

Dialogue between Narrator and Amanuensis in the Testimonial *Biografía de un cimarrón*

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Few, if any, genres surpass the slave narrative as a symbolic yet effective tool for the acquisition of agency and voice by disadvantaged people. Slaves used stories to publicize their subaltern experiences and forge new identities as people worthy of equal rights. Such identity creation consisted of slaves' self portrayal as individuals with the requisite agency to control and change their environments. It included the ability to convince those in power to pass new laws to aid their integration into society. To a degree, the depiction of agency facilitated its realization. Three key components of this process in *Biografía de un cimarrón* (1978) are the trickster figure, the four Afro-Caribbean meta-tropes *ndoki*, *nkisi*, *nganga*, and *simbi*, and the basic principles of *Ifá* divination in the Yoruba religion. These features are also connected to the dialogic, relational nature of language that is intrinsic to any textual exchange.

Given the intervention by white editors in the publication of most slave narratives, the trickster figure, which applies to narration, interpretation, and literary criticism, is to a certain degree transferred from the narrators of African descent to their white collaborators. It may be tempting to conclude that editors' agency eclipses that of narrators, and that the final version of each narrative creates a new form of racial—albeit literary—exploitation, effectively reinforcing the status quo. However, this conclusion ignores the fundamental role of the meta-tropes, both in shaping the narrative and in providing subtle signs of Afro-Caribbean cultural preservation against colonial oppression. While the Yoruba were not a dominant ethnic group among slaves, the Yoruba *orishas*—entities that approximate deities—became a foundation for a Pan-African religion in the New World (Gates, *Black* 23). Thus, the meta-tropes, with their multivalent folkloric, religious,

and literary applications, are appropriate for the analysis of African diasporic cultures. While the factual accuracy of any narrative is compromised by a variety of subjective elements on the part of both narrator and editor, the symbolic perpetuation of the Afro-Caribbean culture—or on a more minute level, the identity of each protagonist—is largely intact.

By analyzing the correspondence between Afro-Caribbean meta-tropes and the four master tropes of the Western semiotic tradition—metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony—one may see that even texts as ostensibly simple as slave narratives possess a high degree of rhetorical and conceptual complexity that is largely concealed by their rudimentary vocabulary and grammar, and their oral style. In spite of the heavy revision carried out by white editors, such narratives still maintain a substantial degree of their narrators' own cultures and identities through the use of tropes bearing literary and non-literary connotations on both literal and figurative levels. Furthermore, the culminating trope in each system—irony in the Western system, *simbi* in the Afro-Caribbean one—parallels the underlying goals of concealment and trickery. Through various forms of deception, the narratives reflect remnants of Yoruba culture only partially visible to an observer unfamiliar with it or its outgrowths in the New World such as *Santería* and *Candomblé*. This tendency is in keeping with the strategy found in African and African-derived cultures to provide outside observers with part—but not all—of the message of their texts, with the ulterior motive of keeping some of it secret. Lastly, *simbi*'s status as the over-arching trope in the Afro-Caribbean system highlights its sometime personification as a monkey and, in doing so, reiterates its correlation with other monkey figures that are considered to be—or are associated with—tricksters. These include the monkey sidekick of the Yoruba trickster *orisha Legba*, the Yoruba monkey figure *Coco Macaco*, the Afro-American trickster figure known as the *Signifyin(g) Monkey*, the monkey figure *Jiwe* in the Efik and Ejagham cultures of Nigeria, and its Cuban derivative referred to alternatively as *Güije* or *Jigüe*. *Simbi*'s function calls attention to the deceptively mimetic nature of all of these figures in their roles as counter-signifiers of texts and challengers of traditions. It also brings to mind the use of the monkey as a racist epithet for blacks, suggesting intellectual inferiority, subhuman status, lack of civilizing potential, and an inherent tendency

towards mimicry. To underscore the importance of these tropes, it is useful to consider Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s suggestion that a major challenge of Afro-American literary history is the identification of metaphors for black literary relations from within the Afro-American tradition, and the combination of such metaphors with useful ideas from contemporary literary theory (Gates, *Figures* 47-48). While Afro-Caribbean slave narratives are sometimes excluded from the Afro-American canon, Gates' observation is relevant to them as well. The recognition of Afro-Caribbean tropes' equality with Western master tropes regarding their potential as instruments of both textual and meta-textual agency is an important step in the acquisition of voice by those who use them.

In Yoruba thought, *ndoki* refers to a witch or other person who brings about the relationship between the known and the unknown by creating fetishes and, in doing so, effectively altering the natural order (Piedra 374). In a literary context, José Piedra associates *ndoki* with the domain of the artist and critic—the two figures that play chief roles in determining the meaning of a text. In both contexts, *ndoki* refers to one who gathers ingredients, mixes them together in order to achieve a transfer of knowledge, and ultimately reconfigures the manner in which reality is perceived.

Ndoki corresponds with the trope of metaphor. Like metaphor, it is representational via the comparison of one object to another. It includes several types of agents—witches who craft spells, artists who craft texts (or relations between signifiers and signifieds), and critics who interpret, critique, and/or revise texts. It is also similar to metaphor in that it provides imprecise images of a narrator who expresses himself within the confines of existing paradigms and hierarchies (White, *Metahistory* 36).

The second Yoruba trope is *nkisi*. On a tangible level, it refers to a fetish or hex that is acted upon by the *ndoki*. Due to the importance of sorcery in African and African-derived social structures, such fetishes or hexes and the specialists who casted or cured them were feared by both slaves and masters (Reis 61). It is partly for this reason that *nkisi* is so influential in both popular and literary contexts. On an intangible, epistemological level, *nkisi* refers to a positive but passive link between the individual and tradition. It is associated with the symbolic relationship between the signifier and the signified (Piedra 374). Both tangible and intangible connotations of *nkisi* may be said to parallel the

concept of a text. *Nkisi* corresponds with the master trope of metonymy. One similarity is that the inherent function of metonymy as a part representing the whole is based on a relationship between a signifier and a signified.

The relationships implied by metonymy tend to be more reductive than those implied by metaphor (White, *Metahistory* 16, 36; White, *Tropics* 73). Its reductionist tendency is evident in its basic function of representing a whole entity via one of its parts. This tendency can also be seen in its reduction of one part of a whole to the level of an aspect or function of another part of a whole. Common examples of this include agent-act and cause-effect relationships (White, *Metahistory* 35). Some of *nkisi's* metonymic qualities are seen in the magical properties attributed to it in Yoruba culture. *Nkisi* is defined by Jason Young as "a ritual object invested with otherworldly power, allowing it to affect special spiritual and material functions in the world" (110). It is described by Nsemi Isaki as "something that hunts down illness and chases it away from the body." Both interpretations indicate agent-act and cause-effect relationships. *Nkisi's* strength comes both from its individual components and from their connectedness—an aspect which exemplifies its metonymic property (110-11).

The concept of *nganga* is defined by the Yoruba as a doctor or expert who manipulates fetishes in order to restore the natural order. It is portrayed as a human agent who, like a *ndoki*, acts upon the fetish. Yet these two tropes differ in the manner in which they act upon the fetish. A *ndoki* materializes a relationship by creating fetishes, whereas a *nganga* manipulates fetishes that already exist (Piedra 374). Thus, while a *nganga* possesses agency and power over another entity, its role appears secondary to that of a *ndoki*. The difference between *ndoki* and *nganga* is reminiscent of that between a text's original author and its editor. In this sense, it parallels the distinct roles played by a slave writer or speaker, whose ideas and linguistic style are out of keeping with those held by the majority of readers, and by his collaborators, who adapt his message in terms of style and content to make it more palatable to their intended audiences.

Nganga corresponds with the master trope of synecdoche. Evidence for this exists in synecdoche's association with the organicist mode of explanation. Organicism is both integrative and reductive. It emphasizes the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm, thus constituting

a synecdoche by token of its relationship between component parts that combine to form a qualitatively different whole (White, *Metahistory* 15). Two of its key features are intrinsicity and the embodiment of a qualitative relationship (36). A qualitative shift from part to whole is reminiscent of the manipulation of a fetish by the expert or *nganga* in such a way as to restore the natural order. In a slave narrative, it is reflected in the addition or elision of textual components, as well as adaptations to the discursive style. Although such changes are parts of the whole narrative and represent qualities of the stereotypical experience of slavery as conceived by editors, they were not necessarily part of the experience of each slave (34). Such adaptations were made to shape a message in keeping with the expectations of a primarily white Cuban readership. The manipulation and the stylistic revisions inherent in *nganga* parallel the formalization of the organicist mode of explanation typical of synecdoche (White, *Tropics* 73).

The trope of *simbi* functions as a challenger of signification and as a negative but active link between the individual and tradition. *Simbi's* potential tangibility is reflected in its status as an observable omen. However, its contrastive description as the spirit of the waters suggests an intangibility that contributes to its enigmatic reputation and reiterates its aura of indeterminacy. *Simbi* is similar to *nkisi* in that it is a link rather than a creator or manipulator of a link, such as *ndoki* or *nganga*. Yet the type of link that it constitutes is a reversal of *nkisi*, in terms of its negativity and its activity. Piedra's description of *simbi* as a challenger of signification echoes its role in Yoruba culture as an entity which negates and undermines the relationship between signifier and signified constituted by *nkisi*, even while not necessarily appearing to do so (374-75). A key facet of Afro-American literature that connects *simbi* to the trickster figure is the idea that while the signifiers may remain the same, the signifieds will change (371).

Simbi corresponds with the Western trope of irony. Like irony, *simbi* is negational in function and self-conscious in ways that the other three tropes are not (White, *Metahistory* 37). Since it is negative but active, it corresponds with the attempt, on the part of either author or editor, to challenge traditional relationships. Irony's dialectical nature also parallels *simbi*. This is evident in its role as challenger of the relationship between signifier and signified. It reflects both a dialogue between these two entities, and a dialogue between itself and *nkisi*—the

original relationship between signifier and signified, since it effectively constitutes *nkisi's* reversal.

As the culminating Afro-Caribbean trope, *simbi*, appears to subsume the conflict between ideological and epistemological irony—a conflict that Hayden White addresses in his books *Metahistory* and *The Tropics of Discourse*. White believes that "epistemological irony is an attitude that questions the historian's ability to offer a representation of the past that meets the standards of truthfulness set by metaphorical, metonymical, and synecdochical worldviews" (Korhonen 37; White, *Metahistory* xii, 443). Herman Paul proposes that White's dilemma is essentially a conflict between two types of irony—ideological and epistemological. The intra-ideological conflict is an attempt to overthrow the monopoly of ideological irony via epistemological irony (Korhonen 42). *Simbi*, which corresponds with ideological irony in the basic hierarchy of tropes, also refers to the trickster figure of Yoruba folklore. It could be said to represent both epistemological irony and the conflict between epistemological and ideological irony, since it raises the same types of questions about the ability of any representation to meet standards of truthfulness, and the ability of any rhetorical trope to take precedence over others.

An important component of any slave narrative, and one that reflects both the relational and creative facets of the Afro-Caribbean tropes, is the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee. Such a dialogue is not immediately evident in *Biografía*, since only one voice—Montejo's—is explicitly present. The narrative, in its written form, is a conglomeration of Montejo's answers to Barnet's questions; yet the questions are omitted from the text. This gives the false impression that the narrative is a continuously flowing document whose content, topics, and form have been chosen by its narrator. It also eliminates the voice of the literate collaborator, thus rendering him a silenced Other, at least on a superficial level. With no explicit reference to his own voice, Barnet—like the *Signifyin(g) Monkey*—depends on rhetorical strategies to express himself such as the arrangement of sections of the narrative, the inclusion and elision of details from Montejo, and the emulation of Montejo's orality. Such emulation is evident in the "Afterword," where Barnet, in clarifying his aim to represent his country's collective memory, admits, "For that purpose I resort to oral discourse" (Barnet, *Biography* 205). While Barnet's voice

is not detectable in the narrative, it is detectable in the "Afterword." Here, it is added to the mixture of different rhetorical strategies. In effect, the autobiographical perspective of the slave in the narrative is replaced in the "Afterword" by the perspective of Barnet. The "Afterword" may even be interpreted as a metaphor for Barnet's autobiography.

There are several factors which seem to support an interpretation of the "Afterword" as an autobiography in miniature. To begin with, it is voiced primarily from a first-person perspective. It adheres largely to a chronological trajectory including details from Barnet's past, present, and future, with respect to his development first as a recipient and then as a purveyor of cultural knowledge. When listening as a child to the stories told by his grandfather, Barnet claims to have been moved primarily by an awareness of the invaluable but unrecognized efforts of "those who had remained behind the invisible walls of history" (*Biography* 202). This description is significant in several ways. First, it shows an awareness of the incompleteness and potential bias of the versions of history that have so far been written by people in power. At the same time, however, it implicitly celebrates the cross-generational oral storytelling tradition integral to African and Yoruba cultures. In this sense, Barnet may be suggesting that even if the words and perspectives of Africans are silenced by white censors, certain key tenets of their tradition are still tacitly present. He prefaces the transition to the next stage of his development by stating that the alleged "people with no history" would wait for a time when they would be given due credit for their achievements. In his view, this change was facilitated by the Cuban Revolution because of its influence in uniting historical and literary elements into the single genre of the testimonial novel (203-04). After signaling the transition to this stage, he provides a definition of the testimonial novel, and then describes his own early formation, ongoing strategy, and future ambition as a writer (205-06). From this point, rather than providing a mimetic or chronological narrative, the remainder of the "Afterword" is primarily a commentary on his personal writing style, the theme of memory, and the role of the testimonial novel. However, instead of limiting himself to the third-person objective point of view typical of critical discourse, he mixes it with that of the first-person, making it difficult to discern if he is expressing his own unique view or a more general one.

In the final paragraph, he offers his services as a mouthpiece for those whom he alleges are unable to tell their story, and salutes other well known storytelling entities in the European, African, and Latin American traditions respectively, whose referential sequence parallels the transfer of agency from European slavers, to African slaves, to the product of these and indigenous civilizations in the Americas. His final image of Latin American culture as a "great mythological tree" (*Biography* 208) is clearly metaphorical, yet also ironic, since it challenges the validity of the stories that he has offered to tell. Overtly, the subjectivity of these stories is reflected in Barnet's use of the word "mythological." It is also implied on a more subtle level via the cultural significance of the Ceiba tree in Cuba. Given the Ceiba tree's adaptability to climates on different continents, and the diversity of shapes, heights, and textures that it adopts, it may serve as symbol for the Cuban nation (Niell 91-92). It has also been used by various Cuban leaders—most notably former President Gerardo Machado, who had it planted in the Park of Fraternity—as a multivalent symbol that could simultaneously cater to both Catholic and *Santería* mentalities (Niell 104). While the varied nature of the tree's appearance may parallel the racial diversity of Cuba, its ability to deceive viewers by its appearance into mistaking similarity for difference carries trickster-like connotations. Such connotations are echoed in the recognition and exploitation of its multivalent symbolic potential by Machado and other leaders. The final paragraphs of both Montejo's narrative and Barnet's "Afterword" underscore the importance of voicing the truth and make propositions to facilitate this goal. Yet they also implicitly acknowledge the limits of their ability to make this happen, either due to fading memory in the case of Montejo, or to inherent poetic subjectivity in the case of Barnet.

Barnet wishes to bring to life, so to speak, Montejo's experiences so that the broader reading public may be aware of them. He also wishes to perpetuate the spirit of the maroon, or more specifically that of Montejo, in both himself and his writing. While Barnet is a professional writer and expresses himself via the mode of writing, certain oral elements are still present in the "Afterword"—a metatextual commentary with which mimetic traits of orality do not traditionally correspond. While the "Afterword" touches on many topics associated with high culture such as history, the testimonial novel, philosophy, literary theory, and the writing process, it does so in a seemingly haphazard

manner devoid of formal structure. It vacillates between technical jargon and figurative language, between third and first person narrators, as well as between socio-anthropological topics and those of a more literary bent. Barnet claims that he seeks to bring these last two areas together, stating "If I move back and forth between these disciplines it's because I believe it's time they join hands without denying each other" (*Biography* 205). While none of the language in the "Afterword" is colloquial, its inconsistency regarding type of vocabulary, narrative perspective, and topic lends it a conversational quality. This may serve to make the "Afterword" look like a testimonial in its own right, albeit one about Barnet rather than Montejo. Barnet never had to endure slavery or racial discrimination as did Montejo, yet he may consider himself a victim of stylistic and generic restrictions. Further, his use of orality may serve to undermine these restrictions and to illustrate his assumption of Montejo's identity—the spirit of the *cimarrón*, which he suggests both in the "Afterword" and in his letter to Zeuske (Barnet, *Untouchable* 284, 287), in response to Zeuske's article, "The Cimarrón in the Archives." The idea of undermining restrictions also relates to satire. As the mode of emplotment that corresponds with the master trope of irony, satire is said to gain its power largely through the rejection of formal coherencies associated with the romantic, tragic, and comic modes of emplotment. Satire's etymological origin in the word *satura*, meaning "medley," reflects its inherent traits of mixture and inconsistency and, thus, corresponds with the stylistic traits found in *Biografía* (White, *Metahistory* 28).

Further examples of mixture and inconsistency are evident in the titles of different editions of the book, and in the authors to whom they are attributed. These also bear parallels with the concept of doubleness as reflected in the naming system of the *Odu* (16 primary *Odu* and 240 secondary *Odu*) used in *Ifá* divination within the Yoruba religion. The name of each primary *Odu* consists of the same name repeated, as in the case of "Ejiogbe Ejiogbe" or "Ejiogbe Meji", which means "double Ejiogbe". The name of each secondary *Odu* consists of the name of one primary *Odu* followed by the name of another primary *Odu*. An example is "Ejiogbe Ogunda". While *Odu* play a role comparable to scripture in other religions, they are not viewed merely as collections of verses, but as animate entities, or more specifically, as kings, each with its own unique traits. Each *Odu* initiates a visit to lower-ranking *Odu* and divines for them through verses of the *Ifá*

compendium. Later, each lower-ranking host *Odu* undertakes a return visit and recitation. Yet both the interpretation of the first signified and the rendition of a reciprocal signifier cause the composite signified to deviate from the initiating *Odu's* expectation.

Editions of the book titled *Biografía de un cimarrón* and *Cimarrón: Historia de un esclavo*, both of which list Barnet as the author, possess names that are bipartite and double. Their doubleness is evident in that their titles and authors reflect a third-person, metonymical relationship between author and text, in which the said author is different from the protagonist. An edition titled *Autobiography of a Runaway Slave* that identifies Montejo as the author is also bipartite and double, since its title and author reflect a first-person, predominantly metaphorical relationship between author and text. The publication data of other editions reflects the bipartite structure of secondary *Odu* names that lack a doubling component. An example is the title *Biografía de un cimarrón* with Montejo as the author. In this case, the title reflects a third-person, metonymical relationship with the text, while the author's name reflects a first-person, metaphorical one. The explicit indication of authorship in Montejo's name provides different information than the implicit indication of authorship in the title. Rather than a mere contradiction, however, the reference to different contributors may imply co-authorship. It also parallels the co-authorship implicit in the names of the 240 secondary *Odus*, each of which consists of the names of an initiatory *Odu* and a responding *Odu* from the sixteen primary *Odus*.

A further example of an edition whose publication date parallels non-double *Odu* names would be *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave* that lists both Barnet and Montejo as authors. This parallels the alternate names used for secondary *Odus*, such as "Ogbe-w(o)-ehin," meaning "Ogbe look back," which is an alternate name for the *Odu* "Ogbe Iwori". "Iwori," the second referent of this name, is replaced by a name that specifies the type of contiguity inherent in the original. If the most important components of a book's publication data may be expressed in bipartite form, they would consist of the title and the author's name. Since "Iwori" is listed second, it would parallel the author's name. Yet, for this last edition, where not one but two co-authors' names are given, authorship is expressed not as a metaphor but as a metonym. While it makes no explicit reference to the roles played

by each collaborator as narrator or editor, the listing of the two names begins with the initiator—Barnet—and ends with the respondent—Montejo. In this sense, it parallels the hierarchy between an initiating *Odu* and a responding one, as well as the tradition of listing the initiator first. If the listing of both authors' names is considered equivalent to the phrase "w(o)-ehin" or "look back"—the second part of the bipartite alternate name, then it raises the question of who looks back to whom. Since the book's title constitutes the first half of the bipartite name, the use of the word "Autobiography" suggests that it metaphorically represents Montejo. Thus, the act of looking back would have to be carried out by Barnet. A responsive gesture by Barnet may seem ironic—and reminiscent of the prohibition against a responsive gesture by a higher-ranking *Odu* to a lower one. Yet it reflects the deeper truth that both men's utterances are responsive—Montejo's answers to Barnet's initial questions; Barnet's transcription, translation, and editing of Montejo's answers. As such, the discourse at each stage in the book's creation is influenced by its metonymical relationship with the language of both collaborators. This parallels the manner in which each collaborator's identity is influenced by his interaction with the other via the medium of the text.

The comparison of the *Odu* naming system with the titles and authors listed for various editions of Montejo's and Barnet's collaborative endeavor reflects the double nature both of the words *Meji* and *Eji*—two words used to indicate the doubling of the names of *Odus* in Yoruba divination—and of any texts or authors that function as likenesses of something else. For example, both a biography and an autobiography serve as simulacra of a person's life—in short, as doubles of that person. Both genres' names suggest that their texts serve as written measures of people's lives. However, neither genre guarantees a high degree of accuracy, or even relative superiority over the other genre. The chief difference reflected in their names is the perspective used in gathering information and in re-expressing it through narration. Each genre necessitates a change in meaning, both from the perspective of the other genre and from the facts themselves. Since the exact replication of any facts via narration is impossible, the names of both genres effectively mask their limitations. They give the impression that their texts are replicas or doubles of the lives that they describe. Yet if they are truly doubles in any sense of the word, it is that they are

countersigns of the original life being described. Effectively, they are differences cloaked in similarity.

A similar argument can be made for authors, transcribers, translators, and editors who collaborate with the subject of an (auto) biographical undertaking. All of these figures play key roles in the shaping of the text, and sometimes are even listed as authors. While this type of identification may be accurate in the case of biography, it is less likely so for autobiography, where the genre explicitly identifies the story's subject as its composer. Nonetheless, this phenomenon may be seen in the article title "The Politics of Memory and Miguel Barnet's *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave*" (Luis 475). The fact that Barnet is given any credit for the authorship of a so-called "autobiography" about Montejo indicates a fallacy in either the author or the title. Since Barnet did indeed play an authorial role in this book, the chief inaccuracy is in the title. As Barnet himself points out in his letter to Michael Zeuske, most of the facts about Montejo's life after slavery were not interesting enough to merit inclusion in Barnet's book (*Untouchable* 283-89). Further, they would be counterproductive to his intended image of Montejo if included in a future book. Not only does Barnet unabashedly create a literary double of Montejo that differs from reality; he goes so far as to suggest that he is Montejo's double, albeit a double with a residual of similarity, concealed by myriad differences.

In sum, one may say that, just as the changes rendered upon *Biografía* via the interaction between narrator and amanuensis tend to be overshadowed by remnants of similarity between its current and former states, the changes affected upon the amanuensis Barnet are similarly overshadowed. While Barnet's literary role maintains an air of editorial finality, his essence increasingly emulates that of Montejo. Thus, the process of signification yields changes in both the text and its co-creators; more specifically, it increases the similarity between co-creators via the communicative medium of the text. To an extent, the process of signification represented by *nkisi*, is reversed, thus yielding *simbi*. Yet Montejo's and Barnet's respective roles as *ndoki* (narrator or creator of the fetish), *nganga* (amanuensis, translator and manipulator of the fetish), *simbi* (trickster and reverser/reversal of the fetish), or *nkisi* (the fetish itself) remain uncertain. While such processes and reversals may be more evident in *Biografía* than in most texts, due to

its relative uniqueness as the translated account of an illiterate narrator, it raises the question of whether similar changes occur in all edited texts and in the people who deal with them.

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A Voice from Oblivion: The Return of the Subject as Agent in Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory*

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I might surprise, even offend, you by how inconveniently Mexican I can be. I am, for example, still very much influenced by Mexican Catholicism. But do not worry. I learned long ago to shield this particular inheritance from public view.
 Richard Rodriguez ("An American Writer" 6)

As a counterdiscourse to the assimilationist tendency expressed within the Chicana/o experience of the pre-Civil Rights Movement period, the vast majority of the literature written by Chicana/o writers during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States was crafted according to an ideological model. This anti-establishment ideology negated the discourse of assimilation, characteristic of earlier generations, and instead forged a sense of identity based on a historical awareness and an affiliation with the socially disadvantaged. To this end, the nationalist ideological project sought to emphasize ethnic and cultural pride through the recuperation of history within its counterdiscourse of cultural preservation:

Identity was seen as a process of historical review carried out through an ideology of nation building which stressed several key points: retrieval of family and ethnic tradition, identification with the working class, struggle against assimilation, and the dire results if these efforts were not continued. Identity was not simply to be found, but to be forged, with careful attention to history and ideology. (Bruce-Novoa, *Retrospace* 134)

Recognizing the influence of history and ideology as basic to the discourse of the Chicana/o Nationalist Movement, Bruce-Novoa outlines a problematic implication of those nationalist ideologues of the 1960s and 1970s. The nationalist ideology resulted in the finalization, within the signifying activity, of the Chicana/o subject. The discourse of cultural