benefactor of the island's singular, and disadvantageous, position in the transnational alliance dedicated to defeating fascism. Furthermore, Muñoz Marín's representation of the Pan-American union actually supports a colonial dynamic between Latin America and its Anglo-Saxon neighbors more than does Zambrano's, due to how it depicts the balance of power. In *Isla de Puerto Rico*, the island is the nexus of the alliance, given that it is the space in which democracy most readily surfaces because of its insularism. In "Puerto Rico en el área de la democracia", it is the United States and Britain that act as the center; all the other sovereign states in Latin America join them "por gravitación inevitable", losing their nationalities while their northern counterparts consolidate theirs. This "area of democracy" is therefore not an egalitarian collective, but rather one that perpetuates the political superiority of the United States in the Western hemisphere.

Another crucial aspect of the issue overlooked by Muñoz Marín and Zambrano is the fact that the very concept of democracy is politically charged in the sense that, in the years immediately following the United States' acquisition of overseas territories, it was a tool used to mark some ethnic groups as undeserving of full political representation and rights. The legal scholar Sam Erman demonstrates this in *Almost Citizens: Puerto Rico, the U.S. Constitution, and Empire* (2019), in which he shows how an underlying logic of white supremacy greatly influenced the juridical and political treatment not just of Puerto Rico, but of all territories of the

United States.[7] Erman writes that in these territorial possessions, "By 1905, the United States…had installed a patchwork of undemocratic governance schemes" and that many politicians "favored undemocratic governance of peoples of color. They…considered retaining Puerto Rico if its population proved itself 'white enough' for self-government" (97). The ability for self-government would theoretically qualify territories like Puerto Rico for unrestricted incorporation into the Union, and thus full participation in the democratic process, but the notion of racial inferiority depicted Puerto Ricans as inherently unable to administer themselves without foreign interference. Under such a perspective, the inhabitants of Puerto Rico could never attain full access to the North American democracy that Muñoz Marín would later celebrate.

Democracy as a principle of government, and specifically its withholding, was therefore part and parcel of the definition of "territory", a category that has always served to situate particular ethnic groups in an inferior position with respect to the North American metropole. The political status that results from Zambrano's and Muñoz Marín's visions of Puerto Rico's relationship to the United States, specifically the renunciation of a nationalism that would lead to political independence, aligns closely with the category of "non-incorporated territory", effectively perpetuating it. Throughout the war years, Muñoz Marín continued his policy of evading this issue. In a speech given on October 30, 1944, he reiterated that in the general elections of that year, a vote for the PPD would not be interpreted as favoring independence, statehood, or any other kind of status (*Discursos*, 233). That year, the PPD obtained a massive

[7] Historian Daniel Immerwahr is another scholar who emphasizes the need to understand United States territorial policy as a tightly connected network of racially discriminatory attitudes, legal decisions, and socioeconomic strategies. In *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (2019), the author demonstrates how official protocols toward one territory almost invariably affected policy towards another, and how this was especially true with regards to the issue of race (19).

victory, winning 65% of the vote, meaning that for the near future Puerto Rico would continue being a U.S. territory.

Puerto Rico's status as a territory would prove to be of fundamental importance to the United States throughout the years of its involvement in World War II. In this period, the federal government clearly inscribed its relationship of geopolitical superiority even in the very landscape of the island. When the United States entered the conflict, Puerto Rico gained additional importance as the first line of defense against possible Axis attacks on the mainland, leading the North Americans to begin acquiring large tracts of land on which to build military bases. As sociologist Ronald Fernández details, the army and navy repurposed hundreds of acres in Puerto Rico; all told, the United States armed forces soon held about 31,000 acres to build the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station (140). In the case of Vieques, a smaller island municipality about 8 miles off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico, the United States armed forces appropriated roughly two-thirds of the entire island (idem). The transformation of Puerto Rico into a military outpost made the possibility of independence even more remote. When US Senator Tydings set about trying to definitively achieve independence for Puerto Rico in 1943, he met resistance from both members of Congress and the military, who understood independence as irreconcilable with maintaining a foreign base on Puerto Rican soil (idem, 149) and thus preferred not to alter its territorial status. The United States' instrumentalizing of Puerto Rico as a military outpost reveals that from its perspective as well, insularism was incommensurate with national sovereignty, because sovereignty would complicate Puerto Rico's function as an invaluable defensive asset that was of most use to a foreign nation.

What I also wish to highlight by placing Zambrano in the context of Puerto Rican political issues such as that of nationalism and independence is a colonial valence of her work.

Many of the critics who study Zambrano as a paradigmatic case of Spanish Republican exile focus on the political ramifications of her philosophy and their contrast with the fascist dictatorship she opposed while abroad, which sometimes leads to an excessive valuation of the liberating potential of her work. Tania Gentic's study of Zambrano's poetic reason, for example, leads her to assert that "Zambrano suggests that although she elsewhere differentiates between philosophical and poetic language, all writing is metaphorical. According to this formulation, decolonization is possible wherever writing is" (430). Such an appraisal seems too optimistic in light of the way in which Zambrano's call for Puerto Rico's sacrifice of its nationalism feeds into the inherent ambiguity of the "non-incorporated territory" that has maintained Puerto Rico in the grip of a colonial dynamic. Gentic's claim that writing is absolutely a decolonizing force abstracts it from any historical context, an undue removal since the act of writing is accomplished by social agents who hold particular positions in social fields at specific points in time.[8] This was clearly the case with Zambrano, who through *Isla de Puerto Rico* came to integrate herself into the perspective of cultural nationalism, a discourse that would hold sway in Puerto Rican political and cultural life throughout the decades of the 1940s and 1950s, culminating in the establishment of the Estado Libre Asociado in 1952. It was around this time that Juan Ramón Jiménez, another exponent of a sociopolitical view that would closely mirror that of cultural nationalism, returned to Puerto Rico.

The Poet and the Social Program: Juan Ramón Jiménez's *Isla de la simpatía*

As recounted above, Juan Ramón Jiménez's encounters with Puerto Rico spanned from

[8] In the closing paragraph of her article, Gentic does acknowledge that Zambrano's philosophy is so closely tied to the relation between language and subjectivity that they possibly ignore the material realities that surround them (433). However, she does not explore the impact of these material realities on the meaning of Zambrano's texts, effectively preserving her claim that all writing aids in decolonization.

1936, when he first arrived as the Spanish Civil War began, to 1958, when he died in San Juan. *Isla de la simpatía* was first published in 1981, about three decades after Jiménez's death, meaning the fragments were never definitively collected into a specific order by the author. Thus, in contrast to a work like Zambrano's structured essay that clearly follows a logical progression, Jiménez's text can be fruitfully read as heteroglossic and freewheeling, an assemblage of communicating vessels that at times reveals more through indirect association than by direct assertion. Despite the disconnected nature of the text, Jiménez succeeds in developing an implicitly political agenda that emphasizes the need to maintain cultural and institutional ties with the United States. To ground these connections, Jiménez develops a perspective on Puerto Rico's insularism that emphasizes a sense of openness to foreign elements as well as an outward-facing disposition to all the nations of the Western Hemisphere. In the poet's view, Puerto Rico as an island is uniquely positioned to form a transnational collective that will bring about social advancement for all those involved.

The reason for this privileged role in hemispheric affairs is Jiménez's depiction of Puerto Rico as the source of a new, amalgamated culture born from the mixture of North American and Hispanic elements. In turn, the text suggests that Puerto Rico has an essential relation to culture because of its insularism, which for the author is synonymous with aesthetic experience. *Isla de la simpatía* even goes on to propose that aesthetic and cultural forms, like poetry, should be the basis of society. In fact, Jiménez had argued this in an address, titled "Política poética", given at a 1936 conference in Madrid.[9] In this address, the author offers a broader view of poetry,

[9] As Germán Labriego attests, the paper was not read by the poet himself but by a proxy. Labriego also points out that Jiménez presented this same paper in several conferences in the Americas, under the title "El trabajo gustoso" (9). The fact that Jiménez delivered this address while in exile suggests (as the text itself does) that its understanding of poetry's relation to society was applicable not just in Spain, but anywhere.

claiming that there are two intertwined categories: “la poesía visible, diaria…de nuestra vida entera” (20) and “poesía…bajo un punto de vista estético o crítico” (idem). Jiménez argues that because poetry is innate to mankind, it bestows on it (using language very reminiscent of Zambrano’s subject of democracy) a capacity to become “fundidos entre nosotros” (22). That is, through its connection to poetry, mankind is able to completely harmonize itself and thus establish the grounds for an equitable social space.

Indeed, towards the conclusion of the address Jiménez asserts that poetry is the very source of the political: “Levantando la poesía del pueblo se habría diseminado la mejor semilla social política” (32). He even associates specific political forms with it, stating that “El hombre…vive…en la república de su poesía” (21), making an overt reference to the type of government, a type that the author clearly favors, that would soon be undermined by fascism in Spain. With the “political seed” planted and nurtured into a republic, mankind is capable of living a life that Jiménez revealingly calls “simpática”, which he opposes to “antipatía”, the lack of social unity that makes something like a destructive war possible (22). What this address provides is not only a genealogy of “simpatía”, which clearly arises from a situation of sociopolitical crisis, but also a clarification of this elusive concept. “Simpatía” carries both a descriptive and a prescriptive charge: it refers to the conditions for what Jiménez considers the ideal society as it advocates for the creation of just such a society. While the proposition to base the sociopolitical on the aesthetic and cultural was clearly aimed at Spain as it plunged into civil war, Jiménez would later apply it to Puerto Rico. As we will see, the descriptive and prescriptive will once again intertwine in this new context, as Jiménez’s portrayal of Puerto Rico as a site of poetry and culture will ultimately influence the author’s call for closer ties with North America.

The main difference between “Política poética” and Jiménez’s posthumous text is that the

former does not consider the issue of space, while the latter's social program reimagines the spatiality of Puerto Rico, both within it and with respect to the United States and Spain. The spatiality of *Isla de la simpatía* embraces a logic that is very much consonant with Muñoz Marín's notion of the "area of democracy", asserting that Puerto Rico should form part of a larger geopolitical and cultural collective that stretches from the United States throughout Latin America. Jiménez expressed this in several fragments and interviews given in 1952-53 in support of the recently established Estado Libre Asociado. I would therefore argue, in contrast to some critics who have claimed the poet resisted the influence of North America on the island, that Jiménez's text partook of a political imaginary that maintained the island's longstanding and colonial dynamic with the United States due to its support of the ELA, which has not definitively changed Puerto Rico's status as a non-incorporated territory. What I hope to demonstrate about Jiménez's work is the colonialist valences of his thought that surface in the context of the Cold War when placed within the sociopolitical context of the island in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Furthermore, I wish to illustrate that the territoriality of Puerto Rico developed by cultural nationalism did not limit itself to the relation between the United States and the island, but rather also included Spain through institutional ties, especially the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras. That is, territory is not necessarily the result of a unilateral link created solely between a metropole and a colony, but rather the outcome of a series of social forces (of which literature is one) that can originate in various geographic locations. What Pedreira's, Zambrano's, and Jiménez's works reveal is that cultural nationalism understood Puerto Rico to be the product of insular, North American, and Spanish society, culture, and politics, a vision that heavily influenced the way these authors imagined the island's relations to other nations, and thus its territoriality.

The Open Island

Isla de la simpatía is divided into five sections, all of which organize the lyrical fragments and interviews along general thematic lines. Given the fact that the text was composed intermittently over nearly two decades, the figure of the island appears throughout all sections seemingly haphazardly. However, the representation of the island gains coherence through a poetic, almost mystic vision that emphasizes the centrality of cultural and aesthetic creation. The first meaning of the term "simpatía" arises directly from this vision, referring to Jiménez's repeated assertions that he found a personally and professionally fruitful environment in Puerto Rico in which he could easily integrate himself. While the immediate effects of Jiménez's social program are primarily directed towards the citizens of Puerto Rico, they also reveal what I argue is the more significant meaning of the term "isla de la simpatía". This definition holds that culture transforms the island of Puerto Rico into a nexus that would be capable of forging a lasting geopolitical alliance between itself, the United States, and the rest of Latin America, a key function in the context of the Cold War. Jiménez posits this in a number of fragments dated at the beginning of the 1950s, a decade in which Puerto Rico would in the discourse of the Partido Popular Democrático become an exemplar of capitalism and democracy. It ostensibly did so by strengthening its economic ties to the United States through initiatives like Operación Manos a la Obra that industrialized the island and improved its economy by opening it up to North American capital, and Operación Serenidad, which focused on improving education in rural communities and instilling democratic values in their populations. In this era, the PPD made Puerto Rico into an island that was politically, economically and culturally open to outside influence and geared towards the crucial ideological battleground of postwar Latin America, all the while rejecting nationalism as an unworkable and detrimental model. In this sense of aperture

and accessibility, the PPD's vision of Puerto Rico closely parallels Jiménez's conception of the island.

Indeed, the notion that Puerto Rico is an essentially welcoming and accessible space is presented in the very first section of the text, "Prólogo muy particular". This section contains five fragments that individually focus on elements that the author considers indispensable to his understanding of Puerto Rico: the women of the island, the children, the natural light, the surrounding sea, and a pervasive sense of a return to a kind of divine origin. In the first fragment, "Primero, la mujer", Jiménez notes that one of the phenomena he finds so expressive of the natural beauty of Puerto Rico is the beauty of its women, whose alluring features are "tan propias de la isla abierta que las entreabre. Y es claro, que esta isla es un país para el hombre que viene" (5). Here the voice of the text refers to Jiménez's arrival after his exile, a biographical fact which marks him as a foreigner, while representing Puerto Rico as a space that exists for those who are outside of its borders. Such a condition has the effect of eliminating the category of outsider that might create distance between Jiménez and this particular island. The association between the island and a capacity to draw in a subject is further reinforced by the figure of the woman, a notion that is presented through an anecdote that Jiménez gives of his youth. According to him, his second partner was Rosalina Brau, the daughter of the renowned journalist and poet Salvador Brau, who "me atrajo como una isla entera" (37). From this passage, the island gains a dimension of seduction, which is reinforced by the fact that Jiménez immediately after notes that he eventually married a woman who was half-Puerto Rican and who first lead him away from Spain (idem). The island is thus a beguiling, siren-like space that calls out to those who catch a glimpse of it, but that welcomes and provides fulfillment instead of destroying them.

It is from this that the first sense of "simpatía" emerges: the "sympathy" that

distinguishes Puerto Rico from any other place is the speaker's powerful sense of integration, expressed in an autobiographical register, as if he were fated to reach the island and effortlessly settle there. Jiménez goes so far as to state this in the fragment titled "Un destino inmanente", where he writes "Yo sé que estoy unido a un destino de Puerto Rico, a un destino ineludible y verdadero…yo siempre indeciso en mi lugar de muerte, quiero quedarme cuando mi muerte sea, muerto aquí" (37). Puerto Rico is in this fragment a space in which Jiménez as subject can harmonize himself to the point that his subjectivity could even be erased, as suggested by his desire to die there. But if Puerto Rico is a site of endings, it is also a site of beginnings, as revealed in the fragment titled "Regazo de madre y esposa". There, Jiménez claims that

> Esta isla de Puerto Rico y de la Simpatía, me está pareciendo como un amable regazo femenino, madre y mujer enmedio de la mar…La única comunicacion que tenemos los hombres con nuestra nebulosa matriz, es por el regazo y el seno femeninos, nacimiento y alimento y al fin también muerte, otro regazo (20)[10]

The metaphor of the island as a kind of womb suggests that Puerto Rico represents for Jiménez a site where he can encounter the whole gamut of life, from birth to death, both of which are presented as transcendental experiences that lead the subject to a greater communion with the reality he inhabits ("nuestra nebulosa matriz"). The author thus posits that on the island he is capable of realizing a process of subject formation that is more complete, given that on Puerto Rico he can ostensibly contemplate the beginnings and ends of his life, as well as other matters

[10] Jiménez's representations of Puerto Rico as a womb, as an "open" island (an aspect he connects to the beauty of its women), and as a country that exists for "el hombre que viene" amply indicate the fact that the (autobiographical) voice of the text plays out a male-gendered role with regard to Puerto Rico. This role amounts to a male-identified subject who arrives at the island and, thanks to its "womb-like" energy, gains insight into and contact with transcendental ontological realities, such as birth and death. Linking this with Zambrano's subject of democracy, we can see that a gender dynamic based on a paradigmatic male figure is integral to both of these texts: Zambrano envisions this figure helping to save the world from fascism and Jiménez understands the "feminine" space of Puerto Rico as a source of aesthetic and spiritual vitality for the "masculine" poet who will help improve the island's society.

such as the importance of aesthetic appreciation and poetry, with greater clarity than elsewhere.

Indeed, aesthetic experience is at the forefront of Jiménez's understanding of Puerto Rico. Central to Jiménez's representation of the island is the sensorial richness that the environment provides. This notion appears in the very beginning of the text, in the third fragment titled "Ahora la luz", where the light on the island is described as "absoluta de colores y reflejos indecibles" (6) and in section XXX, "Un corazón central", Jiménez states that Puerto Rico is a paradise "de color y luz maravillosos, suficiente todo y que le da valor profundo" (38). A phenomenological bent is evident here in the emphasis on the bodily experience of Puerto Rico that leads to a discursive representation. Puerto Rico is a land of plenty for Jiménez because its natural environment seems to always present some new and unexpected sensuous delight; this ability to surprise is what leads the author to classify the island as a space of color and light "maravillosos", as if he could not help but be enraptured. It is important to note, however, that for Jiménez the sensorial plenitude he encounters in Puerto Rico does not just have value in and of itself. Rather, it is the gateway to a more transcendental reality. In fragment XLIII, "Isla de la simpatía", he writes:

> Puerto Rico parece hecho para satisfacer los sentidos corporales. Pero el que cultiva los sentidos corporales sabe que éste es el camino al goce de los sentido espirituales, es decir que ver, oír, oler, gustar y tocar con encanto, es para llegar a la esencia de lo visible, de lo audible, lo aspirable, lo gustable y lo tocable (50).

Like Zambrano and her positing of Puerto Rico as a source of democracy due to its insularism, Jiménez here elaborates an essentialist vision of the island, in which Puerto Rico is inherently capable of producing not just aesthetic pleasure, but spiritual development as well. The point of these representations is to characterize Puerto Rico as a space of revelatory beauty in which the inhabitants can acquire a profound existential knowledge as long as they are able to experience the sensuous plenty of the island "con encanto", that is, as long as they can interpret their

experience with the requisite aesthetic appreciation.

Puerto Rico's capacity to provide aesthetic delight is significant, because it leads Jiménez to associate the figure of the island with artistic creation, especially poetry. This notion appears in the fifth section of the work, "Prólogo más general", which collects fragments regarding the Puerto Rican cultural scene, interviews, and prologues to books of poetry. In one such fragment, titled "Alerta", Jiménez praises the lyrical work of Laura Gallego and offers a striking aphorism: "La poesía…no es una laberíntica disertación lírica, sino una espresión [sic] aislada con voz de pecho. Un poema es una isla" (100). The equation of poetry with the island in the form of the aphorism is cryptic, since the text does not explain why a poem is like an island, but it can be clarified with some remarks that Jiménez makes about poetry through the figure of the child, which is very important to the vision of Puerto Rico that the author builds. In the first section of *Isla de la simpatía*, Jiménez demonstrates a fascination with the Puerto Rican child, claiming that the youths of the island are "tan llenos de misterio, encanto, intensidad, dotes primeras de la poesía" (6). Furthermore, in the fifth section, he writes that "Todo el oasis paradisíaco de esta clara isla nublada…está amasado…en estos pequeños seres indecibles, islillas" (69). In these passages, the Puerto Rican child acts as a privileged link between poetry and the island, connecting them through the innate aesthetic sensibility (those "dotes primeros de la poesía") that Jiménez imputes to him. The figure of the child will be discussed again in a later section; for now, I wish to emphasize the associative function of the youth, who through metaphorical language transforms into an island and thereby highlights the latter's creative potential. Although he never does so explicitly, it is as though Jiménez wishes to prove that the converse of his aphorism is true: if a poem is an island, then the child suggests that an island (especially Puerto Rico), is a poem as well.

The concordance between poetry and insularity is forged not just through the child, but also through the phenomenological gaze that Jiménez develops. Jiménez's depiction of Puerto Rico reveals an exoticizing tendency that renders the island a site of wonder and reverence through pronouncements like "Isla, también, además de la simpatía, del mimo y del primor. Nada solemne hay aquí" (42), which points to the sensation of "encanto" that for Jiménez is so fundamental to Puerto Rico. The author variously asserts that in San Juan he regularly encounters legendary figures of the Judeo-Christian tradition like Saint John the Baptist, Pontius Pilate, and Saint Peter (19-20); that Puerto Rico reminds him strongly of Judea (21); and that a black woman who shares his bus route is actually Queen Nefertiti (31-32). The exoticism that the author imputes to the island causes him to view it through a markedly aesthetic lens, demonstrated when he states the inhabitants are "jente de estilización definitiva" (13), as if the entire population were characterized more readily by the performance of an artistic form than anything else. In the eyes of the author, Puerto Rico does not suffer from socioeconomic problems nor political turmoil, both of which shook Puerto Rico in the 1930s when Jiménez arrived and would continue in the following decades. Instead, its principal dimension is that of natural beauty and sensorial charm.

This aestheticizing gaze has two interconnected results. Firstly, it leads the author to examine Puerto Rico and its relationship to the United States in a cultural sense that contains implicit sociopolitical proposals. Secondly, it adds a new dimension to the definition of "simpatía" we have explored so far, which focuses on the subjective experience of plenitude and integration recorded by the author. That is, Jiménez's understanding of Puerto Rico, based on his aesthetic approach, shifts from presenting the island through an autobiographical register to formulating a program of social development that will ostensibly train Puerto Ricans to be more

effective citizens. In this sense, Jiménez's program is quite comparable to development programs realized by the Puerto Rican government under the Partido Popular Democrático. In line with this operation, Jiménez's views on culture eventually reject the definite geopolitical borders that nationalism would bestow upon Puerto Rico and opt instead for a Pan-American system based on a politics of openness.

To Change, To Reach, and To Incorporate: The Role of Culture

One of the clearest examples of Jiménez's privileging of what he seemingly considers the "purely" cultural over the "purely" political in order to effect social change appears in one of the few dated fragments, "De piedra, Puerto Rico", written in October of 1936. Here, the author mentions that in his travels throughout the island, he has noticed that despite Puerto Rico's natural beauty, its landscapes are too weak and incapable of impressing anyone with "grandeza verdadera" (33). This debility he attributes categorically to the "fragile home" that in his estimation is typical of the island, and thereafter declares that this points to a deficiency in the people themselves:

> La casa delgada de aquí, madera cimentada en madera…debilita la misma naturaleza. Porque el hombre es quien, instalándose fuertemente en su tierra, hace fuerte su tierra…Si Puerto Rico…quiere ser solo y libre, si quiere <<de veras>> su independencia, debe construir, cimentar y levantar, dividir y repartir con doble piedra (33-34)

The subordination of the political to the cultural in this passage is made blatant by Jiménez's suggestion that independence can only result from Puerto Ricans altering a popular kind of architecture.[11] Furthermore, the historical juncture in which this fragment was written is quite

[11] It should be noted that the material that the author associates the materials for this new kind of home with Spain: "España, con sus altos castillos eternos, su normal casa sólida, su piedra familiarizada, se me representa desde aquí más tremenda que nunca" (33-34). This is a clear manifestation of Hispanophilia, a notion that characterized much of cultural nationalism's view on the origins of the island's culture. Jiménez's Hispanophilic perspective will be explored in

revealing, for in that same year political turmoil had seized the island due to the ongoing efforts of the militant Nationalist party, which advocated fiercely for independence from the United States. In 1935, Nationalist Ramón S. Pagán was detained by policemen and initiated a firefight, in which four other Nationalists were killed. In retaliation, in February of 1936 Pagán's fellow members of the party, Hiram Rosado and Elías Beauchamp, killed the Police Comissioner Francis E. Riggs; they were subsequently arrested and killed by police before standing trial, a reprisal that was denounced by practically all of the island's population (Ayala and Bernabe, 110). Given that Jiménez wrote this fragment, which pretends to be a manual on how to improve the cultural and then the political status of Puerto Rico, some months after these events occurred, it is reasonable to assume that they are a nearly explicit referent. Therefore, Jiménez's political affiliations with regard to the Puerto Rican context become quite clear, as he rejects the "overtly" political stance of the Nationalists and instead posits a cultural solution, aligning the author with the ideology of cultural nationalism.

One way in which *Isla de la simpatía* partakes in the discourse of cultural nationalism as institutionalized by the PPD is the way in which it imagines that greater accessibility to culture can transform Puerto Rico. This transformation is at times expressed in a markedly spatial way, such as in the fragment "Un corazón central", in which the centrality of culture is made literal. Jiménez proposes

> algo en el centro mismo de la isla…algo como una ciudad pequeña y atractiva en donde las tradiciones culturales estuvieran representadas en las Bibliotecas, Museos, etc, una ciudad para ser mirada desde el litoral como un corazón necesario para todos. Un centro del cuerpo de Puerto Rico (41).

The vision of such a city makes culture the very nucleus of Puerto Rico for various reasons.

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further detail later on; for now, I wish to call attention to how he posits Spain as a cultural model for Puerto Rico.

Firstly, it resides in the middle point of the island, the site where it could most equitably distribute its potential to the rest of the cities that surround it. Indeed, Jiménez intends for such a place to be readily accessible to all, given that his notion of such a city includes the provision that it be constructed "para ser mirada desde el litoral", making culture and its institutions a kind of spectacle that could command the attention of the entirety of Puerto Rico. It is this positioning and availability from any point that restructures the social space. Given that the city is to be created "para todos", the suggestion is that cultural learning would irradiate throughout the island, rather than being cloistered in one specific location for the benefit of a privileged group. That the text asserts that this site would function as a "corazón necesario" for the "body" that is Puerto Rico indicates Jiménez's belief in the fundamental nature of cultural expression and the need to disseminate it.

As the idea of diffusing aesthetic education suggests, Jiménez's notions of culture were not constrained to just urban areas. In fact, the cultured city in his perspective had to be complemented by educational campaigns in its rural counterpart. In an interview in which he discusses a series of books made for the island's children, Jiménez adds that these books would be disseminated throughout Puerto Rico, particularly the countryside:

> Personas preparadas visitarían las escuelas rurales de la isla y enseñarían a los niños a amar y cuidar los libros espiritual y materialmente…De este modo, con el amor del niño a la belleza esencial de Puerto Rico y al libro bello en sí mismo, se suscitaría también un florecimiento del arte popular puertorriqueño (75).

By doing this, the teachers in charge of such an initiative would be ensuring that an instruction in cultural matters would be achieved equitably all over Puerto Rico. Ostensibly, the countryside would no longer be disadvantaged in terms of education or the ability to appreciate aesthetic material with respect to the city. Significantly, Jiménez indicates that one of the primary effects of this educational reform would be the flourishing of popular art in Puerto Rico, a prediction

that portrays the rural population as an active contributor to the cultural development of the island. In this sense, the dichotomy between city and countryside that so often had privileged the former over the latter in sociopolitical and economic terms could be weakened through the domain of culture, making Puerto Rico into a more socially egalitarian space.

The interview cited was given in 1936, and in another instance of the notable harmony between the author's perspective and that of the PPD (which at the time had not yet been formed), Jiménez's idea proved prescient. In 1949, the PPD instituted the División de la Educación de la Comunidad (DIVEDCO), a government initiative aimed at increasing literacy and producing cultural material for rural populations in the form of illustrated pamphlets, books, graphic posters, and didactic films that demonstrated how to solve social problems in order to improve quality of life (Benítez, 116). The fundamental premise of the various educational techniques employed by DIVEDCO were the diffusion of values consonant with democracy. Rafael Collazo states that "Para la DIVEDCO, las comunidades no debían permanecer 'cívicamente desempleadas', debían…aproximarse de manera democrática y crítica a sus problemas y buscar soluciones a los mismos con el auxilio de las agencias estatales" (72). The objective was also therefore to make the rural populations into agents of democratic government, to formulate a sociopolitical subjectivity that would bolster the image of Puerto Rico as a haven of democracy that the PPD had been elaborating since the beginning of World War II.

If DIVEDCO is an evident example of the government's use of cultural material to craft a mode of citizenship, Jiménez also makes this connection quite clear. In the interview presented above, Jiménez declares that perhaps the most important benefit of introducing material for aesthetic appreciation to rural areas would be that

> el niño de Puerto Rico iría formando y conservando su alma…A la visión diaria de su patria real…iría internando la visión profunda de la isla ideal, la patria ideal; conjunto de

> su patria espresado [sic] por ella y definido por sus hijos mejores…Cuando fuera hombre, sería dueño de un hermoso tesoro poético, la librería de su espíritu, y dueño de un ser plenamente puertorriqueño…Que el niño…salve, por la poesía, la belleza, la armonía de su patria, a su patria (75-76).

Here, Jiménez represents poetry, and aesthetic production and consumption, as not just part of society but as the very foundation of it. The privileging of the aesthetic occurs through the individual, whose subjectivity from childhood would be steeped in and shaped by cultural expression, especially one that would formulate an autochthonous mode particular to Puerto Rico. Throughout these passages, the text reveals a trope of integration quite similar to the one found in *Isla de Puerto Rico*: the version of the island Jiménez's social program advocates for is the result of a combination, a "conjunto" of Puerto Rico "expressing" itself and its most illustrious members ("hijos mejores") interpreting and thereby molding it.[12] This is to say that the Puerto Rican *patria* is impossible without a fundamental, existential link between the individual and society writ large. Like with Zambrano's conception of democracy beginning in the balanced solitude of each man, the Puerto Rico envisioned by Jiménez can only exist as the direct result of the subjectivity created through aesthetics, because it is this subjectivity (one that is "plenamente puertorriqueño") that participates in the sculpting of the *patria* "expressed" by the island into that ideal homeland. It is thus both at the level of the individual and in larger communities like the urban and the rural, by fostering spiritual growth and aesthetic production,

[12] The terms in which Jiménez formulates his social program often echo those of Pedreira, especially when he discusses the need for a local cultural aesthetic, the right of Puerto Rico's most illustrated men to form such an aesthetic, and the role of the university in producing these exalted figures. Indeed, in the final pages of his text Jiménez offers a wholehearted endorsement of *Insularismo*, stating that "El libro…debe ser leído y releído por todos los estudiantes y todos los profesores puertorriqueños y españoles de Puerto Rico. Y habría que regalarlo por las calles" (131). Furthermore, Jiménez held a professional connection to Pedreira, given that he taught courses at the Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos at the University of Puerto Rico since his arrival in 1936, a department Pedreira directed from 1927 until his death in 1939.

that culture works to reform and improve society in Puerto Rico.

Though culture gains its centrality in *Isla de la simpatía* because of its many beneficial effects on the island, it also has significant geopolitical effects on the international stage, particularly with regards to the United States. This is because in the few years before Jiménez's definitive return to the island in 1950, Puerto Rican politics was once again centered on the status question. I would like to turn now to some of these crucial political developments because they provide a historical context to Jiménez's understanding of Puerto Rico's relation to the United States. More specifically, they form a significant parallel to the text's vision of the island as a space characterized by openness and allure, because these developments would lead Puerto Rico to establish closer political and economic ties to the United States; due to this, they reveal the other meaning of the term "simpatía". Such connections would ostensibly transform Puerto Rico, in the discourse of the PPD, into a shining example of post-war development through the twin engines of capitalism and democracy. Given this fortunate shift, Puerto Rico was poised to function as a model for integration into democracy and capitalism for the rest of Latin America, an idea that Jiménez echoes.

The question of the island's official status, on which the PPD had announced a moratorium in the years of World War II, appeared once again soon after the end of the conflict. In 1946 the Puerto Rican legislature, led by the PPD, adopted a measure that authorized a plebiscite with three options for the island: statehood, independence, or some kind of "dominion government", in the words of Muñoz Marín (Ayala and Bernabe, 157). However, the plebiscite was vetoed by both the governor of Puerto Rico, Rexford Tugwell, and President Truman. It was during this time that Muñoz Marín finally broke with the idea of independence, a shift that had begun in the first years of the decade during World War II. In 1946 he attended the hearings in

Washington, D.C. on the possibility of granting independence to the Philippines, which was to come with a severing of free-trade agreements between the archipelago and the United States, a change that would deal a crippling blow to the former's economy. Due to this, Muñoz Marín realized that the United States could not concede free trade to Puerto Rico without conceding it to the Philippines or other territories, and so Puerto Rico would also lose the free trade agreements that had supported its economy if it too gained independence (Maldonado, 55). Wishing to avert what he believed to be devastating economic losses, Muñoz Marín declared he no longer supported this option, now favoring instead that "dominion government" he envisioned.

Although the pronouncement proved controversial even within the PPD (a pro-independence wing officially separated in 1946, establishing the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño) the party won yet again in the 1948 elections, with Muñoz Marín becoming the first elected governor of the island. This placed the PPD in an even more politically dominant position, and in 1950 the Resident Commissioner in the U.S. capital, Antonio Fernós, presented a bill to Congress called P.L. 600, which would authorize another plebiscite in Puerto Rico to ratify the bill. If this were done, Puerto Rico would then elect an assembly to draft a new constitution for the island, which would in turn be ratified by yet another plebiscite. Once this was done, the constitution would be presented to Congress for final approval. In the course of two years, this lengthy process was completed, and in 1952 Puerto Rico was officially named an Estado Libre Asociado, a status that according to Muñoz Marín and the PPD was established by a non-colonial "compact" between the island and the United States.

In the few dated sections in the text, Jiménez makes direct and indirect references to the political debates regarding the island's official status, again viewing the issue through a purely

cultural lens. In section LVI, which is dated 1952, the author states "Si un norteamericano se casa con una puertorriqueña, Puerto Rico lo hace humano. Si un puertorriqueño se casa con una norteamericana, Puerto Rico la hace divina" (60)[13]. Here, the text imagines Puerto Rico's novel status as a matrimony, a metaphor that parallels the PPD's rhetoric of the "compact". Revealingly, however, the entire passage is directed at identifying the ways in which Puerto Rico may benefit the United States, but not vice-versa. The very diction of the section indicates this, as it stipulates that the North American benefits not just from his Puerto Rican partner, but from the entire island as well. Under the ELA, the process of constructing a subjectivity that Jiménez envisioned in 1936 can now also be transferred to the inhabitants of the United States, as due to their association they can become more "human" and "divine", two states that could be derived from the spiritual development that aesthetic appreciation can bestow. The ELA thus bolsters the connection between the island and the continent primarily through culture.

Central to Jiménez's view of the cultural connection between Puerto Rico and the United States is the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, which since the decade of the 1930s had been acting as a point of encounter for intellectuals from the continent and the island. The most revealing section of the text in this respect is an interview given by Jiménez, "Habla Juan Ramón", in 1953 and published that year in *La Prensa*. The first question focuses on the

[13] A sense of divinity pervades Puerto Rico in both Zambrano's and Jiménez's texts. While a full examination of the notion of divinity in the works of both authors is also outside of the scope of this chapter, in the case of Puerto Rico, divinity has a distinctly political dimension because it contributes to the formation of Zambrano's subject of democracy and Jiménez's ideal member of the island's society. For Zambrano, Puerto Rico's Edenic ability to connect man with nature is key in the resurgence of an existential disposition that will renew democracy and triumph over fascism. For Jiménez, Puerto Rico's divinity provides not only spiritual vitality that aids in the aesthetic education of its people, it also helps to cement the island's connection to the United States precisely because Puerto Rico can offer its divinity to the mainland. For more on divinity in Zambrano, see Pulgar Castro, 2012; in the case of Jiménez, see Garfias, 2002.

contribution of the University of Puerto Rico to the fostering of a culture not only for the island but for the entire continent, and Jiménez replies that the University of Puerto Rico is a kind of insular counterpart to the University of Miami. These institutions are particularly important to the "cultura continental americana" because "cada continente tiene un alma corrida y esa alma tiene varios escondrijos. Puerto Rico y La Florida son dos fronteras de intercambio" (86). Here, Jiménez echoes Zambrano's depiction of a commitment to democracy shared by both Americas (because of its "alma corrida"), thereby also situating Puerto Rico within a greater geopolitical scale (the continental) through the assumption of a shared culture. The island's role within this collective is also strikingly similar, as Jiménez asserts that the University of Puerto Rico, because the population is comprised of North Americans and Puerto Ricans, has the unique ability to "sumar una cultura doble que puede influir sin duda alguna en todo el continente tanto como en la Isla y tanto en toda Americohispania [sic], como en todos los Estados Unidos" (idem). Just like in Zambrano's account, Puerto Rico is again presented as a point of encounter and amalgamation (because it can "sumar" two disparate cultures into one), as a nexus that irradiates throughout that more encompassing scale of the Americas and grants them coherence. The image of Puerto Rico as a kind of crossroads harkens back to the initial meaning of "simpatía" associated with the vision of the island as an inviting space of integration. There is a similar notion of "simpatía" here, because through the beneficial effects of culture as channeled by the Universidad de Puerto Rico, the entirety of the Americas ("tanto como en la la Isla y tanto en toda Americohispania [sic], como en todos los Estados Unidos") can coalesce into a type of cultural bloc. From this, the second definition of the titular term appears: in contrast to the initial autobiographical sense, "simpatía" can also refer to the sociocultural and geopolitical alliances that Puerto Rico is uniquely positioned to foster, given its particular mixture of North and Latin

American elements that ostensibly can help create common ground between the United States and its southern, developing neighbors.

Now that the second definition of "simpatía" has been introduced, we can examine the tropes of attraction and assimilation that the text uses with respect to the island in that geopolitical and sociocultural register. In this particular register, these tropes are associated once again with the island and the University, which the text links indirectly through the image of the horizon. This occurs when the author alludes to Puerto Rico acting as a kind of magnet in fragment XXXI, where the author characterizes Puerto Rico as "la isla de los horizontes magnéticos" (41). Likewise, in the fragment titled "Idea de la Universidad", Jiménez states that a university is "una matriz…un centro entrañable que supone horizontes sucesivos" (97). Through these pronouncements, Puerto Rico thus takes on a double function that mirrors the allure of the island and the special capacity of its most renowned University: it both draws in that which may be found outside of it because of its "magnetic" ability, and it spreads out without limit through educational institutions.

The twinned impulses to absorb and to extend farther out in a cultural sense that Jiménez attributes to Puerto Rico are entirely consonant with the ideology espoused by the then Chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico, Jaime Benítez, who headed the institution from 1942 to 1966. Even before assuming the role of Chancellor, Benítez had advocated for an Occidentalist understanding of Puerto Rican culture, which stressed its connections to the culture of its European forebears and even its North American metropolis.[14] In a forum held at the

[14] As Jorge Rodríguez Beruff points out, Benítez occupied the post of Chancellor after the death of Antonio Pedreira. Beruff defines Benítez's Occidentalism as an "apertura, principalmente, a la producción intellectual metropolitana y aderezado de un hispanismo fundamentalmente inocuo y conservador" (20). While Benítez also saw Spain as a principal source of Puerto Rican culture,

Puerto Rican Athenaeum in 1940, which had as its theme the issue of culture on the island, he claimed that Puerto Rico "está en el Mar Caribe, pero también está en el Mar Mediterráneo, en el Mar Egeo y en los Grandes Lagos" (15). The Occidentalism that Benítez championed imagines a kind of concentric cultural spatiality for Puerto Rico, that seeks to place Puerto Rican culture, narrowly defined as the intellectual production from the island, into ever more encompassing levels that carry a greater implicit prestige, such as the Occidental and the universal. The Chancellor strove to institute and express this perspective through the educational and research initiatives undertaken by the University throughout the 1940s and 1950s, and it is worth exploring some of them for two interrelated reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates the institutional links between the United States, Puerto Rico, and Spain that also paralleled governmental programs that further cemented these connections. Secondly, such affiliations had a significant effect on the territoriality of Puerto Rico because, within the overarching historical context of the Cold War, they battled explicitly against political and socioeconomic nationalism.

The University of Puerto Rico began functioning as a hub for North American and Spanish intellectuals in the decade of the 1920s, when Federico de Onís was invited to form part of the University of Puerto Rico's Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos in 1926. Ten years later, the University would begin hosting many of Spain's Republican artists and intellectuals in exile, such as Carlos Marichal, Pablo Casals, Tomás Navarro Tomás, Pedro Salinas and Francisco Ayala (Rodríguez Castro, 159). The presence of these Spanish figures also made the Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos one of the leading sources of *hispanismo*, a discourse that venerated the cultural legacy of Spain in Puerto Rico and Latin America. Given that both

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he differed from Pedreira in that intellectual and cultural influence from Europe and the United States gained importance equal to that of cultural production from the island.

Zambrano and Jiménez were professionally affiliated with the Departamento, it is no surprise that they also demonstrated a Hispanophilic bent. Zambrano states that the "raíz española" (48) still in force in Latin America is the model of that subject of democracy, and Jiménez describes Puerto Rico in the fifth section of his text as a "pie siempre dispuesto para oriente en su alada fijeza hacia España" (8). According to Arcadio Díaz-Quiñones, *hispanismo*'s purpose was to "restaurar el lugar central de la 'madre patria' no solo frente a la independencia, sino frente al poder norteamericano" (77). However, for the philosopher and the poet this dynamic had changed, as neither understood a Spanish legacy to be an obstacle to a closer sociopolitical relation to the United States. Indeed, Zambrano declared that the "Spanish root" was the necessary instrument for the inhabitants of the former colonies of Spain to "encontrarse…con su hermano, el del Norte" (49). Likewise, we have seen that Jiménez valorized the "cultura doble" (half of which was Spanish) being nurtured in Puerto Rico as the only medium to forge a hemispheric cultural bloc with North America. Thus, the Spanish contingent at the University of Puerto Rico helped to affirm the ties between Puerto Rico and the United States not only institutionally, but also discursively, since the notions of *hispanismo* evolved in the 1940s and 1950s to welcome North American influence on the island.[15]

Affording Spain an active part in the discourse of cultural nationalism has a significant effect on the meaning of territoriality for Puerto Rico. As we have seen, the visions of Puerto Rican spatiality elaborated by Pedreira, Zambrano and Jiménez reinforce the colonial dynamic between North America and the island by implicitly or explicitly arguing against independent

[15] The institutional collaboration between Spain and the United States, as well as Zambrano's and Jiménez's endorsement of Puerto Rico's ties with the United States, belie other critics' accounts that stress the exclusive Hispanophilia of someone like Jiménez. One such critic is Carmen Cañete Quesada, who writes that the poet rejected North American influence on the island because it weakened Spain's hold on Puerto Rico (97).

nationalism, which ultimately maintains Puerto Rico's status as a "non-incorporated territory". Most accounts of the Puerto Rico's existence as a territory focus exclusively on its subordination before the United States, as this is the most influential and pervasive source of territoriality in the context of the island's history. Nevertheless, in light of the significance of Spain both in institutional terms and in its centrality to Pedreira's, Zambrano's, and Jiménez's concepts of culture, it can be argued that the peninsula has also actively participated in defining Puerto Rico as a territory of another sovereign nation. Of course, it certainly has not done so to the same degree, given that the benefits of socioeconomic and political superiority have always gone to the United States. Rather, Spain's function in this process is largely discursive, as it formed part of cultural nationalism through the texts of various figures who lived in Puerto Rico and joined the intellectual class that was largely responsible for such an ideology. Thus, the island's condition as a "non-incorporated territory" could be considered as multi-valent rather than exclusively the result of a unilateral domination of a colony by a metropole. That is, different sovereign nations can participate in territorializing another geopolitical area, which in the case of Puerto Rico refers to the process of subjecting it to an external power, to varying extents and through different mediums. What this perspective brings to the surface is the manifold ways in which Puerto Rico has been interpellated by various geopolitical and cultural agents and how this has shaped its political status.

Another significant development at the University of Puerto Rico with relation to the United States was the fostering of the social sciences, which began with the founding of the Colegio de Ciencias Sociales in 1943 and the Centro de Investigaciones Sociales (CIS) in 1945. The Centro de Investigaciones Sociales was particularly welcoming of distinguished social scientists, especially those associated with North American institutions, such as the economist

John Kenneth Galbraith, the political scientists Carl Friedrich and Henry Wells, the sociologist C. Wright Mills, and the anthropologist Julian Steward. As Jorge Duany points out, the work of these intellectuals heavily favored a positivist modernizing project that would aid in transforming Puerto Rico in the next decade and a half (180). This effect can be attributed mainly to the fact that "Este grupo colaboró estrechamente con los dirigentes del PPD, especialmente en la formulación del programa gubernamental de industrialización, Operación Manos a la Obra, a partir de 1947, y en la constitución del Estado Libre Asociado" (idem). A significant number of the professors and intellectuals employed in the CIS, principally those who were Puerto Rican, opposed industrializing models tied to the United States and supported pro-independence political organizations like the Nationalist Party and the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (181), but their North American counterparts had more influence given their international prestige and closer ties to the government in power. The University of Puerto Rico can therefore be regarded as a principal source of Puerto Rico's continued territoriality due to its incubation of discourses that not only functioned in the cultural domain, like *hispanismo*, but that also had wide-ranging repercussions in the socioeconomic realm, particularly in its institutional support of initiatives like Operación Manos a la Obra. An analysis of the central propositions and effects of this program will reveal the way it contributed deeply to the maintenance of Puerto Rico's territorial status.

Back in 1942, the PPD had founded the Puerto Rican Industrial Development Company, otherwise known as Fomento, under the leadership of Teodoro Moscoso. The function of this government-owned corporation was to attract private capital to Puerto Rico in order to industrialize and modernize it. For the first five years of its existence, the corporation had initially attempted to establish several factories in cooperation with labor unions, but these had

quickly foundered. In 1947, Moscoso and the other leaders of Fomento decided that the only surefire way to industrialize Puerto Rico was with foreign capital, specifically from North America. To incentivize the arrival of this capital, the PPD-led insular legislature approved the Industrial Incentives Act of 1947, which granted private firms exemptions on property, insular income, and any other kind of tax for ten years. Due to an exemption from paying federal taxes when conducting business on the island, this offered North American corporations a tax-free haven (Ayala and Bernabe, 189). Capital from the United States began to quickly pour in: by 1950, 80 new industrial plants had opened, by 1952 this number had climbed to 150, and just four years later, the income created by the industrial sector surpassed that generated by agriculture (idem, 190). While the short-term economic results were undeniable, Operación Manos a la Obra also had a crucial political effect; namely, it confirmed to Muñoz Marín and the PPD that "the type of economic development that Moscoso and his people wanted was incompatible with an independent Republic of Puerto Rico" (Maldonado, 49). Muñoz Marín had largely realized this for himself in 1946 when he witnessed how the Philippines, which had previously enjoyed free trade under the 1913 Underwood-Simmons Act (Boquet, 95), lost this benefit when it obtained national sovereignty. In other words, modernization for Puerto Rico was contingent on the privileged economic relationship between the island and the United States, and such a relationship was in turn predicated on the former remaining a territory of the latter.

The trope of cultural aperture that characterizes the island of Puerto Rico for Jiménez also applied in the economic sense for the PPD. Indeed, once the tax exemptions were instituted through the Industrial Incentives Act of 1947, new legislation was passed almost immediately that extended these benefits. A 1948 law authorized exemptions until 1959; another from 1953 established another round of ten-year tax exemptions for corporations that began operating on

Puerto Rican soil before 1963; and in 1963, yet another piece of legislation removed the deadline for concessions for foreign businesses that operated in non-metropolitan areas (Ayala and Bernabe, 190). These crucial socioeconomic developments that the PPD made possible and directed, as well as the ongoing engagement with North American and Spanish scholars by the University of Puerto Rico, indicate that Puerto Rico followed a cultural and economic politics of openness, one that warmly embraced the geopolitical and intellectual influence of foreign countries, particularly the United States and Spain. The openness that Jiménez attributed to Puerto Rico bears the double sense that the island is both very welcoming of foreign elements and also culturally geared outwards toward Latin America and the United States due to its forging of a "cultura doble". We have seen that the internalization of external influence was mirrored economically by Operación Manos a la Obra and politically through the Estado Libre Asociado, which did not establish national borders for the island. However, both of these government programs were also mobilized outward by discursively making the island into the primary example of the benefits of organizing a post-war society along democratic and capitalist lines. So exemplary was Puerto Rico's transformation that it became known in the late 1940s and 1950s as the "vitrina de la democracia", or the "display case of democracy", a figure that implies the island had become a spectacle for the rest of Latin America to witness and emulate.[16] Such a function parallels Jiménez's vision of Puerto Rico creating an amalgamated culture that could then be disseminated throughout Latin and North America, creating a coalition quite akin to the one Zambrano had imagined in *Isla de Puerto Rico*. Cultural nationalism, of which Jiménez partook, therefore created a twofold discourse designed to secure Puerto Rico a position as the

[16] In 1962, for example, the *Britannica Yearbook* wrote that "Puerto Rico…is the most hopeful example in the Americas of how to develop an underdeveloped community in the clean atmosphere of freedom" (quoted in Maldonado, 71).

nucleus of a desired international political order.

It was precisely this role that contributed to the perpetuation of the island's territoriality. The socioeconomic, political, and cultural openness that Puerto Rico was practicing in these two decades involved a rejection of defined national borders, as these would have definitely hampered the entrance of foreign capital and ostensibly impeded the intellectual and institutional exchange between the United States, Puerto Rico, and Spain. The logic that drove the PPD to repeatedly dismiss a political nationalism was rooted in the overarching historical context of the Cold War. As Silvia Álvarez Curbelo asserts, the binary opposition between capitalist and communist systems lead to a geopolitical reorganization of the entire world: "El mundo frío se reordena en los artículos en nuevas esferas de influencia y requiere de alineamientos; hay…una interdependencia que torna obsoletos las fronteras proteccionistas pre-guerra y los discursos nacionales que las han sustentado hasta entonces" (27). Given this need to create international alliances predicated on "interdependencia", from the capitalist perspective any sign of nationalism could be construed as a prelude to joining the communist bloc, and the PPD made every effort to dispel any and all doubts of the insular government's allegiances.[17] Mayra Rosario Urrutia indicates that one of the principal messages that Muñoz Marín wished to communicate to the United States and the rest of the world through Operación Manos a la Obra and the Estado Libre Asociado was that communism was not taking root on the island (171). The byproduct of the imperative to align with either the force of capitalism or communism meant that, for Puerto Rico, it was necessary to avoid definitive national borders through political

[17] In the process of ratifying the constitution of the Estado Libre Asociado, the United States Congress deemed Section 20, which categorized employment and a fair standard of living as guaranteed rights, as "socialistic" and adopted a resolution with the backing of President Truman that required it be removed (Ayala and Bernabe, 168).

independence, meaning that its status as a non-incorporated territory could not be altered. Indeed, despite the PPD's insistence that the ELA was a "compact" that because of its cooperative nature proved no colonial relation existed between the island and the United States, Puerto Rico's territoriality emerged intact. During the founding of the ELA, Congress adopted a resolution stipulating that as a fundamental condition for the approval of Puerto Rico's constitution, no amendments could be added that would alter the relationship between North America and the island as founded by P.L. 600, the Federal Relations Act, and the U.S. Constitution. Finally, during negotiations with the Truman administration, Muñoz Marín had argued that under the Estado Libre Asociado, Congress would technically retain its plenary powers over Puerto Rico but not use them (Ayala and Bernabe, 169).

As stated earlier, cultural nationalism can be said to have evolved in the decades of the 1940s and 1950s. The shift in this discourse becomes apparent if we trace the attitude towards the influence of the United States within the Puerto Rican political scene. The 1930s had featured several government attempts, such as the Plan Chardón, to reconstruct the island's economy and make it more autonomous from North America in the wake of the Great Depression, and the PPD was founded in 1938 as a pro-independence organization after breaking with the Partido Liberal. Once the pressures of wartime began, the newly-ascended PPD thoroughly altered its views, opting to discursively privilege cultural ties to the United States over its former support for political sovereignty. Following the end of the conflict, Puerto Rico's ties to North America only deepened through industrialization and institutional connections. A nearly identical narrative can be observed in the works of Pedreira, Zambrano, and Jiménez. *Insularismo* manifests the ambiguity towards the United States that characterized the Puerto Rican politics of its decade; it only ever discusses the island's political status once, and does so through rhetorical

questions, declining to present any concrete stances on the subject. In *Isla de Puerto Rico*, the ambiguity present in Pedreira's work is gone, given that independent Puerto Rican nationalism should be sacrificed for the coherence of democracy, a political system whose main representative among the Allies in World War II was the United States. *Isla de la simpatía* is similarly explicit in its support for political and cultural links with North America, portraying such a union as a beneficent marriage between equals.

The difference between the disposition towards the United States of these authors can in part be attributed to the way in which they view the figure of the island. As we explored in the previous chapter, Pedreira's understanding of Puerto Rico's insularism is deeply imbricated not only with geography, but with its longstanding history of colonialism. This leads *Insularismo* to regard North American presence in Puerto Rico with marked ambivalence that manifests as a rejection of cultural values, while praising the economic advancements that have resulted from the metropole's control of the island. Zambrano's and Jiménez's vision of insularism differs from Pedreira's in that it does not consider the legacy of colonialism in Puerto Rico, and so does not share the latter's equivocal disposition towards the United States. Their texts instead view the island as a nexus, a site that because of its insularism can be the primary source of a cultural system that can be disseminated throughout the hemisphere and serve as the binding factor in a desired Pan-American union. Due to this, both Zambrano and Jiménez elaborated a program that had to accept closer sociopolitical and cultural links with North America. With this comparison, it becomes possible to track how over the course of two decades the evolving discourse of cultural nationalism helped to affirm Puerto Rico's territoriality as it became increasingly incorporated into the international post-war capitalist order.

Fleeing a peninsula overtaken by violence and repression, María Zambrano and Juan

Ramón Jiménez arrived at an island, and felt the gathered darkness at their backs begin to dispel. Compelled either by a sense of crisis or of profound identification with their new environment, these writers elevated the island in their texts as the source of a sweeping international system that could both defeat fascism and, later on, forge an encompassing culture to further unite an entire hemisphere. However, through their participation in a discourse that called for democracy and development, they would ultimately produce a version of Puerto Rican spatiality that reinforced its territorial status. While these two exiles effectively advocated for the PPD through their texts, the 1940s and 1950s would witness the resurgence of another political party, the Partido Nacionalista, that offered a markedly opposed vision of Puerto Rican politics and culture. In doing so, it would also re-conceptualize the figure of the island and its relation to territory.

Chapter 3. To Rebel is to Redeem: The "Beloved" Island in the Decade of the 1950s

Dawn breaks through the bars on a window and finds a man already meditating. He holds silence over another body beside him, patiently awaiting the light to filter through. As it does, the man prays and remembers. He takes up a few scraps of paper and begins to write, eventually inscribing his thoughts into the very walls of his cell. The verses grow until they fill many pages, and then he passes them on to a comrade who smuggles them out of the prison with the help of another inmate, sending them to the poet's home in San Juan. The poet sits in his cell, engulfed in ardor, as his island passes through a time of rapid and often painful transformations.

The man in question is Francisco Matos Paoli, a mystic who was also active in the Puerto Rican political scene through his association with the Nationalist Party. He joined the organization in the early 1930s, assuming the role of the Party's Secretary General in 1949. Soon after Luis Muñoz Marín and the Partido Popular Democrático announced the advent of Public Law 600 and the Estado Libre Asociado in 1950, Nationalist leader Pedro Albizu Campos called on his followers to prepare and carry out an armed insurrection that year. They launched an uprising in Ponce, Arecibo, Jayuya, Utuado, Mayagüez, Naranjito and even sent two members to Washington, D.C. to assassinate President Harry Truman. The revolt was quite short-lived, lasting only from October 30 to November 10, but due to the scale of the assaults and the sensitive political moment in which the Partido Popular Democrático found itself, the retaliations were severe. Albizu Campos and the participants in the uprising, members of the Nationalist Party who did not take part directly, and many others who were only suspected of being in league with the rebels were arrested and jailed. Though he was not one of the insurrectionists, Matos Paoli was incarcerated for having given four speeches in favor of Puerto Rican national sovereignty, thereby violating the infamous Law 53 of 1948, popularly known as the "ley de la

mordaza" or "Gag Law". This legislation made it illegal to support the deposing of the United States federal government (Ayala and Bernabe, 160), which the Nationalists had done by attempting to overthrow the insular government. Matos Paoli was imprisoned in La Princesa, where he shared a cell with Albizu Campos until 1952, when he was released on probation due to suffering a mental breakdown from which he recovered by writing poetry.[1] While in La Princesa he produced a collection of poems titled *Luz de los héroes* (1954), which will be the principal focus of this chapter.

The text is a collection of poems whose principal feature is that they combine the Nationalist Party's discourse of political independence with the language of Christian mysticism that attempts to portray the soul's union with God. Rather than providing a chronological account of the 1950 uprising, the poems instead refer to it obliquely and focus on articulating how the struggle for independence continues and how it forms a connection with the divine. Furthermore, they do not form a singular narrative arc in the sense that they successively present varying subject matter; for example, one text dedicated to the speaker's childhood in Lares is followed by another that jumps forward in time to Matos Paoli's experience in prison, which is then succeeded by a poem that details how the Nationalist heroes first appear and prepare themselves to fight. One of the reasons for this somewhat scattered structure is the editorial intervention of Isabel Freire Matos, the author's wife, who received the poems in 1951 when

[1] It should be noted that *Luz de los héroes* does not deal with the topic of madness at all. Matos Paoli would later publish *Canto a la locura* (1962), an extended meditation on his experience of mental illness while imprisoned. In the years following the Jayuya Uprising, PPD leader and governor Luis Muñoz Marín often used the semantic field of insanity to delegitimize the Nationalists. In his memoirs, he cites a radio speech he gave on October 30, when the initial violence had subsided, where he states that the rebellion was a "conspiración de fanáticos que ofrecen la tragedia de algunas vidas útiles que su locura ha tronchado" (244). In a 1954 article, he describes the loyalty of the Puerto Ricans to the United States as having triumphed over the Nationalists in the "bastions of their utter fantasy" (541).

another freed inmate smuggled them out. As she herself attests, when *Luz de los héroes* was first published, it only included the poems dedicated to the Nationalist heroes in order to "mantener vivo su sentimiento heroico" (Freire Matos, "Aclaración sobre el Texto" i-ii). This version is relatively sparse, containing only 19 poems, and focuses exclusively on the historical lineage of the fight for independence and on the hero, who through his martyrdom redeems his enemy and reaches a higher ontological plane due to his link to God. In 1992 an edition was published that contained all 39 poems (and facsimiles of their original copies) written by the author in prison. Many of the added texts are dedicated to the poet's wife and daughters and reflect on the significance of these figures both to the speaker and to the struggle against the existential damage of colonialism. It is from this edition that I cite because in certain poems that do not appear in the first version, the family serves as a prompt to the speaker to expand upon a number of key figures, specifically that of the tyrant and of the nineteenth century poet José Gautier Benítez. With regard to the former, the mother helps clarify the hero's subjectivity and the relationship to his opponent, while with respect to the latter, the speaker's interpellation of his wife leads to a literary revisionism that not only further delineates the "beloved island", it also indicates a view of insularity quite similar to the one that Zambrano and Jiménez developed and that Matos Paoli opposes.

Despite the interspersed character of the 1992 version, *Luz de los héroes* still achieves a coherent thematic vision that strenuously advocates for an independent Puerto Rican *patria*. I will examine three principal elements of this vision: a mystical conception of heroism, the interaction of different spaces such as the "beloved island" and the prison, and the formulation of a historical genealogy of the Nationalists that casts them as successors to the *independentista* political leaders of the nineteenth century and their aborted insurrection, the Grito de Lares of

1868. My exploration of these aspects will occur in conjunction with the *Diarios de un poeta*, a multi-volume series of diaries that Matos Paoli wrote in the decade of the 1970s: the first volume was published in 1975, the second in 1987, and the third remains unpublished. *Luz de los héroes* is the principal focus and the majority of the chapter will be dedicated to it, but I intend to refer to the diaries occasionally because there Matos Paoli discusses some of the most important figures and symbols that occur in his poems, and even introduces others that do not but that are relevant. I do this not to fix these figures and symbols in a definitive meaning, but rather to further tease out their nuances within the collection of poems in question.

Understanding how Matos Paoli envisions the island will be the overarching goal of the chapter and doing so will allow me to explore a political and sociocultural logic that, in conjunction with the efforts of the Nationalist Party, would oppose that of Jiménez and Zambrano. As demonstrated in the last chapter, Muñoz Marín and the PPD presented their flagship projects like Operación Manos a la Obra with a triumphalist rhetoric that promised to modernize Puerto Rico by opening it to North American capital and aligning the island with democracy against communism. The PPD's goal to display Puerto Rico as a space of optimistic internal cohesion and amicable relations with its neighbors found a significant parallel in Juan Ramón Jiménez's notion of "simpatía", the island's capacity to forge a "double culture" that could unite the Americas.[2] Despite the emphasis on harmonious progress, political parties that opposed the PPD were often suppressed or labelled as serious threats to social stability. With the authority of Ley 53, by 1952 the PPD would eventually imprison around 3,000 people, many of

[2] Muñoz Marín himself would echo Jiménez's term in a 1958 speech he gave in the United States, where he called Puerto Rico "a house of good will" that worked to spread democracy throughout Latin America, a system of government that was "as inspiring, as all the gleaming promises of Communism, only not as empty" (13).

them belonging to the Communist and Socialist parties (Denis, 104-105). Matos Paoli and other Nationalists would be imprisoned after the 1950 Jayuya Uprising under this law, and the vision of Puerto Rico that the poet elaborated in his works of this decade explicitly rejects any participation in North America's colonial hold over the island.

As stated above, *Luz de los héroes* is a text whose discourse centers itself on a Christian mysticism that lends the hero a disposition towards self-sacrifice. Matos Paoli's hero, instead of possessing an overwhelming martial prowess that eliminates his adversaries, actually allows his own blood to be spilled; he is more martyr than epic warrior. However, this death is not presented as a final defeat, but rather as a spiritual transcendence that participates in the formation of a defined space. When the Nationalist hero dies, his blood and body integrate themselves with the land, consecrating it and establishing a marked tellurism that manifests as an ontological, unmediated relationship to Puerto Rico. As we will see, the struggle and sacrifice in *Luz de los héroes* constructs a space that is not only spiritual but that also is overtly political, whose maximum expression is the *patria*, or politically independent homeland. The fundamental point regarding the *patria* is that it is consonant with the island, that is, the sovereign nation and the island are a mutually constitutive and reconcilable space. This vision of insularity is, for our purposes, the main idea that distinguishes Matos Paoli's poetics of the island from that of Zambrano and Jiménez. *Luz de los héroes* thus belies the idea that the island is necessarily a space conditioned by and created for an imperialist gaze, as the critic Juan Duchesne Winter argues. According to Duchesne Winter, "Es de sobra conocido que la figura de la isla…ha plasmado el imaginario colonialista del occidente…en la literatura y la iconografía occidental toda isla…se traduce en isla desierta, en pantalla disponible para la proyección del deseo del sujeto colonizador" (14). Juxtaposing Matos Paoli's vision of the island-nation with that of

Zambrano and Jiménez demonstrates that insularity, in the Puerto Rico of the 1950s, can be subject to a range of political perspectives and be utilized discursively to argue for those diverse viewpoints rather than being a homogeneous concept. As we will see, this particular version of the island is significant because is intimately linked to bodily sacrifice and was formulated at a time in which Puerto Rico was participating in the beginnings of the Cold War alongside the United States. Therefore, studying the island allows us to explore how spatiality, a pro-independence politics, and literary discourse entered into dialogue at this critical juncture in Puerto Rican history.

While this chapter will center itself on an exegesis of the texts, it will follow other critics like Rivera Rivera (2008), Waldron (2009), and Alicea (2014) who have reconstructed the historical contexts that so heavily informed Matos Paoli's poetics.[3] Most of these critics do so with reference to Matos Paoli's relationship to the Nationalist Party, its opposition to the PPD and the Estado Libre Asociado, or his later poem *Canto a la locura* (1961), in which the text recounts the experience of madness the poet suffered while incarcerated. While I do not wish to marginalize Matos Paoli's dialogue with the Nationalists, I do wish to place his work in conversation with another facet of Puerto Rico's history that developed at the end of the 1940s and throughout the 1950s, namely the increasing presence of the United States military in the island's society.

I intend to focus on two components of this historical frame, the participation of Puerto Rican soldiers in the Korean War and the appropriation of land by the North American military,

[3] For work exploring the function of specific symbols in Matos Paoli's works, see Rivera Ríos, (2007) and Ortega (2016). For a critical approach that traces aesthetic and thematic connections with poetic antecedents like Spanish mystics San Juan de la Cruz and Saint Teresa of Ávila, see Náter (2001), López Jiménez (2015), López Plaza (2015), and López-Baralt (2015).

navy, and air force on both Puerto Rico and Vieques. As Mayra Rosario Urrutia attests, the United States military began to understand the Caribbean as a significant theater of action in the years leading up to World War II, when the Joint Planning Committee of the army and navy came to consider the region as a crucial line of defense for the Panama Canal (193). This led the military to begin constructing bases on several islands in 1941, including ones that counted among the British and Dutch possessions. One of the most significant effects of this process was that, according to Rosario Urrutia, the presence of the military became "invisible", integrating itself into other government initiatives designed to promote economic development in the area (idem, 194-200). The case of Vieques perfectly exemplifies the insertion of the armed forces, as of the 53,484 acres of Puerto Rican land taken by the U.S. military in the course of the Second World War, about 41 percent belonged to the smaller island. Vieques would see nearly two-thirds of all its land expropriated by the North American Navy, which did not return it at the conclusion of the war (Ayala and Bolívar Fresneda, 169-71). The increasing dominance of the Navy resulted in the severe weakening of the sugar economy situated on the shoreline, for the arable land was the first target of the expropriations, sending most of the workers to the interior. Vieques' economy then experienced a short boom when it was redirected towards the building of military bases, but this only lasted until 1943, when the construction of the bases mostly ceased, leaving the residents with higher levels of unemployment and situated in slums (idem, 175-76). Thus, even though the military at times engaged the people of Vieques and Puerto Rico and contributed to some economic stability, in the long run its occupation only culminated in greater hardship for the citizens of the islands.

The conscription of Puerto Ricans as soldiers in the Korean War also had pronounced effects. More than 61,000 Puerto Ricans served in the North American armed forces during this

conflict, with around 91 percent being volunteers (Franqui, 186). Politically, this allowed Muñoz Marín and the PPD to further its rhetoric of Puerto Rico's commitment to democracy and capitalism, as well as to demonstrate the island's accession to full social and cultural maturity. As Harry Franqui-Rivera indicates, the PPD and a significant sector of the press portrayed the soldier as a virtuous and courageous defender of democracy, not just on behalf of the island but also for the United States and the world; due to this, the PPD viewed Puerto Rico's participation as a way to prove the Estado Libre Asociado was viable and thus an example of decolonization (182). However, *independentista* sectors were much more critical of the island's cooperation, and many authors and intellectuals associated with these groups produced texts during this decade that explore the war's significant economic, social, and personal toll. Authors like José Luis González and Emilio Díaz Valcárcel, who actually fought as an infantryman in Korea, published scathing portrayals of how the Puerto Rican soldiers involved in the conflict were caught in a colonial relationship that resulted in them sacrificing themselves uselessly. González's short story "Una caja de plomo que no se podia abrir" (1954) and Valcárcel's "La sangre inútil" and "Los héroes" all portray such a dynamic, and I wish to juxtapose them with *Luz de los heroes* in order to better indicate how Matos Paoli's text envisions the relationship between the sacred Nationalist hero and the violence he confronts. Compared to those of González and Valcárcel, Matos Paoli's heroes enjoy a transcendence beyond death precisely because their deaths result in a divine tellurism.

What I propose by comparing these texts is the presence of two divergent wars in Puerto Rican society at this historical juncture: the mystic nationalist war that will redeem the island politically and the war waged by North America in Korea that involves Puerto Rican lives while furthering the interests of their colonizers. In addition to its material effects, the militarization of

Puerto Rico should also be understood as a matrix of clashing representations of subjectivities, spaces, and the political dynamics between them. One phenomenon that was subject to varying interpretations in this time was that of bodily sacrifice. In the early years of the decades, Muñoz Marín occasionally trumpeted the valor of Puerto Rican soldiers: in a 1951 address to the legislative chambers of the insular government, he cast them as heroic defenders of democracy (52), and claimed in an article from 1954 that the fact that they were dying on Korean battlefields proved the island's inhabitants "were good citizens of the United States" (541). Such pronouncements correspond to a state-sponsored discourse of sacrifice that understands this act as an instrument with which to secure key, and supposedly equitable, international ties. The texts by González, Díaz Valcárcel, and Matos Paoli present decidedly different visions of this consequential period, especially regarding the shedding of Puerto Rican blood. For the first two, Korea promises only banal mutilation and death that confirms the island's political subordination. The latter not only rejects a venture like the Korean War, he also portrays a circumstance of political violence that offers the possibility of spiritual transcendence in a *patria* that is liberated from colonial control. Juxtaposing these authors allows us to better understand how distinct ideological sectors of Puerto Rico engaged with the early years of the Cold War by exploring the significance of the body and its destruction, as well as the varying spaces associated with it.

Indeed, one component that is fundamental to *Luz de los héroes*' discourse on tellurism is the formation of differing spaces, particularly those of the island and the prison, the latter functioning as both a symbol within the text and a material reality that conditions its production. Aside from the central idea that island transforms into the *patria* through the sacrifice of the Nationalist hero, another important element of this space is how the ontological connection with

the hero makes the natural world of Puerto Rico integral to the formation of the pro-independence subject and his efforts to establish a *patria*. This is one of the main reasons the discourse of Christian mysticism is fundamental to Matos Paoli's text, because in addition to contributing to the formation of the Nationalist hero, it also aids in creating a space in which the efforts of such a figure ostensibly yield beneficial results for Puerto Rico. In turn, although the harmonious island-nation is often contrasted with it, the most significant aspect of the prison in Matos Paoli's poems is that it comes to be a space defined by paradox, a fundamental element of Western mysticism (Hatzfeld, 41)[4]. As we will see, although the prison does produce an experience of spiritual crisis, it does more often serve as a site in which the speaker of the poems can reaffirm his fidelity to the Nationalist cause and to his religious worldview. However, the triumph over the prison is never entirely achieved, and what results is an ongoing contention between the carceral and the sovereign island that places the latter's founding in a potential futurity.

Finally, one of the key thematic strands of Matos Paoli's text is that posits a genealogy for the Nationalists that connects the Jayuya Uprising to earlier pro-independence figures and events. Once again, the language of mysticism will be fundamental in this gesture of affiliation, the third reason it is so central to this work. This notion of a political genealogy will be another crucial feature of the tellurism that suffuses *Luz de los héroes*, as the Nationalists are portrayed

[4] The representation of the prison as a site of contradictory meaning in poetry has been fruitfully studied by Victor Brombert, who in *The Romantic Prison: The French Tradition* (1978) writes that among the poets whom he studies "The place of enclosure and suffering is also conceived of as the protected and protective space, the locus of reverie and freedom" (5). Matos Paoli was not a Romantic poet, but his understanding of the carceral will be quite similar to this dynamic, though with an emphasis on a mystic communion with God. Furthermore, it should be noted that Brombert acknowledges that some of the ideas he explores about the prison are not exclusive to the Romantic idiom, which he demonstrates by briefly analyzing a novel by the American novelist Jack London (12).

as the successors of not only the *criollos* responsible for the Grito de Lares, but also of the indigenous Taínos. In the perspective of the text, both groups resisted colonial dynamics and thus evinced a similar fidelity to Puerto Rico that contrasts sharply with the willingness to collaborate with the United States that the Partido Popular Democrático displayed at this time. The link to events like the Grito of 1868 is also significant because in *Luz de los héroes*, Lares becomes a site in which pro-independence surpasses its historical status and achieves an even more fundamental character through the hero's luminous connection to the divine .[5] The notion of a filiation will allow Matos Paoli to formulate a temporality for his tellurism, as it not only provides a historical background to the Nationalists, but also imagines a present and a future in which the Nationalist perspective he represents endures.

Making oneself through the wound: Heroism in *Luz de los héroes*

As the title of the work implies, *Luz de los héroes* holds a triumphalist view of its titular figure, who seems to be the source of a light that would dispel some form of darkness. He could also be regarded as the cause of elucidation or knowledge, perhaps even of revelation. Indeed, throughout the collection of poems, the hero that Matos Paoli produces is inextricably connected to the realm of the divine, continually seeking to experience spiritual transcendence while not abandoning the material world. The mystic character of the hero is most clearly demonstrated in the sonnet "Transfiguración del héroe", one of the most important in the collection due to its focus on the process necessary for the formation of the hero. The procedural perspective of the text is made evident in the quartets, which detail the conditions that lead to the creation of the

[5] It should be noted that Matos Paoli was born in Lares and spent his adolescence there. As his wife Isabel attests, the poet was born "en la calle Stone…por allí subieron los héroes del 1868 a proclamar la República" (*Diario de un poeta* I, 5). For the poet, Lares would remain the site "donde se levanta el altar de la patria" (idem).

exalted figure, while the tercets focus more on the results:

> Primero, la presencia. El aire encima,
> el pitirre del río mañanero.
> En Jayuya, las talas. Y primero,
> hombre tornasolado por la cima.
>
> Después, la levedad, la brasa. Anima
> la vela con su torso milagrero.
> Callado ruiseñor. La noche, el fuero
> de la estrella, la savia que se arrima
>
> en lucerada de candor. Hería
> la montaña. Los verdes, en tributo.
> Y el tramonto de ser alba vivible.
>
> El pan, el arco iris lo ceñía
> al Yunque cenital de lo absoluto.
> ¡Y el héroe mana lluvia en lo invisible! (69)

These verses point to a connection between the hero and divinity, as the man's transformation begins with "la presencia", a noun that suggests an otherworldly phenomenon or entity. As the shift takes hold, the "hombre" is "tornasolado", or made iridescent, and then experiences a "levedad", "brasa", and "lucerada", suggesting a spiritual ardor that allows him to move beyond the materiality of his body. It is evident now that the "light" associated with the hero in the title of the work is divine in nature and that it is a source of plenitude; Matos Paoli himself would write in his diaries that "Dios es inagotable en su luz" (I, 106) and mentions the "majestad de la luz" (idem). These remarks indicate that light is a phenomenon that is directly tied to the nature of God, given that when speaking of him the poet refers to "su luz", and that therefore to encounter such a phenomenon suggests that one has experienced contact with a transcendent realm. The title of poem alludes to such an event, referring to a key moment in the New Testament when Jesus took three apostles to a mountain, exhibited his divine nature to them, and was identified by God as his son (Matthew 17: 1-8); when the transfiguration begins, the Gospel

notes that his face shone and "his raiment was white as the light" (Matthew 17: 2). The sonnet reinforces the analogy between the hero and Jesus in the closing tercet that states "El pan, el arco iris lo ceñía/al Yunque cenital de los absoluto", portraying the former as a figure who reaches towards a more ontologically fundamental realm of existence that is portrayed as a mountain through the reference to the Yunque, one of the highest peaks on the island. Furthermore, in his diaries Matos Paoli describes the rainbow, that which "ties" the hero to the "absolute", as a "puente…entre el cielo y la tierra" when used as a symbol in his poetry (I, 35). The crux of this sonnet is representing the hero as experiencing what in Christian mysticism is known as *unio mystica*, or the uniting of the soul with God (McGinn, 204).[6] However, his access to a divine condition does not remove the hero from the sphere of the political, since Jayuya, the site of the Nationalist uprising, appears among the elements that act as the grounds for the transformation. This indicates that in *Luz de los héroes* the divine and the political do not exist independently of one another, and throughout the course of the text the language of mysticism and the *patria* will become so mutually constitutive as to be practically indistinguishable.[7]

The other central characteristic of the hero in Matos Paoli's text is his acceptance of death. Rather than attack his enemy with overwhelming martial prowess, he is also a martyr willing to destroy his body in order to inspire religious devotion in his peers. This notion can be most clearly seen in another sonnet, "A Susana Paoli", in which the speaker who identifies himself as Matos Paoli addresses the poet's mother. Notably, this poem immediately follows "Transfiguración del héroe", as if the text wished to closely associate these dimensions of

[6] McGinn notes that although the term itself dates from the seventeenth century, this concept has been central to this tradition from before the twelfth century and that it continued to be refined by later mystics like Saint Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross (209).
[7] Iván Silén notes that in an interview, Matos Paoli claims that he joined the Nationalist Party because Albizu's brand of nationalism was a "mística de la libertad" (20).

heroism in its very structure. The sonnet is organized around the interaction between Susana Paoli and two symbols of the political repression facing the Nationalists and other pro-independence groups, the prison and the "tyrant":

> ¿Qué cerco destemplado o piedra en sombra,
> informe de la nada que autoriza,
> puede cubrir la faz de tu sonrisa,
> inútil combatir lo que me nombra?
>
> Esta piedra camina sobre alfombra.
> Por ti se torna en invitada brisa.
> Lluvia de panes el azul desliza.
> En su espacio el rocío no se asombra.
>
> ¿Qué es el tirano, madre? Un gran amigo
> de lágrima irredenta que lo implora.
> Un papel de la piedra entristecida.
>
> Hazlo testigo de su ser, testigo
> de la sangre que come a su deshora
> ¡Y ebrio de nuestra venas, cobre vida! (71)

For the moment, I will set aside the issue of the prison, as that will be taken up later in the chapter, in order to focus on the relationship between the Nationalist and the tyrant that is sketched out as the poem ends. In the concluding tercet, the speaker directly pleads to the mother for her intercession, stating "Hazlo testigo de su ser, testigo/de la sangre que come a su deshora./¡Y ebrio de nuestras venas, cobre vida!" (71). In these verses, the Nationalist hero combats the figure of the tyrant not by killing him but rather by sacrificing himself, a gesture that seems necessary because his counterpart is oblivious to the colonial role he plays, given that the speaker asks his mother to make the tyrant a "testigo" to his own destructive acts. Furthermore, the concluding line suggests that the tyrant should not even be considered a living being, as it is only through his consumption of the rebels' blood that he has the possibility of "attaining life". The most significant aspect of the dynamic between tyrant and Nationalist is that the latter is

capable of converting the former through his sacrifice. As Matos Paoli asserted in a speech given in Lares on September 23, 1950 (the anniversary of the Grito of 1868), the poet claims that tyranny is a "bestia feroz…que se alimenta de la sangre de los héroes para cambiar de naturaleza y finalidad" ("Ante el Yunque de los héroes, 16). Given this possibility, the death and bodily destruction of the hero is not a categorical defeat, but rather a necessary phase in the ostensibly triumphant process of overcoming colonial subjugation.

In the particular case of Matos Paoli's poetry, the sonnets cited above indicate that within the ideological perspective of *Luz de los héroes*, the wound is not a threat to the process of subject formation, but rather an integral part of it. Returning to "Transfiguración del héroe", when the sonnet is describing the course of the man's transformation, it includes the following verse in the list of conditions needed for this procedure: "Hería/la montaña" (69). This suggests that even in the moment in which the hero achieves contact with the transcendent and thus ostensibly passes beyond the material world, his body is still present and seemingly must be wounded, as if the rending of the flesh is a necessary element in the particular subjectivity of the hero. In this sense, Matos Paoli's vision of the hero as mystical martyr can be said to constitute what critic Luis Maldonado has called a "retórica de la herida". According to Maldonado, the body should be understood as a material object as well as a source of a variety of hermeneutics that understand this object in differing ways. He states "el cuerpo está ineludiblemente asociado a una retórica del desgarre…, lo fundamental es la marca corporal y los registros interpretativos que la producen, codifican y descodifican" (12); Maldonando also claims to paraphrase Derrida when he writes "no hay cuerpo sino procesos de articulación y desarticulación de lo corporal" (idem). In Matos Paoli's text, the Nationalist hero's bodily "destarticulación" is beneficial due to the specific political impulse within which it occurs, that is, the wounding and killing of the hero

produces favorable results only because it is done in the name of a Puerto Rican *patria*.

Within this context, *Luz de los héroes* celebrates the wound, and it is in this gesture that the particularity of its "retórica de la herida" surfaces. If Maldonado identifies two different processes of the body, that of "articulation" and "disarticulation", the poet presents these processes merging in Nationalist hero, because a wound that ostensibly "disarticulates" his flesh actually "articulates" a sanctified, transcendent body due to his pursuit of independence. As an antithesis, Matos Paoli views the PPD's engagement with the United States's colonial project in corporeal terms that are starkly negative. Referring to Muñoz Marín in his diaries, he writes that the governor "Prefirió mostrarse como un cadáver al enemigo antes que admitir la cruz del Imperialismo" (I, 193). The "cadaver" here is treated as a figure of pure "disarticulation" whose decision not to confront the reality of colonialism has led to a kind of death that, rather than providing an experience of divinity or any other kind of positive "articulation", is tied to a debased body that does not produce anything beyond itself. Within this taxonomy of death, the Nationalist hero cannot be a "cadaver" even if he is killed since he fights for the island's independence.

Through his treatment of both a degraded and a heavenly corporeality, Matos Paoli portrays the wound as a site around which a society can organize itself either as a colony or independent homeland, respectively. In this, his discourse approximates what Mark Seltzer has called "wound culture", or the public's attraction to injured flesh (3), although he formulates this concept in connection with psychoanalysis and forms of mass media that make the body a spectacle in ways that are not applicable to *Luz de los héroes*. Nevertheless, I contend that the text does share a key element of "wound culture", specifically that "the wound is where private and public cross: the transit-point between the individual and the collective, between the body of

the individual and the collective body of men" (25). This is because in the poems cited above, the injuries that the Nationalist hero willingly receive begin a process in which the elements of Puerto Rico that cooperate with colonial repression can be transformed, as we saw in the conversion of the "tirano" through the consumption of the martyrs' blood. The wound thus functions in *Luz de los héroes* as a point of contact between an individual who holds a pro-independence conviction and his peers who are (temporarily) opposed. Indeed, the work understands the mystical *patria* as a markedly inclusive space that does not exist solely in the realm of the individual: in "Acción de Gracias del Puertorriqueño", the poetic voice gives thanks to God "por el Todo *para todos*" (3, emphasis mine), and a fundamental condition of this "Todo" in the text is the rending of the heroes' flesh.[8] The wound is central to the *patria* not only because it helps to establish it in the first place, but because it also organizes the interpersonal dynamic between its inhabitants by making them all favor independence and erasing the conflict between hero and tyrant. In the absence of a shared cultural and political code between these two camps that would mitigate strife, the injured body ostensibly becomes the ground for a more stable Puerto Rico by effecting a generalized ontological transformation.

While this process is being negotiated, if the wound bears the possibility of forging an inclusive space, it also serves as a site of ideological struggle, especially with regards to its representation. Elaine Scarry argues that war "requires both the reciprocal inflicting of massive injury and the eventual disowning of that injury so that its attributes can be transferred

[8] Jean-Luc Nancy theorizes the sacrifice in a similar way when he states that, in principle, this specific act functions "as the passage of a body to the limit at which it becomes a common body, the spirit of a communion for which it becomes the effective material symbol" (79). The wound, and the sacrifice that the Nationalist hero makes by accepting it, is the source of what *Luz de los héroes* imagines as the ideal Puerto Rican subjectivity because the injuring of flesh makes possible the "communion" between hero and tyrant that, according to the text, converts the latter into a collaborator for independence.

elsewhere" (64), and that the manipulation of portrayals of injury often serve established structures of power.[9] I would argue that at the time in which Matos Paoli produced his text, the Partido Popular Democrático was involved in just such a manipulation with respect to Puerto Rican involvement in Korea. As we noted in the introduction, several of Muñoz Marín's speeches of the time formulate a discourse that focuses much more on the utility of bodily sacrifice by Puerto Rican soldiers, ostensibly fighting for democracy, that it does the physical cost of this act. Even when the PPD leader does refer to this cost, such as when he mentions the "large percentage of casualties" ("Puerto Rico and the U.S.", 1), he does so through statistical diction that transfers emphasis away from images of injury. By making the wound a paramount factor for the *patria*, Matos Paoli works against the contemporary effort to make injury invisible in order to craft a political space that directly challenges the PPD's vision for Puerto Rico. It is this productive view of corporeal destruction that distinguishes *Luz de los héroes* in matters of war or political violence. We will turn now to José Luis González's and Emilio Díaz Valcárcel's texts to examine a diametrically opposed vision of war. Through their short stories, we can observe a discourse surrounding the Korean War that emphasizes the uselessness of bodily sacrifice and the connection between the wound and the production of corrupted Puerto Rican subjects. Once we have done this and contrasted such representations with those of Matos Paoli, we will move to analyzing the kind of spaces these authors associated with this conflict to demonstrate how spatiality was a significant factor in the political debates being formulated in this historical period.

[9] For more theoretical work on wounding and trauma, see authors like Caruth, 1996 and LaCapra 2001.

No More Than Flesh, If That

González's "Una caja de plomo que no se podia abrir" is narrated by a friend of Moncho Ramírez, a young man who was recruited by the United States army to fight in the Korean War. From its very beginning, the narrative presents a corporeal materiality that is notably degraded: the first line of the story states "Esto sucedió hace dos años, cuando llegaron los restos de Moncho Ramírez, que murió en Corea" (127). The marred corporeality of Moncho is evident from the text's insistence that what has returned in the young man's stead are his "restos", the plural form of the noun suggesting that the integrity of his body has been broken into a series of disparate pieces that cannot be reformed into a coherent whole. The sense of incongruity only sharpens when the representatives of the North American army arrive bearing Moncho's remains, which are kept in a box of lead that cannot be accessed. The lieutenant tasked with returning the young soldier proves to be of little use when the men of the community wish to learn how Moncho died, as he offers only the most general information ("murió en el cumplimiento de su deber", 132) and states that he most likely perished long before he was found (133), robbing them of any meaningful narrative about their neighbor's demise. The degradation of Moncho's body even extends to others, most notably his mother doña Emilia, who screams loudly and uncontrollably throughout the story. The horror expressed by doña Emilia damages and undermines her body: the phonic materiality of her screams "parecían desgarrarle la garganta" (131), at one point she attempts to claw her eyes out (idem), and when she learns that she will not be able to see Moncho's remains due to the box's construction, doña Emilia responds by "aflojando el cuerpo y dejándose ir hacia el suelo" (134), as if she were dying herself. In González's depiction of the Puerto Rican inclusion in the Korean War, there is nothing close to the transcendental glory of the Nationalist hero that *Luz de los héroes* so

emphatically presents. The sense of frustrating banality surrounding Moncho's death stems mainly from the fact that he perished within the bounds of a colonial dynamic, as he was fighting for the United States. González's text can thus be understood as a meditation on the senselessness of Puerto Ricans fighting as allies of the nation that has held their island in colonial subordination, an absurdity that is expressed through the metaphor of corrupted materiality that contrasts heavily with the transcendent corporeality of Matos Paoli's hero.

Emilio Díaz Valcárcel, another important chronicler of Puerto Rico's involvement in the Korean War, presents a similar contradiction to Matos Paoli's idea of the transcendent body, but specifically through the familiar figure of the hero. Valcárcel's short story "Los heroes" is told from the perspective of Artemio, a veteran of the conflict who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. His condition manifests itself primarily as a markedly reactive sensoriality, particularly responsive to loud noises, which make the party in which the narrative takes place an especially fraught environment for him. Every time a firework explodes as part of the festivities, Artemio covers his ears and cowers over the bar (141-43), a reaction that elicits derision from a group of men who express jealousy over his supposed status as a "hero". The narrative ends with two of the men playing a cruel prank on Artemio that causes him to disassociate, envision himself in the midst of combat, and attack them. The episode is presented as a moment of alienation from his body: "El zumbido de un proyectil lo hizo doblar mecánicamente las rodillas…Se le imposibilitaba la respiración…Giró de improviso, cuando la bayoneta iba a clavársele en la espalda" (144), and the story concludes with the police leading Artemio home as he attempts to understand what occurred in vain. In Valcárcel's perspective, the heroism that suffuses the Nationalist in Matos Paoli's poems is replaced with a grim irony, as Artemio is not a triumphant figure but rather a victim of the horrors of war. Unlike the Nationalist who willingly sacrifices

himself and thus demonstrates a considerable degree of agency over his own corporeality, the protagonist finds his body reacting on its own ("mécanicamente"), robbing him of dignity. Moreover, while Matos Paoli understands the death of the hero as a medium with which to effect a more cohesive Puerto Rican subjectivity, since it converts the tyrant away from his participation in a colonial dynamic, Artemio repeatedly finds himself alienated not just from himself, but from others. As he stares out into the crowd, people avoid "la pasiva hostilidad de sus hojos" (141) and he wonders "No sé por qué me huyen" (idem). The clearest example of Valcárcel's story rejecting the notion of a glorious heroism comes from the man who decides to humiliate Artemio, who bitterly mentions that the North American army did not want to recruit him "Pero si me hubieran echao mano, no sería tan lucío" (142). In other words, had he actually fought in Korea he would not have gained the supposedly remarkable status of hero, but would have rather lost the vitality he claims to possess. The term with which he refers to this vitality is quite telling, as "lucío" or "lucido" has the same etymological root as Matos Paoli's vaunted "luz". In "Los héroes", entering into combat not only does not provide anything resembling a transcendental experience, it robs one of whatever stability they enjoy as a subject and leaves one unable to reintegrate into society.

Much like in González's story, it is implied by Valcárcel's that the principal reason that a glorious heroism cannot result from a Puerto Rican's participation in the Korean War is due to the colonial dynamic with the United States. This relationship is hinted at in the way the man phrases the reason he did not fight in Korea: "A mí no me quisieron en el 'army'" (142), a reference to the recruitment efforts of the North American armed forces on the island. The diction of the man's statement emphasizes only the desires of the colonial government, as though his possible wish to serve did not matter, and it is similarly never stated if Artemio went off to

war as a volunteer. “Los heroes” cannot imagine that a Puerto Rican would wish to join the fray on the side of the United States, even if there is historical evidence that demonstrates a high number of volunteers on the island, at least until 1953 (Franqui, 186). This is another marked contrast with *Luz de los héroes*, a text that only includes martyrs more than willing to offer their blood for the independence of Puerto Rico. This fundamental difference has significant repercussions for the meaning of the hero in Matos Paoli’s poems, given that this figure is distinguished by the fact that his death has a distinct utility for Puerto Rico, that is, it results in an important change that ostensibly will not occur without it. Principally, the usefulness of the hero’s sacrifice is that it produces a divine tellurism, an ontological connection to the land that is expressed through the language of mysticism and that is deeply imbricated with the struggle for independence. The divine tellurism of *Luz de los héroes* will be the central feature of the island and the aspect of it that forms the sharpest contrast with the prison. This version of insularity is the result of the nationalist, mystical war that seeks to redeem Puerto Rico from its long history of colonialism and that is the diametrical opposite of an imperialist war like the Korean conflict as portrayed by González and Valcárcel, where Puerto Ricans die gratuitously for a nation that denies them political sovereignty. As we will see, the aforementioned narratives and others by González and Valcárcel elaborate a degraded spatiality that exemplifies this colonial dynamic. Matos Paoli’s island can be understood as an alternative space to the Korea experienced by Puerto Rican soldiers in those texts due to the existential harmony between subject and nature that the poems insistently portray.

Springing from the Land to Return to It

The figure of the island is so significant to *Luz de los héroes* that it appears in “Acción de Gracias del Puertorriqueño”, a brief prose poem that opens the text and that can be read as a

geographical inventory of Puerto Rico that produces the pro-independence perspective and mystical language that characterizes the entire work. The poem is organized as a litany of gratitude by the speaker expressed directly at God, and the overwhelming impression of this particular space is of a marked existential harmony between Puerto Rico's natural plenitude, its inhabitants, and God. In fact, the very first aspect of the island to be presented is its heavenly character: "Padre, gracias te damos porque nos regalaste tu cielo en coral de isla amada" (1). The speaker signals its connection to God when he equates the "isla amada" to the Father's "cielo", as if the island were the physical manifestation of such a space, implying that to inhabit this version of insularity is to be in contact with divinity. As we have noted above, one of the central facets of Christian mysticism is the approximation of the soul to God that culminates with a complete union, and the rest of the first stanza suggests such a proximity when it claims "Y nos hiciste familiares de los lirios, las palomas y los corderos. Y nos hermoseaste para la sangre del sacrificio inocente. Y en eclosión de paz pusiste el pulso de nuestro corazón, bajo las estrellas de tu silencio inexpresable" (idem). The first line indicates a close relationship through the language of kinship, as the Puerto Ricans are supposedly made "familiares" of the lily, the dove and the lamb, all symbols that for Matos Paoli bore meanings associated with the fusion of the material and the divine. In his diaries, he writes that the dove "alude a la inserción del Espíritu Santo en nuestro ámbito existencial" (I, 35); on the day in which God fully reveals himself to humanity, "nos reuniremos…en la conjunción planetaria de la rosa y el lirio…Asistiremos…a la indivisión" (II, 135); finally, the lamb is a biblical figure of Jesus made flesh (John 1:29, 1478) and thus of the melding of God and man. For Puerto Ricans to have entered into a kinship with these figures connotes a transcendent experience that characterizes the mystic.

This association is furthered in the following line, in which the speaker states that the

Father has imbued them with the will to sacrifice their lives, a dynamic with the body that imagines its destruction as an act of temporary negation resulting in a reward whose benefits are far more beneficial and long-lasting. As Michel de Certeau asserts in his work on mysticism, "the production of a body plays an essential role in *mystics*…Mystical literature composes scripts of the body" (80-81, author's emphasis). *Luz de los héroes* centers itself on a sacrificial script of the body that is mystical because it leads the hero to a union with God. "Acción de Gracias del Puertorriqueño" acknowledges this in its penultimate stanza, where it mentions the Nationalists' willingness to die "en aras de más vida en Ti" (3). The last sign of the mystical character of the island is the fact that the plenitude and harmony that the speaker celebrates does not result from the actions of a human agent, but rather from God's largesse; this can be noted in how the speaker conjugates verbs in the first-person plural in this verse and the entire poem: "nos hiciste", "nos hermoseaste", "nos insuflaste el vuelo eufónico" (idem). God's active role points to what Juan Martín Velasco has referred to as the "passivity" of the mystic's soul when it encounters the divine (324-26) due to it recognizing the presence of an ontologically superior being. However, Velasco notes that "passivity" does not equate to inactivity, as the mystic must first purify and prepare himself for the experience through spiritual exercises. Moreover, the state of fusion with God requires cooperation on the part of the mystic (327), so that he must adopt a similarly active stance that still acknowledges his subordinate role. The element of human agency is present in the repeated expressions of gratitude from the speaker, whose utterances recognize the beneficial influence of the Father and demonstrate that his gifts have helped to form a subject willing to struggle to preserve this harmonious space even to the point of death. In fact, "Acción de gracias del Puertorriqueño" ends with the poetic voice orienting itself towards the future and expressing its own agency when he states "ya palpita el orbe de la

Paloma en nuestras manos. Preparemos el recibimiento del aire más campesino de la Divinidad" (3). What these lines indicate is that the language of mysticism in *Luz de los héroes* is fundamental in constructing a version of insularity marked by harmony as well as a Puerto Rican subject who desires to maintain such a state.[10]

The other significant aspect of the "isla amada" in this poem is not only the proximity between the Puerto Rican subject and God, but also the dynamic between the former and the natural environment. This dynamic also evinces the kind of ontological fusion that takes place between the Father and the Puerto Rican people. The joining of the subject to nature can be clearly seen in the final line of the second stanza, "Y nos insertaste la palma real en nuestra carne como columna ideal de Tu Gloria" (1), in which God transforms an element of the environment into a constitutive building block of Puerto Rican existence. The third stanza begins with "Gracias por el Mar Caribe en su paternidad de aguas nuestras", a sense of cohesion with nature appearing in the language of familial ties (the "paternidad" of the sea) and the possessive pronoun that describe the waters. The "isla amada" is the space where the Nationalist hero finds a rootedness that, at least within the discourse of *Luz de los héroes*, prevents Puerto Rico from being commandeered as the instrument of a foreign government. This is because, as we will see shortly, the connection between the Puerto Rican subject and his surroundings leads to the

[10] *Luz de los héroes* asserts that all Puerto Ricans are or should be committed to the national sovereignty of their island. In the 1951 collection dedicated to the heroes, one of the concluding poems is "Plegaria por el traidor", a sonnet where the speaker implores God to save the traitor and the tyrant from their disloyalty to the *patria* by linking them to the divine: "Su cruento olvido/de la rosa, redime…/rescata de su carne ahíta/la flor, la nube, la vereda…/¿Por qué, Señor, se niega al paraíso?/¡Quémalo en mar que transfigura!" (75). In other poems included in the 1992 version, like the aforementioned sonnet "A Susana Paoli", the text claims that the tyrant, who in his fight against the Nationalists opposes independence, is "Un papel de la piedra entristecida" (71). The term "papel" implies that the tyrant's politics are a performance, a harmful fiction that alienates him from his proper subjectivity.

founding of the sovereign nation.

Indeed, in "Acción de Gracias del puertorriqueño" the geography itself also participates in this process, answering the devotion of the Puerto Rican in a move that only further underscores their fundamental link. The third stanza of the poem states "gracias por el Mar Atlántico, con su bahía hecha para la primavera de todos los saludos hermanos. Que en lucidez de agua armoniosa concebiste el paso de nuestros Libertadores. ¡Matriz de sol madrepórico, haz florecer el Hijo de nuestra eternidad de pueblo!", while the fourth stanza begins with the line "Gracias te damos, oh Padre, por la Cordillera Central, secreto de nuestra concentración irradiante" (idem). These lines indicate that the natural environment of the island promotes unity not just in an ontological sense, but also in a political one: for example, the waters of the Atlantic Ocean promote "los saludos hermanos", a phrase that alludes to a unified community in which Puerto Ricans do not have to engage in armed struggle against one another. The following line suggests why the waters of the Atlantic are capable of providing such unity, as it is the source of "nuestros Libertadores", the Puerto Ricans who have fought for an end to colonialism.[11] Likewise, the "Cordillera Central" is fundamental because, as it is portrayed in the poem, it joins the transcendent and the political that are the nuclei of Matos Paoli's tellurism. This geographical feature is described as a "secreto", a concept that is at the root of the Christian mysticism we

[11] The ocean as the origin of an exalted figure is not particular to *Luz de los héroes* within Matos Paoli's oeuvre. In 1947, the poet wrote a shorter text entitled *Canto a Puerto Rico*, a poem composed of four sections in which the speaker addresses the island, the bay of San Juan, the Caribbean Sea, and the mountains of the interior in a densely metaphorical language, also interwoven with mystical symbols, and emphasizes the plenitude and harmony to be found there. In the section dedicated to the Caribbean Sea, the speaker directs himself to the body of water and states "aguardas tu Eneas patriarcal" (15), referring to the mythological figure whose descendants would found the Roman kingdom . In a letter written to his wife the following year, Matos Paoli explicitly identifies this figure with Pedro Albizu Campos, stating that the Nationalist leader "podría ser, ya lo es, ese Eneas caribeño de la isla ansiada, vendida al extranjero" (*Diarios de un poeta*, I, 10).

have been exploring so far. Juan Martín Velasco notes that the term "mysticism" is etymologically related to the Greek word *mystikos*, which had two different uses: as a noun, it referred to "los misterios…las ceremonias de las religiones místéricas" (19) of which only members of that sect could have knowledge, while as an adverb it meant to perform an action "secretamente" (idem). Thus, for the Cordillera Central to be a "secret" means that it is intimately associated with the mystic perspective of the Nationalists, whose members are akin to those initiates of religious mysteries since apparently only they experience divinity due to their fight for independence. This is reinforced by the fact that the Cordillera served as the point of "nuestra concentración irradiante", a reference to the fact that the 1950 uprising began in the mountain town of Jayuya and continued throughout other cities in the range like Utuado and Naranjito, casting the mountains as the stage upon which the Nationalists waged their righteous war. That event is also described as "irradiante", a reference to the "luz" that connect the pro-independence hero to God and therefore serves as a meeting point between the divine and the political.

The participation of the land in the project of national sovereignty reaches its desired conclusion in the closing lines of the poem, "Porque nuestra Patria vuelve la muerte inexistente por la hermosura que otorga la paz en libertad del sacrificio consumado" (3). We have already encountered Matos Paoli's idea that to sacrifice oneself for independence is to overcome death and access a greater ontological state, so the aspect of this line I wish to focus on is the use of the term "Patria". What is striking is that the poem begins with the figure of the "isla amada" and ends with the "patria", implying an equivalence by interchanging them. This is the central concept regarding insularity in *Luz de los héroes*, so "Acción de Gracias del Puertorriqueño" can be regarded as a poem that elaborates not only a particular version of the space of Puerto Rico,

but also how the features of this space interact with the Nationalist hero in order to secure the transformation of island into nation.

Throughout the rest of *Luz de los héroes*, the divine tellurism that is the cornerstone of the "patria" is furthered by two significant cultural activities, agriculture and the burial of heroes. Both of these acts underscore the connection between subject and space, as the figures engage with the earth in different ways. The notion of a distinctly agricultural relationship to the land will also serve to distinguish the mystic Nationalist war for independence from the imperialist conflict in Korea. Above, we noted how these instances of combat produce two contrasting subjects, one who achieves a spiritual transcendence that supersedes physical death while the other becomes an empty, corrupted materiality. González's and Valcárcel's stories also formulate Korea as a distinct space both directly and indirectly, and now we will explore how the aforementioned activities produce a vision of Puerto Rico as a very different space from that of the eastern battlefield.

Agriculture as a significant act in the text appears almost immediately, arising in the second poem, titled "Invocación a la Patria". This is an ode-like text, the only poem in *Luz de los héroes* that does not conform to a rhyme scheme or that even structures itself into stanzas; in terms of content, it is a continued apostrophe by the speaker to the titular figure that, also like an ode, celebrates the vitality that the struggle for national independence has given to the Nationalists. Throughout the poem, the speaker casts the virtues of the Patria in images drawn from the natural world, but one that also bears a trace of human affairs. The first half recounts the spiritual fortitude that the "patria" has granted the Nationalists, especially after the failure of the Jayuya Uprising, and reaffirms their commitment to a future in which national sovereignty can be realized: "Somos el porvenir de las espadas" (5). In the midst of the pledge, the speaker

begins to utilize the language of cultivation: "Así en el brazo fiel del campesino/la semilla se puebla/de una canción que sube/de vereda en vereda/y sobre el puño de la espada/deja una luz de libertad primera/…Abrid las manos fértiles/y a sembrar la vislumbre de los salmos/que nacen de la tierra" (7). These verses begin with the concept of fidelity to the land when discussing the effects of the ontological connection brought about by the mysticism of the text, and we can see that this commitment brings about a marked abundance, with the results of the sowing arising from the earth of its own accord. As with every other aspect of *Luz de los héroes*, the cultivation portrayed here is mystical in nature, producing not crops but psalms that in turn make the sword of the Nationalist hero into a bearer of the "light of liberty". The image of the light overtaking the sword emphasizes the almost pacific character of the hero, who as stated before is not an epic warrior bent on conquest but rather a spiritual crusader who seeks to redeem the corrupted tyrant.

In this, the figure of the "campesino" joins the hero in the text's social taxonomy, arraying himself in the struggle against colonialism in terms almost identical to his martyred comrade. Indeed, if the hero is armed with a mystic sword, the "campesino" has the seed, which in his diaries Matos Paoli describes as another weapon: "La semilla crece contra el crepúsculo antiguo, avasalla la espada del maldito, introduce en el aire su esbelto silencio sacrificado" (I, 199). The seed here is portrayed as a kind of martyr, sacrificing its "silencio", a phenomenon that is well known to the mystic due to the overpowering nature of the experience of uniting with God (Velasco, 56). However, once again this sacrifice is generative because it is done in order to combat the "maldito", a figure who does not seem to support independence given that in the text those who do are blessed by God. I contend that by associating the "campesino" with the figure of the seed and clearly aligning both with the Nationalists, *Luz de los héroes* posits the act of cultivation as a principal source of the ideal Puerto Rican subjectivity and of the independent

patria.

Such a compatible relationship between man and earth is quite different than that of other pro-independence authors who focused on the Puerto Rican experience of the Korean War. Once again, Emilio Díaz Valcárcel interrogates this conjunction in another one of his short stories, "La sangre inútil", narrated from the perspective of a wounded Puerto Rican infantryman. The brunt of the story is focused on the bitter fighting between Puerto Rican soldiers and their Chinese and North Korean enemies, with the narrator presenting the confrontation as a pointless bloodbath rather than a heroic action. Throughout his recounting of the battle, the speaker often turns his attention to the piece of land upon which he and his comrades fought, but his presentation of this figure is starkly different than Matos Paoli's: "La tierra saltaba sobre mi espalda y estallaban fuegos por todos lados. Nos arrastrábamos sobre la tierra helada, formando una gruesa correa de hombres de carbón…Algunos estaban quietos, con el rostro inmóvil, llenos de tierra" (123). The earth described in these lines seems animated in a similar way to the one found in "Invocación a la Patria", with its bounty of psalms and seeds actively taking part in the spiritual conflict. However, in the case of Valcárcel's short story the earth's liveliness is not due to a divine connection between man and earth, but rather to the terrifying brutality that surrounds the protagonist; it is implied, and then outright stated, that the earth "jumped" due to the bullets and ordinance falling around the soldiers (124). The contrast with Matos Paoli's mystic understanding of Puerto Rico's land is further underscored by the narrator referring to the earth in Korea as "helada", casting it as cold, inhospitable, and inert when not moved by violence. Even more damning, the protagonist notes many of his fellow soldiers lying still and "llenos de tierra", connecting the soil on which they fight with a death that does not produce anything beyond itself.

Cultivation appears when the narrator pauses in his recounting of the battle where he was wounded to brood angrily about the use of the Puerto Ricans' presence in Korea. According to him,

> Lo que no entraba en mí era por qué tenia que morir tanta gente por una bendita jalda que ni siquiera sirve para la siembra. Sólo los coreanos saben utilizarla. Ellos abonan su tierra con…porquería humana. Pero nosotros, aunque pobres, no lo hacemos y por eso digo ¿por qué tenían que abonar la tierra con sangre nuestra? (125).

What this passage suggests is that with respect to the presence of the Puerto Rican soldiers for whom the narrator speaks, a generative dynamic with the land represented through agriculture has been made impossible: the only land the narrator ever mentions is described as useless for the cultivation of crops. Furthermore, due to the extreme violence of modern warfare, foreign soldiers (among his comrades the narrator mentions Belgians, Colombians and Greeks [124]) are constantly shedding their blood on Korean soil, a fact that strikes the speaker as an absurdity that will produce nothing fruitful because this is not their land. The ontological connection to Puerto Rico that we encounter in *Luz de los héroes*, which is only reinforced by the Nationalist hero's sacrifice, is markedly absent in Valcárcel's story. The relationship between man and land in this text is formed by the exigencies of the Cold War that lead the United States to mobilize Puerto Ricans in a conflict that will have no immediate bearing on their homeland, which remains a colonial subordinate of North America. The mystic tellurism of Matos Paoli is replaced by a purely instrumental logic that produces the "sangre inútil" of the title, a phrase that implies the Puerto Rican soldiers are deeply alienated from a worthy purpose and a desire to fight. The narrator suggests this, stating "nadie sabía por qué había que morir así, tan lejos de 'Puertorro'" and that the infantrymen of other nationalities were there as volunteers (124), implying that the Puerto Ricans could not be classified as such. This last line reveals the spatial dimension we have been exploring in this section, as the protagonist identifies the present battlefield as a site

far from "'Puertorro'", a version of the island's name used as a term of endearment that connotes a longing for it accentuated by the death that surrounds them. In this sense, the "isla amada" and the Korea of pro-independence authors are fundamentally irreconcilable spaces, two opposing experiences of the tension between nationalism and internationalism in the Cold War. As we noted last chapter, after the Second World War, the Partido Popular Democrático steered Puerto Rico towards an internationalist sociopolitical and economic position as part of a larger trend that historian Silvia Álvarez Curbelo describes as "una interdependencia que torna obsoletos las fronteras proteccionistas pre-guerra y los discursos nacionales que las han sustentado hasta entonces" (27). The "beloved island" is the breaking away from the colonial dynamic that brought about such a role and the attainment of the Puerto Rican *patria*; here, Korea is a symbol of its continuing negation.

Even when death does occur in the "isla amada", *Luz de los héroes* portrays it as a generative phenomenon. One central aspect of Matos Paoli's and Nationalist discourse is that it portrays the union between man and earth as displaying a cyclical temporality that defeats death. This is most evident in the dynamic between the land and the deceased body, a topic that formed an important discursive nucleus in a speech that Albizu gave on April 8, 1949 to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Ramón Emeterio Betances. In this speech, the Nationalist leader defines the "patria" as both childhood and as a collection of ashes, two figures that point to the beginning of life and its end. However, the most striking aspect of these ashes is that they actually do not represent an absolute finality, but rather a transition towards a more complete existence. Referring to God, through which Albizu's discourse comes to greatly resemble Matos Paoli's, he claims "De tus cenizas se levantará otra vida y volverás ante el Todopoderoso a dar cuenta de tus actos; mientras tanto, las cenizas serán parte del suelo, del mundo físico único"

(Acosta, 67). In this instance the term "suelo" is an intermediate point in which the Puerto Rican who dies in the fight for independence awaits his encounter with the divine and the "otra vida" that is promised him. The land is therefore a crucial element in the process of founding the *patria* because it functions as the juncture between the material and the transcendent, ensuring that the mystic hero will not be detained by death but will rather accede definitively to a higher plane of existence. Significantly, the temporality of the ashes is not restricted solely to a future that is hopefully immanent, as they also hold a precious link to the history of Puerto Rico. According to Albizu, the ashes are not only a promise, but also a source of national memory: "De las cenizas de nuestros mayores, de las memorias de esas cenizas nosotros vivimos" (idem). However, this relationship to the past has been marred by the intrusion of colonial exploitation, a condition that has subordinates Puerto Rico and caused it to forget the location of the ashes of "los que procrearon su civilización" (Maldonando-Denis, 206). Albizu implicitly argues that by joining the effort to overcome the subjugation that their island has been subjected to, the Puerto Rican people will access this lost history and thereby create a cohesive temporal narrative running from the past through a present defined by struggle that resolves into a perfected future.

Matos Paoli formulates a very similar notion, although it is expressed through a notably mystic language that is not found in Albizu's speech. This is particularly evident in the sonnet "Camposanto de héroes", which portrays the burial of the titular figures. The poem is organized as a direct apostrophe from the speaker to an unseen interlocutor, who is tasked with bringing the remains of the heroes to Coabey, a segment of Jayuya where the Nationalist uprising of 1950 began. A triumphal tone prevails throughout the quartets and tercets as the speaker exhorts his companion to lay the bones to rest and assures his fallen comrades that what awaits them is a glorious transformation:

Sed a sed, reclinad en la montaña
los cuerpos más amados. En la ofrenda
abrid al peregrino clara senda
para el paso adorable a su entraña.

Hermanos, tanto azul puebla la hazaña
que en verde mausoleo el aire encienda
el reposo inmortal. La piedra penda
como arrobo de sol, como pestaña

abierta a la ceniza veneranda
Al campo de Coabey llevad la cima
de los huesos en flor. La Escrita es canto

de alondra. Y en su diáfana baranda
el miradero de los héroes rima
la carne en luz de su Domingo Santo. (79)

The mystic characterization of the hero continues in this poem, as it begins with the lines referring to the fallen heroes' "thirst". As Luce López Baralt has indicated in her extensive research on the poetry of San Juan de la Cruz, the experience of "sed" is a metaphor for the mystic's desire to reach an ultimate union with God, even as such an act seems impossible (*Asedio a lo indecible*, 67).[12] Despite the aporetic nature of the mystic, Matos Paoli once again portrays the "sed" that marks the remains of the heroes as constructive, positing that the burial of the bones in the mountain will open "el paso adorable hacia su entraña" (idem).[13] Furthermore, shifting his attention to his deceased compatriots, the speaker claims that their sacrifice is so spiritually fruitful that "en verde mausoleo el aire encienda/el reposo inmortal" (idem), turning

[12] The figuration of the desire to unite with God as a bodily thirst dates back to the composition of the Book of Psalms in the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament. Perhaps the clearest expression of this idea can be found in the Psalm 42: 2: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (KJV, 662).

[13] Luce López-Baralt, in her monograph on the poetry of the Nicaraguan priest and politician Ernesto Cardenal, signals the aporia at the heart of the mystic experience when she states that "Ernesto Cardenal, como místico auténtico, sabe…que la experiencia sobrenatural es de suyo inefable, dado su carácter suprarracional, y que todas las palabras que se esgriman…para intentar comunicarla serán en vano" (*El cántico místico de Ernesto Cardenal*, 25).

their burial site into a space of vitality as suggested by the adjectives "verde" and "inmortal" and the verb "encienda". This divine vigor reaches its apex in the sonnet's first tercet, where the speaker gives his final order to his interlocutor: "llevad la cima/de los huesos en flor" (idem). Here the remains of the heroes bloom and produce new life (in direct contrast to Moncho's irreparable "restos"), a status expressed through a metaphor that renders the bones into a "cima" or mountain top that harkens back to the site on which the man was transfigured into a hero in the first place.

The sonnet's concluding tercet adds the final phase of divine transformation that leads to an overcoming of death. The final verse of the first tercet states: "La Escrita es canto//de alondra. Y en su diáfana baranda/el miradero de los héroes rima/la carne en luz de su Domingo Santo". La Escrita is a large stone located in Coabey that is furnished with petroglyphs made by the Taínos, the indigenous inhabitants of the island prior to its European colonization; the presence of the indigenous is of central importance to the tellurism that *Luz de los héroes* develops, and we will explore this facet in short order. For now, I wish to focus more on how this object serves as the seat of the heroes' apotheosis, the site on which their presence strongly echoes ("rima") the "carne en luz de su Domingo Santo", the feast day in which the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated. This paralleling suggests that the heroes, having been laid to rest according to the directives of the speaker, have achieved the divine transcendence that their sacrifice promised them, not least through the figure of the light, which as we have seen functions as a symbol of the hero's contact with God[14]. The poem seems to confirm this achievement through a change in

[14] The radiant burial of the Nationalist hero can again be sharply contrasted with that of Moncho's, whose sundered remains are placed in the "húmedo y hondo agujero de su tumba" (135-36), an image that suggests only darkness and further decomposition. If Valcárcel's stories portray Korea as a space of colonial instrumentality that only leads to violent death for Puerto Ricans, González's text indicates that the effects of this conflict follow these soldiers home,

verb tense, as the verbs in the quartets and first tercet of the sonnet are conjugated in the imperative and the present subjunctive, whereas the two verbs in the concluding tercet are in the present indicative ("La Escrita *es* canto", "el miradero…*rima*"). The change from subjunctive to indicative suggests the transition from possibility to realization, the sense of satisfactory completion that, to turn once again to González's short story, is never granted to the members of Moncho's community since they are never able to construct a narrative of their neighbor's death. Matos Paoli's heroes suffer no such alienation, as their death is occasioned by the pro-independence political ideology they espouse rather than a colonial dynamic. Furthermore, their remains enter into a more immediate relationship to the land given that their transcendence is aided by La Escrita and their bones apparently reach the very center of the mountain in which they are interred.

Although *Luz de los héroes* focuses much of its attention on the space of the island and defining the hero's relationship to the land, there is another central spatiality in the text, that of the prison. Given that *Luz de los héroes* was produced during Matos Paoli's painful incarceration in the La Princesa, the experience of the carceral subtends the text. The imprint of the prison is evident in nearly every poem: in the majority of them the poet chooses to locate their production by stipulating below the text that they were written in La Princesa. However, there are a number of poems that take the prison as their central concern, and the tendency of these texts that I wish to focus on here is the presentation of the jail as a paradoxical space, one in which the suffering borne by the prisoner leads to an exalted, mystical state akin to that of the Nationalist heroes.

The first poem in *Luz de los héroes* to focus on the prison is the aptly titled "Cárcel",

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since even though Moncho is buried in his homeland, his return only results in a stubborn and unassimilable absence.

which is composed of seven quartets and a concluding sextet. After describing the hardships that he suffers in his present condition, the speaker presents in the third quartet what may be the clearest and most thematic paradox: “Pesa la piedra muda:/los ángeles convoca./Y me ronda la boca/una ausencia desnuda” (23). The contradictory nature of these verses lies in the assertion that the prison, the “piedra muda” that points to spiritual degradation, not only “convokes” (an act that would be impossible for something experiencing muteness) but also summons angels, a clearly divine phenomenon that could readily be associated with the Christian mysticism of the Nationalists as they are presented throughout the work. Despite this, at this point in the poem the speaker remains unable to express himself as fully as he desires, given that an “ausencia desnuda” seems to haunt him. As the poem nears its climax, the speaker presents the prison as a seemingly insurmountable obstacle by referring to its “móvil tiranía” (idem), but the text ends with a celebratory tone: “¡Oh cárcel que se arredra/ante el iris del hombre!/Sólo robo a tu nombre/la lancinante piedra/de fundar y fundar/¡la palabra del mar!” (idem). Here the internally antithetical nature of the prison is heightened, as the very stone that previously was itself mute and provoked a spiritual aphasia in the poetic voice is transformed into the material that will produce “la palabra del mar”, a bursting forth of language that symbolizes the overcoming of colonial tyranny. By the final verses, the prison has contributed to its own negation, as it shrinks before “el iris del hombre” it had previously subjugated, and the “palabra del mar” that appears in the final verse is the complete reformulation of the way in which the speaker characterizes the crushing repression of the jail in the very first verse: “Un pálpito de mar/en sombras férreas, vivo” (idem). Even the formal structure of the poem points to a discursive overcoming of the carceral. For the majority of the poem, the short heptasyllabic verses of the quartets create the impression of a sparing, reticent poetic voice oppressed by its austere environment. However,

although its verses are also heptasyllabic, the final stanza is a sextet whose greater extension suggests a rush of exuberance from the speaker that mirrors his appropriation of the prison's materiality.

As *Luz de los héroes* continues, it provides more concrete examples of how the jail contributes to invigorating the speaker. If "Cárcel" points to the ostensible transformation of the titular space, a poem like "Primera comunión de Susana Isabel" gives a glimpse of the process, one that is rooted in Matos Paoli's fervent Catholicism:

> En sus labios creció dulzura viva
> de cielo que se acuna de repente.
> El aire, blanco. La oración, simiente.
> El velo, con paloma ya cautiva.
>
> Dios escucha un silencio que lo liba.
> En su casa de albor mi niña ardiente
> penetra, poseída y transparente,
> permanece, dorada y sopresiva.
>
> Yo vi su boca paladear la seda
> de un Jésus lirialmente volandero.
> Como una cruz de alba la ceñía.
>
> Hija mía, contempla esta moneda:
> Yo también de mi Judas carcelero
> recibo el pan de Cristo día a día (35)

The sonnet's quartets and first tercet focus on how Matos Paoli's daughter is initiated in divine transcendence through the central ritual of the Eucharist, which is aptly presented as the source of great spiritual power. The final tercet begins with an apostrophe to Susana Isabel and suddenly pivots to her father's experience of the prison, where he apparently experiences something akin to the Eucharist. The crux of these verses is the analogy between the speaker's incarceration and the religious ritual his daughter enjoys, a parallel that again reformulates the prison by casting the "Judas carcelero", the agent of the colonial system the Nationalists warred against, into a

priest-like figure who paradoxically cultivates the connection with the divine that in *Luz de los héroes* is the basis of national sovereignty. The jailed speaker is thus presented as a martyr whose suffering only feeds the struggle for political liberation, a condition that likens him to the Nationalist hero. Indeed, throughout the work the poems often explicitly indicate a that while incarcerated Matos Paoli carried out a religious praxis that is always connected to the Nationalist's past and present. Below the text of "21 de marzo", the author writes that he produced the poem on the fourteenth anniversary of the Ponce Massacre of 1937 "*después de guardar perfecto silencio ante el santo fervor de la fecha*" (11); likewise, "La luz como espada" was written "*Velando al Maestro*" (57), a reference to the injured Albizu Campos, who Matos Paoli nursed in their shared cell. Isabel Freire attests to her husband's treatment of the prison as a space of martyr-like suffering in her introduction to his diaries, in which she briefly recounts an anecdote of a visit the poet's family made to the Presidio Insular in 1955, where he was kept after the Nationalist's attack on the United States Congress in 1954. According to Freire, Matos Paoli informed them that he had begun to fast, stating "Pasaré treinta y tres días llevando la cruz por la causa de la independencia de Puerto Rico. Es un mandato divino" (I, 3). These statements present the jail as a space in which the speaker and the author himself reaffirm their commitment to the fight for national sovereignty, thus apparently integrating a site that represents the colonial system into a pro-independence discourse by demonstrating that the Nationalist subject can improbably thrive in it through a political brand of Christian mysticism.

Nonetheless, despite the frequent assertions of surmounting the challenge presented by the jail, the text also at times contradicts this notion in explicit ways. The limits of a triumphal perspective arise precisely from the interplay between the desire for national sovereignty and the prison in the sonnet "Isla desde la Princesa". At first glance, the title seems to reveal yet another

instance of the text conscripting the carceral in order to imagine political liberation:

> Sobre esta cárcel, y en el aire flora
> de mártires, la patria se adivina
> cantada del Atlántico que inclina
> en adioses murados pie de aurora.
>
> ¡Oh sino de la espuma que se dora
> irresistiblemente en piel divina!
> ¡Quién pudiera, bahía que se afina
> en guitarra, pulsar tu sol ahora!
>
> De palmera en palmera afortunado,
> volcar, sobre el exilio de las flores,
> la fiel reunion de astros en acecho!
>
> Y de jíbara luna en cauce amado,
> Ver la batalla de los ruiseñores
> tejernos la bandera sobre el pecho. (39)

These verses, especially the first quartet, present a vision of plenitude and harmony between the natural and the political in which the air is replete with the "flora de mártires" and the sovereign homeland rises from the Atlantic Ocean. If the prison appears at all, it is only for the speaker to mention that the abundance he indicates can be found "above" it, implying that it has superseded the boundaries of the carceral or at the very least cannot be contained by them. However, there is an ambiguity to this stanza that turns upon two possible definitions of the verb "adivinar", since it can be understood as "to discern" but also "to intuit" or "to foresee". The difference between these two meanings marks two contrasting relationships with the carceral and, by extension, North American colonialism and its insular collaborators. If "adivinar" is understood to mean that the speaker recognizes the presence of the sovereign nation as actually existing, then La Princesa is successfully incorporated into Matos Paoli's pro-independence discourse because it serves as a vantage point from which to discern it, in accordance with the preposition "desde" in the title. Yet if "adivinar" is taken to mean "to foresee", then the prison is not so much a

viewpoint as it is an obstacle to the attainment of a political form that remains only a potentiality due to the continued influence of the colonial system. The remaining stanzas of the poem seem to indicate this latter option, as the majority of the verses appear within the expression of a desire on the part of the poetic voice that begins with "¡Quién pudiera… (idem). Formulating the sonnet's last eight lines as a statement of longing suggests clearly that the status of national sovereignty has not been yet achieved and whose temporality is thus defined by futurity. Matos Paoli's work never quite vanquishes the space of the prison as it so often claims to do; instead, the spaces it counterposes to the jail remain in a dialectical relationship with it. The island, in other words, remains to be made.

Now that we have explored how Matos Paoli imagines the island and the space of Puerto Rico, as well as the central role of mysticism in this project, we can turn to the last dimension of the text, that of the political lineage of the Nationalist Party. Interspersed throughout *Luz de los héroes* are poems that emphasize the historical connection between the speaker, his comrades, and Pedro Albizu Campos with the pro-independence *criollo* leaders of the nineteenth century, as well as the indigenous Taínos who ostensibly fought against the Spaniards in the early stages of Puerto Rico's colonization. Other poems also reimagine Lares, the site of the Grito of 1868, through a mystic perspective. Like the rest of *Luz de los héroes*, these poems also bolster the sharp contrast between dying in an imperialist war and sacrificing oneself for their homeland. However, the main point of this conceptual strand of the text is to elaborate a temporality for the "isla amada" to complement the spatiality that other poems establish, to demonstrate that the struggle for national sovereignty not only has a history and a present, but also a future.

<u>An Unbroken, Active Descendance: Political Filiation</u>

The concept of genealogy is most evident in the beginning and ending of the "Tetralogía

de la Sed", a clutch of four sonnets in which the speaker connects the pro-independence leaders Ramón Emeterio Betances, Francisco Gonzalo Marín, José Martí, José de Diego, and Pedro Albizu Campos by once again casting them as mystics who all experience the "thirst" of liberating Puerto Rico. The first sonnet focuses on Betances and his generative relationship with the speaker:

> ¡Aún el agua no era! En voz amada,
> me enseñaste la Sed desde pequeño.
> Y tu sed fundó el hijo para el sueño
> de morir por la tierra esclavizada.
>
> De piedra en piedra, Pedro, sed fundada
> por el golpe de un mar caborrojeño,
> en hablas de coral, en verde empeño
> de Betances lidiando con la nada.
>
> ¡El hágase la sed del Lares mío,
> aquel temblor de lomas y de lomas
> tornasoladas de videntes rayos!
>
> ¡Aún el agua no era! Pero el río
> se cubría de extáticas palomas
> divisando el albor de los caballos.

The causal relationship between mysticism and lineage is made clear by the verses, as the speaker stipulates that it was because Betances inculcated the "Sed" in him since his youth that he was transformed into an "hijo", a figure who shares the same impulse to sacrifice himself for the political sovereignty of his homeland. As we saw in the previous section, mysticism formed the core of the Puerto Rican's dynamic with the space of the island; here, it functions to link the speaker with a significant movement in Puerto Rico's history. Most significantly, the nineteenth century independentist movement is incorporated into *Luz de los héroes*' understanding of the political as being intimately connected with a transcendent realm. This reformulation can be located in the second quartet, which ends by noting that the *criollo* leader is "lidiando con la

nada", as if his political career had a metaphysical component that sought to replace this corrosive lack, and in fact Matos Paoli explicitly associates this "nothingness" with Puerto Rico's historical reality in his diaries, stating "La colonia: un modo de entrar en la nada" (I, 165). The other important notion in this sonnet is that the independentists movement of the previous century was a promising start, as the fight that Betances is carrying out against "nothingness" is a source of vitality. Not only is the poetic voice's "sed" begun by a "golpe" and founded upon a "verde empeño", it seems to turn Lares into a site bestowed with a particularly strong mystical valence with its "thirst" and hills made radiant by "videntes rayos". However, the sonnet does avoid an overly triumphalist perspective by observing that the Grito of 1868 was only the beginning of the struggle, since it notes that the "water" did not yet exist but the "río" enters into contact with "extáticas palomas" that foresee an "albor", which could be understood as symbols for national sovereignty.[15] The "water" and the "river" can alleviate the "thirst" for independence, while the "dawn" indicates a new beginning in which Puerto Rico no longer experiences political subordination.

The following two sonnets present the efforts aimed at independence as yielding encouraging developments. The second poem is dedicated to Francisco Gonzalo "Pachín" Marín, a Puerto Rican poet and journalist who fought in the ranks of José Martí's Revolutionary Army in Cuba:

> ¡Y la ternura me enseñaste luego!
> Una gran Sed de manigua en fragancia.
> Un ir de rosas, leves de distancia
> modelando la sangre en que me entrego.
>
> ¡Martí, Martí de angélico sosiego,

[15] The figure of the doves is linked to mysticism due to their "ecstasy". Juan Martín Velasco explains that many foundational thinkers of the Christian mystic tradition connect this state to fusion with the divine (400-401).

de armonía en flor, la sed escancia!
Que ya viene la copa en dulce ansia
paseando la estrella en haz de fuego.

¡Qué linda está la aldea con sus alas!
¡El mar que cunde en su luciente abismo!
¡La casa de los élitros cantores!

Con Martí, Deseado de las balas
Pachín Marín remonta de sí mismo
por un cauce de bravos ruiseñores. (43)

The speaker begins the sonnet asserting that Pachín Marín has added to the process of subject formation began by Betances by teaching him "ternura", a necessary element in the Nationalist hero given that this figure does not seek to harm his opponent, only to convert him; he also mentions that Pachín imbued him with "un ir de rosas" whose color "models" the blood to which he freely gives himself. At this point, the sonnet pivots from relating the strengthening personal dedication of the speaker to exploring the more general results of Pachín's and Martí's struggles, which are just as generative. In the second quartet, it is stated that the thirst "escancia" or pours out, suggesting that the fervor for independence is becoming more prevalent. The following verse seems to indicate this as well, claiming that a cup bearing a star "ya viene", as though the present circumstances are due to change soon. Furthermore, one of the most significant aspects of this sonnet is that it traces a set of spaces that display a marked sense of vitality: the second verse depicts the "thirst" passed down as a "manigua en fragancia", casting the areas of wilderness in which the Cuban rebels fought Spanish colonial forces in the wars of independence as a fruitful site. The first tercet is composed of a list of spaces that are presented quite similarly due to the laudatory tone produced by the repeated exclamations. The first of its verses mentions the beauty of an "aldea con alas", as though it were getting ready to take flight, which could be understood as an act of transcendence; the ocean "cunde" or disseminates itself freely in its

"luciente abismo", calling up again the light that in *Luz de los héroes* always serves as a connection to divinity. The "casa" is linked to the "singers" described as "élitros", an entomological term used to describe the hardened sheaths that some insects use to protect their wings, suggesting that these singers help preserve the capacity for mystical connection. Finally, in the closing tercet Pachín also experiences such a connection alongside Martí through the "ruiseñor", a longstanding symbol in the Western poetic tradition that, in the work of a mystic like San Juan de la Cruz, represents a transformational ecstasy (López Baralt 2002, 106). In this case they seem to perform the same function, given that through them Pachín "remonta de sí mismo", an image that suggests he takes flight or elevates himself as though moving towards heaven, like the "aldea con alas". The principal idea of the poem is that the continuation of Betances' efforts by political "descendants" like Pachín Marín and Martí produced not only a sense of spiritual growth within the poetic voice but also a situation in which future agents, like the speaker himself, can further the cause of sovereignty.

The third sonnet focuses on José de Diego, a journalist and poet who was also an influential politician leading up to the Spanish American War and in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Although a member of Muñoz Rivera's mostly autonomist Partido Unión, de Diego began playing a prominent role in its pro-independence wing in 1913 (Ayala and Bernabe, 57).[16] "Sed de José Diego" explores the relationship between his poetry and his politics, and the

[16] Despite de Diego's pro-independence stance, he is an odd link in the political descendance being traced in these poems due to his employment as a lawyer for North American sugar interests. In 1910, de Diego argued in favor of increasing the number of acres a corporation could possess on the island from 500 to 5,000 (Ayala and Bernabe, 60), a measure that would have greatly added to the sugar industry's agricultural monopoly. Given that stewardship of the land was such a central concern to the Nationalist Party and that it acts as a thematic nucleus in *Luz de los héroes*, de Diego's backing of North American capitalism contrasts sharply with the perspective of other figures like Albizu Campos.

dominant idea regarding the titular figure is that he was consistently privy to an esoteric knowledge:

> ¡El Verbo, la Paloma y el Cordero!
> Triple sino de éste que embebía
> la Sed de los fulgores, y en poesía
> se manaba hasta el orbe del madero.
>
> ¡Sed latina y pitirre mañanero!
> Con su Laura la herencia recogía
> de las aves que van en tenso día
> robando de la noche su venero.
>
> ¡Oh Pedro, qué clamor de lira daba
> este Orfeo causal de frescas rosas
> desatadas en piedra cantarina!
>
> Era el oído del azul que hablaba.
> El que frente a su altar de mariposas
> presenta a su hijo de su sed divina. (45)

The sense that de Diego has a unique sensitivity to a divine reality appears from the first quartet, which associates the poet with the Word and the Lamb, two symbols for Jesus Christ, and the Dove, for Matos Paoli the symbol for the presence of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, it is stated that de Diego "embebía/la Sed de los fulgores", the verb indicating that he internalized a mysticism represented by the "thirst" and the "fulgores", a term signifying a subjective state of rapture akin to the ecstasy provoked by union with God. The most important facet of de Diego's representation is that his access to a transcendent realm is intimately tied to his poetry. The first quartet concludes by stating that through his poems de Diego "se manaba", a verb that likens him to the Nationalist hero of "Tranfiguración del heroe". With "Laura", the subject of one of his most renowned texts, de Diego likewise manages to recover the "herencia" of the "birds" who rob the night of its "venero" or spring, as though the poet gains the ability to reach the source of a natural phenomenon. The tercets only reinforce this notion, portraying de Diego as an Orpheus

whose lyre is capable of plenitude by producing roses and granting stones the ability to sing. Notably, de Diego also seems to share in Matos Paoli's celebration of sacrifice, given that he brings his "sed" before an altar, as if he were willing to offer it in order to reach a more ontologically perfect state. Within the political lineage that Matos Paoli is formulating, the principal function of de Diego is to have elaborated an aesthetic expression that accords with *Luz de los héroes*' desire to reach a transcendent divinity. If in this tetralogy Betances is the progenitor of the independence movement and Pachín Marín and Martí carry on his legacy through their martial efforts, de Diego is the figure who bestows a worthy poetic language to the struggle for a divine *patria*.

The tetralogy reaches its apex with Pedro Albizu Campos. Throughout the text Albizu is presented as a patriarchal figure and the maximum expression of fidelity to Puerto Rico; "Acción de Gracias del Puertorriqueño" is dedicated to "Al Amado en la Patria, Pedro Albizu Campos" and the poem "Destino de Hijo" refers to him as Matos Paoli's "father". The sonnet centered on him continues this trend:

> Amanecidos en la carne tuya,
> oh Padre, nuestra Sed en desafío
> supo herir el secreto del rocío
> portando el agua en celeste Aleluya.
>
> En áereo estupor que se encapulla
> el agua se posó en tu claro brío.
> Gritaste: ¡Bayoán, prende tu río
> en el pétreo Tabor de mi Jayuya!
>
> Y entonces, Padre, ¡qué reunion de vida!
> Tendamos nuestro azul hospitalario
> para que nos visite la Belleza.
>
> ¡Betances con su Virgen renacida,
> de Diego con su Laura, el Emisario
> con Pachín: Penetrad en la Princesa! (47)

The sense of culmination is apparent in the first quartet, which casts the Jayuya Uprising as the "sed" that began with Betances taking on an attitude of "desafío", although in this case it seems to have produced the desired results. According to the speaker, the efforts of the Nationalists managed to "herir el secreto del rocío", and the verb suggests that they have penetrated to an esoteric dimension that has not yet been tapped, given that it is described as "secret".[17] Furthermore, the "rocío" is explicitly portrayed by the quartet as bearing "el agua", the symbol of satisfying the thirst for national independence that the speaker mentions as not yet existing in "Sed de Betances"; this "agua" appears again in the second quartet directly connected to the Nationalist leader, since it "alights" on him. The first stanza clearly ascribes this apparently triumphal state of affairs to Albizu Campos, as the speaker notes that the will of the Nationalists reached such a high point because they are "amanecidos" in his flesh, enlightened by a corporeality willing to sacrifice itself for the patria. Finally, the notion that Albizu is the pinnacle of a historical process can be seen in the fact that he is present through apostrophe in "Sed de Betances" and "Sed de José de Diego", as though this figure were also present in these significant stages; in the final sonnet, "Pedro" transforms into "Padre", situating him in a position of maximum authority in the present struggle. However, the fact that he is treated here as the consummation of a political lineage does not relegate his predecessors to an inaccessible past, as perhaps the most striking feature of the poem is its final tercet, where the speaker exhorts the subjects of the prior sonnets to "penetrate" into the jail where Matos Paoli and Albizu were kept. "Sed de Pedro Albizu Campos" posits that these figures possess agency in the present,

[17] However, the "wound" the Nationalists perpetrated is once again a spiritually generative phenomenon, as the "rocío" is for Matos Paolis a symbol of "pureza, candor, inocencia" (I, 35). It should also be noted that the dew is a recurring symbol of God's presence in the Bible. For example, it first appears in Genesis 27:28, when Isaac proclaims to Esau "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven" (KJV, 107).

enough to apparently combat the repression facing the Nationalists following the Jayuya Uprising's failure. This indicates a vital continuity between the pro-independence movement's past and its more recent iterations, and I would argue that the principal objective of the tetralogy is to demonstrate that the Nationalists are not an epiphenomenon or a chance occurrence that arose without explanation. Rather, they are the continuation of a longstanding political impulse that gives their efforts historical legitimacy. With such a lineage, Matos Paoli's "isla amada" acquires a cohesive temporality to complement its harmonious space, and in this case the language of mysticism is also fundamental, given that it is the mystical experience of "Sed" that links these figures into an orderly progression.

The historical lineage of the mystic tellurism we have been exploring actually extends even farther into the past, to the indigenous Taínos. The clearest expression of this notion is the sonnet "La Escrita", which is significant not only for this reason but also because through its principal object the harmonious space of the island-patria and the unbroken succession of pro-independence struggles unite. Due to the presence of the Taíno petroglyphs, the stone could be understood as a merging of nature and culture, a principal feature of Matos Paoli's insularity, and indeed the poem emphasizes a sense of consolidation throughout:

> Ara la estrella de Betances. Una
> albada de varones cae en tierra.
> Pezuela y el Coabey atan su sierra
> en ardida guasábara de luna.
>
> La escrita mece el Grito: es madre y cuna.
> Bayoán la ausculta con su dedo en guerra.
> Y el guanín de la sangre en ella yerra
> vena a vena. Su luz en luz se aúna.
>
> Piedra que vas pasando tu corola
> de Betances a Albizu: piedra fuerte,
> floreal de irradiante cordillera.

De Lares y Jayuya mutual ola
que rompe de tu Eurídice la muerte
y en tu dura sazón la lira espera (73)

The central role of the titular stone is clearly displayed in the second quartet and first tercet. In the former, the poem portrays it as the source of the Grito de Lares, stating that it is the event's "mother", and emphasizes its ability to forge connections by mentioning that the "blood" that can be found in it disseminates itself "vena a vena". Perhaps most importantly, the Escrita reveals a mystic character, as its "light" begins to grow, a dimension of it that allows the stone to coincide with its location in the "irradiante cordillera" that is the Central Mountain Range, where Coabey and Jayuya are found. The phenomenon of the light, along with the "blood" inside it, connect the stone to the discourse of mystical sacrifice that is the nucleus of *Luz de los héroes*. Due to this, the Escrita is capable of "bequeathing" its corolla from Betances to Albizu, thereby solidifying the historical lineage between these pro-independence rebellions, only in this case the transmission is intimately tied to the land of Puerto Rico given that it is realized by the stone, a natural phenomenon. Indeed, the sonnet features a tightly woven network of different times and places, all of which are connected to the fight against colonialism. The first quarter mentions Pezuela and Coabey, the former being an estate owned by Manuel Rojas, one of the principal conspirators behind the Grito de Lares (Wagenheim, 49), while the latter was regarded by the Taínos as the site where the souls of the deceased resided (Oliver, 210). These sites metonymically refer to two different eras in Puerto Rico's history in which inhabitants of the island fought against those who would subordinate them, and the text notes that they "atan su sierra" to produce a coordinated "guasábara" or mutiny. Similarly, Lares joins in "mutua ola" with Jayuya in order to liberate the Escrita from death, uniting in this act the three epochs of anti-

colonial struggle as well as formulating a kind of pro-nationalist cartography of Puerto Rico.[18] Finally, not only are the past and present linked, the sonnet ends by noting that within the Escrita "la lira espera", thereby gesturing towards a hopeful future.

To conclude our exploration of the concept of historical lineage, it is necessary to analyze how *Luz de los héroes* conceives of Lares, because through this Matos Paoli develops his vision of how the Nationalist' consummate their political lineage. The event of the Grito of 1868 has been revisited by other poets during Puerto Rico's twentieth century, such as Luis Lloréns Torres in his play *El Grito de Lares* (1916) and Juan Antonio Corretjer in his extended poem *El Leñero (Poema de la Revolución de Lares*) (1936). Both of these authors cast the nineteenth century rebellion as a failed but ultimately fruitful act whose influence endures, and Matos Paoli does the same, although as Isabel Freire attests in her introduction to the 1992 edition of *Luz de los héroes*, his main contribution is the mystical dimension (i). Such a perspective is clear in the poem "Lares":

> Lares, que en vuelo verde se levanta
> una unción, un silencio de la tierra.
> Rige la rosa y la espina en guerra,
> da una nueva belleza a la garganta.
>
> Y la sangre se acerca hasta la planta
> del peregrino en Dios que el paso cierra
> en marcha constelada por la sierra

[18] Matos Paoli's portrayal of "La Escrita" as a point of historical union and evocation likens this object to what Pierre Nora has called *lieux de mémoire*, sites that consecrate narratives or events that are fundamental to a people's or nation's identities. However, there are some key differences between Nora's concept and the sites that *Luz de los héroes* marks as foundational to Puerto Rican subjectivity. According to the historian, *lieux de mémoire* are first taken out of historical context only to be returned to it in a revitalized sense, "no longer quite alive but not entirely dead" (7); furthermore, because of their institutionalization, they "no longer arouse militant conviction or passionate participation" (idem). This is precisely the opposite of La Escrita's role in the poem, which takes on a very active function that produces "militant conviction" in the "ardida guasábara" of the sites it ties together. As we saw in the "Tetralogía de la Sed", *Luz de los héroes* traces lineages to connect with the past and turn it into a keen force in the present.

donde el cielo se posa en lluvia tanta.

¡Lluvia del ruiseñor sobre la rosa!
Haz que el iris del hombre en savia lleve
su estrella ante el Altar, su voz en alto.

Lares que ardiste en madre generosa.
Sobre el fuego y la sed, el aire llueve
ternura de paloma en sobresalto. (83)

This text clearly conceives of the titular space as laden with religious import, a place where the "peregrino" and the "hombre en savia" can appear before an altar and contact a divine presence. In accordance with this potential for communication with God, the version of Lares offered here centers itself on a mystical lexicon. The poem begins by associating the place with a "vuelo verde", an image of fruitful ascension towards the heavens, and a "silencio de la tierra", a state of withdrawal closely connected with the practice of contemplation; Juan Martín Velasco notes that this act is a crucial exercise for mystics like Santa Teresa de Ávila and San Juan de la Cruz that readies the soul to experience God (360-67) by cloistering it away from earthly stimuli. Similarly, the sonnet concludes by noting that the over the "fire" and "thirst" the air "llueve/ternura de paloma", verses where the mystic's desire for union with divinity, symbolized by the "fire" and thirst", is answered by the "rain" of the Holy Spirit's dove. As it has been throughout the text, the Nationalist's holy war is ever present in the "espina en guerra" and the "sangre" that seeks to touch the pilgrim. I would argue that the particular significance of Lares is that it functions for Matos Paoli as the site of ultimate connection between the fight for national independence and the spiritual quest to contact God; he states as much in his diaries, where he writes that Lares is the location of the two nuclei of his "poetic essence": "la presencia mística de mi madre Susana y la gesta heroica de 1868" (I, 47). It is in this twinned center that the link between the political and the divine resides, because the poet understands the impulse to achieve

national sovereignty as a "corolario directo de mi concepción metafísica de Dios. Entiendo lo inmanente como una encarnación de Dios en la historia" (I, 48). Due to the importance that Matos Paoli ascribes to the Grito of 1868, Lares can be understood as the space where God irrupted into Puerto Rican history, and it is through this representation that *Luz de los héroes* contributes to the pro-independence lineage it has formulated. In the "Tetralogía de la Sed" we saw that the first three figures give the Nationalists a historical legitimacy by acting as their predecessors and contributing to the formation of a Puerto Rican subject willing to fight and die for their homeland. By portraying Lares as a site of connection with God, *Luz de los héroes* argues that the Nationalist mystic hero has granted the project for Puerto Rican independence a spiritual transcendence that places it beyond the sphere of history into that of the divine, that which serves as the basis of "lo inmanente". The "patria" thus becomes not just a political imperative, but an ontological one as well.

Forging a Counterdiscourse

Now that we have explored the three thematic nuclei of *Luz de los héroes*, we can turn to how Matos Paoli's conception of the island enters into dialogue with the notion that it is incompatible with the sovereign nation. We analyzed this idea last chapter through the works of Zambrano and Jiménez, both of whom were contemporaries of Matos Paoli, although neither of them is an explicit interlocutor of the text. However, it turns out that the poet does address another literary figure who developed a notably similar perspective.

This would be José Gautier Benítez, a nineteenth century romantic poet who produced various texts extolling the natural beauty of Puerto Rico. Although Zambrano and Jiménez do not refer to him in their elaboration of insularity, through Matos Paoli's engagement with Gautier Benítez we can better understand how *Luz de los héroes* posits an alternative understanding of

the island. The relevant poem of Gautier Benítez is "A Puerto-Rico (ausencia)", where a speaker who reveals himself to be in exile addresses himself through apostrophe to his homeland, expressing his admiration for the nature found there and his desire to return. In his pained representation of the "patria mía" (62), the poetic voice speaks to it with the striking lines "Te miro, sí, placentera/de la Isla separada,/como una barquilla anclada/muy cerca de la ribera" (63). Once again, these verses posit that the "patria" and the island are not mutually constitutive spaces, since in the speaker's vision they appear as identifiably separate. Gautier Benítez's text also elaborates a discourse of love that begins with the verses that state "Y brotas a mi deseo/como espléndido miraje,/ornada con el ropaje/del amor con que te veo" (idem). Here, the speaker indicates that his vision of Puerto Rico is markedly aesthetic in the second verse, which defines the island as an "espléndido miraje", as though it were a beautiful fantasy. Moreover, the poetic voice explicitly connects the fantastical character of Puerto Rico with his "love", given that the island appears before him "ornada" in its trappings, the present participle again suggesting that through its "amor" Puerto Rico surfaces as an intricately wrought ornament. The poem then confirms the aestheticizing of the island when the speaker explains that he feels such passion for it in part because it is the home of his "doncella", which he describes as "la perla brillante,/en tus entrañas formada" while Puerto Rico serves as the "concha nacarada/que guarda la perla amante" (64). The poem ends a few stanzas later without mentioning again the divergence between island and "patria", as if such a split were naturalized or could not be addressed in any way. As it happens, the discourse of "love" expressed in the poem produces the division between "patria" and island: the speaker states that his "amor" is a phenomenon through which he experiences Puerto Rico as an exile ("del amor con que te veo"), and the stanza in which he partitions the spaces begins immediately after that line with the verse "Te miro, sí".

Gautier Benítez's "amor" emphasizes an aesthetic perspective of Puerto Rico that discursively marginalizes the *patria* that is the principal goal of Matos Paoli's text.

Luz de los héroes revises the way in which Gautier Benítez represents the island "A mi adorada Isabelita", a poem written in *redondillas,* octosyllabic quartets (Domínguez Caparrós, 188) that appeared in sixteenth century Spain as a popular form. An implicit clue that Matos Paoli is rethinking insularity appears in the beginning of the poem, which states "No veo la luz tan pura/de mi Borinquen amada" (idem). The significance of these verses lies in the phrase "Borinquen amada", which can be considered an iteration of the first version of the figure of the island in *Luz de los héroes*, the "isla amada" mentioned in "Acción de gracias del puertorriqueño". For Matos Paoli, love is an affective phenomenon that leads to political and civic duties, specifically the fight against North American colonialism, a connection that is explored in his diaries through the figure of the Nationalist hero: "Lo heroico no quiere decir dispersión, atónito desplazamiento en lo bélico…Lo heroico consiste en la aceleración del poder virtuoso del amor" (I, 190). Unlike the "amor" that leads the speaker of "A Puerto-Rico (ausencia)" only to contemplate the beauty of his homeland, love in Matos Paoli's text convinces the hero to fight for political independence. The poem furthers its perspective in favor of national sovereignty by its use of the term "Borinquen", the Taíno name for Puerto Rico prior to the Spaniards' arrival. As we have seen, for Matos Paoli the indigenous represent the earliest iteration of the struggle against colonialism, serving as the progenitors of his mystic tellurism. For the text to cast Puerto Rico as "Borinquen" is thus for it to add a fundamental political dimension to the aesthetic vision of the island that Gautier Benítez develops in his poetry.

The more explicit discursive gesture in "A mi adorada Isabelita" with regards to Gautier Benítez is the linking of Puerto Rico to divinity. This move is realized in the verses "Que

Borinquen es jardín/dijo Gautier el romántico./Y yo digo que es un cántico/de flor que no encuentra su fin" (63). In these verses the poetic voice refers to Gautier's "Puerto Rico", a poem in which the titular island is treated as a beautiful garden that possesses unparalleled natural beauty and sensual delight: "¡Borinquen! Nombre al pensamiento grato/como el recuerdo de un amor profundo; bello jardín, de América el ornato,/siendo el jardín América del mundo" (157). Matos Paoli's redefinition of Puerto Rico as a "cántico" in opposition to Gautier Benítez is more than a literary quibble, as the term that the speaker uses refers to a religious hymn or song, and we have seen that in *Luz de los héroes* the divine is intimately connected with the fight that would make the island and the "patria" one. It should also be noted that *Luz de los héroes* often associates independence with songs or music: "21 de marzo", a poem that celebrates the continuation of the Nationalists' fight, begins with the verse "Ya la canción es más clara" (9) and "Isla desde la Princesa" claims that the "patria" appears "cantada del Atlántico" (39). To define Puerto Rico as a canticle is thus to negate the spiritual decay of colonialism and unite the island with its form as a "patria".[19] This movement towards a more politically realized future is captured by Julio Ortega when he asserts that in Matos Paoli's poetry there exist two variants of Puerto Rico, the "isla de la melancolía" associated with the prison, and the patria that is "su virtualidad paradisíaca" (22). "A mi adorada Isabelita" indicates the nation's incomplete status repeatedly: in its opening verse, the speaker states that he cannot see "la luz tan pura" of Borinquen, presumably because its continued colonization obscures the radiant divinity of independence. Moreover, the canticle that is Puerto Rico "no encuentra su fin", an image that suggests an enduring extension into the future, represents that ongoing search for a more

[19] Throughout his diaries, Matos Paoli recurrently equates colonization with ontological corruption. For example, the in the second volume he asserts "La colonia es aislamiento, incomunicación, desamor…crea el vacío espiritual" (II, 12-31).

perfected Puerto Rico, one that *Luz de los héroes* acknowledges is yet to be made.

We noted in the introduction that the wartime context could be understood as a matrix of divergent representations of subjects and spaces, as well as of political ideologies. Like the disparity between Gautier Benítez and Matos Paoli, an apt example of this collection of opposing perspectives would be the stark difference between Jiménez's *simpatía* and Matos Paoli's "amor", two terms drawn from the language of affect that produce contrasting visions of Puerto Rican society. The former emphasizes the development of aesthetic appreciation and cultural diffusion, while the latter calls for a mystic martyrdom that will transform the island from a colony into a sovereign state. Because of the intimate relationship between the hero and love, the "isla amada" of *Luz de los héroes* enters into direct opposition to Zambrano's *Isla de Puerto Rico* and Jiménez's *Isla de la simpatía*, texts that focused their attention on how Puerto Rico could be of use to a hemispheric order that would bring about political stability and cultural development, but that also ignored how such a disposition would perpetuate the island's colonial status. *Luz de los héroes* reverses the latter's perspective that is narrowly centered on Puerto Rico's international role by exploring how the Puerto Rican people can reconstitute an ontological connection with the space they inhabit. In doing so, its understanding of insularity explicitly opposes the territorial status of Puerto Rico that Zambrano and Jiménez endorse either implicitly, as the former did in her rejection of nationalism, or explicitly, as the latter did in his support for the Estado Libre Asociado. Throughout his text, Matos Paoli insistently argues that to contribute to Puerto Rico's territoriality is to ignore its revolutionary past, to negate the redemptive potential of its present and future, and to sever its rightful connection to the realm of the divine.

The triumph of the Partido Popular Democrático's Operation Bootstrap and the establishment of the Estado Libre Asociado cemented Puerto Rico's role in the United States'

political orbit. In the key years between 1940 and 1952, the increasing collaboration between the PPD and the mainland government lead to significant socioeconomic effects on Puerto Rico and its associated islands, such as the military appropriation of lands and the recruitment of Puerto Ricans in both World War II and the Korean War. In the literary sphere, these events also produced a notable impact, directly influencing how authors and intellectuals in Puerto Rico envisioned its role with respect to the United States, Latin America, and the rest of the world. This in turn shaped various notions of insularity. Indeed, the ways Zambrano and Jiménez understand the fact that Puerto Rico is an island is molded by their wartime context: Zambrano explicitly relates her notion of Puerto Rico as an Edenic site of democracy to the war in Europe, while Jiménez's idea of *simpatía* parallels the PPD's determination to create a hemispheric paragon of capitalism and democracy in the early years of the Cold War. The dichotomy between insularity and sovereign nation that these figures posited can be understood as a particular reaction to the militarization of Puerto Rico, an opting for internationalism that, according to Álvarez Curbelo, took precedence over nationalism in many ideological sectors during much of the Cold War. The texts by *independentista* authors we analyzed in this chapter assume the opposite perspective on this discursive binary and also respond to the increasing conscription of their society into armed conflict. The short stories by González and Valcárcel demonstrate the limits and destructive results of the PPD's triumphalist narrative of Puerto Rican participation in the Korean War, while Matos Paoli's poems emphatically argue for a mystical vision of insularity that foregrounds the equivalence between island and "patria". Despite the failure of the Jayuya uprising and the virtual dismantling of their party, the efforts of Albizu Campos, Matos Paoli and the Nationalists would serve as a stimulus to other pro-independence organizations in the following decades.

Chapter 4. Towards a Greater Horizon: Political Space in "El país de cuatro pisos" y *La llegada*

Despite its quick defeat, the Jayuya Uprising of 1950 remained a powerful gesture of resistance to the Partido Popular Democrático's collaboration with the United States. Just six years after, the journalist and author César Andreu Iglesias would explore the ideological dynamics of the Nationalist Party and its rebellion in his novel *Los derrotados* (1956). As the title might suggest, the novel takes a critical stance on the aborted uprising and the political relationship between the Nationalists and the rest of the Puerto Rican people, presenting the former as an exclusive sect that is alienated from their fellow citizens. The action takes place a few years after the events of 1950 and centers on Marcos Vega, an idealistic young man whose ardor for national independence leads him to concoct a plot with other underground Nationalists to assassinate a number of North American officials; the plot goes awry and Marcos finds himself in La Princesa, the very same prison that held Albizu Campos and Matos Paoli. There, he encounters Francisco Ramos, a union leader imprisoned for political agitation, and they carry out a debate that comprises the text's final chapter. At a crucial juncture in the conversation, Francisco states that Marcos's flaw is that he understands the "patria" as a mystical phenomenon, and then claims "Para mí, la patria es un edificio en construcción…hay que orientar al pueblo, porque sin el pueblo no se puede edificar la patria" (303). The image of an independent nation as a type of building or edifice, as well as the clear emphasis on socioeconomic class relations, would later be appropriated by another significant pro-independence author and intellectual, José Luis González.

Beginning his literary career in the 1940s, José Luis González would eventually write a number of very influential short stories, essays, and novels in the next few decades. Among his most notable works are "En el fondo del caño hay un negrito" (1954), which concerns the

poverty of working-class Puerto Ricans in the era of Operation Bootstrap; "Una caja de plomo que no se podia abrir" (1954) which examines the repercussions of Puerto Ricans' participation in the Korean War; and "La noche que volvimos a ser gente" (1970), a story that chronicles Puerto Rican immigrants' process of identity formation in New York. This chapter will focus primarily on two texts written by González in 1979, the landmark essay "El país de cuatro pisos (Notas para una definición de la cultura puertorriqueña)" and the novel *La llegada: Crónica con "ficción"* (1980). As its title indicates, the essay is the text that takes up Andreu Iglesias' image of the building as its central metaphor to explore Puerto Rican national culture, whose four "floors" each correspond not only to a specific set of historical events, but also to distinct ethnic and racial groups that are divided along sharp socioeconomic lines. I will be analyzing this essay alongside González's novel because *La llegada* constitutes a more detailed exploration of the beginning of the third floor: the text is composed of thirteen chapters, all narrated from the perspective of varying citizens of a fictional town in central Puerto Rico, during one day towards the end of hostilities between the United States and Spanish armies. It can thus be stated that *La llegada* is a fictionalization or novelization of "El país de cuatro pisos", as the conclusions regarding Puerto Rican culture and the development of a class structure predicated on a dependent capitalism are identical.

Many critics have noted the intimate connection between these texts, and they have provided compelling accounts of their formal and thematic components as well as their importance to the cultural debates that were raging in Puerto Rico throughout the 1970s. Since the publication of "El país de cuatro pisos", its notion of Puerto Rican culture being based primarily on its Afro-Antillean elements has been celebrated (Flores [1984]) as both novel and controversial, while others have highlighted its reworking of the paternalistic and Eurocentric

idea of the "la gran familia puertorriqueña" (Perkowska [2000], Rangelova [2016]) through its insistence on the primacy of popular culture. With regards to *La llegada*, critics have tended to focus extensively on its representation of history or its most striking formal component, the intertextual inclusion of photographs from the collection *Our Islands and their People, as Seen with Camera and Pencil* (1899) by William S. Bryan (Irizarry [1998], Díaz Quiñones [2000], Perkowska-Álvarez [2003]).[1] This preceding criticism forms the basis of my readings of the texts in question, but I intend to explore an aspect of "El país de cuatro pisos" and *La llegada* that until now has not drawn sufficient attention, namely the way in which they envision various forms of political spatialities, such as the the "país", the plantation, and the island. Although these forms are closely related, they each arise from distinct political, socioeconomic, and cultural perspectives that bestow them with differing relations to the United States and diverging trajectories for the development of a national culture. At the heart of this chapter will lie two figures, that of the island and the "país", which as we will see are diametrically opposed in terms of the role that the United States will play in the development of Puerto Rican society. Given the inextricable link between these two spaces, it will be necessary not only to determine how González conceives of insularity in *La llegada* but also to discern the meaning of the "país", another issue which has not been considered adequately. Both of these terms appear in the novel, which is why it will function as the primary text in the second half while the essay will take precedence in the first. The reason for this structure is mainly due to the novel being a fictionalization of the essay, as stated above, but is also motivated by the fact that González's exploration of the political spaces proceeds mostly through indirect suggestion, especially in the

[1] For thorough explorations of the colonial valence of the photographic project of William S. Bryan and others during and in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, see García 2000, Duany 2001, and Thompson 2007.

case of the "país", with each text presenting important elements that the other does not. Therefore, I would like to begin by analyzing what the essay briefly indicates about the nation and the "país" and how these are opposed to the figure of the building, to then more fully explore the "país" and its dynamic with the island through the novel.[2]

González's usage of the term "país" is rather indirect, for although he utilizes it in the very title of his essay, he does not define it explicitly in that text. "País" does appear more regularly in *La llegada*, although its meaning is also never directly explained: on several distinct occasions, characters ranging from an annexationist *criollo* lawyer, to a disillusioned *independentista*, to a former slave refer to those born in Puerto Rico as "hijos del país". González does offer an account of the nation in his essay, where he presents it from a Marxist perspective of class conflict as a possibility that only the ascendant *hacendados* and the professional class could have realized in the second half of the nineteenth century, but did not due to their relative socioeconomic weakness. My principal contention is that just as the nation is a political space most closely associated in the second half of the nineteenth century with the ascendant Puerto Rican *criollos*, the author understands the "país" as another political space linked to the embryonic proletariat and the popular classes that would gain some influence after 1898 and that are presented most sympathetically in *La llegada*. The plantation, meanwhile, is presented as a wholly undesirable form for Puerto Rico because it would be established and controlled by the *criollos* for economic power at the expense of political independence. Finally, the island is

[2] The essay and the novel covered here were not the first time that González used the term "país", a fact that points to its enduring importance in his work. The most notable example prior to these texts is *Paisa–un relato de la emigración*– (1950), which tells of the hardships that Puerto Ricans encountered as immigrants in New York. Once again, humble members of the popular class are not referred to as members of a nation, but as subjects who belong to a "país", a space more closely linked to their socioeconomic subordination.

another political space that the novel rejects, as insularity only ever appears through the racist, imperialist perspective of a North American colonel and is not utilized by the Puerto Rican characters. By formulating alternative spaces that vindicate racialized and economically disadvantaged groups, González's texts thus relativize the cultural and political logics that Pedreira, Zambrano, Jiménez, and Matos Paoli expressed through the figure of the island.

Specifically, they reject *Insularismo's* ambivalence about the status question and explicitly link cultural with political development. Likewise, they dismiss *Isla de Puerto Rico*'s and *Isla de la simpatía*'s Hispanophilia and their disavowal of national sovereignty. "El país de cuatro pisos" and *La llegada* share in *Luz de los héroes*' commitment to independence, but they also rework some of the central ideas we explored in the last chapter. Not only is insularity disassociated from the *patria*, González also crucially troubles the immediate transformation from colony to liberation that Matos Paoli's poems assume. That is, for Puerto Rico to reach national sovereignty, it must first shift its socioeconomic and racialized structures to produce a democratically socialist society manifested by the "país". Therefore, by studying González's works, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of how the various spaces that we have tracked so far in this dissertation interact and what they signal for Puerto Rico's future.

Although it is *La llegada* that most fully develops the notion of the "país", the significance of this form of political space for Puerto Rico is not limited to a bygone era that briefly existed at the turn of the twentieth century.[3] Rather, the "país" is fundamental to the

[3] The liminality of this form is indicated by the fact that *La llegada* portrays the events of one day in the Spanish America War. The events that transpire in the novel occur on August 8, four days before the United States and Spain signed a Protocol of Peace that effectively ended the hostilities. This means that on August 8, Puerto Rico's status as a Spanish colony was ending, but it was not yet a North American territory either, since that designation was made in December of 1898 when the Treaty of Paris was formalized, and national sovereignty was not possible at this moment.

future of national sovereignty that González posits in the closing pages of his essay, which moves rhetorically from recounting the creation of national culture to a programmatic vision for establishing Puerto Rican independence based on a democratic socialism directed by the proletariat and the popular classes. In other words, the "país" is a kind of incipient nation that by dispelling the control of the local *criollo* elite would evade the colonial dependence to which the Puerto Rican upper class contributed by initially welcoming United States control over the island. The notion of the "país" is therefore integral for solving the issue of Puerto Rico's territorial status, which had become once again a crucial political question in the final years of the 1960s and all throughout the 1970s. By negating Puerto Rico's condition of "non-incorporated territory", which the United States Supreme Court would again uphold in *Harris v. Santiago Rosario* (1980), national sovereignty would also allow for a more measured relationship to foreign capital, especially that of North America. Indeed, one of the most significant aspects of the political spaces we have mentioned is that each one possesses a particular dynamic to the more highly developed capitalism of the United States, and that these dynamics all imply varying statuses for Puerto Rico.

Before examining the historical context in which these texts were produced, I would like to briefly consider the issue of genre with respect to *La llegada* and how this relates to the formulation of space. As we noted when introducing it, the work is a novel that focuses on the events of one day through the perspectives of various characters who each represent a racial and socioeconomic position in Puerto Rico at the turn of the twentieth century. The way in which *La llegada* imagines the various spaces to be studied is intimately tied to its status as a novel, to the "ficción" that appears in its subtitle, because this particular genre allows for the shifts in the political, cultural, and socioeconomic structures to be portrayed and apprehended through the

point of view of those characters.[4] In other words, it emphasizes the notion of *aesthesis* that Rancière developed and that we briefly explored in the introduction: "the system of *a priori* forms determining what presents itself to sense experience. It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and stakes of politics" (13). The focalization by such diverse characters through the "ficción" permits us to explore how social and racial hierarchies make some of those spaces more possible or concrete than others, a perspective that is not quite as explicit in Rancière's account. *La llegada* can thus be understood as an account of a clash of aesthetics, of different modes of apprehending a society, as well as of the historical forces that create possible kind of apprehension even as they foreclose them.

Into this clash enters the "país". The principal contribution of this space is its emphasizing of the inextricable connection between class and race, embodied in the character of Quintín Correa, the figure closest to being the protagonist. In the texts we have studied so far, none have offered an extended meditation on the historical development of either of these phenomena: *Insularismo* attends to race in a highly essentialized way that presents it as absolute and timeless, Zambrano does not mention it at all, Jiménez echoes Pedreira's essentializing

[4] The fact that the subtitle of *La llegada* indicates it is a "crónica" is undoubtedly fundamental, and a clue as to the function of this other dimension is given before the action begins. The epigraph is a passage from *El estrecho dudoso* (1966), a book-length poem about the Spanish "discovery" and conquest of what is present-day Central America written by the Nicaraguan Catholic priest and revolutionary Ernesto Cardenal. The passage concerns a struggle between a powerful count and a chronicler of the Spanish Crown, who in his history of the conquest apparently portrays one of the counts ancestor's in a negative light, leading the noble to request that this section be omitted. The epigraph ends with the chronicler responding steadfastly: "NON DEBE EL CORONISTA DEJAR FACER SU OFICIO". The "cronica" is thus a potentially subversive genre that can be used to undermine narratives that are widely accepted or tied to power structures, and this is precisely what González sets out to do in *La llegada* and "El país de cuatro pisos" regarding Puerto Rican culture. The plumbing of hidden histories through the "crónica" is also a central element in the conflict of aesthetics.

through his persistent exoticism, and Matos Paoli only refers to the indigenous legacy of Puerto Rico while discounting its African inheritance. Likewise, most of these works do not concern themselves with socioeconomic matters with the exception of Pedreira's, though *Insularismo* mainly focuses on these issues with respect to the United States and not within Puerto Rico's own history. My intention with these comparisons is to signal that *La llegada* addresses a few critical dimensions that are missing from the preceding texts' construction of space; that is, González's texts formulate a spatial aesthetics of race and class in that they highlight the link between these three phenomena. The crafting of a language of space is integral to the author's political project, since the sovereign nation he hopes Puerto Rico will be is based on the Afro-Antillean democratic socialism that the "país" names and makes comprehensible. In such a relation between the production of space and language we can see a contrast between Lefebvre's distrust of discursive signs, given that in *La llegada* the act of granting a term like the "país" to a particular meaning is the first step in creating a Puerto Rico whose relations of production, spatiality, and dynamic to the United States are radically transformed.

The issue of Puerto Rico's connection to the United States and its capital had reached a point of crisis in the early to mid 1970s. In chapters two and three, we saw how the PPD had established not only the Estado Libre Asociado but also Operación Manos a la Obra, which in 1947 had begun granting tax exemptions to North American companies in order to attract funds with which to industrialize the island. The Nationalist Party's Jayuya Uprising was the most notable political challenge to the PPD in the 1950s and most of the 1960s, and in the economic sphere Operación Manos a la Obra had been an eminent success. As Frank Bonilla and Ricardo Campos attest, the growth of Puerto Rican manufacturing had produced a 6% growth in GDP during the decade of the 1950s and a 5% growth for the 1960s, the second highest per capita

income in Latin America, and the highest index of per capita imports of United States goods (1982, 559). However, this uninterrupted process of development would end with the recession of 1973-75, which affected capitalist markets throughout the Americas and Europe. In Puerto Rico, GDP growth fell from 6% in the 1960s to 3.3% in the 1970 and the unemployment rate was 17% in 1980. Furthermore, federal transfers such as food stamps and other welfare programs rose from $500 million to $6 billion between 1970 and 1990, accounting for 30 percent of personal income (Ayala and Bernabe, 267). Although many of these issues were due to a generalized trend in global capitalism, the problem of unemployment was directly related to the strategies that the PPD had adopted starting with the Industrial Incentives Act of 1947. Given that Operación Manos a la Obra depended on North American capital, it was necessary to maintain wages for the island workers at a lower level relative to the mainland, a need that contributed to Puerto Rican families' immigration to the United States. Moreover, many of the North America plants established in Puerto Rico belonged to industries that required fewer employees: in 1979, "capital-intensive enterprises" used 34,600 workers, only a fifth of the island's active work force, while gaining $2 billion in profit (Campos and Bonilla, 1981, 143). This led to a reversal of the Operación Manos a la Obra's original purpose, as the infusion of foreign capital into the Puerto Rican economy resulted in higher unemployment, not lower (Campos and Bonilla, 1982, 562). The continued link between Puerto Rico and the United States forged through capitalism in the preceding two decades now seemed like a shackle that would lead the island to economic failure if it continued. Rethinking this connection will be at the core of González's formulation of political space, particularly that of the "país".

Given that Puerto Rico's economic debility had resulted in part from the PPD's flagship policies, the political scene on the island underwent very significant changes in the final years of

the 1960s and throughout the 1970s. The most important development in this period was the resurgence of the pro-statehood movement, which as the Partido Estadista Republicano had lost electoral influence during Muñoz Marín's long reign as governor that ended in 1964. The Partido Estadista Republicano had been suffering internal strife for some time until it finally broke apart due to the possibility of another plebiscite on the status question. A faction of the PER, led by Luis A. Ferré, considered the plebiscite a possibility to demonstrate the Puerto Ricans' desire to more fully join the United States (Meléndez, 94). In 1967, Ferré helped found the Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP), which campaigned for the statehood option for the plebiscite held that same year; despite their efforts, the Estado Libre Asociado emerged victorious with 60.4% of the vote to statehood's 39% (Ayala and Bernabe, 224). However, the following year the PPD lost its first election since 1940 to the newly formed PNP. Although the PNP lost the 1972 elections to the PPD now headed by Rafael Hernández Colón, it recovered control of the governorship in 1976, by then under the leadership of Carlos Romero Barceló. With Ferré at the helm, the PNP focused on what Edgardo Meléndez has termed the "politics of redemption", a program that aimed for economic stability based on the development of local capital and the reconfiguration of the island's links to North American finance, while also pursuing political stability by advocating for Puerto Rico's transformation into a state (115-16). There were even some signs from the federal government that the island's status could soon change: in the last months of his administration, President Ford has proposed that Congress begin the process of admitting Puerto Rico as a state (Ayala and Bernabe, 246). The pro-independence, socialist internationalism that *La llegada* and "El país de cuatro pisos" elaborate is in part designed to oppose statehood and the concomitant preservation of capitalism in Puerto Rico.

Despite the rise of the statehood movement and the relative resistance of the PPD to the

shifts in the political scene, the Puerto Rican Left was not powerless in this period. Indeed, it had experienced its own kind of resurgence in the 1960s and 70s, although it would not enjoy the level of electoral support that the ELA or *estadidad* would. Perhaps the most significant force on the Puerto Rican Left at this time was the Movimiento Pro Independencia (MPI), founded in 1959 by veteran pro-independence figures like Juan Mari Bras, Carmen Rivera de Alvarado, and César Andreu Iglesias who took the Cuban Revolution as a point of departure for their own activities (Ayala and Bernabe, 227). Inspired in part by this event, in 1969 the MPI declared its principal ideology to be Marxism-Leninism, reconstituted itself as the Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño two years later, and in 1972 convinced the United Nations' Decolonization Committee to once again have hearings on Puerto Rico's status, a procedure that had not been carried out since the creation of the ELA. The Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño also underwent a reformation at this time, with its new leader Rubén Berríos arguing that the overcoming of capitalism through democratic socialism was just as necessary as ending colonialism (Ayala and Bernabe, 229). González's texts, with their explicit support of the proletariat and their call for Puerto Rican sovereignty, could be considered as having engaged with these movements. Aside from his positing that Puerto Rican national culture was based upon that of the Afro-Antillean community on the island, his most significant contribution was to produce a political spatial form that could be associated with this perspective. González himself was a longtime member of the Puerto Rican Communist Party, which was officially founded in 1934 in the midst of the Great Depression's devastating impact on the Puerto Rican economy. In its beginnings, this party geared itself towards organizing a series of popular movements that would ideally contribute to a revolutionary climate among the proletariat, as well as a broad anti-imperialist popular front (García and Quintero Rivera, 111-13). González joined their ranks in

the early 1940s and contributed to an influential literary publication of the Puerto Rican Left of New York, *Pueblos Hispanos*, which promoted independence for the island.[5] The Communist Party's desire to base its approach through mass movements would later find an important echo in González's call for a socialist transformation centered on the popular classes, which will also play a central role in how he imagines the Caribbean should organize against colonial capitalism.

Finally, to fully understand *La llegada* and "El país de cuatro pisos", it is fundamental to consider the impact of the intellectual movement known as the "Nueva Historia". This current was based on the work of a number of Puerto Rican economic historians such as Ángel Quintero Rivera, Fernando Picó, José Curet, Guillermo Baralt, Andrés Ramos Mattei, Luis Edgardo Díaz Hernández, and others. Influenced by the Marxist historiography of figures like E.P. Thompson, these scholars founded the Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Puertorriqueña in 1970, and began to write histories focused on "different labor forms and the specific organization of individual producing units, particularly sugar and coffee haciendas…structures of the economy, its classes, and their evolution, while identifying the motive force of the historical processes at work" (Dietz, 211).[6] The kind of historiography these scholars were producing undermined many of the established notions regarding Puerto Rican history, culture, and society, often demonstrating that these were quite limited to representing the perspective of the elite *criollos*. One of the entrenched ideas that a number of the scholars associated with this movement contradicted was

[5] After the founding of the ELA, the repression against communism in Puerto Rico forced him into exile in México for two decades. For more on the topic of exile and its influence on González, see Rodríguez Castro 2003 and Irizarry 2006.

[6] For some examples of this historiography, see Fernando Picó's *Amargo café (Los pequeños y medianos caficultores de Utuado en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX)* (1981), José Curet's *De la esclavitud a la abolición: Transiciones económicas en las haciendas azucareras de Ponce, 1845-1873* (1981), and *La hacienda azucarera: Su crecimiento y crisis en Puerto Rico (Siglo XIX)* (1981).

the historical meaning of North American intervention in 1898. A recurring notion among later intellectuals and historians was that this sudden interference and its aftermath constituted an "invasión" that produced a "década de perplejidades casi trágicas…Era sencillamente el *trauma*: el violento desgarre histórico" (159-60), in the words of Francisco Manrique Cabrera, who authored the influential *Historia de la literatura puertorriqueña* (1956). From the perspective of a scholar of the "Nueva Historia" like Ángel Quintero Rivera in his *Conflictos de clase y política en Puerto Rico* (1977), the focus shifts from the dynamic between the North Americans and the local elite to the relationship between the latter and the popular class. Such class relations are again fundamental in *La llegada* and "El país de cuatro pisos", texts that will seek to displace the social and cultural hegemony of the *criollos* and reimagine the effects of the Spanish-American War. Basing my argument on the fact that González shared the historical vision of the "Nueva historia", I contend that his contribution to this discourse is an imaginary that investigates how the main political tendencies in Puerto Rico have forged spatial political forms and been shaped by them. Moreover, González argues that one such form, the "país", was and still is the only option with which to solve the perennial status issue. However, national sovereignty is not the final goal, but rather a significant prelude to the founding of a Pan-Caribbean confederation. The drive towards such a confederation represents a dialectical attempt to imagine a greater geopolitical, cultural, and socioeconomic scale that evades the insular and goes beyond the national without annulling it. The object is a more unified system whose cohesion would prevent the kind of dependent capitalism that has characterized Puerto Rico's economy throughout the twentieth century.

<u>The View from the 1970s: A Crumbling Present and an Urgent Future</u>

Though it's possible that González appropriated the building as a metaphor for creating

the *patria* from Andreu Iglesias, "El país de cuatro pisos" engages with this figure in a critical way. That is, while the text does organize its exploration of Puerto Rican culture and history through "floors", it actually understands the successive formation of this building as a crucial distortion in Puerto Rico's social development. While Andreu Iglesias thinks of establishing the nation and assembling the edifice as identical, González will argue that independence can only be imagined once the edifice has disappeared. For this reason, I would argue against Malena Rodríguez Castro, who claims that "El país de cuatro pisos" attempts to present a narrative that would lend stability to Puerto Rican identity. According to Rodríguez Castro, the effect of coherence is achieved particularly through the rhetorical figure of the house, which is "un espacio de cohesion interna en cuyos límites las pequeñas desavenencias y las diferencias particulares se dirimen en la pertenencia a una identidad común" (37). While I agree that the essay demonstrates a clear impulse to encompass as much of Puerto Rican history and culture as possible into an intelligible representation, it seems to me that a desire for coherence in which heterogeneities and discordant elements are negated through the figure of the house or building does not accurately describe González's metaphor. Indeed, it is rather a tropology of deterioration and disharmony that characterizes the "house" or "building" that the essay imagines. More specifically, this tropology applies to the last three "floors", for the text makes a subtle but clear distinction between the first level and the following ones, in which the latter are presented as a ruinous divergence from the former. However, the development of global capitalism and Puerto Rican society have created the opportunity for the resurgence of the culture that was being created until the nineteenth century, although clearly not under the same conditions. It will be this culture, and the spatial political forms of the "país" and the sovereign nation associated with it, that will act as the base for the Pan-Caribbean confederation for which

the author so urgently calls.

One of the central ideas that González develops in his essay and in the novel is the fundamental role that African slaves and their descendants play in the history of the island.[7] The author imagines this racial group to have been the progenitors of the popular culture of Puerto Rico, which is also portrayed as being the origin of all culture on the island due to it ostensibly being the first (19). The principal reason for this originary character is that, according to González, the Africans on the island were "los más atados al territorio" by virtue of their enslavement and thus "dificilmente podían pensar en la posibilidad de hacerse de otro país" (20). As we will see in *La llegada*, the purpose of González's positing of an essentialized, deterministic relation between the descendants of the African slaves and the land is to establish a tellurism that will contrast sharply with the local *criollo* dependence on the foreign. What is *not* represented in the novel due to its restricted historical focus, but *is* asserted in the essay, is the consequence of the tellurism of the popular culture of Puerto Rico as it was ostensibly developed in what the author presents as the first epoch of the island's history. According to González, the most significant effect of this first level is that "La cultura popular puertorriqueña, de carácter esencialmente afroantillano, nos hizo, durante los tres primeros siglos de nuestra historia pos-colombina, un pueblo caribeño más" (22). Despite this apparent synchrony with other Caribbean

[7] González's vision of Puerto Rican culture sharply contradicts Pedreira's, who held that the African racial dimension added nothing of value to the island and who viewed all *negros*, *mulattoes* and *grifos* as degraded subjects who could not contribute to the formation of a distinct national character. Zambrano does not mention any kind of Puerto Rican subject in racial terms. While Jiménez speak approvingly of Afro-Puerto Ricans, he presents them in a decidedly exoticized fashion, as though they were aesthetic spectacles rather than political subjects. As we saw in the previous chapter, Matos Paoli does not mention the African element whatsoever, nor is race an operative category in his formulation of a mystical *patria*. The main reason *Luz de los héroes* mentions the indigenous legacy is because it provides a template for the Grito de Lares and the Jayuya Uprising. Challenging these blind spots and racist portrayals will be a fundamental part of the discourse that "El país de cuatro pisos" and *La llegada* weave.

societies, Puerto Rican culture began to evolve away from its African origins in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (idem). The notion of a historical deviation will be key to the rhetorical development of the essay, for it will determine the purpose of the "país" that Puerto Rico is and the sovereign nation that it should be.

This divergence is intimately connected to the tropology of failure that the essay associates with the building. Indeed, it is in connection with the idea that Puerto Rican culture began to be distorted in the nineteenth century that the figure of the building first appears. In 1815 the Spanish monarchy produced a Cédula Real, a decree granting lands to Spaniards, Majorcans, Corsicans and Catalonians who settled in Puerto Rico. Two successive waves of these immigrants, an immediate one and another in 1850, lead to the population of the island's central mountain ranges and the eventual construction of *haciendas* that drove the burgeoning coffee industry; the essay claims that with these events "se le echó un *segundo piso*, social, económico y cultural (y en consecuencia de todo ello, politico)" (23, author's emphasis). The essay further claims that these *hacienda* owners were "uno de los puntales del régimen colonial español" and that due to this the culture that grew among the members of this class was "señorial y extranjerizante" (23-24), adjectives that imply disdain for any social or cultural element that would be found in Puerto Rico and a preference for the foreign, in this case the cultural expression of Europe. For González, one of the primary effects of the formation of the *hacienda* system under the direction of these immigrants is that due to the enormous differences between the popular class and that of the *hacendados*, by 1898 Puerto Rico was not capable of attaining a "síntesis nacional" (25). This inability is one of the first instances of disharmony and it will be the principal one, for the historical recounting that "El país de cuatro pisos" performs is centered on exploring the reasons why Puerto Rico has been unable to attain national sovereignty. The

lack of cohesion that is the absence of "national synthesis" is expressed when the essay states "lo que pasó en 1898 fue que la invasión norteamericana empezó a echar un *tercer piso*, sobre el segundo todavía mal amueblado" (27, author's emphasis). The description "mal abueblado" points to the internal disarray in which discordant elements are not resolved in favor of a "common identity", as Rodríguez Castro asserts.

Furthermore, it highlights the deficient base upon which the period of North American colonialism begins, although the essay's assessment of this period is less categorical than that of the second. This is because González does recognize that the new regime did produce significant changes that mostly benefitted the popular classes of the island, such as the possibility of organizing unions and political parties that would represent their interests in the insular government, like the founding in 1915 of the Partido Socialista by the members of the Federación Libre de Trabajo (García and Quintero Rivera, 81).[8] However, the author also states that such benefits were important only in the short term, and that although the "viabilidad *inmediata* en cada una de sus etapas fue real" the project of imperialism "siempre estuvo condenado, como todo proyecto histórico fundado en la dependencia colonial, a desembocar *a la larga* en la inviabilidad que estamos viviendo ahora" (39, author's emphasis). Despite its apparent successes, the third floor is the level that most clearly exemplifies the sense of incongruity that the text imputes to the building since it is destined to disappear even as it was being established. Finally, the fourth floor, which equates to the Estado Libre Asociado and

[8] González's representation of the United States colonial administration's dynamic with Puerto Rican labor unions elides the fact that the former often demonstrated much resistance to the latter's efforts. Sam Erman writes that officials often labeled union tactics to increase wages as "subversive" and "incendiary" (103). González does not endorse North American control over the island in any way, but neither does he mention the many obstacles the North Americans placed before labor organizing and gains, leading to an incomplete historical vision.

Operación Manos a la Obra, is the end point of this process of steady fragmentation. The ELA and its industrializing impulse, in conjunction with North American colonialism, led Puerto Rico to the economic recession and sociopolitical turmoil that in part defined the 1970s. The sharp reversal of the island's economic fortunes represents what the text figures as the fourth level's "resquebrajamiento espectacular e irreparable" (39), a phrase that highlights the terminal point the edifice has reached. The metaphor is never used in the remainder of the text and González states in the closing pages of the essay that the task at hand is "la reconstrucción de la sociedad puertorriqueña" (40), indicating that the building is now a historical anachronism that would only hamper this project due to its irredeemably disintegrated status.

The political forms that are necessary for the aforementioned task are the nation and the "país", and here I would like to turn to certain passages from the essay in which González defines some key characteristics of other political spatial forms that then form a contrast to the latter. In the perspective of the author, the main issue in Puerto Rico's history is that it had lacked a national State, "un instrumento politico y jurídico" that is not "la expresión de una nación definitivamente formada sino el más poderoso y eficaz instrumento para impulsar y completar el proceso de formación nacional" (15). I contend that the "país", as González uses the term in his two texts, is the political spatial form where there is a developing national culture but no State structure with which to advance the process towards political sovereignty. The "país" is in this sense a precursor to the nation that González hopes Puerto Rico can be. The essay clearly suggests the futurity of independence when it states "Esa inviabilidad del régimen colonial en todos los órdenes es precisamente lo que hace viable, *por primera vez en nuestra historia,* la independencia nacional" (39-40, my emphasis). Moreover, Puerto Rico's present status as a "país" is suggested by the title of the essay, which describes the island with such a term, as

though this current situation is a starting point for a truly sovereign status. We will explore much more fully the particular elements of the "país" in *La llegada*, but for now we can indicate González's insistence that Puerto Rico's future can only be predicated on an "independencia nacional *capaz de organizar al país* en 'una democracia industrial gobernada por los trabajadores'…apoyándose en la tradicional cultura de las masa populares" (40, my emphasis). In other words, Puerto Rican society must move away from the colonial, dependent capitalism that has prevented its independence and the associated cultural forms that has narrowly privileged the elite *criollo* over the African and the popular. Demonstrating the necessity of this shift will be one of the principal intentions of González's novel.

A Liminal Day: The Fleeting "País" in *La llegada*

La llegada offers a glimpse into Puerto Rico's passing from one colonial administration to another, narrating the events of one day two weeks after July 25, the date on which the North American forces landed on Guánica. In the opening pages, a contingent of Spanish forces are retreating, and its military efforts on the island seem destined to end quite soon. The narrative revolves mainly around the inhabitants of Llano Verde awaiting the imminent appearance of the United States troops, while speculating on the social, economic, and cultural future of Puerto Rico. It is through these speculations, as well as the various ways that the characters interact with their social equals, superiors and subordinates, that González's novel represents the Puerto Rican elites as dependent on their underlings, fawning towards their new stewards, and internally divided. In contrast, the characters associated with the popular classes possess crucial knowledge about historical events that at first elude the dominant class, demonstrate altruism and solidarity with one another, and engage with the North Americans in a much more instrumental, strategic way. Before delving into the various political spaces that are associated with each class, I wish to

explore more fully how each of these classes is presented, as it is their practices that define their respective spaces.

Perhaps the most readily noticeable element of the text's representation of the characters in positions of influence in Llano Verde is its irreverent, caustic tone. The first example of such a tone is the entirety of chapter four, which is narrated from the perspective of padre Antonio, the Catholic priest of the town. Padre Antonio understands the arrival of the North American forces as the advent of evil on the island, and his fear manifests itself clearly in the heightened rhetoric and stream-of-consciousness delivery of his interior monologue: "Día de Satanás, día de Luzbel, Belcebú, Lucifer y todos los demonios sueltos sobre esta tierra pecadora y dejada de la mano de Dios!" (35). Although the priest is not a member of the economic elite, given that he mentions the financial scarcity he faces ("el incómodo y apolillado púlpito de esta iglesia de pueblo"), the text presents him as a parasitic figure who maintains himself through the labor of others: he states openly that the source of the majority of his income "son aquellos que no disponen…de recursos monetarios sino de los modestísimos frutos de su propio trabajo…y no puedo menos que aceptarlo todo" (36-37). Padre Antonio represents the last vestiges of the Spanish colonial administration that had oppressed Puerto Rico for centuries, particularly in the course of the nineteenth, as discussed in the first chapter. Notably, even this minor character produces a political space for Puerto Rico, as he refers to the island as a "tierra pecadora y dejada de la mano de Dios," a distinctly religious diction that casts the priest's surroundings as a site of damnation and inherent worthlessness. Such a perspective undergirded Spain's colonial project given that such a view represented Puerto Rico as needing a more developed culture and State to govern it; as we will see, this exact view of Puerto Rico will be echoed by the North American colonel even in its religious components. Despite the fact that such an imperialist ideology

continues with padre Antonio, he is a wholly marginal character throughout the text, interacting with no others and producing no significant effects on the few events narrated. Indeed, the mocking tone of the novel reaches its high point with respect to this particular figure in the marked disparity between his fear of the North Americans and the actual consequences of their arrival: in the closing lines of his chapter, padre Antonio claims that the Protestant North Americans will surely victimize him (45), but when they appear the colonel and his men never think of him or attempt to find him, and he remains needlessly locked within his church as the transfer of power concludes (134).

The main target of the novel's ire are the members of the socioeconomic elite in Llano Verde, such as lawyer Juan José Benítez, the doctor Martínez Coss, and the Spanish-born mayor don Sebastián Camuñas. All of these men compose the Ayuntamiento, or town council, and the majority are first introduced on the night before the North Americans reach the town. Due to this momentous event, they hold a meeting in which they discuss when and how the troops will enter Llano Verde, and whether it is worth their time to await their new stewards. Although the members of the Ayuntamiento portray themselves as the leaders of the town, they very willingly shirk this important duty: upon a suggestion from Benítez, they decide to

> irse a dormir a casa y dejar que otro se encargara de avisar cualquier eventualidad. Aprobada por votación unánime la proposición…salía del edificio el viejo bedel encargado de montar guardia en el Puente que necesariamente tendrían que cruzar los invasores al entrar en Llano Verde (53)

Aside from the sarcastic indication that they are delegating their responsibilities, there are two components of this scene that add to the critique of the council's behavior. Firstly, the man upon whom they bestow the duty of watching is Quintín Correa, an old ex-slave who by the close of the novel is one of the characters who most clearly expresses González's notions of Puerto Rican culture as formulated in "El país de cuatro pisos". The second component is the notion, implied

by the fact that the council members retire to their individual homes while Quintín stays on, that the elites of Llano Verde can cleanly divorce themselves from their socioeconomic "inferiors". This is disproven in the seventh chapter, when don Sebastián Camuñas leaves the council meeting and immediately heads for the "barrio popular" (61) of the town, where he searches for Joaquín Cepeda, a *mulato* who for many years served as a confidante to the Spanish military police (63). Though he never specifies the reason for the visit, presumably don Sebastián is also searching for information, and the fact that both he and other representatives of the Spanish colonial administration depend upon this member of popular class demonstrates how necessary the latter is to effective governance.

The parodic representation of the Puerto Rican dominant class reaches its apex in the ceremony in Llano Verde's plaza in which the members of the council receive Colonel Jonathan Mackintosh and his forces. As the North Americans make their way to the plaza, doctor Martínez Coss' wife and daughter perform a gesture of "goodwill", which the novel interprets as a demonstration of cowardly ingratiation: "Ataviadas con la sobria elegancia que era como el sello inconfundible de su clase…desplegaron sobre la baranda…un extenso y bien bordado pabellón de los Estados Unidos de la América del Norte" (132). Upon learning of this development, don Sebastián Camuñas is outraged that doctor Martínez Coss would precede him in flattering the occupiers, and the novel concludes with him attempting to salvage his pride by asking a translator "cómo se decía en inglés aquello de que lo cortés no quita lo valiente" (138).[9] These

[9] Indeed, don Sebastián Camuñas' vacillating between cowardice and an appearance of courage is perhaps his most consistent trait throughout the text. During his visit to the neighborhood of the "popular" class, he briefly meditates on the inherent nobility of the Spanish but then very nearly flees due to the intimidating atmosphere (63). While waiting for Joaquín Cepeda he happens to stumble upon Quintín Correa, the custodian at the town council, but before he sees him don Camuñas interprets the noises made by Quintín as being made by Death itself (65). These scenes, apart from their clearly parodic nature, indicate the damaging alienation of the

scenes demonstrate one of the most important notions concerning the *criollo* elite in González's novel, that despite their pretensions of a concerted historical project that would assure their relative prosperity, the members fight amongst themselves over petty distinctions. This lack of class cohesion will pale in comparison to that of the "popular" masses, who easily overcome any obstacle that threatens their solidarity.

Other motives for infighting among the elites are far weightier, although this does not preclude the text from characterizing the members of the town council as venal. On the night that the council is convened to discuss the arrival of the North Americans, Martínez Coss and don Sebastián have another quarrel and it is stated that of all the liberals who had resented the Spaniard's accession to head of the council, none had been more opposed to it than the doctor due to his avowed dislike of the colonial administration (50). However, the novel states that Martínez Coss is an "oportunista" who in spite of his rejection of the Spanish government had allied himself with Luis Muñoz Rivera, one of the leaders of the *autonomistas*, when José Celso Barbosa broke with the party to found an "orthodox" version in 1897 (idem). This is a revealing choice, as Barbosa had denounced Muñoz Rivera's leadership because the latter had agreed to subordinate the *autonomistas* to the Práxedes Mateo Sagasta's Liberal-Fusionist Party of Spain, which was pro-monarchism, a move that many autonomists saw as a betrayal of their republican ideology (Duffy, 16). Through the figure of Martínez Coss, the novel indicates that the Puerto Rican *criollos* are doubly divided, both as a class in the sense that they cannot articulate a united political movement to achieve the status they desire, and at the level of individual, as the doctor is shown to be a hypocrite who renounces the Spanish government but then supports his own

elite *criollos* from their fellow Puerto Ricans, as the mayor shows how incapable he is of correctly interpreting the reality of the workers of Llano Verde.

submission to their power structure.[10] Due to these endemic faults, González will argue throughout his novel and essay that the leading class' project of national leadership and culture was always doomed to failure, a result whose bases were present in 1898 and that is manifest in 1979.

That the "popular" class is the most capable leader of Puerto Rico is one of the central tenets of *La llegada.*[11] The text posits this notion through two important motifs: first, the characters who belong to the working masses, be they descendants of Africans or white, frequently displace their "superiors" in a symbolic way; and secondly, they also acquire information regarding significant historical events before their more privileged countrymen. Regarding the first motif, the clearest examples stem from the two prostitutes who work in Llano Verde, Engracia and Casiana. In the fourth chapter, padre Antonio reveals that his niece is in fact his daughter, and that she has become aware of this due to Casiana (43-44), who divulged this information on Engracia's orders as revenge for the priest's frequent attacks on her profession (56), thereby exposing him as a charlatan. What is most noteworthy is that the novel shows that

[10] Despite the novel's clear antipathy towards the town's elite, not every character who could be said to belong to this class is portrayed in a negative light. The only member who maintains his dignity is don Adrián Colomer, an avowed *independentista* who venerates the leaders of the movement like Ramón Emeterio Betances, José Martí, and Francisco Gonzalo Marín. In the essay, González considers the pro-independence leaders of Puerto Rico to have had a much clearer understanding of the significance of North American intervention for the socioeconomic future of their island than their autonomist or annexationist counterparts (16).

[11] González's Marxism and understanding of the role of the Puerto Rican intellectual class was strongly influenced by Antonio Gramsci (in Mexico, González oversaw the translation of the *Prison Notebooks* into Spanish). "El país de cuatro pisos" begins with a quote from that text, one that centers on how some Italian intellectual circles were creating links with the "pueblo" in order to nationalize it and thus form what Gramsci calls the "nación pueblo". This amalgamation would oppose the "nación retórica", which resulted from history being used as propaganda to create the nation as a top-down process that alienated the intellectuals from the people (80-81). In both the essay and the novel, González's "país" serves to found a Puerto Rican "nación pueblo" given that the popular class is the protagonist.

the way in which Engracia obtains this information arises from what could be described as an interaction between members of the "popular class": Engracia mentions that the person who alerted her is "Alguien que vino de por allá. Es lo bueno de tener amigos en muchas partes…Me lo encontré de casualidad un día…Ya ni me acuerdo cuando lo conocí" (55). The anonymity of this person suggests that they belong to the masses against which the leading figures of the town differentiate themselves, although in this text such anonymity is not a sign of degradation or powerlessness, given that such a figure proved capable of unmasking the priest. In the sixth chapter, which is narrated from their viewpoint, Casiana and Engracia discuss their plans to welcome the soldiers and create their own flag of the United States, like the family of Martínez Coss. However, their elite counterparts display their flag before they do, and Engracia comments to Casiana that from that point on "habrá que ver quiénes semos las putas de este pueblo!" (133). Not long after this pronouncement the narrative concludes, with no character explicitly or implicitly challenging this notion, indicating that the text views this as the most accurate description of the dynamic between the North Americans and the upper class of the island. Through these named and unidentified figures, *La llegada* effects a double movement with regard to Puerto Rican society: it presents class distinctions as damaging and advocates for a more egalitarian structure that would be the basis of the "país".

Aside from being able to acquire information about individuals, the members of the popular class routinely find themselves knowing about very influential events before most others. The character who displays this propensity to knowledge most frequently is Quintín Correa, the ex-slave. Chapter eleven focuses exclusively on him and provides the two clearest examples of this phenomenon, the first of which occurs in the eventful year of 1868. By then too old to labor in the fields of the hacienda where he had been born, Quintín is appointed the

coachman of his new owner, and from that point on he begins to spend most of his days in the town. This change opens for Quintín a new horizon of information that once again does not come from the sources associated with the more privileged *criollos*, such as newspapers:

> Allí conversando con otros cocheros, artesanos y otra gente que venía de otras poblaciones…llegó a enterarse, antes que ningún otro negro de la hacienda, de acontecimientos y rumores…Así supo, por ejemplo, que poco después de lo de Lares y el Pepino había estallado en Cuba una guerra contra los españoles; que los jefes blancos de aquella insurrección habían concedido la libertad a todos los esclavos que se unieron a sus fuerzas (115-16)

This foreknowledge of historically significant events is repeated for Quintín thirty years later with the arrival of the North American troops. As we have already noted, the members of the town council force Quintín to stand vigil near the bridge where the foreign contingent would cross, and because of this he is the first to discover that the North Americans have finally arrived and the one who alerts the mayor (120). Once again, we witness the elites placing themselves in a position of dependence with respect to the lower classes, even through gestures that would at first glance seem to confirm their superiority over them. Although the recurrent displacement of the wealthy *criollos* by the popular class occurs solely in the symbolic realm, it does point to a possible ascendancy of the working class at the turn of the twentieth century, one that is intimately connected with the change in colonial administration. This connection is suggested by the fact that it is one of the members of the popular class, and not one of the town council, who announces the advent of the North American troops, with Quintín's sudden irruption into don Sebastián's home (120) mirroring the imminent appearance of the Colonel Mackintosh and his men.

Now that we have analyzed the way in which *La llegada* portrays the two main socioeconomic classes of Llano Verde, we can turn our attention to the various political forms that the novel associates with each one. The first to appear in the text is that of the plantation,

which is discussed in chapter two by Juan José Benítez and his wife Amelia. In the course of their conversation, the lawyer provides a short history of the autonomist movement and its aspirations in the decades prior. Benítez claims that the United States will incorporate Puerto Rico into its Union soon after the end of the conflict, because the United States had never possessed colonies in the way Spain had. While some territories had been delayed in entering the Union due to not being able to meet the population requirements, the island will not encounter this problem (22). The principal aspect of Puerto Rico that the lawyer identifies is economic, and in his estimation Puerto Rico stands to gain much from its inevitable status: "hay que pensar en las ventajas económicas que significará ser parte de la nación más rica del mundo. Sobre todo si consideramos que…no puede producir el azúcar que necesita. Puerto Rico, dentro de ese mercado, estará destinado a convertirse en un verdadero emporio" (23-24). I refer to this notion of Puerto Rico as a plantation due to the lawyer's single-minded focus on sugar, an industry that had declined in the latter half of the nineteenth century due to Puerto Rican producers' inability to completely modernize.[12] Their hope was that with the advent of North American control, they would have access to the necessary capital and to the tariff-protected US market (Ayala and Bernabe, 17-19). Indeed, the desire to transform Puerto Rico into a place defined almost entirely by its relationship to capital can be seen in the term the lawyer uses for it, an "emporio", which is

[12] Sugar production in Puerto Rico had a fluctuating course throughout the nineteenth century. It increased steadily during the first half due to low export taxes and expansion into arable land, such that by 1850 it was the island's leading industry. However, prices on the world market began to lower in the 1840s, and coffee became the most important export in the second half of the century (Martínez Vergne, 1-5). The Puerto Rican sugar industry especially suffered beginning in the 1870s, when worldwide competition lowered prices even further, and the colonial administration often declined to aid producers, such as by not allocating them greater funds or reducing custom taxes (Cubano, 87-105). As the European market became increasingly inaccessible in this time, the North American market became ever more central (idem, 87). For a thorough exploration of how North American capital transformed sugar in Puerto Rico after 1898, see Ayala 1999.

a space wholly given over to commerce.

The most important result of Benítez's ambition is that it denies sovereignty for Puerto Rico. The nation and the plantation are diametrically opposed for Puerto Rico; to choose access to capital and the North American market is to opt for a political spatiality that cannot have the definite borders of the nation state because it is predicated on incorporation into the Union. This is further indicated by the fact that at no point does the lawyer even mention the possibility of the nation state with regards to the island. Indeed, throughout *La llegada* no character, whether they were born there or elsewhere, refers to Puerto Rico as a nation. The text actually presents two distinct occasions in which Benítez deliberately avoids doing this, and these occasions present a neat summary of Puerto Rico's political situation towards the end of the war in 1898, particularly as the leading class understood it. The first occurs during the conversation with his wife in chapter two; in the quote given above regarding the economic benefits of joining the Union, the lawyer calls the United States "la *nación* más rica del mundo" (23-24, my emphasis). The second comes to pass soon after, during the town council meeting, where Benítez states "Esta hora decisiva en la historia de nuestro país (la palabra *nación* la empleaba el licendiado, en todos los actos públicos, solo para referirse a España)" (52, my emphasis). What these two quotes reveal is that the political form of the nation in Benítez's perspective cannot be found within Puerto Rico, only within an external agent. That is, only Spain and the United States count as nations, even as it is clear that the former will soon be forced to relinquish its control over the island, while the latter is sure to place it among its states. Meanwhile, Puerto Rico is referred to as a "país", which seems to function as a kind of liminal form while the conflict and the transfer of power between the adversaries concludes.

In González's texts, the disavowal of the nation form by the Puerto Rican elite *criollos* is

intimately connected to their class status. This is one of the central assertions he makes in "El país de cuatro pisos", when he attempts to answer the question as to why the Puerto Rican pro-independence movement was never able to achieve the level of influence that its Cuban counterpart did. Basing his answer upon an observation made at the time by Ramón Emeterio Betances that the wealthy inhabitants of the island did not desire independence, González states that effectively, the dominant sector did not wish for such a development

> porque *no podia* quererla porque su debilidad como clase, determinada *fundamentalmente*–lo cual no quiere decir *exclusivamente*–por el escaso desarrollo de las fuerzas productivas en la sociedad puertorriqueña, no le permitía ir más allá de la aspiración reformista que siempre la caracterizó…A lo que nunca pudo llegar ésta, ni siquiera en 1898, fue a la convicción de que Puerto Rico era ya una nación capaz de regir sus propios destinos a través de un Estado independiente (16-17)

As we have already seen, Benítez's main interest is in Puerto Rico's economic future, and he envisions the island as a space marked exclusively by its commercial output, one that is geared not towards local markets but rather to those of the United States. González's notion that the island elites were essentially dependent on foreign influence to maintain the relatively meager socioeconomic level they had achieved is echoed by Benítez when he claims "Aquí todo tiene que venir de afuera, lo bueno y lo malo por igual" (20). Such an attitude will form the basis of the moneyed *criollo*'s prostration before the North American troops and of an implicit notion in González's texts that the Puerto Rican upper class has been complicit in a continual erosion of Puerto Rico's economic and political independence since 1898. Arguably, the direst consequence of this process was the punishing recession that Puerto Rico was experiencing at the time in which González produced his essay and novel, a development that had direct links to the PPD's devotion to securing foreign capital at the expense of bolstering the island's own manufacturing sector. From González's pro-independence perspective, the *criollo*'s eagerness to trade political sovereignty for profit functions as the ultimate expression of their inability to govern Puerto

Rico.

As negative an outcome as incorporation into the Union might be, the plantation as a political spatial form would be still be preferable to that of the island, which in *La llegada* is most closely associated with the imperialist perspective of the North American colonel Jonathan Mackintosh. Mackintosh is first introduced in chapter 10, which is narrated from his point of view, and which details the absurdities of the North American campaign on the island: the soldiers are ill-trained volunteers, the weaponry is less advanced than that of the Spaniards, the rations are rotten, their uniforms are better suited for winter warfare, and the colonel suffers from indigestion that persistently robs him of dignity (98-100). What the North American leader considers most outrageous, however, is the fact that the military endeavor of which he forms part will not offer him the glory he covets due to the fact that Puerto Rico, compared to Cuba, is largely insignificant. Strikingly, colonel Mackintosh's immense ire is expressed repeatedly through the figure of the island, turning this particular space into a collection of incriminatory, undesirable elements. He begins by noting that Puerto Rico is an island which the soldiers and military leaders could not even locate, refers to it as "esta replica insular del Purgatorio", as a "Maldita isla" full of "piojosos habitantes", and states that the whole island should be renamed as a "Green Hell" (100-102). In the twelfth chapter, which is also narrated from his perspective, colonel Mackintosh expresses his disdain for the Puerto Ricans, claiming that "estos isleños no eran apaches" (127). The North American's understanding of Puerto Rico links insularity with a lack of social development and cultural achievement that is then expressed in a religious and transcendental register, as the figures of Purgatory and Hell lend the place a sense of degradation, moving from a state of being suspended between grace and ruin to one of being wholly damned. Finally, the fact that the colonel views the inhabitants as starkly different from

the "apaches" implies an endemic weakness on the part of the Puerto Ricans, one that is apparently related to insularity, given that in the phrase in which the Native American warrior appears the Puerto Ricans are referred to as "isleños". Such a feature only deepens Mackintosh's contempt for them, and serves to further associate the figure of the island with a martial, authoritarian gaze that considers Puerto Rico a prize of war barely worth the effort to obtain.[13]

The significance of the colonel's poetics of the island is that it leads him to postulate a clearly imperialist political dynamic between the United States and Puerto Rico. In the twelfth chapter, as he finally enters Llano Verde, colonel Mackintosh makes a distinction regarding the role of the North American troops that expresses the underlying logic of the United States' participation in the war. When he at first identifies himself and his soldiers as conquerors, he quickly corrects himself, stating "No, no, *conquistadores* no…*libertadores* era la palabra apropiada" (127). Given that the Puerto Rican people are "piojosos habitantes" who apparently lack any notable cultural or social structure, it falls upon the North Americans to "liberate" them from their Spanish oppressors and tutor them in the ways of civilization. This is one of the major implicit themes of a very influential collection of photographs that was published at this time, *Our Islands and their People, as Seen with Camera and Pencil* (1899) by William S. Bryan,

[13] When colonel Mackintosh is first introduced, the text notes that after his participation in the North American Civil War and promotion by General Ulysses S. Grant, he was wounded "en una cacería de apaches y eso le valió una condecoración" (95). This biographical fact reveals that for Mackintosh, military glory, as symbolized by the medal he received, is intimately connected to conquering a people designated as racial and ethnic Others. While the Puerto Ricans he encounters qualify as this type of Other, the United States' victory on their soil will not grant any kind of renown. Aside from the Native American, the specter linked to another piece of North American military history also appears in Puerto Rico: as Mackintosh considers the lack of preparation of his recruits, he muses "Menos mal que los españoles no eran los confederados" (98-99). What this repeated gesture of comparison does is to reify North America and its history, identifying it as the site of skilled opponents who were worthy of the Union's military effort in the past, while presenting the Spaniards and the Puerto Ricans in the present as inferior.

which includes many representations of the dire poverty and relative "backwardness" of Puerto Rico at the time. As Arcadio Díaz Quiñones convincingly argues, such images contributed to the belief in a "civilizing mission" that ostensibly "superior" civilizations like the Anglo-Saxon had to assume as it undertook an imperialist project (214). These photographs form part of the very textuality of *La llegada*, which intersperses some of them within its narrative, and they display what Madgdalena Perkowska-Álvarez suggestively calls Puerto Rico's *insularismo* (57, 2003) when she argues that González's use of Bryan's photographs links the idea of social belatedness to insularity within the perspective of the rising North American imperialism. As *La llegada* portrays it, the colonial impulse inherent in the spatial form of insularity can be noted in the very diction of the title of Bryan's collection, which refers to Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Phillipines and Guam as "our" islands, where the pronoun denotes ownership and the objectification of these spaces. If the plantation is presented as a betrayal by the local elites, then insularity as a political space functions as a nadir, representing the negation of all socioeconomic and cultural achievement by its inhabitants and its substitution for a hierarchical project that will always identify Puerto Rico as subordinate to the United States.[14]

Countering the possible futures of Puerto Rico that would spring from the plantation and

[14] There is one notable exception with regards to *La llegada*'s notion of insularity as the political form that expresses colonial disdain and possession. It occurs in the third chapter, as don Adrián Colomer recounts the short history of Puerto Rican *independentismo*. As the only supporter of independence in Llano Verde, don Adrián notes that many of his fellow inhabitants often remind him that "en la isla ya no se conspiraba como antes" (28). This brief memory points to a vision of the island that is the direct opposite of the one espoused by colonel Mackintosh, since insularity is portrayed as a space in which an impulse for political independence takes shape in the clandestine plans of its advocates. Despite such a forceful notion of insularity, the text mainly focuses on that of colonel Mackintosh; don Adrián never again narrates a chapter, nor is the figure of the island mentioned by other characters. The narrative absence of a pro-independence insularity parallels González's acknowledgment in "El país de cuatro pisos" that *independentismo* was a relatively negligible movement in comparison to autonomism in the nineteenth century (14).

colonial insularity falls upon the "país". Not surprisingly, the fact that González implies that the term "país" most adequately describes Puerto Rico in 1898 is echoed by the characters of *La llegada*, who all refer to their island with that term: Benítez (52), don Sebastián (62), Quintín Correa (111), even a Spanish sergeant describing the Puerto Ricans (79). Despite the variety of characters and perspectives who recognize Puerto Rico as a "país", I argue that this particular spatial political form is most closely associated with the popular, working class of Puerto Rico. The link between this form and the popular class is witnessed in "El país de cuatro pisos" in an indirect way while in *La llegada* it is much more explicit. Throughout the novel, in the majority of occasions in which the figure of the "país" appears, it does so through the perspective of members of the popular class, most of all Quintín Correa, arguably the most important representative of that group due to his race. Furthermore, the "país" is linked to the sphere of the popular because González very clearly bestows upon this class a leading role not just in the development of a distinctly Puerto Rican culture, but also in the political program that he develops in his essay. Due to its more concerted treatment in the novel, I will begin the exploration of the "país" with *La llegada* while taking occasional recourse to "El país de cuatro pisos".

The primary bases of González's notion of the "país" are twofold: the experience of African slaves and their descendants in Puerto Rico and the development of a working class on the island. Quintín Correa is the closest analogue in the novel to a protagonist because he embodies both of these dimensions, which are fundamental to the author's understanding not just of his desired political form but of all of Puerto Rican history. One of the most controversial claims of González's essay is the idea that the origins of a national culture lie not just in a popular culture, but specifically in the culture of the African slaves (19-20) who arrived to the

island in the sixteenth century and whose progeny became the very first Puerto Ricans.[15] *La llegada* expresses an identical notion in chapter eleven, which is narrated by Quintín while he awaits the arrival of the North American troops and which features him recounting his life as a slave and a freedman; at one point, he recalls that the young girl who cared for him after the sudden death of his mother asserted that "Tú mama ya era de aquí. Con los hombres será diferente, pero el país de una mujer está en sus hijos" (114).[16] González's representation of the originary status of African culture in Puerto Rico essentializes the slaves and their descendants by positing an inescapable, homogenous response to the space they inhabit. That is, because the slaves worked in Puerto Rico and had children there, every single one of them *necessarily* identifies with the island, a dynamic that apparently does not and cannot change. Indeed, as if to further underscore this notion, the novel introduces a minor but significant character in Quintín's memories: an African warrior who one day appears as a slave on the *hacienda* and who proves incapable of being tamed, with his indomitable spirit leading him to eventually escape (109-112). Although this warrior inspires awe in Quintín, the novel asserts that his destiny remained unknown and that he was an anomaly, as "ningún otro negro de la hacienda pensó…en imitar el ejemplo del 'africano', como siguieron llamándolo cada vez que se referián a él" (113). The

[15] An influential precursor who developed an identical argument was the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, who in his essay "La cubanidad y los negros" argued that of the many racial groups that compose the island's people and cultures, the African slaves and their descendants were the first to regard themselves as Cubans because their connections to their homeland had been irremediably lost (14). Other significant forerunners of this idea were writers associated with the Négritude movement like Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor, as well as poets like Nicolás Guillén and Luis Palés Matos.

[16] Based on this assertion we can see that the "país" has a significant gendered dimension, as it is deeply connected to the maternal body. It also seems to lack a masculine counterpart to the feminine origin since the only notable male figure that Quintín recalls is the African warrior, whom the text marks as inscrutable and unassimilable to a telluric project due to his flight from the *hacienda*.

African warrior represents precisely the inverse of the unavoidable identification by the slaves and their descendants that forms the basis of González's argument, and strikingly this figure of escape is regarded by his peers as a foreigner, an "africano" who is incapable of integrating himself into the space they consider their home.[17]

The function of the essentialization of the African element in Puerto Rico and their attachment to the land is to form a sharp contrast to the local *criollos,* who are more interested in allying themselves with social forces external to Puerto Rico. Although the telluric aspect of Afro-Antillean culture bears an almost mystical power, *La llegada* actually avoids exoticizing this group entirely and bestows their experiences with a significant class dimension. This approach is again revealed through Quintín, who appreciates the beauty of the natural world around him as he awakens from his vigil:

> El espectáculo del sol…padre del día y reanimador de todo lo dormido…Sin embargo, sabía muy bien que aquel gran prodigador de vida se complacía también en agotarla y maltratarla. Así lo había descubierto desde que tuvo edad y tamaño suficientes para servirle al amo en sus campos de caña…aquel mismo sol…era como el gran ojo vigilante del señorío de los blancos–castigaba durante toda la jornada de trabajo (106)

As we can see, Quintín's relationship to nature is marked primarily by how it impacts his labor, and his experience of labor is integral to the construction of his subjectivity. The diction of the passage identifies Quintín's memory of childhood as one closely tied to his work for the master of the *hacienda*, and later on in the chapter he muses that "*Crecer*…fue *trabajar*; mientras más

[17] The connection to a circumscribed, local space that plays a role in identity formation that the descendants of African slaves display in *La llegada* can be related to the etymology of "país", whose Latin root is *pagus*, meaning "pueblo". The intimate link with the land is one of the central reasons these descendants form the basis of the "país" in marked contrast with the *criollo* elites, who are more interested in forging relationships with foreign political and economic forces. The sense of belonging that distinguishes the "país" also differs from the African warrior's escape from bondage, which could be read as expressing the desire to return to Africa or at least distance himself from a space like Puerto Rico where slavery was legal.

crecía, más trabajaba" (115). If Quintín is already significant in *La llegada* due to his African ancestry, he is doubly so due to his status as a member of the nascent proletariat, as membership in this class will prove to be the most important element in the novel with regards to the Puerto Rican culture and political form that González desires.

If the "país" that González envisions marks the space of the natural world with the divisions of race and class that were evident in Puerto Rican society of the nineteenth century, it is mainly built upon a decidedly urban space, the "zona tricolor" of Llano Verde. The novel describes this particular neighborhood as a place where whites, blacks and *mulatos* coexisted and that had been "Constituida en un principio por el artesanado 'de color', la población…había ido creciendo…a medida que los campesinos sin tierra de la ruralía aledaña empezaron a desplazarse hacia los centros urbanos" (61). In passages such as this, *La llegada* suggest a hierarchical relationship between the rural and the urban that values the latter over the former. In fact, throughout the novel the domain of the rural is repeatedly presented as a belated and isolated space, divorced from historical events and the advances of modern civilization. This is made manifest in the very first chapter of the text, in which four Spanish soldiers on their way to Llano Verde stop before a "bohío" and have a contentious exchange with a "jíbaro" (13); when the North American troops pass through, they present the inhabitants with a toothbrush, which according to the text is a new piece of technology for them (15).[18] Similarly, we saw in a quote

[18] The *jíbaro* is important in González's body of work in part because the rural peasant was a recurring figure in Puerto Rican literature in the last half of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth. More importantly, the way in which this figure was treated by the most influential authors of the nineteenth century, who belonged to the local *criollo* elite, would be very different from the representation given by the writers of the same class in the twentieth century. This allows González to explore a very significant shift in the Puerto Rican conception of national culture. In his essay "Literatura e identidad nacional en Puerto Rico", he asserts that the moneyed *criollos* of the island were mostly a progressive, liberal class greatly invested in the modernization of the island, and that this perspective bore a strong positivist streak that led

given above how Quintín learned of historically significant events like the Grito de Lares only when he left the *hacienda* and began spending time in Llano Verde's central plaza amongst other members of the working class, implying that the *hacienda* is a site of historical ignorance, especially so for the slaves who toil there. To move from the countryside to the urban affords the possibility to enter into the Puerto Rican proletariat and thus into a class whose capacity for social and political influence will increase in the years immediately following 1898.

There are two main reasons *La llegada* presents the urban local proletariat as a relatively advantaged class in this specific moment: the solidarity that contrasts sharply with the internecine squabbles of Llano Verde's elite, and the syndicalism that began under the North American regime. Regarding the first point, the text claims that the "zona tricolor" is "el barrio popular donde blancos, negros y mulatos habían aprendido a convivir bajo el común denominador de la pobreza" (61). The popular class is conceived by the text as a group in which damaging and outmoded attitudes such as racial prejudice disappear before socioeconomic concerns, and thus as the site in which a more equitable Puerto Rican society can be formed, a crucial step in creating the sovereign nation of Puerto Rico for which González advocates. The ostensibly innate harmony of the proletariat is expressed most categorically by Quintín's wife

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members of this group like Zeno Gandía, Hostos and Brau to view the peasantry as an unhygienic, unproductive, and culturally backward people (71-74). It was after 1898 that the cultural expression of this class became more conservative (66-67). As part of this change, twentieth century intellectuals and writers transformed the *jíbaro* into an idealized representation of Puerto Rican national identity, as we saw in the first chapter on Pedreira. Both *La llegada* and "El país de cuatro pisos" will react against the idealistic portrayal of the *jíbaro* as the nucleus of national identity. In the novel, the white rural peasant is marginalized, appearing only in the first chapter, and the text represents him much like Zeno Gandía and Brau did: disaffected, isolated, and retrograde. The essay will also displace the white rural peasant, alleging that the source of his customs was mainly the Afro-Antillean slaves and their descendants. For more critical work on the social and literary treatment of the *jíbaro* in the nineteenth and twentieth century, see Baerga Santini 2009 and Torres-Robles 1999.

Petronila in a conversation with Catalino. Petronila asks Catalino to make a coffin in which to bury Joaquín Cepeda, but the carpenter initially balks due to Joaquín's repeated aiding of the Spanish military police (87). When he finally relents, Petronila claims "Los pobres siempre encontramos la manera de ayudarnos" (93), a statement that amounts to a romanticized socioeconomic unity that does not suffer from internal divisions. The work of historians like Gervasio L. García and Ángel Quintero Rivera belies this representation. In *Desafío y solidaridad: Breve historia del movimiento obrero puertorriqueño* (1982), they show how the Federación Libre de Trabajadores, one of the first major unions on the island, rejected the chance to represent unskilled industrial workers, narrowing their base to the craftsmen and artisans of Puerto Rico, in order to establish links with the American Federation of Labor in the United States (41). Such a move establishes a hierarchy within the ranks of the proletariat, a differentiation that not only places some members in a disadvantaged position but that also allows the privileged sector to curry favor with the new colonial administration, much like the elite characters in the novel do.

The romanticization extends to not just to the rank and file of the proletariat, but to its leadership as well. Although he never appears as a character, the Spanish-born syndicalist Santiago Iglesias Pantín is a significant figure in *La llegada*, mainly because he represents a future in which the proletariat can begin to take a more active role in Puerto Rico's development.[19] Iglesias arrived to Puerto Rico in 1896, but had been involved in Havana's

[19] It should be noted that although Iglesias is presented as a harbinger of change in *La llegada*, and despite the fact that he was the most influential labor leader in Puerto Rico for the first two decades of the twentieth century, labor organization did not begin with him. Miles Galvin notes that strikes had taken place before 1896 and that groups of urban craftsmen were already aware of anarcho-syndicalism and other radical ideologies before that (19). Antonio J. González identifies several figures, such as Fernando Gómez Acosta, José Ferrer y Ferrer and Norberto Quiñones, who were not labor leaders but did possess some knowledge of labor organization and

anarchist circles since 1888, before fleeing Cuba due to Spain's increasing repression of labor leaders (Shaffer, 24). Iglesias was briefly detained in 1898 under the autonomist government, and was imprisoned during the hostilities between Spain and the United States. He appears in the novel through Catalino Romero, who describes Iglesias' activities as "Defendiendo los derechos de nosotros los trabajadores…y enseñándonos a organizarnos" (88) and then himself as a "friend" of his because they share the same ideas regarding labor unions (89). For Catalino, the Spaniard's leadership is all the more welcome and productive because the United States will soon take stewardship of Puerto Rico, where union organizing is not a crime as it was under the Spanish colonial administration (91). Iglesias would go on to found the Federación Regional de Trabajadores, but then broke away from it to found the Federación Libre de Trabajadores in 1899. Based on the carpenter's idealistic description, it would seem that his efforts to advocate for the benefit of the proletariat would lead not only to a more equitable society in economic and sociocultural ways, given that the proletariat was supposedly a class in which racism was not a significant phenomenon. However, this was not to be, as the Federación Libre de Trabajadores announced its socialist leanings and sought ties with Samuel Gomper's American Federation of Labor, which was relatively conservative.[20] Furthermore, Iglesias would take a leading role in the development of the Pan American Federation of Labor, an organization founded in 1918 by Gompers that was meant to organize unions throughout the Americas but in a decidedly hierarchical structure, with the AFL directing it (Erman, 155), a position that does not

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were willing to agitate. It was with these men that Iglesias came into contact with upon his arrival to Puerto Rico in 1896 (451).

[20] Indeed, legal scholar Sam Erman indicates that Gompers had a record of disinterest in workers of color, and even condoned the exclusion of African Americans on the mainland from unions (100). Erman also points out that Iglesias did often deemphasize the African descendance of island workers and the presence of former slaves in the unions represented by his federation (69).

correspond well with González's avowed *independentismo*. As we saw above, González's account of the slaves' uniform and determinist identification with the land allows him to implicitly form a basis for a telluric Puerto Rican identity and national culture. A distinctly homogenous and idealized proletariat joins the Afro-Antillean as the other principal source of the "país".

The promise that the "país" represented in 1898 proved to be transitory, as the United States quickly established a colonial dynamic with Puerto Rico. However, the transformational power of the "país" is posited as deeply necessary at the end of the 1970s, because González's text is keenly aware that many political obstacles remain before Puerto Rico can achieve independence. Once again, the most pressing one is the status issue, whose solution the author refers to as the "futura y definitiva organización del país" (25). As we mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, in 1972 the Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño was able to have the United Nations Decolonization Committee begin hearings again on Puerto Rico's relation to the United States, undermining the rhetoric of decolonization by a "mutual compact" that Muñoz Marín has used to describe the Estado Libre Asociado. In 1980, the United States Supreme Court further contradicted the idea of "mutual compact" in the case *Harris v. Santiago Rosario*, where it held that it was constitutional for citizens of states in the North American Union to receive more funds for federal welfare payments than citizens in Puerto Rico due to the plenary powers given to Congress by the Territorial Clause (Cook and Indiano, 1980). This decision clearly maintained that Puerto Rico was still classified as a "non-incoporated territory". Puerto Rico's transformation to a "país" would overcome the status of territory for two interrelated reasons: first, this status has justified and made possible the United States' colonial dynamic and the perpetuation of capitalist exploitation. Second, due to this effect the space of "non-incorporated

territory" forms part of the building that the "país" and nation are meant to annul, given that the third "floor" that corresponds to North American control created such a legal condition. In his preference for the "país" with its "socialismo democrático, pluralista" (40) as the basis of national sovereignty, we also see how González inserts himself into the tradition of Puerto Rican *independentismo* by reformulating Albizu Campos' and Matos Paoli's assertion that the island is the spatial form that is fundamental to the efforts for Puerto Rico's independence. This is because the island in *La llegada* is a spatial political form that will not be effective in the struggle for sovereignty since it is forms the basis of the "non-incorporated territory" from which Puerto Rico must free itself.

Beyond the obvious sociopolitical shift, independence would also have fundamental cultural effects. According to the text, the socialist future of the "país" makes possible serves also to restore "la caribeñidad esencial de nuestra identidad colectiva". This is a crucial step that must be taken so that Puerto Rico "comprenda por una vez y por todas que el destino natural de Puerto Rico es el mismo de todos los demás pueblos…del Caribe" (40). The cultural effects of the "país", as presented in the quote above, are principally temporal and spatial. Regarding the first of these effects, this form's centralization of Afro-popular culture and its wholesale endorsement of the proletariat allows it to recuperate the elements that had made Puerto Rico "un pueblo caribeño más", as if its historical development would resume the proper course that was thwarted by the building's damaging and artificial last three floors. The "país" also saves Puerto Rico from a restrictive, isolating spatiality: when discussing the evident failure of the Estado Libre Asociado and its project of foreign-led industrialization, the text states that North American colonialism "ya sólo es capaz de empujar a esa sociedad a un callejón sin salida" (39). On this point, the "país" also marks a sharp contrast with the island because its status as an

object of the United States also alienates Puerto Rico from its Caribbean peers. One of the key effects of rethinking Puerto Rico as a "país" is that it opens the possibility of a more encompassing geopolitical and sociocultural network, a Pan-Caribbean confederation, that will negate the current economic dependency of colonialism and thwart its reappearance in the future.

A Wider Sweep: Rethinking the Scale of the Caribbean

Indeed, "El país de cuatro pisos" concludes its program of political action with the notion that Puerto Rico's independence is not simply a national issue, but rather an international one. The impulse towards independence in the essay is meant to place Puerto Rico in a much more encompassing geopolitical and sociocultural scale that goes beyond national borders: "concibo las respectivas independencies nacionales de todos esos pueblos como sólo un prerrequisito…para el logro de una gran confederación que nos integre definitivamente en una justa y efectiva organización económica, política y cultural" (40-41). González resurrects the great political project of nineteenth century *criollo* leaders like Eugenio María de Hostos and Ramón Emeterio Betances, but he adds a geographical element that indicates the contemporary historical context in which the author was writing. When González discusses the Caribbean, he refers to the islands but also to the mainland countries that compose the area; with regard to the "destino natural" of Puerto Rico, he states that this is a future shared with all of the regions' nations "insulares y continentales" (40). This broadened view of the Caribbean posits an egalitarian, non-hierarchical dynamic in which every nation is equally important in the cultural, political, and socioeconomic construction of the region. Furthermore, it develops a central theme explored in *La llegada,* namely that distinct modes of cultural, political, and socioeconomic organization create various kinds of spatialities, like the island, the "país", and the plantation, and that these spaces also serve to protect and promote these organizations. In other words, "El

país de cuatro pisos" traces an ascending order of geopolitical and cultural scale in which the nation is only the first phase (a "prerrequisito") in the achievement of a more inclusive international structure that is cast as the culmination of a historical process, given that it ostensibly integrates the region "definitivamente".

The most important function of this planned alliance would be "nuestra descolonización definitiva" (42), a process that would ensure that the nations of the region would not be beholden to external influences, particularly that of the United States. This was necessary because during the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the Caribbean became once again a focal point in the United States' waging of the Cold War. The very same year in which González wrote "El país de cuatro pisos" and *La llegada*, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FLSN) ousted Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza DeBayle, who had been intermittently supported by the Carter Administration during the decade. Founded in 1961, the FLSN had been inspired by the success of the Cuban Revolution and adopted a Marxist ideology in its very beginnings, although by the 1970s it was a diverse movement led by three main factions, only one of which espoused Marxism (Henighan, 37-41). Beginning in 1981, the Reagan administration began financially supporting armed counterrevolutionaries through the CIA, and this would not be its only attempt to battle the possibility of socialism's and communism's spread in the region.

For example, in 1984 Reagan's Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, also known as the Caribbean Basin Initiative, took effect. The CBI was conceived as a multilateral economic strategy that was aimed at improving socioeconomic conditions while furthering U.S. investments in the region (Ranmarine, 12). Perhaps the most significant element was tax incentives to attract foreign investments, such as the ability for North American manufacturers to move raw materials and machinery among off-shore partners without restriction, lowering

production costs and increasing profits. According to Emilio Pantojas García, the implicit model for the CBI was Puerto Rico's Operation Manos a la Obra, in that it advocates for an "export-oriented industrial development model fostered by a strong injection of U.S. investment" (105). James Dietz agrees, writing that the CBI was meant to urge Caribbean nations to "emulate the Puerto Rican strategy" (309). Much like Operación Manos a la Obra, the premises of the CBI were meant to exert ideological and political influence: for example, nations could only be eligible for exemption from export duties if they were not led by a Communist government and had not nationalized property that belonged to North American business interests (Pantojas García, 107-108).[21] Given that its purpose was to construct an network of industrial production led by foreign economic influence at a multi-national level, the Caribbean Basin Initiative can be regarded as the capitalist counterpart of the alliance that "El país de cuatro pisos" imagines precisely to ward off the undue control of foreign governments. In both of these organizations, the notion of an expanded geographical, political and economic scale is central.

The relationship between capital and geographical scale has long been indicated by Marxist intellectual traditions. Marx himself wrote in the *Grundrisse* that "Capital by its very nature drives beyond every spatial barrier…capital must on one side strive to tear down every spatial barrier to intercourse…and conquer the whole earth for its market" (524-39). A few decades later, Lenin would declare in *Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism* (1917) that by the beginning of the twentieth century a new form of capitalism, based on monopolies and the export of capital (69), had appeared that drove the partitioning of the world as imperial powers

[21] Perhaps the two clearest cases of the U.S. confronting the possibility of Communism in the Caribbean around this time are its increasingly strained relationships with Jamaica and Grenada. For more on this, see Masters 1998. For more on the CBI, see Zagaris 1984, Collo 1989, and Moore 2006.

began to colonize the globe (89). Although Lenin also treats the topic of how this phase of capitalism must necessarily create uneven development among imperial nations and their colonies, he does not explicitly tie varying levels of development to geographical scale. Despite the longstanding awareness of capital's relation to geography, critics in this tradition began to explore more deeply the question of scale relatively recently. In 1984, only a few years after González published his essay and novel, economic geographer Neil Smith would produce a sophisticated theoretical account of how capital influences geographical space, asserting that as capital establishes productive forces in an environment, it creates a space in line with the spatial characteristics of those productive forces. Additionally, the formation of varying "spatial scales of social organization" are fundamental to this process (86-87). More importantly for our purposes here, he also analyzes the way in which these scales are intimately involved with the phenomenon of uneven development. The answer for Smith is that capital intrinsically searches for the highest profit and that this leads it to move through geographical space, two facts that mean that

> we can think of the world as a 'profit surface' produced by capital itself, at three separate scales [the urban, the national, and the global]…The mobility of capital brings about the development of areas with a high rate of profit and the underdevelopment of those areas where a low rate of profit pertains…the underdevelopment of specific areas leads, in time, to precisely those conditions that make an area highly profitable…Underdevelopment, like development, proceeds at every spatial scale (148-49)

The purpose of this theoretical exposition is to emphasize the notion that the effects of capitalism in the late twentieth century are not isolated to any one particular political space, such as the nation, but run through "every spatial scale", such that each one of those scales must be understood in relation to the others. González demonstrates such an understanding in "El país de cuatro pisos". Initially, the essay presents itself mainly as a meditation on Puerto Rico: its

subtitle is “Notas para una definición de la cultura *puertorriqueña*” (11, my emphasis) and it begins by addressing itself to a group of Puerto Rican university students who have asked González to elaborate on how the North American colonial administration has affected the island’s culture. However, it not only calls for the renewal of Puerto Rico into a democratic socialist independent nation, but it concludes by also insisting on the need to place the island among its Caribbean peers within an encompassing political, cultural and socioeconomic collective that would supersede the national scale. Even more important, this collective would be premised on “regímenes populares y no-capitalistas” that would annul “nuestro común pasado colonial” (41), a capitalist structure that has ensured the area’s underdevelopment. The essay thus formulates a historical project that elaborates greater scales that can act as counterparts to those of capitalism and thus resist the relative underdevelopment that has affected the region in the twentieth century.

The confederation therefore functions as the culmination of a spatialized political process that begins with the “país” and moves on to the nation. It is the ultimate expression of the anti-imperialist impulse to reformulate Puerto Rican society in these texts. Additionally, it permits González to formulate a more geographically integrated version of the Caribbean. Its presence in the essay forms a fruitful point of tension with the vision of the Caribbean espoused by the influential cultural anthropologist Sidney Mintz, particularly in his essay “The Caribbean as a Socio-cultural Area” (1966), even though González does not explicitly cite him as an interlocutor. Rather than imply that González’s understanding of the region is more accurate than Mintz’s, by comparing the two I want to highlight the rhetorical importance of spatiality at every level of González’s discourse. With regards to Mintz’s essay, I will focus on how the text treats two different forms of space, the island and the nation, in order to then demonstrate how

González's differing view of these two forms impacts his understanding of the Caribbean.[22]

In his text, Mintz establishes a hierarchical dynamic in both geography and in the various dimensions that compose Caribbean society: to begin with, he largely limits his exploration of the region to the islands themselves, stating that the societies on the mainland Caribbean are of subordinate interest (19). Aside from suggesting an arbitrarily stratified view of Caribbean cultural geography, Mintz makes a distinction between the island and the nation: he treats the former as a purely geographical phenomenon, while analyzing the latter as a political, cultural, and socioeconomic form. Such a view of the latter is quite common, and one that González himself adopts, but the principal difference in this respect is that González also regards the island as a spatial form that is associated with political, cultural, and socioeconomic projects. We see this clearly in his treatment of insularity in *La llegada*, where the figure of the island serves as the least favorable kind of spatial political form due to its appearance through Colonel's Mackintosh's imperialist perspective. "El país de cuatro pisos" continues the rejection of the island as the preferred form by largely dismissing it in favor of the "país" and the nation, although as noted above it does view the Caribbean as a collection of islands and mainland nations, a more equitable relationship than the one Mintz presents in which the mainland is only ancillary. González's impulse to view the Caribbean as a more consolidated whole can be noted in the fact that the text presents the confederation it desires as "integrating" the region or in its

[22] Mintz's considerable body of work focuses on the historical processes that shaped the Caribbean and its many societies, and employs a perspective based on socioeconomic class that would serve as a forerunner of the historians who founded the CEREP (Dietz, 212). Among his most renowned works are *Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History* (1960) which examined the socioeconomic conditions of the Puerto Rican peasantry; *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern World History* (1985), an account of the titular foodstuff's rise as a commodity through the Caribbean plantation system; and *Caribbean Transformations* (1989), a history of slavery and the forming of the Caribbean peasantry.

approach to the region's linguistic variety: "La gran comunidad caribeña es una comunidad plurilingüe…Pero eso, en lugar de fragmentarnos y derrotarnos, debe enriquecernos y estimularnos" (41).

The second significant point of contention between Mintz and González is the nation, particularly in the sense that according to Mintz, one of the roots of "Caribbean regional commonality" (20) is the apparent impossibility of national cohesion. In the beginning of the text Mintz assert that there is a "prevailing absence of any ideology of national identity" (20) in the Caribbean and later refers to the process of creating such an identity as a "dilemma" for the societies in this region (34-35). Upon more closely examining this process in separate cases, he asserts that there is an inverse relationship between the strength of the capitalist colonial plantation system and the growth of national ideologies (35). While González's essay agrees that the effect of capitalism has been to derail the project of national sovereignty, its programmatic stance attempts to remedy this situation through a call to socialism. In this, González echoes the Marxist theorist of space Henri Lefebvre, who in his *Production of Space* (1974) writes that "Since…each mode of production has its own particular space, the shift from one mode to another must entail the production of a new space" (46). Each mode of production enters into a dialectical relation with its correlative space, helping to give rise to it while in turn the new space promotes this mode of production. *La llegada* explores this dynamic, for example through the form of the plantation, as the lawyer Benítez claims that North America will surely incorporate Puerto Rico into the Union due to its unique ability to produce sugar.[23] In the anti-capitalist

[23] A very clear example of this mutually reinforcing dynamic between spatiality and mode of production can be noted in one of Puerto Rico's most significant social phenomena of the twentieth century: the migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States in staggering numbers. Migration has been common for Puerto Ricans throughout the twentieth century, but after the adoption of Operación Manos a la Obra and its export manufacturing model of development, it

reformulation of Puerto Rican space, we can again see the importance of the "país", the spatial form of socialism that banishes the colonial capitalism that has reigned on the island for centuries.

However, González adds a dimension to his construction of space that is missing from Lefebvre's account, the issue of race. He primarily does this through Quintín Correa, the former slave who becomes a salaried worker when he moves from the *hacienda* to Llano Verde and eventually is hired as the custodian of the town hall ("Ahora…tenia un salario fijo", [117]). Quintín is therefore a principal subject of the "país", not just because he represents both the nascent proletariat and the African cultural inheritance in Puerto Rico, but also because in the 1970s that particular space is meant to be the engine of structural changes that are meant to address the longstanding repression of both of these social groups. In other words, the racial dimension is just as central as the socioeconomic to González's overarching project to reconfigure political space. "El país de cuatro pisos", the text that offers a more encompassing purview of the Caribbean than the novel, indicates the centrality of race when it posits this legacy as the element that can bind the entire region into a unified bloc capable of resisting imperialism. González thus demonstrates, in contrast to Lefebvre, that the modes of production of a given society are not the only factors that transform a space; these must be considered alongside sociocultural components like race in order to understand spatiality and the most apt ways to alter it.

If socialism and African popular traditions make the nation possible, they also function as

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became necessary in order to maintain the economic stability of the island during the 1950s and 1960s. What is crucial to note is that Puerto Ricans' ability to move to the United States is due to their being granted citizenship through the Jones Act, a piece of legislation that also further cemented Puerto Rico's status as a "non-incorporated territory". For more on the socioeconomic pressures to migrate, see Dietz 1994.

the political basis of the larger scale González envisions with his confederation. As presented above, one of the fundamental ingedients of this confederation is the establishment of "regímenes populares y no-capitalistas" (41). The most significant aspect of González's understanding of the socialist mode of production is that it is not exclusively a socioeconomic model, but is instead very closely tied to cultural concerns, specifically the culture of the popular classes. This stance forms the third and last point of difference between him and Mintz, who insists that commonalities between the nations in question are of "economic and social structure and organization, the consequence of lengthy and rather rigid colonial rule. That many of them also share similar or historically related *cultures*, while important, is treated here as secondary" (20, author's emphasis). In contrast, "El país de cuatro pisos" argues that colonial rule has affected Puerto Rico's social, economic, and cultural dimensions in part by making their evolutions inseparable. Every stage of the four floors of the building demonstrates this through its dialectical growth, wherein the contributions of one level is re-contextualized and opposed by its successor, but never fully negated. Furthermore, the cultural transformations brought about by the creation of each floor has been accompanied by crucial political and socioeconomic changes, suggesting that relegating one of these dimensions to a position of lower importance is arbitrary and thereby opposing Mintz's claim that "the formation of any cultural integrity always lagged behind the perpetuation of traditional bipolar and socioeconomic structures" (37). The belatedness from which culture suffers in Mintz's view of the Caribbean is replaced by a simultaneity of the cultural, political and socioeconomic within a socialist internationalism that integrates these domains, demonstrates how they have functioned under a colonial system, and most importantly indicates how a tantalizing future could be realized.

To finalize our exploration of the two main texts, I would like to further underscore how

González's rejection of insularity leads him to produce an anticolonial vision of the Caribbean by contrasting him with another contemporary intellectual. If González distinguishes his understanding of the Caribbean from that of Mintz in a geographic and sociocultural way by not narrowing his perspective to only the island, his vision of the region also engages critically in a sociopolitical dimension with the work of Cuban intellectual Jorge Mañach, especially through the notion of insularity. In 1960, Mañach had delivered five interrelated lectures at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras that would be posthumously titled as *Teoría de la frontera* (1970). As the title suggests, the author posits that there exists a geopolitical and social frontier between the United States and Latin America, and that such a space should be understood as one marked by the danger of possible conflict and the latent promise of cultural refinement through interaction. Turning from the frontier in general to the Caribbean in particular, Mañach claims that this region is the site in which the frontier between the two Americas most clearly manifests itself due to its relations with the United States, and it is in this section that his vision of the Caribbean aligns itself with that of Zambrano, Jiménez, and the PPD. Indeed, in the second lecture he actually claims that the history of the twentieth century has demonstrated that the United States never had a "genuina voluntad de imperio" (63). Furthermore, he casts the Caribbean as a space of civil, almost brotherly hemispheric connection: "el Caribe, es como la plaza central del hemisferio, y…las Antillas son…bancos propicios al reposo y al diálogo" (138-39). Finally, Puerto Rico is apparently the most privileged in terms of the such a dynamic due to its ongoing historical link with North America, a fact that makes it a cultural frontier but not an economic or political one. What this means within the logic of the lectures is that in Puerto Rico, the cultures of the United States and Latin America can achieve a level of refinement through competition and interchange that elevates them from the merely provincial and nationalist to the

exalted realm of the universal (134). What likens Mañach's thinking about the role of Puerto Rico to that of Zambrano and Jiménez is the Cuban intellectual's claim that although the frontier is a specific space in which two or more states or cultures meet, the effects that the interactions between them create inevitably influence the rest of the states or cultures the frontier delineates. In other words, the frontier diffuses itself throughout the spaces it in part helps to define (32). In this notion we can detect a version of Zambrano's, Jiménez's, and the PPD's representation of Puerto Rico as a hemispheric nexus of democracy and capitalism.

For Mañach then, Puerto Rico is the site on which apparently all of Latin American culture can be most readily and usefully defined, and this is in part due to its insularity. According to the author, islands demonstrate two aspects that are key for Puerto Rico's political future and its relationship to its southern neighbors. Firstly, the fact that an island is created from the interplay between ocean and land means that it is entirely a coastline, which in turn makes it entirely a frontier. Mañach then states that an island "es toda poros" (47), a characterization that implies they are ideal transmitters of cultural influences because they are essentially open spaces through which such influences can pass. If an island is such a porous space, this adds another reason to the argument that Puerto Rico is the most apt space for the development of universal cultural elements on behalf of Latin America, because not only is it the site in which those elements are supposedly forged, it is also able to diffuse them due to its accessible character. Secondly, Mañach states that historically, when islands are located along significant trade routes (such as the Caribbean) and nearby to a political and economic powerhouse (like the United States), they enter into its orbit of influence, although what effects this might have is not subject to a deterministic progression (47). González's conception of the island forms a marked contrast to what his Cuban counterpart has posited, mainly because of the former's linking of insularity

with a clearly imperialist project that fervently contradicts Mañach's assertion that the United States never intended to colonize the Caribbean. Furthermore, Mañach's "porous" island can be regarded as the opposite of González's desired nation, as this space enjoys political and socioeconomic barriers that protect it from undue foreign influence without cutting it off from cultural elements. Lastly, replacing the island as a site of imperialism with the "país" and then the nation is for González what will eventually build the regional confederation dreamed of by Hostos and Betances, a collective of sovereign states that can be understood as very different from that plaza of hemispheric civility that Mañach considers the Caribbean to be. This is mainly due to the fact that this "plaza", especially with regards to Puerto Rico, is predicated on the negation of national sovereignty, which in turn has furthered North American imperial interventions. Mañach's understanding of the Caribbean and insularity in particular hew closely to those explored in Chapter 2 since they privilege developments in the realm of culture at the expense of political and socioeconomic matters.[24] González's notions of the "país" and the nation revise Mañach's vision by not only identifying and ratifying a cultural tradition for Puerto Rico, but also by complementing this with political and socioeconomic developments aimed at ensuring the region's stability. The "país" and nation are thus a kind of "improved" island that would ostensibly make this kind of spatiality secondary for Puerto Rico.

With the conceptual content and rhetorical progressions of his texts, González inserts himself into a tradition of Caribbean pro-independence intellectuals like Betances, Hostos, Albizu

[24] It should be noted that Mañach does not decidedly argue against national sovereignty like Zambrano and Jiménez did. For instance, he states that while Puerto Rico is a frontier in the cultural sense, it is not in the political or economic, and that its future will depend on whether this lack of political or economic frontier will persist or change (146). Even so, Mañach reproduces imagery associated with the island that has been used to justify the postponement of political independence.

Campos and Matos Paoli, who all articulated their *independentista* ideals in a spatial manner. *La llegada* and "El país de cuatro pisos" answer Puerto Rico's tumultuous political, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions by elaborating not just an unorthodox reading of the island's history, but also a spatial imaginary with which to envision the various futures that lay before it. Both texts also establish an essential continuity between themselves: the novel serves to more fully explore the nature of the "país" as it briefly emerged in the beginning of Puerto Rico's development under North American control, while the essay completes this historical vision by positing that at the end of the 1970s the "país" can help establish a future that could counter and replace the spaces made by capitalism, such as Puerto Rico as a dependent colony and plantation. Of the political forms explored by González, the figure of the island proves to be rather undesirable, a holdover from the era in which Puerto Rico's colonization would continue under a new master, even if this was also the beginning of a possibility that was all the more pressing to realize decades later. Finally, this spatial imaginary serves a purpose other than that of Puerto Rico's own particular relation to colonialism, elaborating a more comprehensive geopolitical, socioeconomic and cultural scale than seeks to make a more unified and equitable Caribbean that is resistant to undue foreign influence. As the island's more culturally faithful counterpart, only the socialist, popular-based "país" and the sovereign nation it promised could offer a path that led away from a decrepit building's shuddering collapse.

Conclusion. To Other Shores

Years after his adventures, Robinson Crusoe broods on his time on a different island, or at least so imagines it Elizabeth Bishop in her poem "Crusoe in England". By turns wistful, rueful, and humorous, the poem presents a vision of the character's sojourn that is quite different from Defoe's version; the novel's ethnocentric triumphalism is notably gone. Crusoe reveals that he was often tormented by the space he inhabited, stating "I'd have/nightmares of other islands/stretching away from mine, infinities/of islands, islands spawning islands/…knowing I had to live/on each and every one, eventually,/for ages, registering their flora,/their fauna, their geography" (230). This castaway is less a dominant agent of empire and more a tired functionary, dutifully but wearily "registering" what he finds in the "nightmare" of his continual travel, no less a captive because he leaves one island for another.

I cite this poem because it draws out the fundamental idea I have pursued throughout this dissertation: the malleability of the discursive figure of the island. As we have seen, insularity is far from a uniform phenomenon in literature, crucially featuring in the works of Puerto Rican intellectuals, or foreign ones in exile there, with strikingly diverse visions of the island's culture and political connections to the United States. The varied representations of insularity compose what I have called the "poetics of the island", which in the case of Puerto Rico, ties the island to two important conditions: the "non-incorporated territory" and the state of crisis. This poetics, developed in the particular discourse of literature, places these three components in continual tension, treating them as communicating vessels that challenge and shape each other. My purpose in this dissertation has been to examine how their interactions have inspired, altered, and marginalized cultural imaginaries during the crucial historical period that runs from the 1930s to the 1970s. As Bishop's Crusoe would tell you, an island can easily turn into a labyrinth.

The poetics I have traced here realizes several transformations, but the most significant with regards to insularity is that it ceases to be a mere geographical fact and becomes instead a fertile source of cultural discourses. Every one of these discourses reimagines Puerto Rico in its own particular way, in the process emphasizing certain aspects of its society, culture, and politics while erasing others. One of the principal results of these processes is the formulation of different visions of Puerto Rican subjectivity, that is, the kind of subject that corresponds most closely to the cultural values that each space formulates. The first two chapters analyze how the figure of the island was portrayed as either a disoriented ship in need of an educated elite to guide it to its ideal version, or as an Edenic paradise in which the true spirit of democracy and aesthetic appreciation could flourish. In their accounts of insularity, Pedreira, Zambrano, and Jiménez fashion a subject who is dedicated exclusively to cultural concerns, or more precisely, whose potential political stances are shaped most strongly by the imperative to contribute to a distinctly Puerto Rican culture or to a geopolitically inclusive culture of democracy that covers the entire Western hemisphere. In the third and four chapters, we examined how insularity was a central element in divergent cultural imaginaries, from the positing of the island as the mystic homeland to the rejection of the island as an imperial outpost in favor of a space that favors the racially oppressed and socioeconomically exploited. In these works, the imperatives that the Puerto Rican subject faced were markedly different, as the island's culture is perceived to be directed explicitly towards a specific goal, that of independence from North American control. Matos Paoli imagines thus Puerto Ricans to be either martyr for the cause or traitors who must be converted away from their damaging beliefs; in turn, González portrays the most representative Puerto Ricans as proletarian descendants of African slaves closely associated with the basis of a future sovereign nation. The literary depictions that spring from insularity are thus significant

because they indicate the most pressing debates around which Puerto Ricans have attempted to organize their culture. They also crucially help to shape these controversies by providing contrasting visions of Puerto Rico and its inhabitants as well as radically dissimilar camps of thought regarding its culture's relationship to the United States.

As the above statement suggests, the political charge of the island stems not just from its internal ordering of Puerto Rico, but also from its often-explicit confrontation with the status of "non-incorporated territory". This juridical condition can be thought alongside the figure of the island because I would contend that both have functioned throughout the twentieth century as a type of aesthetic in the sense that Rancière gives the term and that we cited in the introduction:

> aesthetics can be understood…as the system of *a priori* forms determining what presents itself to sense experience. It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and stakes of politics…Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak (13)

What I mean by proposing Puerto Rico's status as an aesthetic is that the concept and practice of "non-incorporated territory" has functioned as a set of limitations in the island's political and socioeconomic spheres that has effectively institutionalized some dynamics while making some other options impossible. That is, because Puerto Ricans inhabit a territory of the United States and have been citizens since 1917, a political subjectivity that is largely aligned with North American interests has been posited ever since 1898, though of course a field of unceasing conflict like that of power relations can never been completely overdetermined. The same circumstances apply to Puerto Rican cultural imaginaries: the fact of "non-incorporation" made some portrayals of Puerto Rico permissible or even desirable while practically outlawing others. While written in distinct historical periods, the perspectives explored in the first two chapters developed a language that understood nationalism as a primarily cultural phenomenon that did

not translate into a political stance in favor of sovereignty. In this way, insularity allowed intellectuals like Pedreira to avoid the issue of Puerto Rico's status as a "non-incorporated territory" or, in the case of Zambrano and Jiménez, to explicitly call for its continuation, even if this juridical fact was not named directly. Although the visions of Puerto Rico that arise in Matos Paoli and González do so from quite different discourses, what links them is the fact that either of them would directly overturn Puerto Rico's condition as a territory in favor of national independence, and as such were at times directly repressed by the insular government.

What in turn connects all these very divergent perspectives is the fact that they are all grounded upon respective views of insularity, such that the island becomes an aesthetic interwoven with that of the "non-incorporated territory". At times the poetics of the island runs parallel to this status, other times it appears indistinguishable from it, still others it departs strikingly from the colonial relationship it entails. All of these positions, through the differing genres with which they have framed themselves and their capacity for figurative language, alter what can be conceived for Puerto Rico and what cannot be with respect to its relationship with the United States. In centering the juridical relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, my intention has not been to narrow the realm of politics to just this problem, but rather to add to the existing critical scholarship that explores the condition of "non-incorporated territory" by indicating how it has affected Puerto Rican culture in its many facets during a critical period of its growth. The majority of scholarly treatments of Puerto Rico's territorial status approach the question from a legal standpoint and often from a top-down perspective that at times loses sight of the ways in which Puerto Rican subjects have engaged with it. One of my principal aims in this dissertation has to supplement this viewpoint by demonstrating how literature serves as a significant avenue with which intellectuals and writers on the island have tackled the pressing

issue of "non-incorporation" and how the figure of the island has been central to this undertaking in a critical historical period.

That period begins with the economic devastation of the Great Depression and rising financial control by United States companies, passes through the crucible of World War II and the early Cold War with its projects of democracy and industrialization, and ends in the decade in which those socioeconomic and political programs began to fail. What this narrative suggests is that the era from the 1930s to the 1970s for Puerto Rico often featured times of profound crisis. The concept of crisis has a long history of theoretical and aesthetic representation, too extensive for me to explore here. However, I define the concept here generally as a historical juncture in which a society's cultural, economic, and political structures are weakened by either internal or external forces. In other words, a crisis is a time in which an aesthetics, those *a priori* forms that delimit what can be imagined in a cultural and political sense, are made relative or pass through transformations that make new forms possible. Puerto Rico's status as "non-incorporated territory" is related to the condition of crisis because the socioeconomic and political arrangements made possible by North American juridical control in part have helped to bring about that very condition. Furthermore, the instances of social predicament faced by the island in this era often raised the possibility of a fundamental change in the dynamic between Puerto Rico and the United States. For example, the 1930s not only featured the ravages of the Great Depression, but also the bloody clashes with the Nationalist Party, which in turn lead to the 1936 Tydings Bill that would grant the island independence under punitive financial conditions. Because the status question was placed under renewed scrutiny during such times, the contexts of crisis that suffuses this dissertation also provoked intellectuals to revisit the topic of insularity, such that the figure of the island has also been used to understand and propose solutions to the

emergencies that Puerto Rico has endured. The richness of the "poetics of the island" thus stems from the confluence of representations of insularity, the "non-incorporated territory", and crisis, three phenomena that in their perpetual interactions have acted as major conditions of possibility for Puerto Rican culture's development throughout the twentieth century.

What this indicates in turn is that contrary to what Rancière asserts, aesthetics are not *a priori* forms, because such a condition suggests that they are somehow eternal or removed from the historical contexts in which they surface. The poetics of the island has functioned as an aesthetics in Puerto Rican cultural discourse because it has continually mutated throughout the time period we have covered. What the figure of insularity allowed intellectuals to imagine regarding their culture and the political ties to the United States was notably different in each of the decades between the 1930s and the 1970s, and it is precisely its protean character that has maintained its relevance. Although the status of "non-incorporated territory" has never ceased to be the juridical framework for Puerto Rico, it has experienced notable changes in key particularities during the first two decades of its founding. The Foraker Act of 1900, for example, transformed the military government into a limited civilian one, and was superseded by the Jones-Shafroth Act of 1917, which granted U.S. citizenship to all Puerto Ricans and added a Senate to the legislative branch. Despite the fact that the fundamental relationship between the United States and the island remains the same, what has fluctuated has been the ways in which Puerto Ricans have responded to "non-incorporation" through political and cultural means, and so the status of territory has functioned as an aesthetic among these subjects, but not in a homogenous sense that is abstracted from the flow of history. If periods of crisis are the stage upon which the status question and the poetics of the island enter into dialogue, they are also the junctures that make apparent that the aesthetics discussed above are shaped by the development

of Puerto Rican culture just as much as they frame this process.

To break somewhat with Bishop's Crusoe, islands don't always lead just to other islands; it is my hope that this dissertation's individual chapters can contribute to other topics through their explorations of insularity and the problematics that the authors in question explore through it. For example, *Insularismo*'s exploration of a markedly cultural spatiality does not end with that version of Puerto Rico that was flourishing at the end of the nineteenth century and whose twentieth century analog the text hopes will be established. Towards the end of the second section, the work alludes briefly to an intellectual current that seeks to formulate a mode of artistic expression for all three Hispanic Antilles, the "triángulo antillano" (70) as he calls it. How might *Insularismo*'s brief imagining of this aesthetic expression, which bears an important spatial dimension, contribute to understanding other proposals or visions regarding inter-Caribbean relations, like that put forward by contemporary poet Luis Palés Matos in *Tuntún de pasa y grifería* (1937)? Another central preoccupation of Pedreira's text is the relationship between the various demographics on the island, especially in terms of race and sex. How does his hierarchical vision of Puerto Rican culture compare to that of Manuel Méndez Ballester's *Isla cerrera* (1937), a historical novel that narrates how a young Spaniard travels to Puerto Rico in the beginnings of its colonization, establishes an *hacienda*, and begins a family with an indigenous woman? How does this portrayal of the island's first years under colonial rule contrast with that of *Insularismo*'s brief recounting of this period, what social dynamics does it argue for, and how might the novel's discourse engage with the historical context of Puerto Rico's often tumultuous decade of the 1930s?

Regarding the second chapter, my aim in re-contextualizing Zambrano's and Jiménez's exile in the Caribbean could be extended to other Spanish intellectuals who settled there in this

crucial historical period. A provocative counterpart would be the Surrealist painter, musician and writer Eugenio Granell, who first arrived to the Dominican Republic in 1940 and who began to produce his first visual works while on the island. In 1950, he moved to Puerto Rico to become an art professor at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras where he established a rich friendship with Jiménez and created "El Mirador Azul", a school of Surreal visual artists and poets who were his students. The year after arriving to Puerto Rico, Granell publishes *Isla, cofre mítico*, a book of short lyrical passages interspersed with Surrealist drawings that analyzes the experience of European artists with Caribbean insularity, as well as the mythical function of islands throughout Western civilization. What effect does the visual component have upon Granell's representation of the Caribbean, and how does it dialogue with other influential artists of the period and region like Wifredo Lam or Francisco Vázquez Díaz, another exiled Spanish republican who founded an influential sculpture workshop in the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña in the early 1940s? Another significant dimension that this chapter touches on is the central role of the cultural institution in Puerto Rican society during World War II and the Cold War, specifically their welcoming of foreign intellectuals from Spain and North America. During this period and others, what kinds of power structures, implicit or explicit, did institutions like the Institución Hispano Cubana de Cultura in Cuba, the Universidad de Puerto Rico, or the Universidad de Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic impose upon these figures and others, and how did they negotiate them? In what larger political trends or programs were such organizations enmeshed, and what kind of political and sociocultural subjectivities did they promote? Focusing on institutions in the Caribbean can be a useful way to organize the constellation of Spanish exiles in the region and to investigate the impact of their work in their respective environments during this crucial era.

The central problematic of the third chapter is the profound influence that the years of 1940s and 1950s had on Puerto Rican society. Through my study of Matos Paoli's *Luz de los héroes*, I focus mostly on a very particular kind of subjectivity and a space associated with it, but there are many others that lie outside the scope of that section. In the case of Puerto Rico, World War II and the early Cold War was a matrix of clashing representations of subjectivities, spaces, and the political dynamics between them. There are many other texts produced in this time that engage directly with the fraught political scene on the island by way of some key themes and spaces. What poetics of the body does César Andreu Iglesias formulate in his novel *Los derrotados* (1956), which follows a band of Nationalists after the failed Jayuya Uprising as they undertake another failed plot? What possible future for Puerto Rico does Andreu Iglesias suggest with the space of the prison, which is absolutely central to *Luz de los héroes*, and which becomes in the novel a site of emerging class consciousness rather than religious fervor? Other writers at this time were thinking through questions of political and ethnic lineage that also appear in Matos Paoli's text, such as Juan Antonio Corretjer in *Alabanza en la torre de Ciales* (1953), a poem that not only deals with insularity but that also explores the legacy of the Taínos. What is the discursive valence of indigeneity in literature of this time, and how might the context of the Cold War differentiate it from that of earlier representations? There is also the crucial matter of Vieques, a space whose exploitation by the United States Navy beginning in the 1940s was explored by Pedro Juan Soto in his novel *Usmaíl* (1959). Studying this work would not only allow for a further interrogation of the conciliatory and triumphalist rhetoric of the PPD, it would also permit a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the islands that comprise the Puerto Rican archipelago and how political trends have affected them in unequal ways.

The final chapter tackles the uncertain times of the 1970s, when the revolutionary programs of Operación Manos a la Obra and the Estado Libre Asociado began to break down. The dimension of González's proposals that is least developed in "El país de cuatro pisos" is the Pan-Caribbean confederation that serves as the ultimate goal of Puerto Rico's national liberation; for such a significant development, the essay devotes only a few lines to it. Studying how González envisions such a confederation in comparison to nineteenth century separatist leaders like Ramón Emeterio Betances and Eugenio María de Hostos would round out this section of his essay. Additionally, the work done on González's oeuvre often ignores his lengthier "sequel" to "El país de cuatro pisos", *Nueva visita al cuarto piso* (1986), in which he recounts a brief sojourn on the island in the 1980s while analyzing Puerto Rico's economic fortunes, the fracturing of international communism, and the development of the island's leftist organizations. A rigorous comparison between the shorter essay and the succeeding memoir would not only enrich our understanding of how González viewed the evolving relation between the island and the mainland, but would also examine some crucial issues that do not appear in "El país de cuatro pisos", such as political exile and its link to the Puerto Rican culture.

Returning to the poem that opens these remarks, one island leads to the next, but sometimes they are lost to view. This dissertation is defined as much by what it omits as by what it explores, and I would like to turn now to what I have been unable to study. Perhaps the most glaring lacuna is the political, socioeconomic, and cultural matter of the diaspora that has so greatly influenced Puerto Rico since 1898. In the future, I plan on adding a chapter that focuses on this question, particularly through Manuel Ramos Otero's collection of short stories *Página en blanco y staccato* (1987). My selection rests on several key facets of the text; in formal terms, it represents a genre that so far has been missing from the corpus, so its addition will expand this

work's investigation of the relationship between different aesthetics and spatiality. In thematic terms, *Página en blanco y staccato* includes many destinations of Puerto Rican immigrants, such as New York City and Hawaii, so that examining this collection allows me to track diasporic movements to several locations and form a more comprehensive view of it. Furthermore, some of the short stories analyze their protagonists' experiences through the trope of insularity, with one referring to New York City as "otra isla"; does the "otra" in the phrase conceive of sites of diaspora as "alternatives" to Puerto Rico, or as spaces of "otherness" with respect to it? Such statements allow for a continuing exploration of the rhetorical uses of this figure in processes of subject formation and the building of political dimensions of space. Lastly, in several of the short stories of *Página en blanco y staccato*, the narrators obtain access by chance to written records like letters that detail the lives of powerful merchants responsible for the development of Puerto Rico's sugar industry in the twentieth century or poor laborers emigrating to Hawaii soon after 1898. These unofficial archives often lead the narrators to travel and speculate on the connections between different spaces, thus posing an important question: what is the relationship between archives and spatiality, particularly insularity? What potentially variable outlooks on Puerto Rican history and subjectivities do these archives provide? Examining how Ramos Otero portrays this dynamic opens the possibility of engaging with other representations of Puerto Rican society, such as González's "El país de cuatro pisos", an essay that notably omits the issue of the diaspora and which one of the short stories explicitly mentions.

The last island I hope to include is the one that appears in Eduardo Lalo's essay *Los países invisibles* (2008). In this text, Lalo puts forth a vision of the island as a marginalized place under the prevailing system of neoliberal globalization established towards the end of the twentieth century. However, insularity does seem to preserve a crucial function: the dismantling of the

cultural and socioeconomic myths of the "Occident", represented by the United States and Western Europe. How does the fact that Puerto Rico is both an island and a "país invisible" make it a particularly apt site from which to carry out such a mission? What political valence do writing and aesthetic production acquire in relation to the absolute pretensions of the "Occident" and the institutional failure of the Puerto Rican government? *Los países invisibles* is a valuable addition to this project not only because of its engagement with insularity in a period in which Puerto Rico was undergoing important socioeconomic shifts, but also due to the subjectivity that it formulates to match its visions of space. Specifically, the text formulates a kind of cynical citizen who resolutely distances himself from the kind of projects that Pedreira, Zambrano, Jiménez, Matos Paoli and González propose to reorder Puerto Rican culture. This part's main contribution would therefore rest on elaborating a view of insularity as more of a hermeneutic vantage point than a geographical fact and of the subject as a figure dedicated to relentlessly critiquing the cultural, political, and economic norms of the West and of his own society. From this stems a persistent questioning of the validity of the political programs for free associated statehood or national independence that have marked the island's development in the twentieth century. This chapter will end with a short analysis of a brief text by Lalo recounting his experience of Hurricane María in order to trace some of the contours of Puerto Rico's coming years.

Whether it is a disoriented ship, an Edenic nucleus of hemispheric brotherhood, a liberated resting place of heroes, or the imperial double of a socialist democracy, insularity has materially and discursively shaped Puerto Rico's course over the last century. Moving through the twenty first, ever newer islands await over just over the horizon.

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