Puerto Rican Literature, 1988–96: An Annotated Bibliography

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ADE Bulletin 115 (Winter 1996), pp. 26–31
ISSN: 0001-0898
CrossRef DOI: 10.1632/ade.115.26
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This bibliography presents some of the most recent works of literature written by Puerto Ricans born and raised in the United States. Its contents testify to the proliferation of literary voices within the Puerto Rican communities in the United States. As Juan Flores anticipated eight years ago, women’s voices have contributed enormously to a different characterization of the Puerto Rican experience, and writers from different corners of the United States (such as Philadelphia, Boston, and cities in California, Georgia, and Missouri) have a significant presence in today’s literary production. The aesthetic projects of these new writers have begun to rearticulate the poetics of the earlier work of Nuyorican writers.

Geographical diversity differentiates this bibliography from Edna Acosta-Belén’s “The Literature of Puerto Rican Migration in the United States: An Annotated Bibliography”; the literature presented here is no longer the exclusive domain of writers from New York City. Even though a younger generation of Nuyorican writers continues to produce vibrant literature, this bibliography documents a wider trajectory of the Puerto Rican diaspora. This broader perspective can be seen in the work of Judith Ortiz Cofer, Martin Espada, Aurora Levins Morales, and others.

Despite deep cuts in funding for Puerto Rican studies and ethnic studies in general, literary as well as critical production in these areas has flourished, and critics from the United States and Puerto Rico have become increasingly interested in literature written by Puerto Ricans in the United States. Although major publishing houses have been slow to publish these writers, we have seen a proliferation of criticism in Spanish about this literature, an increasing number of dissertations written exclusively on Puerto Rican writers, and numerous conference panels dedicated to the subject. With more than two hundred participants from Puerto Rico and the United States, the September 1996 Puerto Rican Studies Association conference in Puerto Rico attested to that vitality.

This bibliography is meant to complement and update Acosta-Belén’s. Thus I cite only texts not found in her bibliography. For authors who have not published in the last eight years, I refer the readers to previous bibliographies. Marc Zimmerman has recently published a bibliography that includes Puerto Rican authors: U.S. Latino Literature: An Essay and Annotated Bibliography (Chicago: March/Abrazo, 1992). I mark with an asterisk texts listed in his bibliography. Because of the limited scope of this bibliography, I have cited a few other bibliographies that could complement this effort.

Anthologies


Poetry read in the Nuyorican Poets Café. Includes works by well-established Nuyorican poets such as Sandra María Esteves, Pedro Pietri, Tato Laviera, and Miguel Algarín.


Short stories organized by theme. Includes stories by Judith Ortiz Cofer, Piri Thomas, Nicholasa Mohr, Ed Vega, J. L. Torres, and Edward Rivera.


Includes critical essays by Juan Flores, Virginia Sánchez Korrol, and Nicholasa Mohr and excerpts of works by Edward Rivera, Aurora Levins Morales, Rosario Morales, and Judith Ortiz Cofer.


Poems and short stories. Includes works by Nicholasa Mohr, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Aurora Levins Morales, and Sandra María Esteves.


The author is Assistant Professor of Spanish at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras.
Includes works of well-established writers such as Judith Ortiz Cofer and Nicholasa Mohr.


A reprint of the works published in 1979 in Revista Chicana-Riqueña. Includes: Jaime Carrero’s The FM Safe, Miguel Algarín and Tato Laviera’s Olú Clemente, and Miguel Piñero’s The Sun Always Shines for the Cool.


A collection of Spanish poetry written by authors born in the United States and Puerto Rico.


Stories by new writers, including Abraham Rodríguez, Ed Vega, Judith Ortiz Cofer, and Ed Morales.


Works by both young and well-established Latina writers, including Judith Ortiz Cofer, Sandra María Esteves, and Nicholasa Mohr. Reflects on growing up female and Hispanic.


Poetry and prose, some previously published, by well-established writers.


Poetry, short stories, and criticism. Includes works by Puerto Rican authors such as Nicholasa Mohr, Judith Ortiz Cofer, and Sandra María Esteves and a critical essay about Sandra María Esteves by Luz María Umpierre. Reprints a 1983 issue of Revista Chicana Riqueña.

Prose Fiction


These stories about el barrio, covering the decades of the 1940s through the 1990s, convey the daily struggles of the community, its achievements and its failures.


A young woman from the South Bronx breaks away from the ghetto and encounters the difficulties of living in two worlds.


A novel recounting the transformation of the narrator as she becomes involved with feminist struggles in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s.


In a small village in Mexico two sisters come to terms with their destiny.


The narrator recounts the story of her mother and grandmother and reveals the secrets that surrounded their lives.


This first novel deals with the consequences for the family, especially for women, of social change and revolution.


As a woman writes a novel about family life, she starts to liberate herself and at the same time brings her marriage into chaos. The first novel the author has written in English.


The transformation of the life of an upper-middle-class family that moves from the Puerto Rican countryside to Worcester, Massachusetts. Narrated by the family’s second child.


A novel written outside Puerto Rico, in Spanish, depicting life in the countryside where coffee is grown. Deals with the transformations that occurred between the 1940s and the 1960s, which paved the way for the massive immigration to the United States.

Twelve stories about teenagers growing up in New Jersey and their difficulties balancing their parents’ demands and their urban milieu.


An autobiographical novel about a family in the Puerto Rican countryside (*Salud*) and the immigration of their son and daughter to the United States. Narrated by the daughter's oldest child.


A first book. Focuses on young city dwellers and their difficulties finding an alternative to drug abuse and despair.


A continuation of the short story “Happy Birthday.” Narrates a young drug dispatcher's involvement with a girlfriend and his eventual withdrawal from the underworld.


A teenager tries to fulfill the American dream by selling drugs until he endangers himself.


A domestic worker from Vieques is abused by her companion and travels to the United States as a nanny.


A collection of short stories, some previously published, focusing on the Vietnam War and the Puerto Rican community.

Poetry


A first book, divided in four sections: “Sonnets from the Puerto Rican,” a collection of sonnets of everyday life in New York City; “Psalm for The Redeployent of Angels,” psalms and other compositions about injustice in New York City; “More Sonnets from the Puerto Rican,” poems about various city dwellers; and “Correspondence between the Stonehaulers,” in which two workers (an Egyptian and an Incan) discuss their miseries while working on grandiose projects.


A collection of seven books of poetry about the modern and postmodern urban experience of the immigrant.


The author’s fourth book of poetry. Explores topics such as the lives of tenants in Massachusetts and the experiences of a writer holding odd jobs.


Divided into two sections (“If Only History Were like Your Hands” and “To Skin the Hands of God”), the author's third collection of poetry is deeply rooted in the Puerto Rican independence movement and its literary production.


According to Zimmerman, “Hernández presents poems filled with humor, sentiment and hope. Some social protest but now also much private sometimes amusing, musing meditation by a poet recently made aware of his own mortality.”


Includes poems about the author’s life in three metropolitan centers: New York, San Francisco, and San Juan.


A collection of poems, some previously published. Engages the reader in the musicality that the author believes poetry should provide.


Focuses on the power of Hispanic tradition to survive total displacement but, recognizing that traditions change, avoids a fundamentalist stance.

Treats the promises of a new world and the disenchantment resulting from Columbus’s arrival.

Drama


Covers the production of Puerto Rican drama, beginning with The Betrothal (1958), by Roberto Rodríguez Suárez. Includes Spanish Eyes (1982), by Eduardo Iván López; Siempre en mi corazón (1986), by Oscar A. Colón; The Boiler Room (1987), by Reuben González; I Am Winner (1987), by Fred Valle; Zookeeper (1986), by Juan Shamsul Alán; Some People Have All the Luck (1990), by Cándido Tirado; Marlene (1990), by Eva López; Rising Sun, Falling Star (1991), by Yolanda Rodríguez; Julia (1992), by Carmen Rivera; and Mariol (1992), by José Rivera, which was produced in 1992 at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in Louisville.


Plays by contemporary Puerto Rican authors that have been produced. Includes Bodega, by Federico Fraguada; Family Scenes, by Ivette M. Ramírez; Midnight Blues, by Juan Shamsul Alam; Ariano, by Richard V. Irizarry; and First Class, by Candido Tirado.


These seven plays, already produced by Pietri, constitute much of his dramatic production in the last twenty years. Includes Jesus Is Leaving (1973), Illusions of a Revolving Door (1973), The Livingroom (1975), I Dare You to Resist Me (1977), Act One and Only (1979), A Play for the Page and Not the Stage (produced in 1979, published in 1980), and Sell the Bell or Go Straight to Hell (1981).

Autobiographies, Memoirs, and Biographies


Reveals the evolution of the Puerto Rican community in New York.


A memoir of growing up in East Harlem. Attests to the power of writing and painting as creative alternatives to typical pursuits in the ghetto.


A collection of short stories, essays, and poems. Addresses issues related to being Puerto Rican in the North-east through the author’s and her neighbors’ everyday experience.


A memoir, including poems and prose vignettes, of the author’s childhood in Puerto Rico and Paterson, New Jersey, as the daughter of a navy serviceman.


The autobiography of a young girl living in Macún who emigrates to San Juan and later to Brooklyn and who becomes the first university graduate in her family.

Criticism


———. “Literatura puertorriqueña en los Estados Unidos o cómo, con un poco de voluntad hasta Shakespeare puede llegar a ser boricua.” Brújula/Compass:


Costa, Marithelma. “¿Y qué dicen los escritores neorriqueños sobre el idioma, la literatura y la identidad nacional?” La revista del Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe 9 (1989): 69–73.


Costa, Marithelma. “¿Y qué dicen los escritores neorriqueños sobre el idioma, la literatura y la identidad nacional?” La revista del Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe 9 (1989): 69–73.


Essays from a 1986 symposium on Spanish and Portuguese bilingualism at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Includes articles about Chicanas, Puertorriqueñas, and Cubanas.


Bibliographies


Notes

This bibliography was made possible through the contributions of José Torres, Lola Aponte, Vanessa Vilches, Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Ada Fuentes-Rivera, Charmaine Wellington, and George Noble. To all of them, my deepest appreciation.

The Puerto Rican bibliography is one of a series on multicultural literatures initiated by the MLA Committee on the Literatures and Languages of America. In addition to the bibliographies on Chicano and Chicana Literature and Puerto Rican Literature appearing in this issue, bibliographies on African American, Asian American, and Native American literature are scheduled to appear in the coming year. This series updates an earlier series appearing in the ADE Bulletin 1983–88.