

Show and Tell The Difference: Women Narrators in Contemporary Puerto Rico

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on a presentation given in conjunction with Puerto Rican Culture Week at Michigan State University on November 17, 1994. The author has tried to put together a stimulating, clear (and brief, fear not) picture of her culture, Puerto Rican women, and most of all Puerto Rico's excellent narrative artists, many of whom, by the way, are men, although she mentioned only a few of them. The author presents a brief essay of women writers in Puerto Rico starting with the work of Maria Bibiana Benítez who, in 1832, felt good enough about her writing she sent one of her poems, in honor of an official event, to the local press, becoming the first native-born Puerto Rican woman or man to receive an official accolade. Her niece Alejandrina, in turn, managed to get one of her stories included in the island's first printed collection of literary works by local writers, the "Aguinaldo Puertorriqueño," published in 1843. The paper also includes three short stories to give a taste of what the reader might find as s/he enters these texts as interactive readers. The first one is by Rosario Ferré, "The Youngest Doll," written more than twenty years ago. The second, published by Magali Garcia Ramis in 1976, is "A Week of Seven Days." Ana Lydia Vega's short story, "Letra para salsa y tres sonetos por encargo," from 1995, is the third.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Maria Sola is a Professor and Associate Professor at the University of Puerto Rico in Spanish American Literature, Puerto Rican Literature, writing and basic Spanish. She received her Doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, and her Masters degree at Radcliffe-Harvard. This paper is based on a presentation given in conjunction with Puerto Rican Culture Week at Michigan State University on November 17, 1994.