The Impact of Hispanic Culture on the U.S.

Spanish Language & Latino/a Literature

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True or False???

- Hispanic presence in the U.S. is a recent phenomenon.
- The Spanish language was spoken in what we now call the United States before English.
- There are fewer Spanish-speakers in the U.S. than in Spain.
- Florida was part of Spain until 1821.
- Mexico lost half of its territory (over 500,000 acres) to the U.S. following the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848.
- There are about 10 million students of Spanish in the world.
Hispanic presence in the U.S. is a recent phenomenon. 
False—Hispanics have been living on this continent since the 16th century. Spanish explorers traveled across North America.

The Spanish language was spoken in what we now call the United States before English. 
True

There are fewer Spanish-speakers in the U.S. than in Spain. 
False

Florida was part of Spain until 1821. 
True

Mexico lost half of its territory (over 500,000 acres) to the U.S. following the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848
True.

There are about 10 million students of Spanish in the world. 
False. There are 14 million students studying Spanish in the world.
In its 2013 study on Spanish in the world, the Cervantes Institute determined the following:

- There are about 450 million native speakers of Spanish in the world.
- By 2030, native speakers of Spanish will make up 7.5% of the world’s population.
- Spanish is the 4th largest spoken native language in the world; it’s the 2nd language for international communication.
- In 2013, 16.6% of US population Hispanic, about 52 million people.
- By 2050, one of the three persons will be of Hispanic origin in the US.
- The study also looks at what the growth of Spanish means for the world’s economy.
- In a 2012 study, the agency Callis asked individuals in the US about their thoughts on the influence of Hispanics on American culture—74% of Hispanic and 78% of non-Hispanic respondents believe Hispanics have and are continuing to influence American culture.
- The top three areas of influence are—food, music, sports.
Hispanic/Latino Literature in the U.S.

- This influence is seen in the arts, as well, including in American literature
- Earliest Hispanic writers can be traced to the 16th century, through the 19th century to our 20th - 21st centuries
Early Writings

- Latino/a Literature has been an integral part of American Literary Culture.
- The earliest examples of Latino/a or Hispanic literature can be traced to the colonial period with the diaries of Juan Ponce de León in 1513 and the publication of *La relación* by Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca in 1546.
- In the 1700s, we can find Jewish Sephardic (Spanish-speaking) communities in the Northeast (13 colonies) and later Spanish-speaking communities publishing political and creative works in Spanish.
The 19th century

- Spanish newspapers were already being published in the early 1800s
- 1808 *El Misisipi*; 1809 *El Mensagero; El Luisianés* in New Orleans
- 1813 *La Gaceta de Texas* in Nacogdoches
- 1817 *El Telégrafo*, Florida
- 1824 *El Habanero* (Philadelphia)
- Approximately 2500 newspapers published in Spanish between 1808-1960
We can trace literary fiction, poetry & drama written in Spanish since the 19th century.

In their works, these writers, from various backgrounds, have centered on a wide range of issues including: civil rights, identity, rites of passage, immigration, race, gender, biculturalism/multiculturism, exile, language acquisition, code-switching, and Spanglish.

Here I’m going to share a few writers whose works look at being a Latino/a /Hispanic in the U.S.
Los chicanos

- The Mexican-American / Chicano Civil Rights Movement (1960s & 1970s) was pivotal in the creation of a Chicano/Latino literary canon.
- One of the most famous works is the poem *Yo soy Joaquin/I am Joaquin*, by Rodolfo ‘Corky’ Gonzales (1928-2005).
- This work expresses the duality of the Chicano, their loss of identity and their struggle to retain their history and combat racism and discrimination.
‘I am Joaquín’
by Rodolfo ‘Corky’ Gonzales

Yo soy Joaquín
perdido en un mundo de confusión:
I am Joaquín, lost in a world of confusion,
caught up in the world of a gringo society,
confused by the rules, scorned by attitudes,
suppressed by manipulation, and destroyed by modern society.

My fathers have lost the economic battle
and won the struggle of cultural survival.
And now! I must choose between the paradox of victory of the spirit, despite physical hunger,
or to exist in the grasp of American social neurosis,
sterilization of the soul and a full stomach.
Famous Chicano/a Writers

- Rudulfo Anaya- b. 1937, author of *Bless me, Ultima*
- Gloria Anzaldúa- 1942-2004 (poet, writer, feminist theorist)
- Ana Castillo- b.1953 (poet, novelist, activist, translator)
- Sandra Cisneros- b. 1954, poet, short writer, novelist –her most famous work is *The House on Mango Street*
- Juan Felipe Herrera- b.1948-- poet, performer, activist, poet laureate from 2015-2017)
- Tomás Rivera- b. 1935-1985—educator, novelist- his most famous work “Y la tierra no se lo tragó/And the Earth did not swallow him
- Gary Soto-b 1952– poet, novelist, children’s books author – one of his most famous poems “Oranges” (required reading in many schools)
Nuyorican Writers

- Pedro Pietri- 1944-2004, poet & playwright, founder of Nuyorican movement
- Miguel Piñero-1946-1988, poet, actor, co-founder of Nuyorican poets café
- Piri Thomas-1928-2011, writer, poet, memoirist, author of \textit{Down these mean streets}
- Sandra Maria Estevez– b.1948, poet, visual artist
- Nicolahsa Mohr-b 1953, writer and professor, author of mostly children’s books; first Hispanic woman to have literary works published by major commercial publishing house
- Esmeralda Santiago- b.1948, novelist & actress, author of \textit{When I was Puerto Rican}

* Lin Manuel Miranda (Hamilton)
Cuban-American Literature

- Dolores Prida-1953-2013, columnist & playwright, author of play Beautiful Señoritas & Other Plays
- Oscar Hihuelos-1951-2103, Pulitzer Prize winning novelist, most famous work The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love (1989)
- Margarita Engle- b. 1951– poet and author of books for children, young adults & adults; first Latino to receive Newberry Honor in 2009 for The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba’s Struggle for Freedom
- Nilo Cruz- b. 1960, pedagogue and playwright. 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Drama winner for Anna in the Tropics
- Achy Obejas- b.1956, novelist, journalist, teacher and translator; author of Memory Mambo (1996), Days of Awe (2001) among others, Pulitzer Prize winner in Journalism
- Virgil Suarez- b. 1962, novelist, poet and professor at FSU,
- Richard Blanco- b. 1968, poet, memoirist, civil engineer, public speaker; poet at Pres. Obama’s second inauguration reading “One Today”, author of Prince of Los Cocuyos
Dominican-American Writers

- Rhina P. Espaillat b. 1932, bilingual poet and translator
- Nelly Rosario b. 1972, novelist, creative writing instructor, author of Song of the Water Saints
- Angie Cruz b. 1972, poet, novelist, professor and activist, author of Soledad
For additional reading

• 2012 Conill Study Hispanic Influence on US Culture [link]

• Cervantes Institute-’ 2013 study El español es una lengua viva: [link]

• Latinx Voices in Poetry: [link]

• CDC study on Hispanics in the US: [link]


• Article in the Guardian: [link]

Links

Rhina P. Espaillat Poems:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vj84yXJPByc
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNSEoNW90rQ
- https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/rhina-p-espaillat
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vj84yXJPByc
- https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/rhina-p-espaillat

Tato Laviera
Poems: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/58197/american
- https://youtu.be/LG84QO95zMg
- https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/tato-laviera

Richard Blanco Poems:
- https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/richard-blanco
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lakNtGqVIA

Juan Felipe Herrera Poems: