

### Analyzation of Poems

Raquel Salas Rivera's book, "The Tertiary", explores the problems of debt that Puerto Ricans face and how it traces back to the United States. Through the use of poetry and anecdotes, Rivera tries to display the wrongs committed against Puerto Rico and bring a voice to the injustices. Rivera outlines the repeated empty promises made by Americans and the destruction of the country financially by American investors. When reading Rivera's work I wanted to explore a way where I could use similar writerly choices, anecdotes, and current events to somehow convey the importance of a certain topic or problem in society. Rivera uses listing to better display connections between specific topics and show back to back examples that tie to a specific subject. This style of writing is especially noted on page 21 when Rivera writes, "Imagine / that you come back with your neighbors / with your abuela, with the dog / with Luis and say / here are my heirs / will you terminate our debt?" (Page 21). The specific point that Rivera displays is how debt is constant in many family's lineages in Puerto Rico. Rivera proves this by showing multiple examples of the long line of debt and how in the end Puerto Ricans still hold hope that it can finally be repaid. The word "imagine" tries to involve the audience and place them in this perspective of endless debt. In my inspired poem, I also try to use listing to draw on connections and display multiple examples to prove something. I write about my parent's involvement in my struggle, "My parents told me that writing helps / Writing about struggle, writing about life, writing about providing, writing about racism / I ignore this advice". In this part of my poem, I try to use listing to better show the repeated solutions to the discrimination I felt. The use of the word "writing" multiple times displays the constant desire for my silence on the subject. This is similar to how Rivera repeats the word "with" to represent the repeated times Puerto Ricans try to pay their debt from family member to family member. One thing I found pivotal in Rivera's poem was the description of the impact of being in a new and different environment/culture. Rivera shows the change that creates when writing, "we discuss how to identify double agents / I don't remember when i left behind / many terms or traded them for others"(Page 43). The use of the phrase "double agents" represents the two

important parts of Rivera's identity and how they feel connected to their Puer Rican identity but also live in America and have been affected in many ways by that presence in their life. The word "traded" also shows the change in language that they have undergone in their life and how they are forced to adapt to a new world. The impact on Rivera is losing parts of their identity and culture when trading terms for others. My situation differs but an impact is still seen with the involvement of language, "Privileged but silenced / The ring of fire surrounds me as I walk past the laughter and mockery / My Abuela told me that Dios está a tu lado". The word "Abuela" means grandmother and this quote shows what impact she brings in my life especially as someone who only speaks Spanish. Because of my Spanish roots, discrimination against who I am occurs and my grandmother is one person that reminds me of who I am. The use of the Spanish language in this part of my poem was to show the involvement of the language in my life and how I can't even escape it in my poetry. The impact of having a constant presence of my Hispanic culture and Spanish language is in some ways negative, with people looking down upon me for being different but also positive by knowing who I am and my culture. This adds to Rivera's idea of "double agents" and the feeling of being connected to two environments, two countries and two cultures. That's what Rivera's poems are about two countries, two sides, one drowns in debt while the other profits and escapes from the mess. Through Rivera's poetry they are saying that this is society, two sides pitted against each other with one side benefiting or evading any responsibility while the other is left to clean up the mess and deal with the problems.