

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

Monica Brown

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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.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert P. Moreno is currently an Assistant Professor of Applied Human Development in the Department of Human and Community Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He received his B.A. in Psychology from UCLA and his Ph.D. in Child and Adolescent Development in the School of Education from Stanford University. He also served as an Illinois Cooperative Extension Service State Specialist. His research examines family influences on children’s learning and academic achievement among Latinos and low income families. His current project examines Latina mothers’ involvement in the schooling of their children and effective instructional practices in the home.