

learn more about the complex relationship between white women and non-white people.

— Kristin Herzog
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Edward Rivera. *Family Installments: Memories of Growing Up Hispanic*. (New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1983) 299 pp., \$5.95 paper.

Puerto Ricans have been writing about their experiences in the mainland for a very long time. At the beginning, the majority of the texts were written in Spanish by Puerto Rican writers residing in this country or by Puerto Rican writers who lived here for periods of time. A careful study of the works published about the life of Puerto Ricans in the mainland shows that they were written in prose.

Among the first generation of Puerto Rican American prose writers, the best known, for the quality and quantity of their published works, are Piri Thomas and Nicholasa Mohr. To the list of better known “new-yorican” writers we add the name of Edward Rivera. *Family Installments: Memories of Growing Up Hispanic* is Rivera’s first attempt to write a long narrative piece. In this novel, Santos Malanguez, the protagonist narrator, is a participant eyewitness who sees well beyond the first person singular and becomes the translator of the Puerto Rican people in North American society. He portrays their joys and sorrows, their dreams and nightmares, their successes and defeats as they struggle in a different linguistic and cultural environment that much of the time is hostile and filled with indifference.

The novel is divided into thirteen chapters, some of which had already been published as short stories. In the first three chapters, through an effective use of the flashback technique, the protagonist-narrator relates experiences of his early childhood in a small town in the southwestern countryside of Puerto Rico. Rivera includes in his narration a very interesting mixture of oral and official history of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean as he prepares the background for the introduction of the genealogy of his autobiographical main character, Santos Malanguez.

In the middle chapters of the novel, as the subtitle *Memories of Growing Up Hispanic* suggests, Rivera narrates the odyssey of this transplanted migrant family to East Harlem’s El Barrio. *Family Installments* portrays the complex cultural conflict that children growing up in

a bilingual and bicultural setting must face day after day. The myriad problems that these individuals encounter every day are compounded by the attitudes of the representatives of the dominant culture in the form of racism, classism, lower wages, high levels of unemployment, poor housing, and language with the development of the child's identity.

Santos Malanguez is the product of this bilingual and bicultural environment, but he does not try like Richard Rodriguez in *Hunger for Memory* to maintain a clear-cut separation between his private life at home and his public life in school. Santos Malanguez maintains a close relationship with his Puerto Rican family and community; both nurture him socially and spiritually as he integrates himself through a slow acculturation process to the English language and to the white mono-cultural education that he receives at Saint Misericordia's Academy.

Unlike Richard Rodriguez, Edward Rivera keeps Spanish, the language of his parents, the private language of family relationships. He never felt that by speaking both Spanish and English he was socially disadvantaged, and he never attached any kind of stigma to being bilingual or bicultural. In school he faced many problems Puerto Rican children still face today. The Catholic nuns suggested to his parents that they speak English at home to reinforce English language learning. The acculturation process in the Malanguez household ran smoothly, nonetheless. When both boys graduated from high school, they were advised to go to a vocational school to learn a trade. We have heard all this before, and times have not changed much from the fifties to the present because Puerto Rican children are still getting the same kind of advice.

After graduating from high school, Santos held many odd jobs; then he decided to register in college at night. As time went on, the health of his father began to deteriorate; like many Puerto Ricans who were born and raised in Puerto Rico, his father had the dream of returning home some day. Shortly after going back, he passed away. This sad incident brought all the family back to Puerto Rico for the burial ceremony. The circle had been closed; all the family members had returned to their roots, but things were now different. Santos considered himself a stranger in his own country. He did not fit in, because he considered himself a New Yorican. The novel ends as Santos Malanguez looks back through the airplane window to catch the last glimpse of the beautiful city of San Juan lighted at night.

Edward Rivera has written a moving personal and cultural novel. In this autobiographical account of Rivera's experiences, perceptions, and finally his mastery of the language of the dominant class we can see how language becomes a powerful tool for economic and cultural liberation for eradicating colonial subjugation. He has shown how a new language can be used as a method for self determination and self definition, that language can be a powerful tool not only for expressing identity but to

express history and culture—the Puerto Rican people. Rivera also shows the power of literature for demonstrating how external forces determine one's social, psychic, and ego self.

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Anya Peterson Royce. *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity*. (Bloomington: Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1982) 247 pp., \$27.50, paper.

“...Ethnic identity requires the maintenance of sufficiently consistent behavior to enable others to place an individual or group in some given social category, thus permitting appropriate interactive behavior.” With this definition by George De Vos as thesis, Anya Peterson Royce examines ethnic identity, considering it as “...one of many identities available to people...developed, manipulated or ignored...” as the particular situation demands. She identifies power, perception and purpose as the fundamental criteria which determine behavior in any inter-ethnic situation. Colonialism, nationalism and mass immigration are analyzed from an historical and theoretical perspective and as socio-economic manifestations of power, perception and purpose by dominant and subordinant groups interacting in their respective societies. Expressions, manifestations of ethnic identity, are seen as a dynamic which is characterized by both change and consistency. This dynamic encompasses all variations of individual and collective behavior, including the antitheses of cultural pluralism and isolationism. The dynamic is shaped by socio-economic factors but motivating forces are power, perception and purpose.

Applying this analysis to contemporary social phenomena in the United States, she identifies cultural pluralism (or “melting potism”) as responsible for ambiguities and conflicts in ethnic identity, expressed in immigrant families, as cultural generation gaps. Women's struggles for recognition and economic equality are but another expression of interaction and conflict between subordinant and dominant groups, parallel to similar interaction (and struggles) by nations under colonial rule and immigrant groups in a host society. Similarly, “token” recognition of women (in corporate, academic, or administrative roles) is identical to the “token” status afforded members of minority ethnic groups by