“Observe and Participate”: The Afro-Puerto Rican Socialist Life Writing of Jesús Colón and the New York Young Lords

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In her lecture, Mills discusses the life writing of Afro-Puerto Rican Communist and journalist Jesús Colón and the New York Young Lords (1969-1972), arguing that their writing is part of a tradition of Afro-Puerto Rican socialism, a strand of anti-racist, Puerto Rican nationalist, and socialist thought. This Afro-Puerto Rican socialism manifested itself most clearly through an “observe and participate” model of life writing, which centers Afro-Latino and Afro-Latina identity and politics and works actively to recruit the readers to its anti-racist, pro-sovereignty cause.