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A New Destination for “The Flying Bus”? The Implications of Orlando-Rican Migration for Luis Rafael Sánchez’s “La guagua aérea”

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Abstract: Puerto Rican author Luis Rafael Sánchez’s “La guagua aérea” explores the duality, hybridity, and fluidity of US-Puerto Rican identity through the frequent travel of migrants between New York City (the traditional destination city for Puerto Rican migrants) and the island. In recent years, however, the “flying bus” has adopted a new number one destination: Central Florida. The Orlando metropolitan area has surpassed New York as the primary locus of Puerto Rican migration on the US mainland. Given that migrants on the “flying bus” have a new primary destination and now tend to remain settled in Central Florida versus returning to the island, this essay will use an interdisciplinary approach to Sánchez’s fiction in order to demonstrate that the author’s metaphor for a fluid Puerto Rican identity no longer adequately explains the realities presented by the demographic and migratory shift to the Orlando area. This study also explores the differences between the recent Puerto Rico–Orlando migration and the previous waves of migration, calling into question the traditional revolving door migratory paradigm illustrated by Sánchez.

Keywords: Central Florida/Florida central, culture/cultura, flying bus/La guagua aérea, Luis Rafael Sánchez, migration/migración, Orlando-Rican, Puerto Rico, revolving door migration/migración circular

Introduction

Since its occupation and colonization by the United States as a consequence of the 1898 Spanish–American War, the island of Puerto Rico has maintained a unique relationship with the United States that has resulted in the forging of what critics have termed a “transnational” identity rather than an “international” identity (Duany, *Nation* 218). The continuous ebb and flow of migrants from the island over the past century has been so significant that the population of the Diaspora rivals that of the island.¹ With the movement of Puerto Ricans from the island to the mainland and back again, the citizenship status afforded to Puerto Ricans by the 1917 Jones Act, and the island’s political status as an “Estado Libre Asociado” (Free Associated State), Puerto Rico has become what Jorge Duany calls a “nation on the move,” and its people a “stateless nation” (*Nation* 4, 15).

Although for decades the traditional destination for Puerto Ricans who decided to leave the island for the mainland in search of more favorable economic conditions has been New York City and the surrounding metropolitan area, since the 1970s there has been a notable shift in that Diasporic movement from the Northeast to the state of Florida, specifically the Orlando region. Furthermore, as stated by Jorge Duany and Félix V. Matos-Rodríguez, in the decade of

the 1990s, Central Florida, which includes Orange and Osceola counties, displaced New York as the primary destination for Puerto Rican migrants (3). According to the 2008 American Community Survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau, the Orlando-Kissimmee metropolitan area constitutes the second largest concentration of Puerto Ricans on the mainland with a population of approximately 222,481, surpassing the third place Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington metropolitan area by over 9,000 people. These demographic shifts do not suggest that Puerto Ricans have ceased to migrate to the traditional urban industrial centers of the Northeast and the Rust Belt. However, the demographic shift has been so significant that new tools are required to fully understand the implications for identity development both in the Diaspora community as well as on the island.

It is also important to note the growing dominance of the Puerto Rican community as a proportion of the general population of Central Florida. The Hispanic population in Orange County comprises almost 25% of the entire population, 48% of which are from Puerto Rico or of Puerto Rican origin.² Additionally, in neighboring Osceola County, one of the fastest growing counties in the state of Florida, 39% of the population is Hispanic, 59% of which are of Puerto Rican origin.³ As these data suggest, not only do Puerto Ricans comprise the largest group in the region's Hispanic community, but, in and of themselves, they represent one of the largest groups overall. It would seem that the Orlando-Rican community is on its way to becoming the preeminent ethnic group in a fast-growing North American city and could soon rival Cubans in South Florida and Mexicans in the Southwest in its political, cultural, and economic influence in the region. In other words, Orlando stands poised to become a "Puerto Rican" city along the same lines as traditional Northern cities like Hartford, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia.

Numerous studies have examined the development of a Diaspora identity, notably the nuyorican identity,⁴ that has resulted from the continuous migration from the island to the mainland, as well as the interplay between returning migrants and the islanders.⁵ The freedom of movement between Puerto Rico and the United States afforded by their citizenship status has resulted in a "revolving door" migration that is unique in US-Latin American migration patterns. A major consequence of this free flow of people between the island and the mainland is the creation of new, hybrid identities, notably among second- and third-generation mainland Puerto Ricans.⁶ In terms of cultural expressions of this hybridity, one need only look at the rise of salsa music in the barrios of New York City and its musical development through the interplay with island rhythms.⁷ Furthermore, this hybrid nuyorican culture has been marginalized both by mainstream American culture as well as by island Puerto Ricans. Such is the extent of the negation by islanders that Hugo Rodríguez Vecchini suggests that they have denied the Diaspora a place in the Puerto Rican nation (61). On the other hand, Duany argues that the revolving door migration and interaction of island and Diaspora cultures is so significant that the Diaspora must be considered part of the Puerto Rican nation, a "nation on the move."

In his 1984 short story/essay titled "La guagua aérea,"⁸ renowned Puerto Rican author Luis Rafael Sánchez explores the tensions and negotiation of cultural space that springs forth from the comings and goings of Puerto Rican migrants to New York City. Through the metaphor of the "flying bus," Sánchez captures the duality, hybridity, and fluidity of US-Puerto Rican identity in the microcosm of an airline flight between New York and Puerto Rico. In this story, passengers on the "flying bus" bring manifestations of Puerto Rican cultural identity with them in their carry-on luggage, while discussing how they feel torn between economic opportunities afforded by life in New York and their sense of belonging and rootedness when living in Puerto Rico. As discussed earlier, this frequent travel between New York City and the island on the "flying bus" greatly facilitated circular migration and was crucial in forging the nuyorican culture and identity that has left its own legacy. However, given that migrants on the "flying bus" have a new number one destination, the Central Florida region, Sánchez's metaphor can no longer adequately explain the realities presented by this demographic and migratory shift to the Orlando area. In addition to using sociological and anthropological approaches to the

issue, this study utilizes a close reading of Sánchez's "La guagua aérea" to explore the recent Puerto Rico–Orlando migration. This paper will also discuss demographic data and sociological studies in order to determine how the migration of Puerto Ricans to Central Florida differs from previous Puerto Rican waves of migration and to reevaluate the traditional revolving door/nuyorican paradigm seen in "La guagua aérea." Finally, this study will demonstrate how the unique factors surrounding the shift to Central Florida offer the possibility of a new identity distinct from the nuyorican experience, the implications of which also pose questions for the island's relationship with the Orlando Diaspora.

The Central Florida Puerto Rican Diaspora

While Puerto Ricans have been migrating to the state of Florida for decades, they have only been settling in large numbers over the last twenty years. New York is no longer the top destination for these immigrants, with recent data illustrating that Florida possesses the second largest population of Puerto Ricans not on the island, with Orange and Osceola counties in Central Florida having the largest concentration in the state (US Census Bureau 2008). The state of Florida is also the number one destination for these newcomers. Initially, Puerto Ricans came to Florida in waves following patterns of circular migration, according to the season and the amount of employment available. However, in the 1970s, they began staying for extended periods of time, rather than going back and forth between the island and the mainland. Duany cites four main reasons for the shift in Puerto Rican migration to Central Florida in particular: 1) the economic reconstruction of New York during the 1980s; 2) better employment opportunities that moved Puerto Ricans to other parts of the Northeast, West, and South; 3) lower cost of living and a lack of state income tax; and finally, 4) the rapid expansion of the Hispanic population caused many to be drawn to the linguistic, cultural, and geographic similarities between the State of Florida and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico ("El Barrio" 74). Additionally, the type of migrants coming to Central Florida has shifted in comparison to New York. The Central Florida Puerto Rican population is more educated with 73.6% having finished high school, compared to 55.2% in New York (Duany and Matos-Rodríguez 3). For example, more Puerto Rican professionals, such as teachers, have been migrating to Central Florida in search of a higher standard of living.⁹

The differences in identity formation between nuyoricans and Puerto Ricans in Central Florida can be attributed to differing surroundings and histories. Upon their arrival in New York, Puerto Ricans had to compete with other racial and ethnic groups, such as the Jewish and African-American communities, for jobs and influence in city politics, and lived in close proximity to these groups. Juan Flores's book *The Diaspora Strikes Back* (2009) argues that the close connection to the African-American community in New York changed the behaviors that many Puerto Ricans had brought with them from the island. Given their familiarity with the African cultures of the Caribbean, the adaptation to African-American culture was easier than to mainstream America. Puerto Ricans in New York also experienced the same prejudice that many African-Americans faced in the United States, especially Afro-Puerto Ricans, as seen in Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets* (1967). As a result of this cultural mixing, the poetry and literature of nuyoricans demonstrate more African-American dialects and rhythm than the literary expressions of the Chicano community, which historically has not intermingled with African-Americans (Flores, *Divided* 183). The absence of a well-established multiethnic culture in Central Florida, with which to both compete and blend, explains the closer connection Puerto Ricans have in Central Florida to their island identity. For example, in his 2010 study of middle-class Puerto Ricans in Orlando, Duany explains that, "The demographic and cultural predominance of Puerto Ricans in Central Florida has encouraged their mobilization primarily around national origin, not multiethnic coalitions" (110). Furthermore, Ramón Grosfoguel, Frances Negrón-Muntaner, and Chloé S. Georas argue that the movement of Puerto Ricans

to geographic areas beyond New York has the effect of “detritorializing” the migrants to new immigrant enclaves, such as Central Florida: “A few decades ago, Puerto Ricans in the Northeast could claim a sense of ‘territory’ within the metropolis since most migrants settled in New York. The new migration patterns, however, are destabilizing these spatial correlations, making the migratory experience increasingly deterritorialized/reterritorialized” (34). In other words, whereas the nuyoricano feels a stronger sense of belonging to the deeply rooted Puerto Rican community in New York, the Orlando-Rican, who is most likely a recent arrival to a young city, will less likely develop a relationship or identity with the local community. Finally, Patricia Silver proposes that the context of Central Florida’s recent economic expansion and sprawling urban and suburban development has led to the creation of a unique Puerto Rican identity different from the traditional, closely-knit Diaspora enclave identity.

“La guagua aérea”

Luis Rafael Sánchez’s “La guagua aérea” represents a snapshot of a typical flight between San Juan and New York City.¹⁰ This short story showcases Puerto Rican, nuyoricano, and American identity through the perspective of the Puerto Rican narrator, presumably the voice of Sánchez himself. In “La guagua aérea,” the author “satirically analyzes the perennial negotiations of Puerto Rican identity in terms of constructs such as race, class, gender and language differences” (Maldonado-DeOliveira 53). Through the conversations between the diverse group of passengers, the reader is allowed an inside look at the relationships and tensions among the various people aboard the flight in order to explore the “diversity of this [Puerto Rican] identity” (Perivolaris 60).

The story’s name “La guagua aérea” is a metaphor that refers to the flights on which Puerto Rican migrants travel, to both come to the mainland and return to the island. The metaphor of the “flying bus” compares “the airplane to a bus literally taking off from the ground and flying in the air with its human cargo, from one stop to another” (Maldonado-DeOliveira 54). In its early years, air travel was a way for the upper class to travel from place to place, while a bus was utilized by the lower class. However, in this story the roles are inverted and the “flying bus,” or airplane, serves as a mode of cheap and economical travel. Generally, buses are also utilized for short, frequent, and easy trips, further subverting the traditional significance attributed to air travel. The image of the “flying bus,” then, underscores the facility and mobility that Puerto Ricans enjoy when traveling to and from the continental United States. This easy access stems from the fact that Puerto Ricans born on the island have held US citizenship since 1917, allowing them the freedom to travel to and from the mainland with little trouble, unlike the experience of foreign nationals. As a result, for the passengers onboard, the trip from Puerto Rico to the United States is not a major undertaking, but simply a short commute from one place to another. The narrator in “La guagua aérea” describes a flight where, “Puertorriqueños que, de tanto ir y venir, informalizan el viaje en la guagua aérea y lo reducen a una trillita sencillona sobre el móvil océano. Que lo que importa es llegar, pronto, a Nueva York. Que lo que importa es regresar, pronto, a Puerto Rico. Que lo que importa es volver, pronto, a Nueva York. Que lo que importa es regresar, pronto, a Puerto Rico” (20). In other words, when traveling on the “flying bus,” Puerto Ricans become trapped in the cycle of being between the island and the mainland, which lessens the seriousness of migrating or “commuting” on an airplane. Because this travel is so frequent, the gravity of moving to and from the island becomes nothing more than a “trillita sencillona,” an “insignificant little trip.”¹¹

“La guagua aérea” clearly represents the revolving-door period of Puerto Rican migration, which started in 1964 and continues to the present.¹² Duany observes that, “Although economic, political, and cultural penetration by the United States entices people to move there, migrants often return home when socioeconomic conditions abroad become less attractive—only to move back again when the local situation is unsatisfactory” (“Mobile” 355). Thus, Puerto Rican

circular migration is primarily determined “by changes in the structure of the labor markets in Puerto Rico and the United States” (Duany, “Imagining” 263). This economic reality causes many Puerto Ricans to consider their island “el edén inhabitable” and New York “el eliseo desacreditado,” as described by Sánchez (“Guagua” 15). Because of the constant travel to and from the island as a result of economic “pushes” and “pulls” to the mainland, many Puerto Ricans demonstrate a confused sense of identity. Sánchez narrates that one of the passengers “brinca mensualmente el charco y olvida el lado del charco en que vive” (14). This displacement of identity stems from the rejection of the *guagua*’s commuters by both US and Puerto Rican societies. In the United States, Puerto Ricans are seen as foreigners, because they speak Spanish. However, when traveling back to Puerto Rico, they are seen as assimilated Americans, leaving them “natives of nowhere” (Maldonado-DeOliveira 55). This circular migration pattern of Puerto Ricans traveling back-and-forth between the island and the mainland is due to various factors, including poor economic conditions in Puerto Rico compared to the supposedly limitless supply of jobs in New York. However, once Puerto Ricans settle in New York, the harsh reality and culture shock sets in despite the economic gains, which pushes them back to their home island. Sánchez narrates, “Puertorriqueños del corazón estrujado por las interrogaciones que suscitan los adverbios *allá y acá*” (20). Migrant Puerto Ricans become perplexed with the question “¿allá o acá?” “Here or there?” Should one stay in New York where there are more jobs and economic opportunities, or should one return to his/her home island where one can live more at ease surrounded by his/her native culture?

In addition to the metaphor of the “flying bus,” Sánchez’s story explores the manifestation of Puerto Rican identity in relation to American culture. On the flight from San Juan to New York, tensions arise between the American flight crew, the assimilated Puerto Rican passengers, and the Puerto Ricans from the island. At the beginning of the story, when two large crabs, brought on board by a passenger with a predilection for *criollo* crab dishes, escape from their box, a sense of terror overtakes the cabin of the plane. When the “terrorist” crabs are finally captured and returned to a safe place, the Puerto Ricans on the flight burst out laughing, leading to a moment of intercultural tension: “Sólo la tripulación, uniformemente gringa esta noche, parece inmune a la risa, inmune a la plaga de risa, inmune a las burlas que merece el pavor de la azafata rubia” (12). While the American stewardesses fail to see the comedy in the crabs’ escape, the Puerto Ricans on the flight find humor in the scene. A consequence of this perceived cultural difference, “La intranquilidad, en fin, tiende una raya, invisible pero sensible, entre el bando de los gringos y el bando de los puertorriqueños” (13).

Not only are there tensions between the American flight crew and the Puerto Rican passengers, but also between Puerto Ricans from the island and those from the mainland. There has been a notable divide between Puerto Ricans on and from the island and those born and raised or living in the continental United States, especially in New York.¹³ This clash is mostly due to the cultural differences between the two groups resulting from degrees of acculturation and native language loss. Sánchez reflects these tensions in “The Flying Bus” through the interaction between the “Americanized” Puerto Ricans and those who are on their first flight to the mainland. One passenger in particular harshly critiques the non-assimilated Puerto Ricans on the flight: “*They are my people, but . . . Wish they learn soon how to behave . . . They will never make it because they are trash*” (17). As with the American flight crew and Puerto Rican passengers, there are clear lines drawn between the “Americanized Puerto Ricans, or ‘yankizados,’ represented here by the passengers ensconced in First Class” and the native islanders (Perivolaris 65).

These cultural tensions that arise on the “flying bus” reflect a larger debate on whether Puerto Ricans from the Diaspora truly form a part of the Puerto Rican nation as a whole.¹⁴ Through a dialogue between passengers at the end of “The Flying Bus,” Sánchez consciously declares that the Diaspora is indeed a part of the Puerto Rico nation: “*¿De dónde es usted? . . . De Puerto Rico . . . Pero, ¿de qué pueblo de Puerto Rico? . . . De Nueva York*” (21). Agustín

Lao argues that the Puerto Rican national identity is in itself translocal in nature, shifting between the island and the mainland (171). In other words, the Puerto Rican national identity is inextricably linked to migration to the metropolis (176). Duany explains that, “Over the past few decades, New York City has become a symbolic extension of Puerto Rico through the popular reappropriation of cultural icons (such as language, music, and food), and the creation of transnational spaces” (“Mobile” 263), and that “New York City, not San Juan, has served as the cultural capital . . . since the 1920s” (“Imagining” 261). Now that migration from the island is shifting geographically, Sánchez’s passengers would have to consider if Orlando and Central Florida have also become an extension of the island and its national identity.

Reevaluating “The Flying Bus” and Orlando-Rican Migration

In light of the differences between the Central Florida and New York Puerto Rican communities, Sánchez’s “flying bus” metaphor for circular migration no longer holds the same relevance. Unlike in New York, Puerto Ricans migrating to the Central Florida area are showing a pattern of what one could call “sticky migration” (authors’ term).¹⁵ In other words, instead of moving back and forth based on economic conditions, as in Sánchez’s “La guagua aérea,” Puerto Ricans tend to remain in Central Florida because they are finding the better life that they have been seeking. As discussed earlier, the Orlando region offers Puerto Ricans access to a growing job market, a lower cost of living, and a climate and culture similar to what they left behind on the island. Table 1 illustrates the comings and goings of Puerto Ricans to the Northeast and Chicago, in comparison with counties in the Central Florida region.

As demonstrated in Table 1, the net migration of Puerto Ricans coming and staying in Orange County, Florida, is 9,420 versus 5,319 in the Bronx, New York, historically the primary destination for migration from the island, as reflected in Sánchez’s work. Whereas Queens County, New York, and Essex County, New Jersey, only netted a small gain in overall Puerto Rican population growth, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties in Florida, the three major counties comprising the Orlando metropolitan area, all experienced high net population growth. These statistics illustrate that, as a percentage, more Puerto Rican migrants are coming to and staying in Central Florida than New York. In fact, New York (Manhattan) and Kings (Brooklyn) counties witnessed a net loss of Puerto Ricans back to the island.

The tendency of Central Florida Puerto Ricans to stay can be explained by the success they are finding in the region. For example, Duany and Matos-Rodríguez’s study reveals higher incomes and rates of business ownership for Puerto Ricans in Orlando in comparison with their counterparts in the Northeast (29). Moreover, with a more accessible real estate market than in New York, Orlando-Ricans have better access to home ownership, which leads to greater stability and fewer migratory trips on the “flying bus.” Whereas Puerto Ricans move to Central Florida to build a stable life, those that migrate to New York simply find temporary jobs and dwellings rather than homes and careers: “[M]ost Puerto Ricans want to believe they come to New York ‘strictly on loan’ to make ends meet, so that they can return to the island” (Maldonado-DeOliveira 90). That is, with an outlook towards more permanent settlement in the region, Orlando-Ricans are less likely to be caught between the question of “¿allá o acá?” that plagued the passengers on Sánchez’s “flying bus,” and are more likely to remain “acá,” “here” in Florida.

The “sticky” nature of migration from Puerto Rico to Central Florida has several implications for identity formation and cultural expressions. First of all, by remaining in Central Florida and putting down roots in the region, there could be less segregation and friction between the Puerto Rican community and the rest of mainstream Central Florida, in contrast to the tensions between the flight crew and the nuyorican passengers on “La guagua aérea.” By the very same token, the levels of assimilation achieved through the “stickiness” could result in the same cultural tensions between island and mainland Puerto Ricans seen in Sánchez’s story. Secondly,

Table 1. Migration between Counties in the United States and Puerto Rico: 1995 to 2000

County	Migrants to Mainland from PR	Return Migrants from Mainland to PR	Net Migration to Mainland	Percentage of Retention
New York, NY	3,107	5,904	(2,797)	-90%
Kings, NY	5,289	6,862	(1,573)	-30%
Cook, IL	5,183	6,249	(1,066)	-21%
Essex, NJ	2,534	2,447	87	3%
Queens, NY	2,482	2,077	405	16%
Bronx, NY	13,853	8,534	5,319	38%
Philadelphia, PA	6,017	2,946	3,071	51%
Hartford, CT	6,250	2,708	3,542	57%
Orange, FL	14,347	4,927	9,420	66%
Brevard, FL	573	188	385	67%
Hillsborough, FL	6,147	1,401	4,746	77%
Volusia, FL	1,158	217	941	81%
Pinellas, FL	1,534	167	1,367	89%
Seminole, FL	2,157	182	1,975	92%
Osceola, FL	7,600	600	7,000	92%
Polk, FL	1,856	145	1,711	92%

Table created with data from *Migration between Counties in the United States and Puerto Rico: 1995 to 2000* (US Census Bureau, "Migration").

a more stable permanence does not mean that Orlando-Ricans leave behind their culture and identity on the island. In fact, much like the passengers on Sánchez's "guagua" who bring the island culture with them on board the airplane, Central Florida Puerto Ricans recreate their homeland through the many cultural manifestations that abound in the region, including special events at the Orlando Magic NBA basketball games and a celebration in honor of the patron saint of Puerto Rico, San Juan Bautista, at the Wet 'N Wild water park, in addition to numerous municipal street festivals, concerts, and cultural organizations in the city.¹⁶ Moreover, Puerto Rican restaurants and grocery stores can be found throughout Central Florida, and Spanish language media sources, both print and television, pay special attention to news on the island. Furthermore, the air bridge between Orlando and Puerto Rico continues to expand, with over fifty flights to the island from Orlando International Airport on an average week in June of 2009 (Greater Orlando Aviation Authority). Unlike their New York counterparts, who have been living on the mainland for a number of generations, the Orlando-Rican community lives in a young, growing city, and tends to comprise more recent arrivals and is thus more closely connected with the island, which explains the high volume of air travel back to the island to visit family and friends.

Conclusions

What are the implications, then, of a more stable, more economically successful, and more recently established Puerto Rican community in Central Florida vis-à-vis the paradigm of “La guagua aérea”? As Duany explains, this community is unique and breaks the patterns of previous Puerto Rican migrations: “Las comunidades puertorriqueñas de Orlando, Tampa y Miami difieren sustancialmente de sus contrapartes de Nueva York, Chicago y Filadelfia, no sólo en sus orígenes socioeconómicos y patrones de asentamiento, sino también en sus modos de incorporación económica, política y cultural (“El Barrio” 78). As discussed earlier, migration from the island to Central Florida tends to be “sticky” and not circular and fleeting as Sánchez’s “flying bus” metaphor suggests. As a result of these significant differences, with a stable population in a geographical area that is relatively new to the community, the idea of an identity defined by the constant back-and-forth of circular migration is called into question. In other words, according to the Central Florida paradigm, the concepts of Puerto Rico being a “commuter nation” and a “nation on the move” need to be reexamined. Without the circularity of migration back to the island, the Orlando-Rican community might be better understood using traditional models of immigrant assimilation into American society and hybridity.

In the end, Sánchez’s passengers on the new “flying bus” between San Juan and Orlando may respond differently to the question of “¿De dónde es usted?” He or she might simply respond, “De Orlando,” demonstrating a complete shift of identity from the island to the mainland. However, if s/he still feels an identity connected to the island as part of Lao’s “translocal” nation, the answer to that question may still be “De Puerto Rico.” What remains to be seen is if, when asked “Pero, ¿de qué pueblo de Puerto Rico?”, the passenger would then respond, “De Orlando,” demonstrating that Central Florida now belongs to what Juan M. García Passalacqua calls the Puerto Rican “human archipelago” (103).

NOTES

¹The US Census in 2000 states that there were over 3.8 million Puerto Ricans on the island, versus over 3.4 million living throughout the fifty states.

²According to the US Census 2005–07 American Community Survey.

³*Ibid.*

⁴The term “nuyorican” refers to New Yorkers from Puerto Rico or of Puerto Rican ancestry.

⁵See Torre, Rodríguez Vecchini, and Burgos (1994); García Passalacqua (1994); Grosfoguel and Negrón-Muntaner (1997); Aranda (2007); and Lao (1997).

⁶For a detailed study of cultural hybridity in the postmodern world, see Néstor García Canelini’s book *Culturas híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (1990) and article “Cultural Reconversion” (1992).

⁷See Flores’s chapter “Bring the Salsa: Diaspora Music as Source and Challenge” in *The Diaspora Strikes Back* (2009).

⁸“La guagua aérea” translates to “the flying bus” in English. Both terms will be used throughout this paper. Although this essay will reference the original Spanish text, for an English version of the story, see Elpidio Laguna-Díaz’s translation in Nicolás Kanellos’ anthology *Herencia* (2003).

⁹For more data on the demographic profile of Puerto Ricans in Central Florida, see Duany and Matos Rodríguez (2006), and the *Centro Journal* 22.1 (2010) special issue “Puerto Rican Florida,” with pertinent anthropological and sociological articles and analysis from Duany, Martínez-Fernández, and Silver, among others.

¹⁰Luis Rafael Sánchez was born on November 17, 1936 in Humacao, Puerto Rico. Sánchez grew up in San Juan and attended the University of Puerto Rico for his undergraduate degree. He then received a scholarship which allowed him to take courses at Columbia University and receive his Master of Arts degree from New York University in 1963. Finally, he completed his Doctorate in Philosophy from La Universidad Complutense de Madrid in 1976 with his thesis “Fabulación e ideología en la cuentística de Emilio S. Belaval.” Sánchez then became a renowned professor at various universities throughout the United States which allowed him to complete numerous works (Hernández-Vargas 3). His first novel, *La guaracha del Macho Camacho*, enjoyed great success after its publication in 1976. Sánchez went on to

write many other well-known texts, including the following short stories, plays, and novels: *La pasión según Antígona Pérez* (1968), *Quintuples* (1985), and *La importancia de llamarse Daniel Santos* (1988). For a comprehensive bibliography on Luis Rafael Sánchez and his work, see Arcadio Díaz Quiñones's Cátedra edition of *La guaracha del Macho Camacho* (2000).

¹¹Authors' translation.

¹²Revolving-door migration refers to Puerto Ricans moving to and from the island various times throughout their lifetime. Duany calls it "circular migration" and defines it as two or more extended round trips between the island and the mainland (*Nation* 32).

¹³See Aranda (2007) and Flores (1993).

¹⁴See also Torre, Rodríguez Vecchini, and Burgos (1994); Duany (2002); Flores (2009); Negrón-Muntaner and Grosfoguel (1997); and Aranda (2007).

¹⁵Whereas the migratory pattern of Puerto Ricans to the Northeast was circular in nature, the Central Florida phenomenon tends to be more unilateral in that there is much less return migration to the island. In other words, migrants tend to "stick" around in Central Florida rather than return to the island.

¹⁶On the other hand, Martínez-Fernández (2010) notes the limited cultural production by Puerto Ricans in Central Florida, and the absence of a bookstore where one can purchase works by Puerto Rican authors (37). In other words, this young Diaspora community has not yet matured enough to produce a stand-alone cultural or literary tradition like their nuyorican counterparts.

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