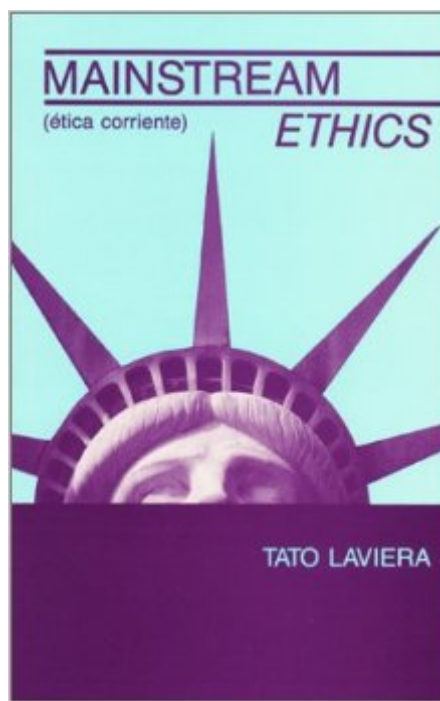


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# Mainstream Ethics



## Synopsis

Laviera affirms that Hispanic language, lore, art, and history are transforming the national culture and identity of this country. It is not the role of Hispanics to follow the dictates of a shadowy norm, but to remain faithful to their collective and individual identities . . . to either lay claim to mainstream territory or disprove its very existence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In "Mainstream Ethics (etica corriente)," Tato Laviera has created a brilliant poetic exploration of the Nuyorican (that is, "New York Puerto Rican") experience. This is a bilingual work; the majority of the poems are written in English, and several are written either in Spanish or in a mixture of the two languages. Himself a Puerto Rican who has lived in New York City, Laviera has effectively captured the spirit of a multilingual culture. Laviera deals with many themes and subjects: poverty, United States iconography, history, the work of the poet, multilingualism, and the complexities of ethnic identity. In his writing one can find both pain and joy, all expressed in a powerful vernacular language. As a whole, "Mainstream Ethics" can be read as a unified piece of art, but each individual poem in the collection also shines. Laviera starts out with "lady liberty," in which the Statue of Liberty herself reflects upon both the problems and the potential of the United States. I read this poem as a wonderful companion piece to Emma Lazarus' beloved poem "The New Colossus." Other standouts include "latero story," told by a welfare recipient, and "melao," about a Puerto Rican-born New Yorker whose son speaks "black american soul english talk." Alternatingly angry, affectionate,

satirical, and hopeful, Lavieria writes words that are deeply rooted in urban reality, but always reaching towards transcendent truths.

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