As Puerto Rican politicians debate the merits of statehood before Congress and the island continues to grapple with bankruptcy, here are two books that shed light on the United States’ relationship with the commonwealth and the various visions of Puerto Rico’s future.

THE HOUSE ON THE LAGOON
By Rosario Ferré
1995; 407 pp.; Farrar, Straus & Giroux

This novel by one of Puerto Rico’s leading writers, whose father was a politician on the side of statehood, is ostensibly a family epic of the Mendizabal family, but it also portrays the dissenting political views that divide many families in Puerto Rico.

Told from the perspectives of both Isabel Mendizabal and her husband, Quintin, the book is a novel within a novel. Isabel takes on the task of memorializing the couple’s family history, but when Quintin finds her manuscript, he imbues the story with his corrections and perspective. “The House on the Lagoon” is a commentary on family, politics and how “the truth” is recorded.

PUERTO RICO
The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World
By José Trias Monge
1997; 228 pp.; Yale University Press

In this incisive look into Puerto Rico’s unresolved status, the legal scholar and former government official José Trias Monge discusses Puerto Rico’s 500-year history, focusing on its relationship with the United States. Arguing that the United States’ indecision on the issue has been detrimental to the island — poverty is rampant and political freedom is limited — he explores the different options for Puerto Rico’s future: statehood, independence, or enhanced commonwealth status.

In his analysis of the three options, he invokes examples of other Caribbean islands, including United States territories, that have achieved greater autonomy, while also looking at the American interests at stake. Monge is plain in his opinion that “decolonization” is the only way forward.

Siempre Boricua, Ivonne Figueroa
**Terminology 101**

**Rican**

The term 'Rican' is a fairly new term used in the states only. It is short for Puerto Rican. In Spanish Puerto Rican is 'puertorriqueño' and the word 'Riqueño' would be the equivalent of 'Rican.'

**Porto Rico, Borinquen, Borikén**

Much is being said on the Internet about the names of Puerto Rico. Most of it is way wrong. No, the Portuguese did not name the island Porto Rico... No, Porto Rico is not the arcaic name....

The Taínos of Puerto Rico named their island paradise, Borikén. Later the Spaniards changed that to Borinquen.

Christopher Columbus named the island San Juan Bautista and the rich port, Puerto Rico. Soon after, just before the governorship of Juan Ponce de León and purely by error, the names were switched and the island became Puerto Rico.

On January 15, 1899, the military government changed the name of Puerto Rico to Porto Rico, because in error or they could not pronounce Puerto - and just misspelled it once and it 'took'. Later on May 17, 1932, at the urging of Luis Muñoz Marín, Congress finally agreed to correct their error and use the correct spelling.

Puerto Ricans NEVER used the term Porto Rico except when forced to use it in legal documents and did so bitterly.

**Canarios**

The first wave of Canarian migration to Puerto Rico seems to be in 1695, followed by others in 1714, 1720, 1731, and 1797. The number of Canarians that immigrated to Puerto Rico in the first three centuries of Iberian rule is not known to any degree of precision. Still and all, Dr. Estela Cifré de Loubriel and other scholars of the Canarian migration to America, such as Dr. Manuel González Hernández of the University of La Laguna, Tenerife, agree that they formed the bulk of the Jíbaro or white peasant stock of the mountainous interior of the island.

Most Canarios joined the populations of the interior, the west and the southern coast of the island because of their independent personalities and wanted because they wanted to stay away from the San Juan area since San Juan was dominated by the Spanish and felt more comfortable by being away.

The Puerto Rican accent is very much similar to the Canary Island accent. Our food and ‘our ways’ are also similar. Our accent, our particular words, etc come from los Canarios. So, not only are we Spanish, most of us from the mountains or in-land Puerto Rico have Canario or Canary Island ancestry.
We can thank our Canary Island ancestry for some odd words in the Boricua vocabulary.

Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Venezuela have a very strong Canary Island influence mixed with people from Galicia and the Vasconcade provinces. The people from the Canary Islands had much to do with what we the Puerto Ricans are today.

Why do we call them guineos . . . . ?

In the States we are used to buying the same type of banana - pretty ones that are nice and yellow. In Puerto Rico and the Caribbean we have several varieties to choose from including the same yellow bananas we find in the states known “guineos or guineitos,” plus guineitos niños, manzanos, and others.

Why do we call them guineos? Canary Islanders brought the word guineos to the New World. Originally they were called plátanos de la Guinea (New Guinea) to differentiate from the larger plátanos and later just guineos or guineitos.

What’s a chavo?

The “chavo” or “ochavo” as it is originally known. It’s a small copper coin used in the island and in Spain during the Spanish domain and resembles the American penny, and that we have gracefully baptized with the same name. Our Mexican primos call their children chavos.

What about the word guagua?

Now let's talk about the guagua (bus) as it is known in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and at the birth place of this word, Las Islas Canarias. (It should not be confused with a guagua in South America, which means baby in Quechua.) The word guagua came from the Canary Islands – they call a bus a guagua and so do we. Also noted, we called a van-like vehicle a guaguita or small bus.

A few Canario recipes continue to be popular in our culture today such as garlic-mojo or mojito – brought to the New World by Canario immigrants; gofio, ropa vieja (a meat dish), bacalao and bienmesabe, among others.

Special Pronunciation of the "s." The "s" is pronounced like “h” at the end of each word or before consonant such as “Lah mohcah” instead of “Las moscas” for “the flies” – there are many more similarities. Words like sanchocho, sancocchar, tenderete, In terms of our speech we are very much Canarios.

Canary Islands, word combination más nada ‘nothing else,’ más nunca ‘never again,’ más nadie ‘no one else,’ as well as ¿qué tú quieres? ‘what do you want?’ used very frequently in Caribbean and Canary dialects, are not used in other Latin American countries.

Speaking Puerto Rican . . .

‘Buchipluma’ is someone who does not keep his word or talks a good story without following through often boastful. Does not keep promises. Not trust worthy.

Refrán . . .

Dios no se queda con nada de nadie.

Trivia

Puerto Rico is located in North America in the Caribbean Sea and belongs to a group of islands known as The Greater Antilles, and is part of the West Indies and is also found within the Bermuda Triangle.

Cachete = cheek. I thought she was going to kiss me on the lips, but she kissed my cheek. Cachete used as in ‘I got it de cachete,’ means I got it free. ¡Te estás ganando un cachete! You're asking for a slap!

http://www.elboricua.com/CCNOW_Calderos.html

BORICUA . . .

is a powerful word.
It is our history,
it is our cultural affirmation,
it is a declaration,
it is a term of endearment,
it is poetic . . .
. . . . . . it is us.
The name was derived from the Arawakan word for cassava flour, a staple of their diet. The Taíno people, or Taíno culture, has been classified by some authorities as belonging to the Arawak, as their language was considered to belong to the Arawak language family, the languages of which were present throughout the Caribbean, and much of Central and South America. Contemporary scholars have recognized that the Taíno had developed a distinct language and culture.

Taíno and Arawak appellations have been used with numerous and contradictory meanings by writers, travelers, historians, linguists, and anthropologists. Often they were used interchangeably; “Taíno” has been applied to the Greater Antillean nation only, or including the Bahaman nations, or adding the Leeward Islands nations, or all those excluding the Puerto Rican and Leeward nations. Similarly, “Island Taíno” has been used to refer to those living in the Windward Islands only, to the northern Caribbean inhabitants only, as well as to the population of the entire Caribbean.

Modern historians, linguists and anthropologists now hold that the term Taíno should refer to all the Taíno/Arawak nations except for the Caribs, who are not seen to belong to the same people. Linguists continue to debate whether the Carib language is an Arawakan dialect or creole language, or perhaps an individual language, with an Arawakan pidgin used for communication purposes. Rouse classifies as Taíno all inhabitants of the Greater Antilles (except the western tip of Cuba), the Bahaman archipelago, and the northern Lesser Antilles. He subdivides the Taíno into three main groups: Classic Taíno, mostly from Haiti, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic; Western Taíno, or sub-Taíno, for population from Jamaica, Cuba (except for the western tip) and the Bahaman archipelago; and Eastern Taíno for those from the Virgin Islands to Montserrat.

1. Hostas are hardy and are considered perennials in US zones 3 thru 9. If planting in zones 8 & 9, they will definitely need shade and a bit of extra water.

2. The color of the foliage will tell you how much sun each Hosta plant can withstand. Plants with variegated leaves that have white or light green coloring can take much more sun than plants with darker green, solid leaves. Plant in the shade if leaves are green.

3. When planting, leave enough room for the width of the mature plant…and they do get big. Some Hostas can grow to be 5 feet wide. Hostas live for years. If they get too big, they can be divided in the spring just after their green shoots pop through the soil. Just dig up the entire plant and carefully split with a shovel.

4. Hostas die down in the fall and go dormant in the winter months. This allows easy clean-up of garden beds. Just remove the dried leaves.

I’m Quita Gonzales
I’m a rescue cat from Puerto Rico. Now I live in NY with my new mom. I was a kitten, but now I’m grown.

I have other friends in PR that also need to find a home.
http://www.saveasato.org

Save A Sato is a non-profit, all volunteer organization dedicated to easing the suffering of Puerto Rico’s homeless and abused animals. “Sato” is slang for street dog. They rescue Satos from the streets and beaches, give them medical care, food and shelter, and plenty of love. When they are healthy, they are sent to shelter partners for adoption into loving homes.

August 8, 1948 U.S. grants Puerto Rico the right to elect own Governor.
August 8, 1505 Ponce de León founds Caparra, Puerto Rico.
August 8, 1898 Spanish American War ends.
August 12, 1508 Ponce de León begins colonization of Puerto Rico.

Don Guillo, the gardener . . . .
Did you know?

Conquistador and first governor of Puerto Rico, Juan Ponce de León, is buried in the San Juan Bautista Cathedral in Old San Juan.

Getting to San Juan Cathedral by car is tricky, most of the street in old San Juan are narrow and hilly one way streets. There are cars parked on one side which makes driving more challenging. The interior of the very old and historic cathedral, especially the ceiling was beautiful, it was a bit dark therefore you could not see too much in detail. Most people take the walking tour.

In 1508, Ponce de León led an expedition to Puerto Rico, where he discovered gold, and within a year, conquered the Indians living there. As a result of his gold discovery, he became one of the richest men in the New World and the King of Spain made him Governor of Puerto Rico. Later he traveled to a new land he named Florida, meaning "full of flowers" for the beautiful flowers he found growing there.

Cause of death: Shot in the stomach with a poison arrow by Indians in Florida, and traveled wounded to Cuba where he eventually died.

Strange foods

Lengua (beef tongue) – Beef tongue is eaten all over the world, including the USA. It is a cheap item and must be boiled for hours and then the outer skin must be peeled before it is ready to process. In Puerto Rico it is often served as ‘Lengua Rellena, stuffed with spices and bacon, in a wine sauce.

*Sally Rubio Canales is a guest writer with roots in Ponce. She lives in St Louis with her two daughters and spends the summers in Puerto Rico.

Lemonade Cocktail

3/4 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup water
1 ½ cups fresh lemon juice (6 lemons)
1/2 cup fresh mint leaves
1/2-2/3 cup white Puerto Rican rum
6 cups ginger ale
Additional lemon slices for garnish

In a small saucepan, combine granulated sugar and water and heat over MED heat until sugar dissolves into water and mixture is clear. Simmer 1-2 minutes, then remove from heat. Add lemon juice, mint leaves, and rum, then let mixture cool.

Pour mixture through a fine strainer into a large pitcher to remove solid particles and mint leaves. Add ginger ale and stir to combine. Add ice and lemon slices and serve cold.

* Diego Matos Dupree, born in Bayamón, is a tavernero for a popular cruise line and lives on board most of the year. He gets to travel the world for free.
Elena Cintrón Colón
Primos Editor

* Elena, born and raised in Puerto Rico to Brazilian and Peruvian parents, lives in Buenos Aires most of the year. She works for a large South American firm and travels throughout Latin America. She comes home to San Juan.

Our PRIMOS section journeys through Latin America celebrating our cousins.

This section was added in 1998 in order to become more inclusive and at the request of several public schools using our publication in the classroom.

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**Uruguay Chimichurri**

Parsley, 1 Bunch, chopped fine  
Oregano, 1/2 Cup dried  
Garlic, 10 cloves, chopped fine  
Hot Peppers, 2 seeded and chopped fine (or dried flakes)  
Vinegar, 1/5 Cup  
Olive oil, 1/2 Cup  
Salt, 1 tsp

There are two ways to do it, both give similar results. By hand or by processor (as long as you pulse and chop instead of puree).

Finely chop your parsley, add the dried oregano, then garlic and the peppers (or use dried pepper flakes). If you are making in the processor just chop everything but add the parsley last, otherwise it will be a paste.

Move everything into a mason jar and add the salt, vinegar and the oil. Rest it for at least 1 hour before using.

The objective is to have very small bits, and not a smooth paste. Refrigerate.

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Casapueblo is a building constructed by Uruguayan artist Carlos Páez Vilaró. It is located in Punta Ballena. It houses a museum, an art gallery, a cafeteria and a hotel.
Cocina Criolla – Cooking Hints
By: Anna María Vélez de Blas

Ponche de Malta

1 egg yolk

¼ cup sugar

12 oz bottle Malta

Ice cubes

Cream egg yolk and sugar using a fork until it turns a creamy light beige color, that takes more than few minutes. Slowly add Malta and continue beating and adding more Malta as you go until all the Malta is incorporated. Serve over ice cubes. Serve immediately.

This is how my abuela and mom made it.

Today I’ve prepared this easier just using condensed milk mixed with the Malta, very simple.

It is always a treat no matter the recipe.

*Anna, born in Bayamón and raised in Aibonito, is a Recipe Tester for EL BORICUA, a staff writer, and is also a professional Chef. She lives in California with her husband, Joe and their three children.

Jaime in the Kitchen
A Food Blog

Along the way I discovered I could turn leftovers into something delicious . . .

Stuffed Avocado

Honestly, this is popular now, but I used to serve my kids rice and beans and a chunk of sliced meat when they were little kids, just like in this photo. I called them Avocado boats. Soon they outgrew these wanting more, or seconds and thirds, and that was the end of these cute little boats I often served for lunch.

As the girls grew into women they wanted a more sophisticated Avocado Boats, so I stuffed the avocado with tuna or chicken salad for the girls, however, my son, RJ would have none of it. He wanted 2 avocados, that means 4 boats with rice and beans and meat. And I did not mind preparing two different kinds of avocado boats, anything for my children, plus I preferred the rice and beans with meat boat myself.

Those were fun times for me. I remember them fondly and have tried to recreate some of my ‘fun’ dishes for my grandchildren. But they actually come over for the swimming pool, not for the treats, but I think they do enjoy the treats but more so the pool. What’s a dotting grandfather to do?

*Jaime Garibay Rivera, Ph.D. is a retired college professor (Aerophysics), now living in Miami. He has three children and his family roots are in Mayagüez.
Nuestra Cocina Criolla

Bolones
stuffed mofongo balls

Green plantains are fried over medium heat until very tender, then mashed into dough, stuffed with cheese or pork, and then fried again until crispy. Bolon is a slang term that means large ball.

4 green plantains, peeled and cut in medium sized chunks
4-5 tbs vegetable oil (to fry plantains)
2 tbs vegetable oil
1 tbs hot pepper or chili powder
1 tsp cumin
garlic powder
1 cup grated cheese and/or 1 cup cooked chorizo or seasoned cooked pork or beef
Salt to taste

Cook plantains chunks over medium heat in large sauté pan for about 40 minutes or until they are very soft, turn them about every 10 minutes, they should be slightly golden but not too crispy. Sprinkle the cooked plantains with the chili powder, cumin, plenty of garlic powder and salt. Transfer the plantain pieces to a bowl and mash using a potato masher – until it has a chunky dough like consistency.

Form balls to a size half between a tennis and golf ball. Press a hole in the middle of each ball and stuff it with filling, gently press the filling into the hole, cover the filling and reshape it back into a ball shape.

Heat oil over high heat, add the bolones and fry them until they are golden and crispy. Transfer to plate lined with paper towels to drain the grease and serve immediately.

Criollo Stuffed Zucchini Boats

2 zucchini
10 oz ground beef
1 onion small, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced/mashed
1 cup tomato sauce
1 peeled and diced tomato
2 tbsp olive oil
½ cup sofrito
salt
black pepper
half envelope Sazón Goya
1 egg
Shredded cheese
Adobo

Preheat oven to 350º
Chopped and dice before you start.

Heat one tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet and cook the sofrito a couple of minutes. Add chopped onion and simmer it in the over medium heat, stirring continuously. Add the chopped garlic and cook another minute or so. Add the ground beef, then season it with salt, pepper and Sazón and cook another few minutes breaking up any meat chunks as you go. Add tomato and the tomato sauce, mix it well with the meat and cook it covered on medium heat for 25 minutes.

Grease a baking dish with cooking spray. Cut the edges of the zucchini, then half them lengthwise. Scoop out the seeds and some of the center of zucchini using a small spoon. Season the boats with salt and pepper and Adobo.

Stuff the zucchini boats evenly with the meat mixture, place them into the prepared pan. Cover the pan and toss it into the oven. Bake the stuffed boats for 20 minutes until the zucchini is soft. Remove from the oven, uncover, beat an egg and carefully bush over the meat, sprinkle with shredded cheese and back in the oven to broil until cheese is melted and egg is cooked. This should take less than 5 minutes, keep your eye on it.
**Nuestra Cocina Criolla**

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**Criollo Salad Dressing**  
*A family recipe*

- ¼ medium onion, finely minced
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- 1 tsp coconut sugar, (or plain sugar)
- 1/4 tsp dried dill
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp white vinegar
- sea salt & pepper to taste
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper

Shake all ingredients together in a small mason jar.

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**Mami’s Candied Walnuts**

- 1 cup walnut halves
- ¼ cup white granulated sugar
- 1 Tbsp butter

Cook all ingredients together in a medium skillet over medium heat for about 5 minutes stirring now and then. As soon as the sugar starts to melt mix it well to coat the walnuts. Pour over wax paper and separate nuts so they are not clumped together. Let them cool.

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**Key Lime Pie**

This is a pie I grew up eating since we had a Key Lime tree in our back yard in Puerto Rico. It is delicious and refreshing and right up our Caribbean alley. It is a very simple recipe.

- 1 9” graham cracker crumb pie shell, ready made
- 4 large egg yolks
- 1 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 8 Key limes, will need ¼ cup lime juice
- 2 teaspoons lime zest

Pre heat oven to 350-degrees. With electric mixer beat the egg yolks until they are thick and turn to a light yellow (it takes a while, just keep beating). Slowly add sweetened condensed milk while mixing on a low speed. Zest 1 lime, then juice it. Pour the fresh lime juice into a 1/2 cup measuring cup then fill the cup with the Key Lime juice to make a full 1/2 cup of juice. Gradually add the lime juice and zest and continue to mix on a low speed just until blended.

Pour the mixture into the prepared pie shell and bake 15 minutes. Remove and let cool and refrigerate. Serve with a garnish of whipped topping and a small slice of lime if desired.
The Storyteller and the Beauty Queen

Ms. Sasha Stroman grew up watching *telenovelas* in her native San Juan, Puerto Rico. As the present day journalist and filmmaker grew older, she began to attend American schools where everything was in English and that included television. She became interested in the movie world outside of San Juan.

She might have been like everyone else except for the fact that her mother was a celebrated beauty queen. Sasha Stroman is the daughter of the first lady of the crown, Marisol Maralet! Her mother made history when she was crowned the first Puerto Rican Miss Universe of 1970.

Her daughter is making her own way involved in many areas of the arts. She studied in New York City as well as Los Angeles and Paris. It is written that the journalist has shared, her many unique experiences have shaped her storytelling techniques. She did everything from working at the Gap to interviewing Catherine Zeta-Jones.

Stroman holds degrees from Columbia University and USC’s School of Cinematic Arts. She was also selected for the Nickelodeon Writing Program and completed it successfully. Her credits include writing for the animated *Sanjay and Craig*, Hulu’s *East Los High* and *I Didn’t Do it* sponsored by Disney.

Her mother is living a quieter life since she last appeared at the 2011 Puerto Rican Parade in New York City. She has however contemplated writing a book on smoking cessation since her own success at quitting. She has also participated in motivational speaking engagements involving young women according to sources. She is still a most proud *Boricua*. While it has been a long time since she head-lined as *La Mas Bella* on the front page of *El Nuevo Dia*, she is still being revered. She was recently honored with a star at San Juan’s *El Paseo de la Fama* on March 16, 2017.

Hats off to two great ladies representing two generations of Puerto Rican women in such a positive light.

*Betty is a literacy teacher in Harlem and writes children’s books. She is publishing her first, “La Despeinada” in late spring. Betty lives with her two children Natasha and Xavier in Brooklyn, New York.*

Lo Nuestro . . .

*El Velorio, 1893*

*Francisco Oller y Cestero*

This work presents a Puerto Rican ‘baquiné’ or the wake of a child, where you see people gather to celebrate the life and death of a young soul and to express grief or sorrow. This scene takes place inland or out in the mountains, way so long ago.

A *velorio or in this case a baquiné* is a social gathering associated with death, held before a *funeral*. Traditionally, the velorio takes place in the house of the deceased with the body present.

“*El Velorio*” is listed in impressionistic and realistic style. Oller’s “*El Velorio*” is considered an example of mastery in the art of combining colors. You can see parents suffering the loss. The mother, who wears has a turban is comforted by the thought that her baby is now an angel and went straight to heaven. We see a group of family, neighbors and friends who come to join the family in the mourning of the child’s death. The velorio includes, food and drink, music and even singing, lots of prayers and remembrances, the children play.

A wake, or velorio, and in this case a baquiné is a dying tradition now that funerals and services are not held at home but in a funeral home.

Everything depends on the accent.