ORÍGENES GROUP AND JOURNAL

**Jorge Luis Arcas**

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The Orígenes group was one of the most significant and controversial literary groups of twentieth-century Cuban culture. It took its name from the last of several journals that included Cuban culture. It took its name from the last of several journals, La Espuela de Horizonte, which featured—among others—Vitier himself. 

Orígenes was created by Jorge Luis Arcas, Octavio Smith (b. 1921), José Lezama Lima (1932–1990), René Portocarrero (1912–1985), Lorenzo García Vega (b. 1926), Eduardo Suero Fernández Retamar (b. 1930) was also frequently published in the journal, and the exiled Spanish writer Maria Zambrano (1904–1991), who was among the journal’s most important contributors, had considerable influence on the group. Her essay “La Cuba secreta” (The Secret Cuba, 1948) invests the Cuban poetry movement with a sort of philosophical metaphysics. Major painters such as Mariano Rodríguez (1914–1997) and René Portocarrero (1912–1995), the art critic Guy Pérez Cisneros (1915–1920), and the musician Julián Orbón (1912–1995) can also be considered part of the group; nevertheless, it was poetry—specifically a poetic concept of reality—that characterized the Orígenes group and made it unique. Indeed, it was the group’s painstaking poetic work that distinguished it from earlier and even contemporary tendencies (Arcas 2002).

There are two analytic perspectives of this group. The more traditional viewpoint links it directly to the existence of the previously mentioned journals, through the examination of many editorials written by Lezama Lima and books such as Vitier’s *La Pecera de la Habana: Recuento de un Pedro Pan* (Silver Spur, 1939–1941), *Espuela de Horizonte* (Poet, 1942–1943). The Orígenes group consisted of ten poets who first achieved prominence in Vitier’s anthology *Díaz poetas cubanos* (1937–1947) (Ten Cuban Poets, 1948), which featured—in addition to Vitier himself—Lezama Lima, Palma, Gantín, Suero Fernández Retamar (b. 1930), Justo Rodríguez Santos (1915–1999), Ángel Gaitán (1914–2003), Eliseo Diego (1920–1994), Fina García Marrero (b. 1923), Octavio Sánchez (b. 1921), and Lorenzo García Vega (b. 1926). The writer Roberto Fernández Retamar (b. 1930) was also frequently published in the journal, and the exiled Spanish writer María Zambrano (1904–1991), who was among the journal’s most important contributors, had considerable influence on the group. Her essay “La Cuba secreta” (The Secret Cuba, 1948) invested the Cuban poetry movement with a sort of philosophical metaphysics. Major painters such as Mariano Rodríguez (1914–1997) and René Portocarrero (1912–1995), the art critic Guy Pérez Cisneros (1915–1920), and the musician Julián Orbón (1912–1995) can also be considered part of the group; nevertheless, it was poetry—specifically a poetic concept of reality—that characterized the Orígenes group and made it unique. Indeed, it was the group’s painstaking poetic work that distinguished it from earlier and even contemporary tendencies (Arcas 2002).

The Orígenes group was one of the most significant and controversial literary groups of twentieth-century Cuban literature. The journal was edited by José Lezama Lima (1932–1990) and José Rodríguez Felo (1897–1958) until a split between the two resulted in two different versions of the last two issues and the emergence of *Ciclón* (Cyclone), edited by Rodríguez Felo with the assistance of the Orígenes dissident Virgilio Piña (1914–2003), favoring modernity and a different cultural orientation.
The other perspective is that the group's influence lasted far beyond the journals' final issue and into a new age of Cuban literature following the triumph of the Revolution in 1959. In this construct, the group had a classic period linked to its journals and another, more controversial period during which Víctor and García-Marruz were the most widely accepted proponents (Víctor 1994, García-Marruz), all the way into the early years of the twenty-first century.

**ORÍGENES IN THE REVOLUTION**

In any case, the acceptance of the group disintegrated with the advent of that new period (Arcos 2007; Díaz). The negative criticism that began with Caribé and was continued by *La voz de la revolución* predominated until the early 1980s, thanks in part to the group's most notorious dissident, Piñera, and to the next generation, called the Fifties Generation or the first generation of the Revolution, which had new ideological tendencies that originated with García del Carpio and were represented by writers such as the Marxist critic Aguirre. In some sense, the triumph of the Revolution obliged the members of Orígenes to redefine their previous concept, called transcendentalist (Fernández Retamar), in light of the new political and literary context. Initially all of them enthusiastically welcomed the new revolutionary period—except for Baquero, who went into exile immediately, followed later by Orbión, Rodríguez Santos, Gaetela, and García Vea. Very soon, however, Víctor, Diego, García-Marruz, and Smith took exception to the new government's atheist, Marxist orientation. In 1968 Víctor revealed his ideological conversion with the lecture “El violin” (The Violin), signaling the group's reinvention into revolutionary culture, but not without reservations. Likewise, in 1976, with the publication of García Vea's *Las años de Orígenes* (The Years of Orígenes), the group became aware of its most radical and thorough critics, known as The Five Grey Years (1971–1976), the Orígenes group experienced a revival among critics in books such as *En torno a la obra poética de Fina García-Marruz* (Concerning the Poetic Work of Fina García-Marruz, 1990), *La solución unívoca. Sobre el pensamiento poético de José Lezama Lima* (The Unifying Solution: On the Poetical Thought of José Lezama Lima, 1990), and *Orígenes: La pobreza irradiante* (Orígenes: Irradiant Poverty, 1994) by Jorge Luis Arcos. The well-known critic and essayist Enrique Sainz was one of the major contributors to this reinterpretation. This legitimate and necessary rehabilitation in academic studies and publications responded to the political suspicion on the part of the Marxist cultural establishment, which had mistrusted the Orígenes group's religious or “idealistic” worldview; however, the reconsideration did not yet appreciate the group's nationalist projections.

But Orígenes' gradual return into Cuban culture, linked to international political events stemming from the end of the Cold War, made it possible for Víctor and García-Marruz to reinterpret the group on the basis of revolutionary ideological perspectives, thereby putting into effect Víctor's 1968 ideological “conversion,” but it was not until after 1989, when the Revolution accentuated nationalism, that these reinterpretations received official acceptance (Víctor 1994; García-Marruz). With the colloquium honoring Orígenes's fiftieth anniversary, 1994 was the year when the group was fully admitted into the Revolution's academic and cultural world, and it marked the beginning of a new acceptance by young writers, especially members of the Diáspora group, as well as Víctor Fowell and Antonio José Ponte. In 2002 Ponte published *El libro perdido de los origenistas* (The Lost Book of the Orígenes), despite having given a controversial lecture in 1994 on García Vea's *Los años de Orígenes and Víctor's Ese sol del mundo moral* (The Sun of the Moral World). In the same vein, Duamel Díaz released *Los límites del origenismo* (The Limits of Origenism, 2005) in Madrid, and Rafael Rojas wrote several important essays viewing Orígenes from this new perspective, in line with Arcos's new studies on the Orígenes group (2002; 2007).
After the 1990s, Píntera’s image was rehabilitated and García Vega’s critical perspective and avant-garde creativity were recognized. The same is true of Baquero. Within this multiple and sometimes contradictory process, critics reconsidered some of Víctor's emblematic texts such as *La cabra en la poesía y El siglo del mundo surreal* (published in Mexico in 1975 and in Cuba in 1995), as well as García-Marrúz’s *La familia de Orígenes* (The Family of Orígenes, 1997). The latter two books are the clearest representations of the authors’ revolutionary and nationalistic ethical reinterpretation, which have been rebuffed by their contemporaries. In this new context, in addition to the emblematic and, in one way or another, everlasting figure of Lezama Lima, his ideological adversary Píntera reemerged vigorously, and Baquero and especially García Vega have been read and studied much more frequently.

ENDURING IMPORTANCE

But beyond these literary, ideological, and generational ups and downs, the group’s internal division, the multiple reinterpretations, the extra-literary interferences, and manipulation by critics, there are positive constants within the varying reactions to the Orígenes group. The most general of these is its universal projection, coexisting with its Cuban style of poetry, which was in the end controversial and of relative value. Another constant is the writing quality, which its members faithfully upheld despite the hostile environment. Furthermore, the group had a capacity for reinventing itself, demonstrated by Lezama, Píntera, Baquero, and García Vega. Its capacity to create a poetic concept within its varied personal poetic styles continued to enlighten readers at the end of the twentieth century (Arcos 1999).

Antonio José Ponte’s opinion advanced readers’ appreciation of Orígenes’ most admired efforts:

*We prefer Orígenes in an open field, facing the elements, scratching at the stone of sensulessness and nothingness, amiously lost and gasping, to the improbable roads of Panglossianism. We prefer what we find in *Los años de Orígenes*, sickly pages that do not arrive at a single certaity, to the certainty we may find in *El siglo del mundo surreal*, for example.*

Ponte p. 103

This evaluation, though somewhat distant from Orígenes’ essentialism or transcendentalism, and paradoxically linked to modernity, ponders Píntera’s and García Vega’s avant-garde, experimental vocation and projection, together with an affinity between, for example, the poetry of Diáspora(s) and other writers and that formerly marginal or noncentral zone occupied by Orígenes. Added to this is both tendencies’ radical distancing from the Revolutionary ideology.

To a great extent, Lezama’s protean capacity and furious singularity seduced Lezama from these critical ups and downs. His open thoughts, his heterodox worldview, is inexhaustible universality, the intensity of his imagination—his strength, as the American critic Harold Bloom puts it—are some of the traits that distinguish him from the other Orígenes members. The proliferation of academic studies of his work and the recognition he has received from his fellow writers attest to Lezama’s work being an inexhaustible treasure. The Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges famously described Lezama as classic, but as Bloom explains in *The Western Canon*, he is a classic who has not yet depleted his original strangeness.

The singularity of a literary process within the context of the Cuban Revolution (inside or outside, exiled or not) has prolonged the controversy surrounding the Orígenes group, perhaps for too long. What should have been relegated to archaeology or a historical reference has defied deterioration because of that singularity. Nonetheless, the Orígenes group remained in the early 2000s one of the most intense and tragically polemic Cuban literary experiences, and some of its writers’ works will forever be classics not only of Cuban letters, but of Ibero-American letters.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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These include emphasis on group orientation and identity, deferment of profits for long-term gain, and commitment to quality at every organizational level. American organizations, in contrast, are characterized by a lack of trust at all levels, a devotion to short-term profits, overspecialization, complacency, and arrogance. Group Decision and Negotiation is published in cooperation with the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences and its Section on Group ... The journal focuses broadly on relation and coordination in group processes by exploring the entire process or flow of activities relevant to group decision and negotiation. Among the evolving approaches to group decision and negotiation processes, the journal explores computer group decision and negotiation support systems; artificial intelligence and management science; applied game theory, experiment and social choice; and cognitive and behavioral sciences. Descriptive, normative, and design viewpoints are all represented. Genes is a quarterly peer-reviewed open access scientific journal that is published by MDPI. The editor-in-chief is J. Peter W. Young (University of York).[1] It covers all topics related to genes, genetics, and genomics. Abstracting and indexing. The journal is abstracted and indexed in: Chemical Abstracts. EBSCOhost. Unlike most management journals, Group & Organization Management moves away from the boundaries of management subfields and encourages scholarship that challenges traditional distinctions among management scholars. The journal promotes the development of new paradigms and the explorations of paradigms from various disciplines. Comprehensive Coverage. Each quarterly issue of Group & Organization Management publishes a broad range of articles, including data-based research articles, research review reports, evaluation studies, action research reports, and critiques of research. In addi