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## ¿La Voz de Quién?

### Cover Page Footnote

This article is from an earlier iteration of *Diálogo* which had the subtitle "A Bilingual Journal." The publication is now titled "Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Studies Journal."

# ¿LA VOZ DE QUIÉN?

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Photos by: Mariana Isabel O'Neil

In the summer of 2008, I watched news coverage on island Puerto Ricans' reactions to leader of the Popular Democratic Party (PPD) and Governor Aníbal Acevedo-Vilá's visit to the UN regarding Puerto Rico's colonial status. Univision and Telemundo, asked Puerto Ricans on the street about their perception of the Governor's visit, and his claim that Puerto Ricans lack self-determination in the Commonwealth's relationship with the United States. Those highlighted, primarily showed indifference to Gov. Acevedo's initiatives and expressed pessimism regarding their possibilities.<sup>1</sup> Member of the pro-statehood party and President of the Puerto Rican Senate, Senator Kenneth McClintock argued that Gov. Acevedo's ploy was nothing more than an attempt at bringing positive attention to his work as governor. McClintock argued that because of his poor showing as a governor, Gov. Acevedo wanted to divert attention from the scandals and failures surrounding his tenure as governor.<sup>2</sup>

Critiques of Puerto Rican political parties' performative decision making processes date back to the 1990's. In 1990, former Puerto Rican Socialist Party president, Juan Mari Bras, critiques the individualism party presidents exercised in agreeing to not support another plebiscite.<sup>3</sup> The presidents of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and the Popular Democratic Party (pro-commonwealth) agreed to challenge the plebiscite, without receiving public input. The leaders made the decision based on what they wanted and their fear that Puerto Ricans would have voted to change their status to statehood. Their decision was more

out of self interest, according to Mari Bras, than out of the interest of Puerto Ricans. Such self-serving individualism negates any progress their mutual understanding might have represented. Mari Bras did not believe a decision made without consultation or discussion could provide any good opportunities or possibilities for Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico's resistance to its colonial condition was paralyzed precisely because their acts of leadership imitated imperial acts of the U.S. government on the island.<sup>4</sup> These party leaders were governing without consideration for the necessities of the Puerto Rican people.

In her essay "Puerto Rican Feminism at a Crossroad: Challenges at the Turn of the Century," Margarita Mergal makes a similar critique of party leaders' perceptions of women's political participation. She examines then president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party, Rubén Berrios and Vice-president Fernando Martín's belief that "nothing can be done to remedy [the lack of women's leadership in the party] because women must take care of their homes, children and husbands."<sup>5</sup> Such a belief from these men presents an antiquated way of looking at the possibilities and contributions of women to the Puerto Rican independence movement. It presumes housework and family care limited women's political participation despite a history of women's involvement and leadership, like that of Lola Rodríguez de Tió, Lolita Lebrón, Julia de Burgos, among others. Lolita Lebrón, for instance, was a member of the Nationalist Party, who took part in and was arrested for a failed assassination attempt against President

Truman. This is a clear indication of Berríos' and Martín's limited understanding of women's involvement in politics and community activism. Their limited scope also demonstrates a lack of consideration for women leaders in diasporic independence initiatives.

I start with examples of limitations in island-based power dynamics because it is important to ground critiques of political leadership within a historical and transnational frame. Puerto Rican island based issues influence how diasporic Puerto Ricans perceive each other's and their own possibilities of political participation, and leadership. In this paper, I focus on specific examples of community based, anti-colonial struggles. In the discourse and practice of inclusion, some organizations like the Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center, maintain a hierarchy of leadership that results in exclusion. This is demonstrated in the ways in which leaders address racism,<sup>6</sup> socio-economic inequalities, gender disparity, and heterosexism. Comments like Berríos in the early 90's may have changed, because of the critiques scholars and political critics like Margarita Mergal and Juan Mari Brás have made. For example, Lolita Lebrón spoke alongside Berríos at the PIP's protest of Democratic candidates Clinton and Obama visiting Puerto Rico in early June. Does such a change in visibility really address a critical repositioning of the understandings of power and contribution?

Berríos' public discourse during his leadership is not the sole example of the necessity for such a critique. In looking at the Juan Antonio Corretjer<sup>7</sup> Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC), I will look at the language and representation of their work in the newsprint *La Voz del Paseo Boricua*. This past year, they celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> anniversaries respectively. The Center and the paper also celebrated the centennial of former Puerto Rican Nationalist Party secretary, Juan Antonio Corretjer's birth. In light of this celebration, the community newsprint printed articles relating a collective history, with a narrow focus on a few individual leaders. Examining this edition of the paper and the way the anniversary is celebrated raises some questions: For whom is this history being written? Whose voice do these accounts represent? How do these accounts affect the success of community building and, what do they say about us as scholars and activists theorizing Puerto Rican identity?

### TRYING TO FIND VOICES IN LA VOZ

For the past four years, Chicago's Puerto Rican community newsprint *La Voz del Paseo Boricua* has served as a site of community engagement and positive cultural reinforcement. Writers, allies and artists also cover political, community, and artistic work of Puerto Ricans in Chicago and in other diasporic communities. *La Voz del Paseo Boricua* has served as a media venue offering a positive and engaging depiction of Puerto Ricans in Chicago and the community with the greatest Puerto Rican presence, Humboldt Park/ Paseo Boricua.<sup>8</sup> The mission reads that *La Voz* is "an alternative source of media that seeks to acknowledge the achievements of the Puerto Rican community at large and advocate for the preservation of the heart of our barrio."<sup>9</sup> Preservation of the barrio indirectly relies on nostalgia for la gran familia puertorriqueña as a strategic tool in calls for nationalism and nation building.<sup>10</sup>

The statement made by Berríos about women's lack of participation in politics is of particular relevance here, for the

image around the Puerto Rican family relies on maintaining women in the domestic sphere and men partaking in political and economic activities. It also relies on the replication of this process that dates back to Eugenio María de Hostos' promotion of women's education. For Hostos, a nineteenth-century sociologist and advocate of Puerto Rico's independence, women's education was important because they were the best examples of loyalty to the nation.<sup>11</sup> Their education would give women as mothers and wives, more tools to extend their form of loyalty to husbands and children, specifically to make men greater leaders for the nation building process. Albizu Campos, in the early twentieth century, argued that women's reproductive rights needed to be protected under the same vein, because they produced the heirs to the nation.<sup>12</sup> The great Puerto Rican family could permit women's education to better aid men's political leadership development. The categories of 'woman' and 'man' as defined by family and nation, centered on their roles of mother and father. Women's roles were defined by how they reproduced male leadership through their wombs; their access to education had to strengthen their abilities to maintain masculinist power. They had to instill masculinity as defined by male dominance in their sons and husbands. They had to raise their daughters to carry out the same role. Such a dichotomy maintained and relied on fixed gender roles, as an either or status, to not be questioned; heterosexist family values were the focal point for a great nation. The family needed to be rewritten to reflect these values, to challenge the negativity associated with being Puerto Rican.

*La Voz* does bring a positive alternative media representation and coverage of Puerto Ricans in Chicago. The nationalist sentiment within the PRCC and its project *La Voz*, however, is more than "simple identification by a national identity category, a reflexive operation of agency and criticism, or a mode of social membership. It is unclear for whom the monthly newsprint acts as an agent for this change. The newsprint is a project whose founding and dissemination is male centered. Various articles in the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue attest to this. The first was a brief statement in which the production manager wrote that *La Voz* was founded on the vision of one Puerto Rican man."<sup>13</sup>

### ONE MAN'S VISION-WHAT OF THE OTHERS?

The March 2008 issue celebrated male leaders' struggles and triumphs, specifically that of Juan Antonio Corretjer, for whom the PRCC was named. A guest writer of the issue, someone familiar with the work done at the Center, credited the 35 year success of the organization to one man. The production manager of *La Voz* followed suit.<sup>14</sup> However, *La Voz's* special issue was a bit more complicated. PRCC's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary included events that celebrated women's legacy. The anniversary's significant events also included International Women's Day, which celebrated the legacy of Puerto Rican women. Another event commemorated women political prisoners, entitled "Legacies of Corretjer."<sup>15</sup> Reading women's contributions as the legacy of one man's, frames women's contributions through the grandeur of a male's work.

The creation of women's events is an example of how celebrating Juan Antonio's legacy has indirectly justified continued venues for male-centered hierarchies. The expectation remains that, despite marginal recognition of female leaders, (heterosexual) men remain the primary foundation for nation building projects. In its mission statement, *La Voz* claims to acknowledge the contributions of local

Puerto Ricans and Latinos, as well as Puerto Ricans across the country. This particular issue, as well as a number of earlier editions, would lead us to believe, however, that the contributions of the community at large are the result of specific actors: ones who are straight and male. In short, the newspaper seems to attribute its existence (and even its *raison d'être*) to men. Both *La Voz* and PRCC are founded on an anti-colonial, pro-Puerto Rican independence ideology, which necessitates critiques of their representation. Limited gender representation makes the organization and the newsprint guilty of espousing earlier forms of nationalisms<sup>16</sup> that were decidedly sexist and heterosexist.

## DEBUNKING NATIONALISM'S SUCCESS: PROBLEMATIZING UNCRITICAL NOSTALGIA

Heterosexism within diasporic nationalist movements and ideologies is not the Puerto Rican exception. In her essay, "Queer Aztlán," Moraga claims Puerto Rican nationalism based efforts, such as the Young Lords' work, have been successful. From her perspective, the nationalists' fixed ideas and forms of taking action have kept activist work alive as evidenced in activities such as protesting "English Only" initiatives on the island, among others.<sup>17</sup> The critiques of Chicano nationalism that Moraga makes in her essay parallel the limitations of Puerto Rican nationalism on various levels. The male centrism Moraga had seen in the Chicano movement, as well as nostalgia former leaders had for past work, is ever present in Puerto Rican nationalism. It is present when *La Voz* credits specific men for the work of many. Berríos' comments, as cited earlier, are also examples of how male supremacy continues to be of great concern in the creation of a democratic and egalitarian Puerto Rican nationalism.

In critiquing Berríos' opinion on Puerto Rican women's lack of involvement, Mergal had wanted to point out the male centrism prevalent in the party as well as gendered constructions of contributions. That motherhood and wifedom limited women's participation speaks directly to the heteronormativity prevalent in national imaginaries.

The gendering of names within the Puerto Rican Cultural Center affiliate organizations is a key example of how contributions and recognition remain gendered. The magnitude and attention each center provides is a reflection of the division of labor and presumed possible gendered contributions. The largest and most prominent entities, the PRCC proper and the alternative high school, for example, are both named after men. The alternative high school had been named after former Nationalist Party President, Pedro Albizu Campos. The day care center (a decidedly feminized space) and the Family Learning Center,<sup>18</sup> Consuelo Lee Corretjer and Lolita Lebrón respectively. The divisive gendered naming of institutions within the large umbrella of the PRCC demonstrates how, even in honoring contributors, the male ego remains served, honored and revered which continues to justify their male supremacy. This naming reflects the elementary division of women as caretakers and men as greater political leaders, which maintains an imbalance of socialization and recognition that is true of diasporic enclaves like Humboldt Park and the greater Puerto Rican nation.<sup>19</sup>

## FOR WHOSE GLORY?

PRCC has worked on creating more visible spaces for Boricua/Latino lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and queer (lgbtq) community members. When looking at the male-

centeredness of the work, it is important to recognize the changes that give voice to groups otherwise silenced. The community also struggles with representations deviating from a traditional heteronormative model and strict gender binaries. In the Spring of 2007, PRCC's branch STI testing and counseling center, Vida/SIDA held a Cacique and Cacica Pageant, in which trans queens and kings competed to be crowned Cacica and Cacique respectively, to then participate in the Puerto Rican Parade. Complexities exist within the process of inclusion, however, for homosexuals, bisexuals, transgendered and transsexuals.

Writing the 'queer' subject into the nation, as the transpageant does, on the surface, appears as progress. This aspect of community building efforts recognizes their contributions, needs and efforts in this annual event that started the spring of 2007. The way the first had been pageant reported in *La Voz* of May 2007, however, leaves much to be questioned. Particularly, who did the pageant serve? The queer body had historically been negated and or treated as a symptom of barbarity and by some is still regarded as diseased for not complying with heterosexual practices and lifestyles. Jon Binnie, in his text *Globalization of Sexuality*, explains that full inclusion of lgbtq citizens is tokenistic. While historically queers were regarded as ostracized, new language and demonstrations of inclusion are only used by a nation to project progress. A nation that includes gays and lesbians, that grants them rights and allows them to perform does so on the same premise that it had historically marginalized them. Giving them citizenship, social membership, works to maintain power within current leadership as justified by their willingness to include the once inhuman degenerate other.

That a transpageant serves to bring attention to the STI issues suffered within the homosexual and transsexual community conflates the two and maintains the idea of the queer body as diseased. The relationship that gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered individuals have with the way medicine perceives and treats them is more than framed through disease. Historically, their sexual desires and expression had been constructed as diseased. The disease was read as biological, then psychological. While there are attempts through DNA testing and surgery to validate their existence and expression, their relationship remains framed and needing to answer to heteronormative practices. Sexuality as an expression of agency and autonomy as well as desire continuously needs to be socially read as something that can be proved through science, which denies autonomy and self-determination.

The Cacique/Cacica pageant seeks to address the need to provide more education about sexually transmitted infections. It is limiting to have the first representation of queers in this vein. Reading queers as diseased, and only included to talk about disease, maintains them as secondary citizens. This had been a groundbreaking event for the community that represented a great deal of change, however, when critically examined it represents homophobic realities that still exist. It is important to address the realities of STIs but within a vein that does not conflate the diseased body with the queer body. Also, it is important to include queers on their own terms and celebrate their efforts and contributions as non-diseased.

It is also important to think critically about how the way gender is socially read in such spheres can also be limiting and degrading. The fluidity of sexuality and gender expression, and the continued

hostility around such discussions needs to be addressed as it affects social and political initiatives. It is important to look at how bound forms of external identification do not take into consideration the reality that gender is more than a bio-determined trait. Body parts, disease, sexual organs confine the expressions and definitions of gender and, of how sexual desire is understood. In his article “Pa’la Escuelita,” Manuel Guzmán discusses the rise and fall of “La Escuelita,” a New York gay bar. Guzmán explains the complexity of descriptors of homosexual men and how, “men having sex with men,” continues to be complex because of how it is read. As he explains, descriptors “fail to take into account the manner in which actors involved in the sexual act experience and apprehend their sexual act.”<sup>20</sup> Hetero/homo-normative readings of sexual practices, denies the agency exercised in the act, and the possibilities of the actors defining their roles for themselves. Guzmán, specifically wants to argue that understandings of sexual relations have as much to do with roles as with self-perception. What one may read as a man having sex with a man (MSM), may be read differently by those involved. The misreading affects and strains the possibilities of a good relationship between queers and the medical profession, scholarship and practice. Guzmán is addressing the fact that during the sexual act, depending on their roles, one may identify as a ‘man,’ even if socially he is not read as one. The inverse is also true, someone’s gender identity should be identified by her/his decision, not by an observer or outside party.

An article in *La Voz* which focuses on MSM, erases the lesbian and transman’s<sup>21</sup> expression as integral to deconstructing the hierarchies of heterosexism. It negates the experiences and medical needs of lesbians, and bisexuals. They also have health needs regarding safe sex education and resources, something this article overlooks. Lourdes Torres, in the introduction to *Tortilleras*, writes, “Radical new Latina lesbian representations emerged in the 1980’s... boldly [challenging] the virtual absence of Latina lesbian representations, and created an impetus for the emergence of Latina lesbian political, creative and scholarly works in various genres.”<sup>22</sup> Work around and supported by the Puerto Rican Cultural Center had begun to do the same thing, with queer focused spoken word events, community lectures, the formation of an lgbtq collective, a drag contest, most of which had started to take place in 2007. As Torres later explains in the anthology’s introduction, “it is not surprising to see that, in sites where dictatorships and right-wing governments rule, possibilities for lesbian expression may be limited, and expressions of same-sex desire may take a different form than in places where such expressions entails less risk.”<sup>23</sup> She is speaking of the experience of lesbians in Latin American countries in comparison with Latinas in the United States who have, comparatively, a lesser chance of encounters because of the lack of queer spaces in urban settings. Representations of the political and cultural contributions of queer folks in Puerto Rican Diaspora, specifically as recognized by Chicago based community newsprint, *La Voz del Paseo Boricua*, need to be addressed more fully. Similar to statements Torres makes in which representations of queer are focused on “general homosexualities often [erasing] the gender hierarchy... [rendering] lesbians as less visible,”<sup>24</sup> the visibility of contributions of queers should require more than maintaining lgbt individuals in the discourse of sex and disease.

Visibility, however, through this pageant and other coverage on Vida/SIDA, specifically frames lgbtq communities as one group and solely tied to sexually transmitted diseases. Representations based on disease introduces the lgbtq community into the national

family, la gran familia puertorriquena, as less than human. It reifies the heterosexist reading of them as a threat to the family, despite this event’s attempt at including them into it. Active queer organizer and community member, Juan Calderón, in covering the Caca/Cacique pageant, explains “The purpose of the pageant was to create a safe environment in which young Latino MSM can feel comfortable assessing HIV/AIDS and STI prevention education.”<sup>25</sup> This is significant and the MSM focus is in part because “males” in this work, publicly attack each other with degradations of their masculinity through homo-/transphobia more intensely than those read as women. Definitions of manhood and masculinity remain framed by social and political virility, which binds their possibilities of being respected for deviating and questioning boundaries of maleness. In *What it Means to Be a Man Reflections on Puerto Rican Masculinity*, anthropologist, Rafael Ramirez explains that though this is not the case, “some people [believe] that homosexuality is always a negation of masculinity.”<sup>26</sup> Public discussions and performances in PRCC affiliated venues and events can attest to this. Emcee battles, for example, are avenues in which young men express themselves. One of the primary ways in which they express themselves, however, is by degrading each other’s expression of masculinity. It is the overarching centrality, impenetrability of male figures that needs to be disrupted without dehumanizing or devaluing members of the community and or nation.

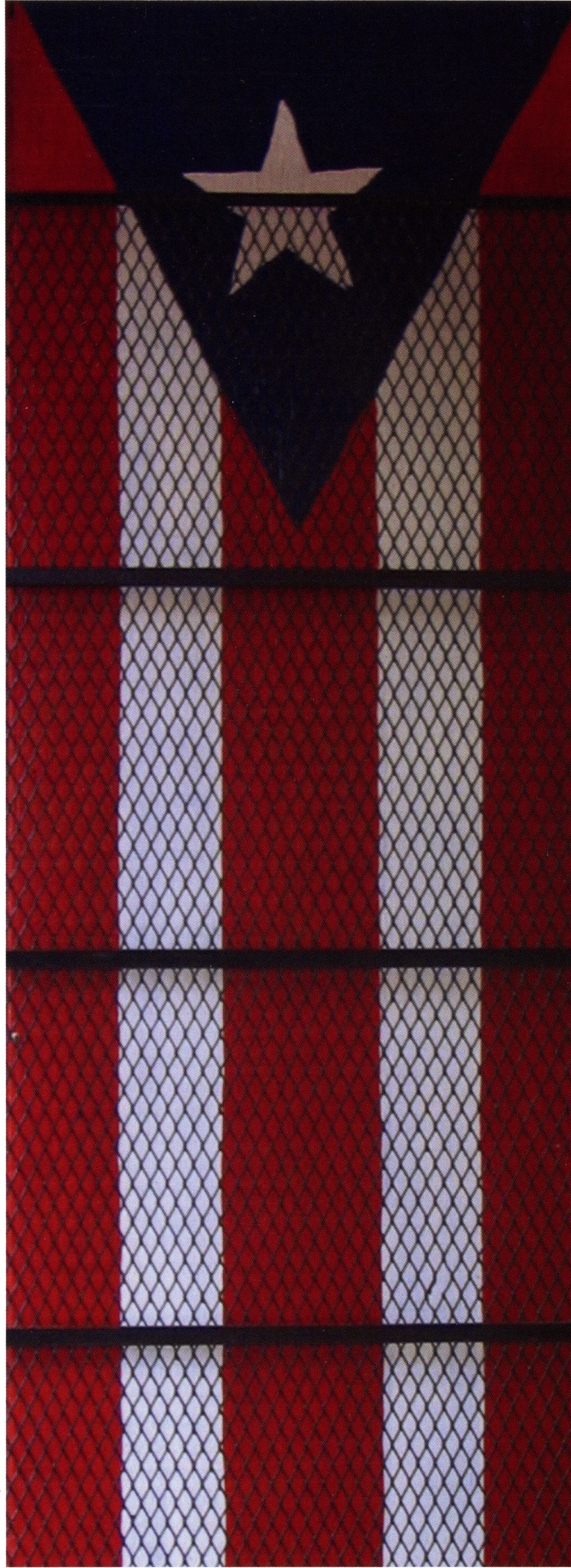
### “IF THAT’S NOT INDIVIDUALISTIC, I DON’T KNOW WHAT IS”<sup>27</sup>

To prove authenticity in the nation, to be written in, it is important to follow men’s example and leadership. In attempts to deviate from strictly male or female gender expression, for the nationalism as portrayed in *La Voz* and PRCC work, it is important to still ask permission of and answer to heterosexual definitions. It is important to note that Guzmán had found that sexiles left their nation because it failed to incorporate them in their national imaginary, into full unadulterated citizenship.<sup>28</sup> Puerto Rican independence leaders share similar frustrations with the United States and its negation of Puerto Ricans’ right to exercise self-determination. While in the United States, neither legislation nor emigration stateside has guaranteed more rights for Puerto Ricans, lgbtq Puerto Ricans suffer the same second-class citizenship in their limited representations. Tokenistic stories such as the transpageant coverage do not incorporate the complex history of the lgbtq leaders and community members in to the Puerto Rican national imaginary. The way the transpageant was covered relies on community members’ historic amnesia, as though Puerto Ricans have forgotten the ever-encompassing heterosexism present in their communities, their nation, within greater understandings of Puerto Rican history. Albizu Campos used the universalistic idea of ‘la raza’ as a united race of Puerto Rican’s African, Taíno and European ancestry. In universalizing he erases and negates the damage the initial construction of difference had done. Albizu Campos also negates the wealth within the difference of the complex background and influences within Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican’s cultural self-interpretation. His racialized universalism is very similar to the universalizing of community members, heterosexual and queer, which erases their historical ostracization of lgbtq individuals within a struggle that now ‘accepts’ and ‘embraces’ them. Recognition is important as is challenging heterosexism through affirming narratives.

Puerto Rican women and queer Boricuas remain on the sidelines as additives to a male centered male dominated nationalism. Such

exclusion and hierarchies reflect a bourgeois national project. The paradox of an essentialist performance of nationalism is an imitation of the imperialist project of U.S. nationalism which functions more like a tyranny. The grand narrative of PRCC male figures as leaders, visionaries and isolated messiahs of the work reflects the bootstrap ideology of rugged individualism that, as an organization, their discourse rejects. The contradiction of rugged individualism while using a discourse of collective action limits the possibilities of the organization. It discourages loyalty that seeks to strengthen the work through practicing the complexities and complications of collective processes. Narrating particular individuals as originators constructs a process of membership that lies at their discretion.

The negation of the cultural capital they have gained through education and longevity in the work, disregards the social power they possess. This, in turn, makes their authority absolute and unquestionable. Their prior impoverished identity becomes an unending victimhood that overshadows the implications of the longevity of their status within institutions like the PRCC. The unquestionable self-imposed martyrdom is ever present in public displays like murals. On a mural on a street half a mile north of Paseo Boricua, community members painted Pedro Albizu Campos as Christ. Such a depiction overlooks his Hispanophilia and melting pot racism, hiding it behind the iconic martyrdom of Christ. For some, Albizu Campos' political prisoner status eradicates his colorblind racism, masked by 'one race' ideology<sup>29</sup> that mimics the United States' melting pot multiculturalism. His suffering immortalized him despite his intellectual elite approach to anti-colonialism, which attempted to strategically use nostalgia for Spain. This is a demonstration, on the part of Albizu Campos, of his own historical amnesia. That community members immortalized him without question also denotes a preference for historic amnesia when it justifies the moral capital in their performative, uncomplicated victimhood.



An anti-colonial subaltern nationalism, like Puerto Rico's, needs to challenge the documentation of a collective history that relies on historical amnesia. Using historical amnesia extends the silencing project of imperialist histories that have informed Puerto Rico's Spanish then United States' colonial status. In her text, *Queen of America Goes to Washington City*, Lauren Berlant explains, "democracies can...produce a special form of tyranny that makes citizens like children, infantilized, passive, and overdependent... based on the suppression of critical knowledge."<sup>30</sup> The treatment of the citizen as a co-dependent, naïve malleable member, has led to the success of U.S. imperialism.<sup>31</sup> A nationalist movement that aims to work against U.S. imperialism should work hard to not treat its members as immature, passive and overdependent.

In response to U.S. heterosexist frameworks, organizations like Queer Nation, a grassroots collective out of New York, performed queerness publicly to challenge the normalization of heterosexual practices and institutions. The organization's work queered the nation by breaking through borders which excluded them and regarding them as non-citizens. They addressed issues such as AIDS in their work, but challenging heteronormativity was not bound within diseased discourse. The organization's members had the intention of recognizing their significance in discussions of liberty and freedom. They insisted that they had the same rights to live in public, out of secrecy as did the nuclear family.<sup>32</sup> Their efforts were an attempt to challenge their invisibility on their own terms.<sup>33</sup> They did not seek consent, rather they demanded

attention. Puerto Rican nationalism demands attention as well in a variety of respects. Imitating the progress of inclusion of U.S.'s dominant history, keeps Puerto Rican work stagnant. A Puerto Rican nationalism that relies on creating a power system similar to the one that excludes it, fails. The myth of PRCC's success is

grounded in the same essentialist masculine privileges that inform colonialism in the first place. Since disrupting boundaries remains a deconstructionist project, one has to consider the historical construction of nation-states and its implication in contemporary understandings of citizenship and nation-building, even in anti-colonial projects. Davila explains,

[The] distinction between nation and states can be traced to Herder's eighteenth-century ideas of the "folk soul" in which nations are deemed to have a distinct essence rooted in history and tradition...the distinction...is important in order to study types of nationalism that identify with something other than a nation-state, such as those encapsulated within a greater state or constrained by a colonial relationship, as is the case of Puerto Rico.<sup>34</sup>

The Puerto Rican 'essence' that the PRCC and *La Voz* try to promote is one rooted in self-determination, the knowledge that the discrimination, poverty, economic disparity Puerto Ricans in Chicago have experienced stems from how their racialization is informed by the colonial relationship Puerto Rico has with the U.S. as well as how that particular relationship constructed the economic and political conditions that required Puerto Ricans to emigrate to the mainland in the first place. Davila continues, "Cultural nationalism in Puerto Rico is a direct result of the limits imposed by colonialism...which led to the emphasis on culture as Puerto Rico's [sovereign domain]."<sup>35</sup> Davila also explains that nationalism is prompted as self-recognition as a culturally distinct, not necessarily a separate physical space. The status question is not important, although, performing specific traditions and practices within the frame of what's recognized as culturally distinct remains important.

The question of citizenship, of who is included in the national imaginary, remains gendered, raced, classed, much like the question of who has access to the right to be part of writing and constructing the definition of a Puerto Rican citizen. The act and process of writing a group of persons into the national imaginary also needs to be examined critically. Queer Nation's work called out their exclusion by performing inclusion, something which they did not allow to be mediated by heterosexual privilege. If Puerto Ricans in Chicago follow that model in the process of addressing the other obstacles used to withhold rights from them, maybe their community building efforts could be more easily sustained. Maybe, if they practiced inclusion, the organization would have greater success in attracting and maintaining activists. Maybe inclusion, would break the current revolving door of active participants dedicating their energies to the PRCC.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Univision evening news week of June 10, 2008; "Puerto Rico in Independence Bid" BBC News June 10, 2008 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/7445615.stm>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 1.

<sup>3</sup> Mari Bras, Juan. "La enfermedad no está en la sábana." *Patria y Universo Ideas y Sentimientos de un Puertorriqueño Libre Causa Común Independentista* (Proyecto Educativo Puertorriqueño), 1993: 104.

<sup>4</sup> Puerto Rico is comprised of various islands- Puerto Rico proper, Vieques, Mona, Desecheo and Culebra.

<sup>5</sup> Mergal, Margarita "Puerto Rican Feminism at a Crossroad: Challenges at the Turn of the Century" *Colonial Dilemma Critical*

*Perspectives on Contemporary Puerto Rico*, 135.

- <sup>6</sup> I am referring to Anglo-American racism against Puerto Ricans; racism *within* the community is another story.
- <sup>7</sup> Juan Antonio Corretjer worked with the Nationalist Party during Albizu Campos' tenure. Poet, Secretary of Nationalist Party, he participated in various of their efforts and put his political ideas to verse as well as practice. <http://www.patriagrande.net/puerto-rico/juan.antonio.corretjer/biografia.htm>
- <sup>8</sup> Humboldt Park is the park and district that currently has with the most visible Puerto Rican presence in Chicago. Part of that is the concentration of Puerto Rican businesses on Paseo Boricua where the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, among other organizations, is located. Paseo Boricua lies between the two iron wrought Puerto Rican flags. The contemporary correlation between Puerto Ricans and Humboldt Park, especially in light of gentrification, is due to the fiestas patronales that have taken place in the park since inception.
- <sup>9</sup> *La Voz del Paseo Boricua* March 2008 Vol. 5 No. 1.
- <sup>10</sup> Janer, Zilkia. "Colonization as Seduction." *Puerto Rican Nation-Building Literature: Impossible Romance*. University Press of Florida 2005: 11-31.
- <sup>11</sup> Hostos, Eugenio Maria de. "La Educación Científica de la Mujer." De la revista *Sud-América* 10 de Julio de 1873. en *Obras Completas* Vol. XII *Forjando el Porvenir Americano Tomo 1*. Cultural, S.A. Obispo y Bernaza Habana, Cuba 1939: 7-65.
- <sup>12</sup> Briggs, Laura "Debating Reproduction," *Reproducing Empire Race, Sex, Science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. University of California Press © 2002: 74-108.
- <sup>13</sup> Velasquez, Jodene, " *La Voz* Celebrates its 4th anniversary." *La Voz del Paseo Boricua*, p. 2.
- <sup>14</sup> Rodriguez, Marisol.
- <sup>15</sup> The announcement for the Jornada events was on a postcard mailed out in early March of 2008, which provided a list of anniversary events.
- <sup>16</sup> I pluralize nationalism because of the various other representations of grassroots organizing, like the Young Lords, who center their work as being led by and primarily serving men's quest for power, not necessarily for change.
- <sup>17</sup> Moraga, Cherrie. "Queer Aztlán: the Re-formation of the Chicano Tribe" from *The Last Generation: Prose and Poetry* South End Press 1993 p. 152.
- <sup>18</sup> The Family Learning Center is a site where young mothers who did not finish their degrees can work to obtain their high school diploma; it also provides child care.
- <sup>19</sup> In *Puerto Rican Nation on the Move*, Duany makes the argument that Puerto Rico as a 'nation' is not defined by the borders and boundaries of the Puerto Rican islands, that rather the nation is in constant movement. My use of 'nation' stems from that particular understanding. Duany, Jorge "Introduction" *Puerto Rican Nation on the Move Identities on the Island and in the United States* University of North Carolina Press, 2002: 1-11.
- <sup>20</sup> Guzman, Manuel "Pa'La Escuelita con Mucho Cuida'o y por la Orillita." In *Puerto Rican Jam* University of Minnesota Press 1997: 217 and 11.
- <sup>21</sup> A transman is someone who identifies as a man, though he may not have been born biologically as a 'man.'
- <sup>22</sup> Torres, L. "Introduction." Ed. Torres, Lourdes; Pertusa, Inmaculada. *Tortilleras Hispanic and U.S. Latina Literary Expression*.



- 23 Torres, 4.
- 24 Torres 3.
- 25 Calderon, Juan. "Vida/SIDA Cacique and Cacica Pageant 2007 A Celebration of LGBTQ Life in the Barrio" in *La Voz del Paseo Boricua* May 2007 Vol. 4 No. 3 cover page.
- 26 Ramirez, Rafael "The Homosexual Question" in *What it means to be a Man*, 1999: 80.
- 27 In an online conversation about with this project with a good friend of mine familiar with the PRCC, the person stated that the community building efforts of the leaders of this organization were an individualistic endeavor. Having been involved to a greater extent and for a longer period of time then me in PRCC activities, and having worked against the masculinist constructions of participation, this person eventually left the community.
- 28 Guzman. "Pa' La Escuelita con Mucho Cuida'o y Por la Orillita": A Journey through the Contested Terrains of the Nation and Sexual Orientation" *Puerto Rican Jam*, 189-208.
- 29 Carrión, Juan Manuel. "Two Variants of Caribbean Nationalism: Marcus Garvey and Pedro Albizu Campos." *Centro Journal* Volume XVII Number 1, 2005: 27-45.
- 30 Berlant, Lauren "Theory of Infantile Citizenship" *Queen of America Goes to Washington City* Duke University Press, 1997: 27.
- 31 Berlant, Lauren. "Theory of Infantile Citizenship."
- 32 Berlant, Lauren. "Queer Nation." *Queen of America goes to Washington City*.
- 33 Berlant, Lauren.
- 34 Davila 9.
- 35 Davila 10.

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