



HISPANIC CARIBBEAN  
LITERATURE OF  
MIGRATION

Narratives of Displacement

Edited by  
VANESSA PÉREZ ROSARIO

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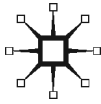
# Hispanic Caribbean Literature of Migration

## Narratives of Displacement

*Edited by*

*Vanessa Pérez Rosario*

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# Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
Introduction: Historical Context of Caribbean Latino Literature <i>Vanessa Pérez Rosario</i>	1
<b>I Migratory Identities</b>	
1 The Unbreakable Voice in a Minor Language: Following José Martí's Migratory Routes <i>Laura Lomas</i>	23
2 <i>Más que Cenizas</i> : An Analysis of Juan Bosch's Dissident Narration of <i>Dominicanidad</i> (Ausente) <i>Lorgia García Peña</i>	39
3 Creating <i>Latinidad</i> : Julia de Burgos' Legacy on U.S. Latina Literature <i>Vanessa Pérez Rosario</i>	57
<b>II Dislocated Narratives</b>	
4 Travel and Family in Julia Alvarez's Canon <i>Vivian Nun Halloran</i>	75
5 Making It Home: A New Ethics of Immigration in Dominican Literature <i>Ylce Irizarry</i>	89
6 <i>Days of Awe</i> and the Jewish Experience of a Cuban Exile: The Case of Achy Obejas <i>Carolyn Wolfenzon</i>	105
<b>III Gender Crossings</b>	
7 A Community in Transit: The Performative Gestures of Manuel Ramos Otero's Narrative Triptych <i>Mónica Lladó-Ortega</i>	121

- 8 A Revolution in Pink: Cuban Queer Literature  
Inside and Outside the Island 137  
*Ana Belén Martín Sevillano*
- 9 Gender Pirates of the Caribbean: Queering Caribbeanness  
in the Novels of Zoé Valdés and Christopher John Farley 153  
*Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley*

#### IV Racial Migrations

- 10 Insular Interventions: Jesús Colón Unmasks Racial  
Harmonizing and Populist Uplift Discourses in Puerto Rico 171  
*Maritza Stanchich*
- 11 Coloniality of Diasporas: Racialization of Negropolitans  
and Nuyoricans in Paris and New York 189  
*Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel*
- 12 The Dominican Diaspora Strikes Back: Cultural Archive and  
Race in Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* 207  
*Juanita Heredia*
- Notes on Contributors* 223
- Index* 227

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# Introduction

## Historical Context of Caribbean Latino Literature

Vanessa Pérez Rosario

*Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is contrapuntal.*

—Edward Said (“Reflections on Exile”)

In his essay “Reflections on Exile,” Edward Said notes that the exile feels a sense of constant estrangement. The writer’s life abroad is contrapuntal, precisely because of the constant interplay between two languages, geographies, traditions, and cultures. This awareness of at least two visions is what leads to feelings of perpetual alienation. For the moment let us suspend the distinction between the various reasons for migration such as exile and immigration, to focus on the experience of migration. The migrant lives a life outside of habitual order; it is a life that is decentered between two worlds. This contrapuntal vision or double consciousness allows the Caribbean Latino writer the ability to challenge national discourses from her or his country of origin while simultaneously critiquing U.S. hegemonic narratives and imperial power in the Caribbean region. The essays included in the collection *Hispanic Caribbean Literature of Migration: Narratives of Displacement* explore the lives and literature of intellectuals and writers of Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican origins who cross barriers and borders of thought and tradition.

The collection opens with a look at three migrating writers from the Hispanic Caribbean: José Martí and Juan Bosch, who were exiled from

their countries of origin, and Julia de Burgos, who left to escape a narrowly defined island national discourse. These authors' dissonant ideologies in relation to the national discourses in their countries of origin at the time are illustrated in this first section of the collection entitled *Migratory Identities*. José Martí was exiled for denouncing the Spanish colonial government in Cuba, and as expressed in his essay "Nuestra América," as well as in other writings, developed a keen understanding of U.S. imperialism during his extended stay in New York. On the other hand, Juan Bosch's contrapuntal doubling is revealed in his astute understanding of the role that the U.S. government played in its attempt to establish "democracy" in the Dominican Republic. Finally, nationalist leaders in 1930s' Puerto Rico challenge U.S. invasion of the island by clinging to a Hispanic legacy that served the recently displaced landowners, while silencing the African and indigenous voices on the island. The strengthening of contrapuntal vision for these three writers can be noted in further detail in the chapters included in this first section.

While Edward Said privileges the experience of exile in his essay quoted above, his reflections also shed light on other migratory experiences. However, here Said does not account for what comes after exile: diaspora. If the exile's vision is contrapuntal, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican diasporic communities in the United States find new ways to express this instability, disruption, and fragmentation which is exacerbated by extended time abroad, distance from the Caribbean island of origin, U.S. citizenship, and English or bilingualism in English and Spanish, as the mother tongue. The rest of the collection is made up of three sections with three essays in each that explore salient themes in Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican diasporic literature: the question of belonging is examined in *Dislocated Narratives*; migration that is motivated by gender and sexual orientation is considered in *Gender Crossings*; finally, the experience that Caribbean Latina/os face upon migration to the United States of either being racialized into ethnic minorities and/or being fixed into a U.S. racial discourse is investigated in *Racial Migrations*.

While this collection is not meant to be a comprehensive examination of Caribbean Latino literature, the essays included study some of the prominent themes and notable authors who migrated to the United States from the Hispanic Caribbean or form a part of its corresponding diasporas. The Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican shared cultural heritage and regional location, yet distinct political realities and migratory and diaspora histories provide fertile ground for contrast and comparison of the ways that Hispanic Caribbean literature written abroad confronts and challenges established cultural traditions and norms, and expands notions of national identity that are often exclusionary. Reading the literature of migration by writers originating from these

three nations side-by-side, allows us to note parallels and draw preliminary conclusions. Indeed, Ana Belén Martín Sevillano argues (chapter 8) that Cuban queer literature written from abroad forms part of the national literary canon proving that exile is a territory of the nation. In addition, Caribbean Latino literature challenges and expands traditional notions of American literature (U.S. literature) as it disrupts the black/white racial binary in the United States and is often multilingual; written in Spanish, English, and/or Spanglish. Simultaneously, one can begin to describe a Caribbean Latino literary tradition as Laura Lomas argues in her chapter on José Martí as a foundational writer of deterritorialized literature in the region (chapter 1). Opening with a chapter on José Martí as an early figure in this literary tradition of Caribbean Latino writing in the United States and as a writer who defined literature in Latin America as a discourse critical of state and other institutional discursive practices,<sup>1</sup> we close with an examination of Dominican born, Junot Díaz's 2008 Pulitzer Prize winning novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. As this chapter reveals, Díaz continues the tradition of contrapuntal transnational discourses and uses his positioning of being both outside and inside the nation to critique master discourses both in the United States and in the Dominican Republic (chapter 12).

Understanding Hispanic Caribbean and Caribbean Latino literature requires an understanding of the history of migration and the historical, social, political, and economic circumstances that led to the movement of people in the region. The collection opens with the late nineteenth-century writer José Martí's works to provide historical depth to Caribbean Latino literature that is often misunderstood to be a mid-twentieth century phenomenon. The cultural expressions of writers from the region is erroneously thought to have emerged because of the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the end of the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in the 1960s and the economic policies and establishment of the Free Associated State in Puerto Rico in 1952. In reality, people from the Hispanic Caribbean have been migrating to the United States throughout the nineteenth century and growing in number as the United States became the main economic power in the region. Although laws governing the region were still made in the centralized governments of Europe, U.S. economic and political power were taken into account before setting policy.

From U.S. shores Cuban and Puerto Rican anti-colonialists took advantage of the freedom of the press by using the newspapers to establish the "imagined communities" Benedict Anderson describes to continue the struggle against Spanish rule. All publications were centralized in Spain and were heavily censored. The Cuban and Puerto Rican press in exile began because of the repression in the homeland that forced intellectuals to migrate.<sup>2</sup> By mid-nineteenth century, Spanish language newspapers were flourishing in the Northeast and have remained in

Hispanic communities since, preserving and advancing Hispanic culture and maintaining its relationship with the larger Spanish-speaking world. The newspapers were instrumental in organizing civil rights and in educating the communities in the States. They shared information about religion and cultural celebrations, and helped the communities to battle segregation and discrimination. They also published creative literature in Spanish during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They helped to shape the identity and ethos of U.S. Hispanic communities as they developed. Spanish-language newspapers calling for independence and liberation continued to emerge in cities along the eastern seaboard of the United States throughout the nineteenth century. In New York there was *La Verdad* (1852), *La Revolución* (1869), and *El Pueblo* (mid-1870s). In New Orleans, *El Independiente: Organo de la democracia cubana* (1853), and in Florida *El Yara* (1878), to name a few. *La Voz de América* (1865), founded by Cuban Juan Manuel Macía and Puerto Rican José Bassora, helped unify the Puerto Rican and Cuban exile communities in their liberation from Spain.

Important writers, such as José María Heredia, Cirilio Villaverde, and José Martí, who are considered Cuban nationalists and were later adopted into the Cuban literary canon wrote for these papers and also published their poetry and prose there.<sup>3</sup> In these papers, Hispanic Caribbean writers in New York participated in the conversations about race, abolition, and Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican annexation to the United States. From New York, Cuban exiles wrote militant poetry they believed would inspire Cubans on the island to fight against Spanish colonialism.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that these writers are later rescued from exile and included in the national literary canon even though they spent significant time abroad. Villaverde's short-lived support for annexation of Cuba to the United States can be noted in his writings for *La Verdad*, although he later supported Cuban independence.<sup>5</sup> Founded by Cuban exiles and U.S. expansionists, John O'Sullivan and Moses Beach, *La Verdad's* mission was to lobby support for Cuban annexation from both the U.S. public and Cubans. Slavery and abolition were central to the Cuban independence movements of the nineteenth century. *El Mulato* emerged in New York in 1854 and set out to unite the Cuban independence and abolitionist movements (Kanellos 13). Carlos de Colins, Lorenzo Alló, and Juan Clemente Zenea established the paper to unify the Cuban revolutionary movement with the U.S. abolitionist movement in direct opposition to the annexationist ideology espoused by *La Verdad*. The awareness of an Afro-Cuban identity and culture expressed in *El Mulato*, surfaced once again with Arturo Alfonso Schomburg's archiving of Afro-Caribbean and black culture in New York in the late nineteenth century. These themes were later revisited in the Hispanic journalism of Alberto O'Farrill and Jesús Colón's (chapter 10) writings for *Gráfico* in the 1920s. The racialization

of Hispanic Caribbean within U.S. racial politics remains an important theme of Hispanic Caribbean diasporic literature today.

The most important and well remembered writer who forms part of this exile community in the late nineteenth century is José Martí, and as with any great leader he had the gift of uniting people.<sup>6</sup> He encouraged Puerto Ricans to join efforts with Cubans. José Martí (1853–1895) studied in Spain where he obtained a law degree. He spent much of his life abroad working as a professor and a writer in Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, Spain, and in New York. He founded various papers and magazines throughout Latin America. He was able to bring “the various classes and factions together in the revolutionary cause” even “extending open arms to Puerto Rican intellectuals to unite their efforts with those of the Cubans” (Kanellos 19). In addition to his revolutionary efforts and his journalism, Martí is remembered as an early Latin American *modernismo* poet, even though his books of poetry were first published in the United States. From New York he published a book of poetry dedicated to his son, *Ismaelillo* (1882). His poems included in *Versos sencillos* (1891) describe his love for freedom and for Cuba, echoing some of Heredia’s poetry on Cuba written in exile. While the poetry he wrote in New York is included in canonical national literature in Cuba and read across Latin America, he also wrote numerous articles about the United States and North American literature during his fifteen years in New York. Abroad he developed a penetrating critique of U.S. imperialism and expansionism (Lomas 2008).

As in Cuba, discontent and a desire for independence grew in Puerto Rico during the 1860s. For the remainder of the century, Puerto Rican intellectuals joined Cuban brothers in New York in their struggle to overthrow Spanish colonialism. After the failure of the Grito de Lares in 1868, Puerto Rican intellectuals including Eugenio María de Hostos, Ramon Emeterio Betances, Lola Rodríguez de Tió, and Luis Muñoz Rivera moved to New York to continue the struggle for independence. In 1891, Francisco Gonzalo Pachín Marín (1863–1897) brought his newspaper, *El Postillón*, to New York from Puerto Rico. Marín later died in 1897 in battle in Cuba. Sotero Figueroa (1851–1923), the Puerto Rican writer, also migrated at this time as did writers such as Ramon Emeterio Betances (1827–1898), Manuel Zeno Gandía (1855–1930), Salvador Brau (1842–1912), Matias González, and Miguel Meléndez Muñoz, all leaders in the independence movement who contributed to exile publications in New York.<sup>7</sup> Lola Rodríguez de Tió (1848–1924) arrived in New York in 1895 and stayed until 1899. She was first exiled to Venezuela (1877–1880) and later Cuba (1889–1895). However, after the Spanish American War, she spent the rest of her life in Cuba. She strongly supported independence and refused to return to Puerto Rico. This nineteenth-century writing often consisted of letters, diary entries, and newspaper articles.

This early writing offers an inside view of U.S. society, one that is further elaborated by Puerto Ricans of the early twentieth century who were writing between the two world wars and formed part of the first wave of Puerto Ricans migrating to the United States.

Another important turn-of-the-century Puerto Rican writer in New York is Arturo Alfonso Schomburg who is remembered for his archive and book collection about black history and culture. In 1926 he sold his collection to the New York Public Library “laying the foundation for one of the world’s richest archives for the study of black culture” (Hoffnung Garskof 3). Born in Puerto Rico in 1874 to a black West Indian mother and a father of German ancestry, Schomburg moved to New York in 1891 where he joined a small enclave of Puerto Rican and Cuban radical cigar workers who were involved in the independence movement. He founded the revolutionary club “Las Dos Antillas.” Hoffnung Garskof notes that “Schomburg’s gradual absorption into black North American social and intellectual life reflects an untold history of race within the small group of Puerto Rican migrants in New York between 1890 and 1900” (3).

Although the nineteenth-century history of the Dominican Republic distinguishes itself greatly from Cuban and Puerto Rican history, Dominican involvement with the United States during this period shares some similarities. Prior to the Dominican Republic claiming independence, Haiti had occupied the Spanish colony on two separate occasions. First, by Toussant L’Ouveture and Dessalines between 1801 and 1805, and once again by Jean-Pierre Boyer from 1822–1844. In 1844, Dominican independence leaders in search of “commercial and diplomatic credibility” sought recognition from the United States soon after independence (Torres-Saillant, *Before Diaspora*, 256). Torres-Saillant notes that Dominicans who had the ability to travel to the United States and Europe during the nineteenth century were of the educated class, and therefore it is not surprising that they would “have literary interests and aptitudes” (255). Manuel de Jesús Galván (1834–1910), author of *Enriquillo*, spent significant time in Paris and later in Puerto Rico, where he lived the remainder of his life.<sup>8</sup> Likewise Juan Pablo Duarte, Dominican independence leader studied English in New York before the Dominican Republic became independent on February 27, 1844. Duarte wrote plays, prose, and verse.

During the nineteenth century, the United States was a place where Dominicans who were exiled by political rivals traveled to. It was the home of Dominican writers such as Alejandro Angulo Guridi (1822–1906) who lived in the United States from 1840 to 1852, and Pedro Alejandro Pina.<sup>9</sup> Mid-century discussions about Dominican annexation to the United States also circulated. Although the Dominican Republic was never annexed, by the end of the century the United States became

the primary influence in the newly independent republic as it had in all of the Caribbean region, strongly influencing all aspects of economic, social, and political life.

While the economic and political ties between the Caribbean and North America continued to grow during the nineteenth century, by the turn of the century their economies were enmeshed. Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic all spent the twentieth century under U.S. imperial power; this led to massive migrations to the United States and the development of ethnic enclaves and diasporic communities. However, they differ greatly in nation formation—with Puerto Rico remaining a direct colony, and Cuba participating in a socialist revolution—and represent two extremes in their relationship to the United States. The Dominican Republic as a neo-colony rests somewhere in between. Economic, cultural, and political dependency for each nation has been negotiated differently. As ethnic enclaves emerged in metropolitan centers such as Chicago, New York, and Miami, writers of Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican origins developed new ways to express their relationship to the past, their positioning in history, and the emergence of new cultural identities. The essays included in this collection explore multiple migratory experiences from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic to the U.S. and the diasporas that resulted, leading us to reflect on modern notions of citizenship, residency, and belonging.

U.S. occupation of Puerto Rico and the extension of citizenship with the 1917 Jones Act precipitated increased Puerto Rican migration to the United States. While most accounts of early migration explore the lives of men, Luisa Capetillo (1879–1922) traveled to the United States in 1912 where she organized tobacco workers in both New York and Tampa. She was a labor organizer, a women’s rights activist and an anarchist. Written in 1911 on the eve of her departure for the United States, Luisa Capetillo’s book *Mi opinión sobre las libertades, derechos y deberes de la mujer* (1911) was the first Puerto Rican book dedicated exclusively to questions of gender and women’s rights (Ramos, *Amor y anarquía* 30). In her essay, “For the Sake of Love: Luisa Capetillo, Anarchy, and Boricua Literary History,” Lisa Sánchez notes that Capetillo left the island after being “harassed by both colonial regimes in Puerto Rico and becoming discontented with the workers’ movement” on the island (59).

By the interwar period, most Puerto Ricans settled in New York City where a vibrant community emerged.<sup>10</sup> Among the texts written by Puerto Ricans in New York between the two wars, there are two that stand out: *Memorias de Bernardo Vega* (written in 1940 and published in 1977), and Jesús Colón’s, *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches* (1961). Their stories are compelling autobiographical and testimonial accounts of life for Puerto Ricans in New York in the early part of the century as well as important historical resources. Bernardo Vega

(1885–1965) and Jesús Colón (1901–1974) migrated from Cayey, Puerto Rico at a young age and were *tabaqueros*, members of the socialist party, labor organizers, and regular contributors to the various Puerto Rican and Spanish-language newspapers being published at this time in New York. Their writings highlight the need for improved living standards for Puerto Ricans in New York City, and provide a glimpse of every day life in the city. Vega's obsession with history as detailed in his memoirs and his desire to rescue Puerto Rican history from oblivion, also provides a contrasting perspective to the stories in the mainstream newspapers that criminalized the emerging *colonia*. Jesús Colón contributed regularly to the newspaper *Gráfico* (1927–1931) first edited by Cuban Alberto O'Farrill. Here, Colón explored his political perspectives on race and culture (chapter 10). Colón also published weekly columns in *The Daily Worker* (1924–1958), *El Nuevo Mundo*, *The Worker*, *Mainstream*, *Liberación* (1946–1949), and *Pueblos Hispánicos* (1943–1944). His column "Puerto Rican Notes" appeared in *The Daily World* from 1968 to 1971, and "Lo que el pueblo me dice" in *Pueblos Hispánicos* in 1943.<sup>11</sup> Colón was a worker and union organizer who made the transition to writing in English by the mid-1950s. Julia de Burgos (1914–1953) also wrote for *Pueblos Hispánicos* during 1943–1944 (chapter 3). She wrote about art and culture and also published poetry in the newspaper. She too anticipated the language shift of the growing community, and wrote her final poems in English.

The second wave of Puerto Rican migration to the United States occurred mid-century, between the years 1950–1970. Often referred to as the Great Migration, it signals the peak of Puerto Rican migration and the first airborne migration. This time period also saw the first change in government policy on the island. Puerto Ricans elected their first governor in 1947, and became a Free Associated State in 1952, a situation that persists today and has been the topic of concern for many Puerto Ricans both on and off the island.<sup>12</sup> The second stage of twentieth-century Puerto Rican writing in the United States took place during the decades immediately following World War II. Fueled by policies such as Operation Bootstrap on the island, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans came to New York and other parts of the United States in search of work. During this period, the experience of migration and the growing community in New York became major themes in Puerto Rican literature. There was also a shift in this literature from a rural to an urban focus. Puerto Rican writers such as René Marqués, Enrique Laguerre, and Emilio Díaz Valcárcel traveled to New York to witness the growing community. Other writers such as Pedro Juan Soto and José Luis González lived in the United States for extended periods of time however, many of the writers from this period are closely identified with the island and incorporated into that national literary canon. The literature of this



period is clearly about Puerto Ricans in the United States, rather than literature of this community as can be noted in the language of these texts which does not resonate with the language of the community at the time. By the 1950s the Puerto Rican community in New York was already inclined toward bilingualism, language mixing, and code switching.<sup>13</sup>

The Great Migration of the middle of the century was followed by the emergence of the Nuyorican Movement, which we can recognize as the first true Puerto Rican literary movement of the diaspora. The Nuyorican writers grew out of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. Many of the writers were first generation born in the States or had migrated there when they were young. In this literature, there is an awakening of a Puerto Rican New York consciousness with pride in their Afro-Caribbean and indigenous Caribbean identity. This is an urban literature that gives expression to the hostility that Puerto Ricans faced in New York and their treatment as second-class citizens. Most notably, there is a language shift in the literature that is written in English, Spanish, and Spanglish, reflecting the language spoken by the community. The use of English, and a new articulation of a racial identity gave rise to tensions between island and Nuyorican writers. Nuyorican creative expression draws from the testimonial writing of the ‘pioneer’ stage as well as from the fictional approach of the mid-century writers, although it appears to have emerged with no apparent knowledge of this earlier literature.<sup>14</sup> The combining of testimonial and imaginative modes of expression can be noted in Piri Thomas’ *Down These Mean Streets* (1967) and Nicholasa Mohr’s *Nilda* (1973). Puerto Rican literature written in the States today remains a literature that straddles two national literatures and remains marginal to both.

The 1970s brought about a new phenomenon in the migration patterns of Puerto Ricans to the United States. From the 1970s to the present, there has been a great deal of two-way migration or return migration of Puerto Ricans born in the United States to the island. Although Puerto Ricans did begin to return in large numbers in the 1970s, little attention has been given to the impact of this return migration or “remigrants” as Juan Flores has noted in *The Diaspora Strikes Back: Caribeño Tales of Learning and Turning*. Flores explores these “cultural remittances” and determines that “it is in the language, music, literature, painting, and other expressive genres that the values and lifestyles remitted from the diaspora to homeland become manifest in the most tangible and salient ways” (45). During the 1980s and 1990s migration again increased but retained its two-way patterns.

There was also a greater dispersion of Puerto Ricans away from New York City because “economic restructuring in urban areas in the Northeast and the Midwest displaced Puerto Rican workers” (Whalen 37). Not surprisingly, Puerto Rican literature has emerged beyond the

sensibilities of the Nuyoric movement in areas such as California and Hawaii with Puerto Rican enclaves that date back to the 1900s and rival early New York Puerto Rican communities. Edited by Aurora Levins Morales and Vanessa Pérez Rosario, the forthcoming anthology *OtheRicans: Voices of the Greater Puerto Rican Diaspora* brings together for the first time a body of literature that reflects the current geographic diversity of the Puerto Rican diaspora. While New York Puerto Ricans have defined themselves as U.S. people of color largely in relationship to African Americans, Hawai'ian Puerto Ricans fashioned their identities in very different conditions, in response to the Native Hawai'ians, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, and Portuguese among whom they settled at the turn of the last century, and in California, alliances and conflicts with the much larger Mexican population have been a defining characteristic of Calirican culture. This diversity can be noted in the literature written by Aurora Levins Morales, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Alba Ambert, and Rodney Morales. The study of this greater Puerto Rican diversity is also explored in *Writing Of(f) the Hyphen: New Perspectives on the Literature of the Puerto Rican Diaspora* edited by José L. Torres-Padilla and Carmen Haydée Rivera.<sup>15</sup>

In the twentieth century, Cuban literature written abroad followed a different course than that of Puerto Rican literature. The Spanish-Cuban-American War had different repercussions on the developing nation of Cuba. With the Treaty of Paris (December 1898), Spain granted independence to Cuba, and ceded Puerto Rico to the United States. A military government was established in Cuba by U.S. Congress to disarm insurgents and relieve malnutrition on the island. In 1900, elections were conducted and an assembly formed to write a constitution. Most representatives sought total independence, however, the McKinley administration was determined to protect U.S. property and investments on the island. This was done through the Platt Amendment that would ensure U.S. naval bases on the island, among other provisions. The Platt proposals were added by the Havana Constitutional Convention by 1901. Twentieth-century Cuba was ruled by a series of corrupt governments. To preserve order and protect U.S. interests, U.S. troops were sent to Cuba three times between 1906 and 1917, and again in 1922. Cuba enjoyed the highest standard of living in the region and the U.S. government agreed to purchase their exports and protect them from foreign powers. During World War I, Cuba prospered in unprecedented ways. However, when the price of sugar dropped Cuba's banks suffered greatly, depending once again on U.S. economic assistance.

The patterns and waves of Cuban exile and migration differed significantly from those in Puerto Rico. Cubans continued to flee the island as political exiles in the twentieth century. Alejo Carpentier and Lino Novás Calvo, two of Cuba's most important writers, left the island

during the 1930s' Machado dictatorship.<sup>16</sup> Carpentier left for Paris and Calvo for Madrid. During this time, Nicolás Guillén also spent time traveling abroad. Batista's dictatorship, from 1952 to 1958 produced a small number of exile writers such as Roberto Fernández Retamar, Edmundo Desnoes, Pablo Armando Fernández, and Ambrosio Fornet. While many of these young writers did return after Fidel Castro came into power in 1959, the Cuban Revolution did produce the greatest wave of exiles to Miami, New York City, and San Juan. There are three distinct groups of exile writers post-1959 Revolution. The first group comprises those anti-Castro exile writers such as novelist Carlos Alberto Montaner who wrote *Perromundo* (1972) and Hilda Perera who wrote *El sitio de nadie* (1972). Other writers who left immediately following Castro's revolution include Lydia Cabrera who left in 1962, Carlos Montenegro in 1959, and Enrique Labrador Ruiz. The decade after the Revolution also saw the departure of important writers such as Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Matías Montes Huidobro, and José Sánchez-Boudy. In the 1980s, another group of exile writers emerged during the Mariel boatlift. Many established writers such as Heberto Padilla, José Triana, César Leante, Reinaldo Arenas, and Antonio Benítez Rojo sought asylum during this period. Compared to the literature these writers produced in Cuba, considerably less was published by them in exile. William Luis notes that "economic imperatives have forced them to devote themselves to other intellectual work, such as publishing and teaching" (14). Because these writers had already established themselves in Cuba prior to the 1959 Revolution, their writing tends to be anti-revolutionary, and a denunciation of the Castro regime that at times heavily censored their work and at other times persecuted them, as in the case of Reinaldo Arenas because of his sexual identity.

While these earlier generations of exile writers continued to write anti-Castro literature in Spanish, more recent writers started to write in English using Spanish in their writing as a marker of Hispanic identity. Earlier generations thought that their condition of exile and their stay abroad would be temporary; however, many have come to realize that their departure is permanent. Their themes encompass both island life and the experience of exile. They also explore questions of identity politics, cultural identity, and diaspora. Some of these writers include Zoé Valdés, Oscar Hijuelos, Achy Obejas, and Cristina García.

As with Puerto Rican and Cuban writers, Dominican writers have traveled to the United States throughout the twentieth century in greater numbers than in the previous century because of events on the island and increased U.S. involvement in Dominican affairs. In 1899, after President Heureaux's assassination, the Dominican Republic was left without a government and with an enormous debt it couldn't pay. Fearing intervention by European powers, U.S. President Roosevelt

took over the collection of customs in 1905. Santo Domingo's finances remained under U.S. control until 1940, with U.S. marines occupying the nation from 1916 to 1924. During this time the United States restructured national finances, built schools, invested in infrastructure, and trained local police. Pedro Henríquez Ureña and his brothers arrived in New York after completing secondary school in Santo Domingo in 1901, sent by their father to attend Columbia University. Pedro Henríquez Ureña (1884–1946) was “the literary figure with by far the most international recognition” (Torres-Saillant *Before Diaspora* 261). Torres-Saillant argues the significance of New York in Pedro Henríquez Ureña's development as a professional writer and literary scholar: “one could contend that it was in the context of his New York experience that he, devoid of paternal supervision and protection made the serious decision to become a professional writer and literary scholar” (261). Ureña wrote regularly for the New York periodical *Las novedades* founded by Francisco José Peynado, Dominican intellectual and businessman. There was much anti-Trujillo activity in New York in the 1940s. Writers published in local Hispanic publications such as *Visión*, *La Prensa*, and *El Diario de Nueva York*.

While the Henríquez Ureña brothers, Pedro and Max, receive most of the literary and intellectual attention, their sister Salomé Camila Henríquez Ureña (1894–1973) remains in their shadow. She was born in Santo Domingo as the fourth child and only daughter of poet Salomé Ureña de Henríquez (1850–1897) and intellectual Francisco Henríquez y Carvajal (1857–1935). Her life of travel, as that of her brothers, began soon after her mother's death. She lived in various parts of the world, including Haiti, Santiago de Cuba, and Minnesota. She served on the faculty of Vassar College in the Department of Hispanic Studies from the years 1942–1959 and later retired in Cuba where she remained until her death in 1973. Her greatest contribution to the genre of the essay in the Hispanic Caribbean is her collection of essays on the contributions of women titled “Feminismo” (1939), “La mujer y la cultura” (1949), and “La carta como forma de expression literaria femenina” (1951) (Cocco de Filippis 2007).

Virginia de Peña de Bordas (1904–1948) is another important early Dominican woman writer who lived and studied in the United States during the 1920s. Most of her work was published posthumously by her husband. She is the author of *La princesa de los caballos platinados y la eracra de oro* (1978), the novel *Toeya* (1952) in the Indianist tradition and *Seis novelas cortas* (1978). Her experience abroad is reflected in her work as she often set her work in the United States and much of it was originally written in English. In her writing she raises important questions about the experiences of Caribbean women writers and their place in literary and cultural history (Cocco de Filippis 2002). Cocco de Filippis has noted

the prevalence of foreign locations or settings in the novels of Dominican women writers before 1950s who tend to set their plots in faraway lands, preferring the “tourist’s gaze” (2002, 53). Other writers who spent time abroad during this early period include José Bernard (1873–1954), Fabio Fiallo (1866–1942), and Manuel Florentino Cestero (1879–1926).

In 1930, Trujillo installed the longest and harshest dictatorship in the Dominican Republic of the twentieth century. Many fled the island and were exiled for political reasons. In 1965, U.S. troops once again occupied the island. In 1962, Juan Bosch briefly became president in a democratic election, but was later exiled to Puerto Rico in 1965 because of his communist sympathies. Joaquín Balaguer followed him in office in 1966 and again from 1970–1974. With U.S. aid, higher sugar prices, and growing investments the country seemed to prosper through the mid-1970s. However, the poor became poorer, unemployment increased, and sugar prices dropped. In 1979, two devastating hurricanes left many homeless. The economy of the Dominican Republic remained depressed during the 1980s, sugar prices remained low, and the population continued to grow. Tourism boomed and became the most important source of foreign income.

During the twentieth century Dominican literature has been particularly concerned with the Trujillo dictatorship. The dictatorship sent into exile Dominican writers such as Juan Isidro Jimenes Grullón, Juan Bosch, and Pedro Mir who continued to organize against Trujillo from abroad.

Dominican literature in the United States has remained greatly invisible among studies of American Literature. The development of literary magazines has been significant in promoting and publishing the work of Dominicans in the United States. These magazines include *Letras e imágenes* (1981–82), *Inquietudes* (1981–82), *Punto 7 Review* (1985– ), and *Alcance*. A number of anthologies by Franklin Gutiérrez such as *Espiga del Siglo* (1984), *Niveles del imán* (1983), and *Voces del exilio* (1986) as well as an anthology by Daisy Cocco de Filippis titled *Poems of Exile and Other Concerns* (1988) have helped to render Dominican literature more visible and accessible in the United States. The success of writers such as Julia Alvarez and Junot Díaz has helped to bring more attention to Dominican literature.

Recent writers address themes that reflect life in the U.S., writing about their relationship to the past, loss of identity, the pressure to assimilate, and the search for the American dream. These writers also write about the experience of exile and their experience of racism within U.S. racial politics. Santiago Gutiérrez Campo (1956– ) was born in the Dominican Republic and lived in New York for many years. He is the editor of *Universal Prensa* published in New York. He has published a collection of short stories *Los perros de la noche* (1993). His stories have appeared in magazines in the United States and the Dominican

Republic. José Carvajal (1961– ) is a writer and journalist who was born in the Dominican Republic and has lived in New York since 1974. He has written for local papers and founded the cultural paper *Mambrú y cultura* that has helped to promote the literature written by Dominicans and other Latin Americans in metropolitan centers. He has also published the novel, *Por nada del mundo* (1991). Tomás Modesto Galán has lived in the United States since 1986 where he wrote the collection of stories *Los niños del Monte Edén* (1998) and the novel *Los cuentos de Mount Hope* (1995) where he explores the struggles faced by Latin American immigrants to the United States. One of the recent Dominican women writers in the United States is Marianela Medrano (1964– ) who was born in the Dominican Republic and has lived in the United States since 1990. Her poetry has been published in various magazines including *Callaloo Magazine*, *Sister of Caliban: Contemporary Woman poets of the Caribbean and Central America*, *Letras Femeninas*, among others. Her collections of poetry include *Oficio de vivir* (1986), *Las alegres ojos de la tristeza* (1987), and *Curada de espantos* (2002). Yrene Santos López lives in New York and her work has been included in collections such as *Tertuliando/Hanging Out* (1997), *Conversación entre mujeres del Caribe Hispano* (1999), and she has also published the collections of poems titled *Desnudez del silencio* (1987), and *El incansable juego* (2003).

The literature written by Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican writers abroad and their corresponding diasporas, challenge established cultural norms and expand our traditional notions of national literatures. These writers explore questions about identity such as, What does it mean to be Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Dominican? They raise questions about citizenship, residency, and community when they ask, How do we relate to traditions and customs? What are the boundaries of our community? They critique notions of race when they ask: How do we relate to our blackness and our African Heritage? They explore notions of gender and sexuality in questions such as: What are traditional gender roles? How do I express my sexuality? The essays included in *Hispanic Caribbean Literature of Migration: Narratives of Displacement* are organized around the four themes of migratory identities, origins and residency, gender and sexuality, and race.

The chapters included in *Migratory Identities* explore the literature of early Caribbean migrants José Martí, Juan Bosch, and Julia de Burgos. Active political writers, they championed hemispheric unity and solidarity against colonialism and imperialism. It is important to note that though they spent significant time abroad, their work is still incorporated into national literary canons in their countries of origins. We may note the importance of language choice by the author here. Because their work is almost exclusively in Spanish, it is incorporated into literary

canons in their countries of origin, despite ideological rifts that existed between them and their contemporaries. In “The Unbreakable Voice in a Minor Language: Following José Martí’s Migratory Routes,” Laura Lomas establishes Martí as the initiator of a tradition of Latin American diasporic writing in the United States. She characterizes this literature as one where the author maintains uneasy relationships with both the host country and the homeland. In “*Mas que Cenizas: An Analysis of Juan Bosch’s Dissident Narration of Dominicanidad (Ausente)*,” Lorgia García Peña examines the relationship between literature, exile, and national identity. She credits Juan Bosch for initiating a revolutionary narrative project that transformed Dominican letters and expanded national boundaries to include the voices of the Dominican diaspora into the national dialogue. Her chapter offers a thoughtful look at the importance of exile and migration in the construction of a new understanding of *dominicanidad*. Vanessa Pérez Rosario’s chapter “Creating *Latinidad*: Julia de Burgos’ Legacy in U.S. Latina Literature” focuses on Julia de Burgos’ time in New York, situating her among other early New York Puerto Rican writers such as Jesús Colón and Bernardo Vega while highlighting her importance among Puerto Rican diaspora women writers of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. These chapters recognize the ways that Martí, Bosch, and de Burgos expand traditional notions of national identity and anticipate the cultural expressions of later Caribbean Latino writers.

The chapters included in *Dislocated Narratives* explore questions of residency, citizenship, and belonging. In her chapter “Travel and Family in Julia Alvarez’ Canon,” Vivian Nun Halloran explores the importance of class on the experience of exile and diaspora in Julia Alvarez’s work. Alvarez uses the trope of the family, Halloran argues, to demonstrate that the experience of exile has a lasting effect on the country the exiles leave behind as well as the home where they choose to settle. Ylce Irizarry contends that Junot Díaz performs several ethical interventions in his collection of short stories *Drown*, disrupting the dominant U.S. story of migration, acculturation, and belonging in her chapter “Making It Home: An New Ethics of Immigration in Dominican Literature” establishing a *narrative of fracture* that challenges the dominant narratives of arrival. She questions how Latino/a writers narrate the Dominican immigration story to the United States if *arrival* is not the final goal. She notes that Díaz’s narratives neither privilege nostalgia nor the idea of acculturation, arguing that the trope of arrival is not possible for working-class, dark-skinned people of the Caribbean. Carolyn Wolfenzon illustrates the way that the characters in Achy Obejas’ novel *Days of Awe* resist accommodation as subjects of multiple diasporas in her chapter “*Days of Awe* and the Jewish Experience of a Cuban Exile: The Case of Achy Obejas.” She highlights the way the novel parallels the experience of living in exile

to the Jewish Days of Awe—a time out of time—a state of permanent indeterminacy.

The chapters included in *Gender Crossings* explore the role of gender, homosexuality, and sexual orientation as causal factors for migration as revealed in Caribbean literature. The literature reveals that the social intolerance, discrimination, harassment, persecution, and other forms of violence experienced by LGBT characters leads to their exclusion from narrowly constructed national identities finding liberation through movement and migration. In “A Community in Transit: The Performative Gestures of Manuel Ramos Otero’s Narrative Triptych,” Mónica Lladó-Ortega traces Manuel Ramos Otero’s development of a poetics of transit using autobiographical narrative strategies that also move between fiction and history, the collective and the individual. In this way he challenges Island’s insular discourses on nationalism and rejects totalizing metaphors and fixed geographical boundaries. Ana Belén Martín Sevillano demonstrates in “A Revolution in Pink: Cuban Queer Literature Inside and Outside the Island” that exile became the territory where a queer and Cuban subject could be created in literature. She highlights the influence of exiled writers, Arenas and Sarduy, on a later generation of queer island-based writers Pedro de Jesús Lopez and Ena Lucía Portela and suggests that in this way these texts written from abroad form an integral part of the national literary canon, thus, ultimately confirming that exile is another territory of the nation. In “Gender Pirates of the Caribbean: Queering Caribbeanness in the Novels of Zoé Valdés and Christopher John Farley,” Omise’eke Natasha Tinsley critiques contemporary U.S. media representations of the Caribbean as a site of backward sexual politics, for not simultaneously examining U.S. policies toward LGBT rights. Tinsley examines the novels *Lobas de mar* (2003) written by Cuban-born Zoé Valdés and *Kingston by Starlight* (2005) by Jamaican-born Christopher John Farley where these diasporic writers reverse the dominant discourse and imagine the Caribbean as a haven where northerners can travel to live out “fluid gender, sexual, racial, and class identities.” Tinsley reveals the ways in which Valdés and Farley use fiction as a space to question the ways in which “sexual progress flows,” imagining new possibilities and opening up a space for dialogue.

The collection closes with *Racial Migrations*, an exploration of the racializing process that many Caribbean Latinas/os experience as they migrate to the United States. In “Insular Interventions: Jesús Colón Unmasks Racial Harmonizing and Populist Uplift Discourses in Puerto Rico,” Maritza Stanchich investigates the way that diasporic writer Jesús Colón exposes the incommensurability between racial discourses in the United States and on the island, destabilizing them both. She highlights how Jesús Colón’s work anticipates the civil rights discourses of the 1960s and the Nuyorican movement of the 1970s. Yolanda Martinez-San



Miguel sheds light on the relationship between racism and colonialism in “Coloniality of Diasporas: Racialization of Negropolitans and Nuyoricans in Paris and New York,” exposing the racializing process of colonial subjects who cross racial and cultural boundaries and become problematic members of metropolitan societies. She explores the limits of postcolonial discourse in two postcolonial Caribbean texts, Frantz Fanon’s, *Black Skin, White Masks* and Piri Thomas’ *Down These Mean Streets*, revealing the inherent contradictions in modern postcolonial state discourses. In the closing chapter “The Dominican Diaspora Strikes Back: Cultural Archive and Race in Junot Díaz’s *The Brief Life of Oscar Wao*,” Juanita Heredia draws on Paul Gilroy and Silvio Torres-Saillant’s understanding of racial legacy in the multiple diasporas of the Dominican community in the United States. She reveals the way that Díaz’s novel challenges gender and racial stereotypes critiquing race and gender master narratives in both the United States and the Dominican Republic.

This collection aims to illustrate the way that Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Dominican writers re-tell the experiences of multiple migrations, crossings, and movements between borders, languages, identities, and discourses. While their narratives at times appear to be displaced, the essays reveal that discourse is always placed, and Caribbean Latino writers speak and write from a particular place, and historical moment. The writers considered herein develop new forms of self-expression and representation that allow them to constitute “new kinds of subjects and thereby enable us to discover places from which to speak” (Hall 402).

## Notes

1. Julio Ramos explores the way that José Martí distinguishes himself from the Latin American enlightened *letrados* such as Andres Bello and Domingo Sarmiento, establishing a new kind of intellectual tradition in the Americas. See Julio Ramos’ *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Duke University Press, 2001).
2. The first Cuban exile press was founded by Father Felix Varela (1788–1853) in Philadelphia in 1824 with *El Habanero*, a Spanish-language paper which openly called for Cuban independence from Spain. Not long after, in 1828, other Cubans and Puerto Ricans would establish two newspapers in exile from New York, *El Mensajero Semanal* and *El Mercurio de Nueva York*. Varela was an intellectual who translated works by U.S. political leaders and thinkers of the time such as Paine and Jefferson and smuggled these translations into Latin America. In fact, Varela was considered the most popular writer in Cuba during the latter half of the twentieth century and his books were seen as the only bestsellers in Cuba, even though his name was banned on the island because of his outspokenness against the Spanish government (Fornet 73–74). Father Varela set the precedence among Puerto Ricans and Cubans for writing their political critiques from abroad and smuggling them