

Journal 2 When I Was Puerto Rican

Old to New

In the beginning of the story, I noticed how Esmeralda was very descriptive of her home, connecting guavas to her culture, the open clean air, the poor living conditions, etc.... Towards the end of her story, I noticed how once again she describes her new home, Brooklyn, as loud, dirty, unsafe, etc.... By describing both settings, she gives me as a reader a deeper understanding of her yearn for her home and how she felt when she had to make such drastic changes in her life. The transformation that occurred to her was obviously one that she did not desire, and this idea was reinforced as she continued to describe her difficulties with the language, with her mother, and with her social life. Moreover, I also question myself why I notice how the nicknames are not used as much as they were in the beginning. Her relationship with her father seemed to be extremely biased and I was surprised at the consideration coming from her mother, encouraging her to continue speaking to her father although he remarried and started a new life that did not include her in it. Her father continued to respond to her letters though, so it's not as if he got her completely out of his life. I suspected that if anything she would continue talking to him, but little by little he faded from the story and I never found out what happened to him in the end.

Becoming Senorita

Esmeralda's description of her "sexual experience" was shocking. I was totally stunned over the way that she accepted that small experience with the truck driver. It was really disturbing to think that she smiled at the man who was jerking off until then.

I'm extremely surprised that she would reveal, and in such great detail, something so intimate and disgusting. Since it was mentioned numerous times throughout the story about being "casi senorita", when she first got her period I felt like it would be something more moving, like a climax in the story, but I was disappointed.

Transition

The transition at the very end of the story was too quick. Her relocation to the other school seemed to happen too quick and unexpectedly, and the ending seemed to not be an ending at all. In the beginning of the story, I feel like the way she's telling the story is very descriptive of the moments that are recalled, and I also feel like very little time passes by in between them. At the end though, time passed quick and was left unfinished. While many times I have found this method of an abrupt and unclear ending to be mysterious and interesting, I felt like there was too much skipped and left unsaid. I find out that she's about to enter the Performing Arts School and will be a Harvard graduate which is great and all, but what does this ending suggest? Is her being accepted into Harvard the ultimate sign that she is "no longer Puerto Rican"? The title of the story is "*When I was Puerto Rican*", insinuating that she is no longer. While this may seem sad and gloomy, the story ends on a good note, with her letting us know how she thought about that "PA '66" that she was hoping would be on the wall of her old high school. It's as if she's accepted her new "nationality" (wanting to find a better word), but personally I would feel a huge loss.

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