Neither Here Nor There: Nuyorican Literature, Home, and the American National Symbolic

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ABSTRACT
This paper analyzes the way nationalism, citizenship, and the Puerto Rican diaspora intersect with delinquency and violence, converging upon the “I” that is constructed autobiographically in Piri Thomas’s Down These Mean Streets. This paper also focuses on the history of the collective, or the attempts to collectivize, anthologize, and categorize the diverse opus that is Puerto Rican literature. In doing so the author sheds light on the way in which attempts at individual “self-representation” via autobiography are necessarily implicated in the way non-white ethnic outgroups are constructed and represented in dominant culture, by and through the nation.

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