

VOLUME 1

Latin American Literature  
and Its Times



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Profiles of Notable Literary Works and the  
Historical Events That Influenced Them

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## General Preface



The world at the turn of the twenty-first century is a shrinking sphere. Innovative modes of transmission make communication from one continent to another almost instantaneous, encouraging the development of an increasingly global society, heightening the urgency of the need for mutual understanding. At the foundation of *World Literature and Its Times* is the belief that within a people's literature are keys to their perspectives, their emotions, and the formative events that have brought them to the present point.

As manifested in their literary works, societies experience phenomena that are in some instances universal and in other instances tied to time and place. T. S. Eliot's poem *The Wasteland*, for example, is set in Europe in the early 1920s, when the region was rife with the disenchantment of the post-World War I era. Coincidentally, Juan Rulfo's novel *Pedro Páramo*, set in Latin America over a spread of decades that includes the 1920s, features a protagonist whose last name means "bleak plain" or "wasteland." The two literary works, though written oceans apart, conjure a remarkably similar atmosphere. Likewise, Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis's *Dom Casmurro* has sometimes been called Brazil's *Othello*, since both the novel and Shakespeare's play feature men driven by an overpowering jealousy. In this case, the two works are set three centuries apart, suggesting that time as well as place is of little consequence. A close look at the two men, however—and the two wastelands referred to

above—exposes illuminating differences, which are in fact tied to the particular times and places in which the respective works are set.

*World Literature and Its Times* regards both fiction and nonfiction as rich mediums for understanding the differences, as well as the similarities, among people and societies. In its view, full understanding of a literary work demands attention to events and attitudes of the period in which a work takes place and of the one in which it is written. The series therefore examines a wide range of novels, short stories, biographies, speeches, poems, and plays by contextualizing a work in these two periods. Each volume covers some fifty literary works that span a mix of centuries and genres. The literary work itself takes center stage, with its contents determining which issues—social, political, psychological, economic, or cultural—are covered in a given entry. Every entry discusses the relevant issues apart from the literary work, making connections to it when merited, and allowing for comparisons between the literary and the historical realities. Close attention is given as well to the literary work itself, in the interest of extracting historical understandings from it.

Of course, the function of literature is not necessarily to represent history accurately. Nevertheless the images and ideas promoted by a powerful literary work—be it Miguel de Cervantes's *The Adventures of Don Quixote* (Spain), Nadine Gordimer's *Burgher's Daughter* (South Africa), or Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (India)—

leave impressions that are commonly taken to be historical. In taking literature as fact, one risks acquiring a mistaken notion of history. The gaucho of Argentina is a case in point, having inspired a collection of poetry by non-gauchos whose verse conveys a highly romantic image of these cowboylike nomads, albeit one that includes some realistic details (see *The Gaucho Martín Fierro* in *Latin American Literature and Its Times*). To adjust for such discrepancies, this series distinguishes between historical fact and its literary reworkings.

On the other hand, literary works can broaden our understanding of history. They are able to convey more than the cut-and-dried record, by portraying events in a way that captures the fears and challenges of a period or by drawing attention to groups of people who are generally left out of standard histories. This is well illustrated with writings that concern the position of women in different societies—for example, Flora Nwapa's novel *Efuru* (Nigeria) or Mary Wollstonecraft's essay *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (England). Literature, as illustrated by these works, engages in a vigorous dialogue with other forms of communication. It often defies stereotypes by featuring characters or ideas that are contrary to preconceptions. In fact, many of the literary works covered in this series feature characters and ideas that attack or upset deeply ingrained stereotypes, from Friar Bartolomé de las Casas's *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (mid-1500s Latin America) to Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala* (mid-1900s Cameroon Republic).

Even nonfiction must be anchored in its place and times to derive its full value. Octavio Paz's essay *The Labyrinth of Solitude* explains the character of contemporary Mexicans as a product of historical experience; the entry on the essay amplifies this experience. A second entry, on Albert Memmi's *Pillar of Salt*, uses the less direct genre of biography to describe the life of a Tunisian Jew during the Nazi occupation of North Africa. A third entry, on Frantz Fanon's essays in *The Wretched of the Earth*, about the merits of violence, considers his views as an outgrowth of the ravages in colonial Algeria.

The task of reconstructing the historical context of a literary work can be problematic. An author may present events out of chronological order, as Carlos Fuentes does in *The Death of Artemio Cruz* (Mexico), or may create works that feature legendary heroes who defy attempts to fit them neatly into an exact time slot (such as the warrior Beowulf of Denmark, glorified in Eng-

land's epic poetry; or the emperor Sunjata of Mali in Western Sudan). In the first case, *World Literature and Its Times* unscrambles the plot, providing a linear rendering of events and associated historical information. In the second, the series profiles customs particular to the culture in which the epic is set, arming the reader with details that inform the hero's adventures. The approach sheds light on the relationship between fact and fiction, both of which are shown to provide insight into a people and their epics. As always, the series takes this approach with a warm appreciation for the beauty of the literary work independent of historical facts, but also in the belief that ultimate regard is shown for the work by placing it in the context of pertinent events.

Beyond this underlying belief, the series is founded on the notion that a command of world literature bolsters knowledge of the writings produced by one's own society. Long before the present century, fiction and nonfiction writers from different locations influenced one another through trends and strategies in their literatures. In our postcolonial age, such cross-fertilization has quickened. Latin American literature, having been influenced by French and Spanish trends, among others, itself influences Chinese writers of today. Likewise, Africa's literary tradition has affected and been affected by France's, and the same relationship holds true for the writings of India and Great Britain. The degree of such literary intermixture promises only to multiply given our increasingly global society. In the process, world literature and its landmark texts gain even greater significance, attaining the potential to promote understanding not only of others, but also of ourselves.

## The Selection of Literary Works

The works chosen for *Latin American Literature and Its Times* have been carefully selected by professors in the field at the universities detailed in the Acknowledgments. Keeping the literature-history connection in mind, the team made its selections based on a combination of factors: how frequently a literary work is studied, how closely it is tied to pivotal events in the past or present, and how strong and enduring its appeal has been to readers in and out of the society that produced it. Attention has been paid to contemporary as well as to classic works that have met with critical and/or popular acclaim. There has also been a careful effort to include a balance from both Spanish-speaking Latin America and Brazil, to



represent female as well as male authors, and to include a mix of genres. Selections were limited to those literary works currently available in English; fortuitously much of the finest literature from the region has been translated, though a great many works still await such a transformation. Recognizing that political borders belie cultural boundaries, the series includes in its purview a number of entries on Latino works produced in the United States. In selecting which Latino works to include, the team invoked additional considerations—representation of literature by Caribbean expatriates as well as by Mexican Americans, of nonfiction as well as fiction, and of works created in various regions of the nation.

### ***Format and Arrangement of Entries***

The volumes in *World Literature and Its Times* are arranged geographically. Within each volume, entries are arranged alphabetically by title of the literary work. The time at which the work is set appears at the beginning of an entry.

Each entry is organized as follows:

**1. Introduction**—identifying information in three parts:

The literary work—specifies the genre, the place and time period in which the work is set, the year it was first published, and, if applicable, the year in which it was first translated; also provided, for translations, is the title of the literary work in its original language.

Synopsis—summarizes the storyline or contents of the work.

Introductory paragraph—introduces the literary work in relation to the author's life.

**2. Events in History at the Time the Literary Work Takes Place**—describes social and political events that relate to the plot or contents of the literary work. The section may discuss background information as well as relevant events during the period in which the work is set. Subsections vary depending on the literary work. Taking a deductive approach, the section starts with events in history and telescopes inward to events in the literary work.

**3. The Literary Work in Focus**—summarizes in detail the plot or contents of the work, describes how it illuminates history,

and identifies sources used by the author. After the summary of the work comes a subsection focusing on an aspect of the literature that illuminates our understanding of events or attitudes of the period. This subsection takes an inductive approach, starting with the literary work, and broadening outward to events in history. It is followed by a third subsection specifying sources that inspired elements of the work and discussing its literary context, or relation to other works.

**4. Events in History at the Time the Literary Work Was Written**—describes social, political, and/or literary events in the author's lifetime that relate to the plot or contents of a work. Also discussed in this section are the reviews or reception accorded the literary work.

**5. For More Information**—provides a list of all sources that have been cited in the entry as well as sources for further reading about the different issues or personalities featured in the entry.

If the literary work is set and written in the same time period, sections 2 and 4 of the entry on that work ("Events in History at the Time the Literary Work Takes Place" and "Events in History at the Time the Literary Work Was Written") are combined into the single section "Events in History at the Time of the Literary Work."

### ***Additional Features***

Whenever possible, primary source material is provided through quotations in the text and material in sidebars. There are also sidebars with historical details that amplify issues raised in the text, and with anecdotes that provide a fuller understanding of the temporal context. Timelines appear in various entries to summarize intricate periods of history. Finally, historically relevant illustrations enrich and further clarify information in the entries.

### ***Comments and Suggestions***

Your comments on this series and suggestions for future editions are welcome. Please write: Editors, *World Literature and Its Times*, The Gale Group, 27500 Drake Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48331-3535.

# Acknowledgments



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# Introduction to Latin American Literature and Its Times



Latin American literature attracted unprecedented global attention in the 1960s, a volatile period in the region, one in which many of its residents were upset or challenged by the success of revolution in Cuba. Debate raged furiously across national borders, calling into question relationships long regarded as inviolable, with writers factoring themselves into the political and social dialogue through the literary works they produced. Of course, authors had already engaged in such dialogue for decades. For them, as for many Latin Americans, literature has long been as legitimate a medium as any to explore the most compelling political, social, and spiritual concerns of the past and the present.

In keeping with this conviction, *Latin American Literature and Its Times* arises out of the notion that a grasp of historical events is fundamental to understanding Latin America's literary works. Such knowledge is, in some cases, necessary to decipher the meaning of the works; in others, it enhances or illuminates one's reading of them. By the same token, the literary works can elucidate history when one has a grounding in its particulars. Latin America has vibrant traditions in poetry, the short story, the novel, non-fiction (essays, biographies, and epistles), drama, and a hybrid genre, the testimonial, all of which relate to history. There are even narratives (Brazil's *Rebellion in the Backlands* by Euclides da Cunha and Argentina's *Facundo* by Domingo F. Sarmiento) that defy classification, yet share with other works a relation to events in the region.

There have been several transfiguring events in Latin America, which vary in their particulars depending on location. Among these events are conquest by European powers; the colonial experience; environmental encounters with the jungle, grasslands, plains, and in Brazil the drought-ridden sertão; a mystical/spiritual dimension that affects everyday life; the incessant struggle for political control and economic survival; and ethnic clashes among European immigrants, indigenous Americans, Africans, and mixed-race offspring.

Details about these transformative experiences surface in the literary works covered in this volume. Out of the Conquest, for example, comes the philosophical question of civilization versus barbarism, which rears its confounding head in Domingo F. Sarmiento's essay *Facundo* (set in Argentina), Rómulo Gallegos's novel *Doña Barbara* (Venezuela), and Pablo Neruda's poem *The Heights of Macchu Picchu* (Peru). From the mystical/spiritual dimension incorporated into various novels comes the perception that boundaries are blurred; there are no clear distinctions between life and death, or humans and the rest of the animate and inanimate world. Illustrating this perception is Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (Mexico), which features souls of the dead lingering on earth. A postman is transformed into a coyote in Miguel Ángel Asturias's *Men of Maize* (Guatemala) and a woman into a statue in Elena Garro's *Recollections of Things to Come* (Mexico). Another factor that finds its way into such nov-

els is the unrestrained power of the local strongman (the *cacique* in Mexico, the *coronel* in Brazil, the *caudillo* in Argentina and elsewhere), a figure who emerges out of genuine struggles for political control in the 1800s and early 1900s. Other common factors manifest themselves in the region's literary works too:

- **Dictatorship experience**—*Santa Evita* (set in Argentina); *I the Supreme* (Paraguay); *In the Time of the Butterflies* (Dominican Republic); *The Celebration* (Brazil)

- **Revolution at the national and local levels**—*Rebellion in the Backlands* (Brazil); *Like Water for Chocolate* (Mexico); *A House in the Country* (Chile)

- **Geography and its effect on humanity**—*The Decapitated Chicken and Other Stories* (Argentina); *Barren Lives* (Brazil); *. . . and the earth did not part* (southwestern United States)

- **Ethnic and social disparity**—Indians and ladinos in *I, Rigoberta Menchú* (Guatemala); Afro-Caribbeans and Europeans in *The Kingdom of This World* (Cuba); Jews and Catholics in *The Fragmented Life of Don Jacobo Lerner* (Peru); haves and have-nots in *The Hour of the Star* (Brazil)

- **Mythical foundations**—*Men of Maize* (Guatemala); *The Gaucho Martín Fierro* (Argentina); *Iracema, the Honey-Lips* (Brazil)

- **Impact of popular culture**—Cinema in *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (Argentina); music in *Macho Camacho's Beat* (Puerto Rico); folklore in *Macunaíma* (Brazil)

- **Search for individual or national identity**—*The Labyrinth of Solitude* (in Mexico); *Days of Obligation* (by Mexican Americans); *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* (in Brazil)

Beyond such related concerns, Latin American literature shows a longstanding streak of rebelliousness that surfaces in works written at home and abroad. As early as 1542 Friar Bartolomé de las Casas wrote the polemical *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, directed at the colonizing Spaniards in defense of Latin America's indigenous peoples. In 1691 Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, playwright, poet, and essayist who challenged the sexist assumptions of her times, penned a tract in defense of a woman's right to learn, producing the first feminist writing in the Western Hemisphere. Two centuries later, from New York, expatriate poet and essayist José Martí wrote tirelessly to embed an independence of thought in Cubans, in the process arguing for a distinct Latin American literature whose foundations he helped lay. Martí also contributed to the origin of a subset of Latin Amer-

ican literature, the writings of expatriates and their descendants from the Caribbean and from Central and South America in the United States. In the twentieth century, the Latino writers who followed Martí aimed likewise to influence popular thought through their works. Tomás Rivera, for example, upset stereotypes of Mexicans in the United States by portraying migrant laborers as ambitious, hard-working, humane, and intelligent (*. . . and the earth did not part*). On both sides of the border, in the tradition of Sor Juana, writers crafted tales that portrayed the defiant rather than the compliant female, as demonstrated by Sandra Cisneros's *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (the U.S. Southwest) and by Rosario Ferré's "The Youngest Doll" (Puerto Rico).

Literary works written from the end of the nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century would go far in developing the distinct Latin American literature that Martí foresaw. Innovation in language and narrative style have been key building blocks in the process. Incorporated into groundbreaking stories is the vernacular used by the people portrayed. Unfortunately the dexterity of an author in infusing a text with nuanced localisms—the Spanish spoken by Mexican peasants or the Portuguese characteristic of various regions of Brazil—is often lost in translation. Authors have nonetheless taken major strides by writing such localisms into the original editions of their works (see Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma*). Other authors, such as Guillermo Cabrera Infante in *Three Trapped Tigers* (Cuba) and João Guimarães Rosa in *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* (Brazil), have experimented daringly with language, coining words of their own invention to inspire new levels of understanding. There has also been tremendous originality in narrative style. Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*, for example, uses not one straightforward narrator but a series of narrative voices, who tell the tale in the first-person and the third-person, and in discontinuous fragments of time.

Given its focus on the connections between literary works and historical events, *Latin American Literature and Its Times* does not cover some well-known Latin American works. It does not, for example, feature poetry by the Nicaraguan master Rubén Darío, whose formal achievements can hardly be accounted for in translation; there is, however, discussion of Darío's impact on other literary works when relevant. Moreover, the volume does include works that are representative of various literary movements in Latin America—for example, the naturalist novel with

its scientific bent (*A Brazilian Tenement*), the regionalist novel that features one or another of the major landscapes of the area (*Doña Barbara*), and the so-called “Boom” novel of the 1960s, when Latin American literature became a worldwide rage. There are two writers whose works defy this sort of categorization—Brazil’s Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839–1908) and Argentina’s Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986). Machado (see *Dom Casmurro*) took the Latin American novel to new heights, writing tales that can be read on different levels with a skill that many have described as still unsurpassed. Borges excelled in briefer genres (see the short story “The South”), becoming a model for other writers, his works fusing the past with the present, the local with the universal, fantasy with reality, and fiction with nonfiction.

In the 1960s a number of Spanish-speaking writers would fuse fiction with nonfiction to create a new genre, the testimonial novel, of which Elena Poniatowska’s *Massacre in Mexico* is a prime example. The ’60s in general featured technical virtuosity from novelists such as Carlos Fuentes, who told a tale out of chronological time and through an amalgam of points of view in *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, and Gabriel García Márquez, who encapsulated a century in a few hundred pages in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and brought to the fore the mix of registers (human, historical, magical, allegorical) that figures into everyday life in Spanish-speaking Latin America.

Muzzled to a large extent by a military dictatorship in the 1960s, Brazilian letters flowed more freely in the ’70s, a decade in which Latin American literature on the whole began to show

a renewed concern for the politics of the moment. Two of the decade’s novels—José Donoso’s *A House in the Country* and Isabel Allende’s *The House of the Spirits*—alluded to the coup in Chile against the Western World’s first democratically elected socialist president, Salvador Allende. Other novels began for the first time to infuse popular culture into their storylines, which gave greater voice to the masses, acknowledging the importance, for example, of popular music in Puerto Rico (Luis Rafael Sánchez’s *Macho Camacho’s Beat*), and film in Argentina (Manuel Puig’s *Kiss of the Spider Woman*).

As the century neared its close, Latin American literature would continue to serve as an instrument through which to communicate about current events. At the same time, these latest literary works would show a loyalty to a long-standing perception of them as separate entities, apart from the events they happen to portray. This perception of literature as more than a reflection of events is evident in classic stories with unreliable narrators (by Machado or Borges) and in recent novels with self-conscious or multiple narrators. Ivan Ângelo’s *The Celebration*, in part about a violent incident near a Brazilian train station, inserts into its narrative “Author’s Notes,” which turn the novelist into a character. Similarly, Mario Vargas Llosa’s *The Storyteller*, which focuses on an indigenous people of the Peruvian jungle, includes multiple narrators, who become a conspicuous part of the action. These strategies, like others in earlier works, call into question standard ways of viewing events, infusing Latin American literature with no easy answers but with an exhilarating, exploratory edge that expands the reader’s comprehension and consciousness.

# Chronology of Relevant Events

## Latin American Literature and Its Times



### FROM CONQUEST TO COLONIZATION

Latin American civilizations evolved over thousands of years, experiencing conquest and domination before the arrival of the Europeans. Beginning in 1492 with Christopher Columbus's first voyage to the Caribbean, Europeans insinuated themselves into the region, lured largely by the promise of economic rewards. Within roughly 100 years the Spaniards and Portuguese had destroyed every important New World civilization and had established a colonial infrastructure. To a large extent, they succeeded in imposing Christianity on the region.

	Historical Events	Related Literary Works
1500 B.C.	1500 B.C. Olmec civilization, the mother culture of Mesoamerica, develops on Mexico's Gulf Coast	
500 C.E.	500 C.E. Rise of the Mayans in the Yucatán peninsula, southern Mexico, and Guatemala  600–900 Height of the Mayan Empire  972 Toltecs from central Mexico begin to dominate Mayan civilization	
1000		
1300	1324 Aztecs build capital city of Tenochtitlan on site of present-day Mexico City	
1400	1400s Inca civilization rises in modern-day Peru  1492 Sponsored by Spain, Christopher Columbus lands on Bahama island of San Salvador, on Cuba, and on Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic)  1493 Pope Alexander VI signs the papal bull <i>Inter caetera</i> , which decrees that Spain can colonize the New World, as long as it conquers in the name of Jesus Christ; on his second voyage, Columbus claims Puerto Rico (originally called Borikén) for Spain	<i>The Heights of Macchu Picchu</i> by Pablo Neruda

## Historical Events

## Related Literary Works

### 1500

1494 Treaty of Tordesillas splits the newly discovered world between Portugal and Spain

1500 Pedro Álvares Cabral lands in Brazil

1502 Queen Isabella of Spain signs proclamation authorizing the governor of Hispaniola to “compel and force” the natives to grow crops, construct buildings, and mine gold for a fair wage

1507 An account of Amerigo Vespucci’s travels uses *America* to designate South America and the West Indies; the term is soon applied to the whole New World

1511 Diego Velásquez conquers Cuba

1512 Hatuey, leader of Cuban Indians, is burned at the stake for leading an uprising against the Spanish

1519 Spanish take Panama and Costa Rica

1521 Hernán Cortés conquers capital city of the Aztec Empire, Tenochtitlan—Empire falls to Spaniards; amid violence, Friar Bartolomé de las Casas tries to establish peaceful, noncoercive settlements of natives and priests

1522 Malintzin, Indian translator and mistress of Hernán Cortés, gives birth to their son, Martín, who will become known as the first mestizo; Spanish take Nicaragua

1524 Spanish take Guatemala

1525 Spanish take Ecuador

1527 Spanish take Venezuela and Yucatán; Bartolomé de las Casas begins to write his *History of the Indies*

1528 Spanish take Florida

1531 Virgin of Guadalupe is said to have appeared on a hilltop in Mexico to Juan Diego, a young Indian boy

1533 Francisco Pizarro conquers the Incas in Peru

1539 French attack Havana

1545–60 Bartolomé de las Casas again tries to establish noncoercive settlements of natives and priests

1555 French establish a colony in Guanabara Bay, Brazil

1567 Portuguese expel French from Guanabara Bay

1570 Spanish Inquisition sets up court in Lima, Peru

1572 The emperor Túpac Amaru is executed in Cuzco, ending Inca rebellion in the Andes

1580 Portugal and Spain are unified under Spanish Crown

1588 England defeats Spain’s Invincible Armada, causing widespread political and economic chaos in Spain

### 1600

1604 Tabajara Indians in northeastern Brazil are conquered by Portuguese soldier Pero Coelho de Sousa

1609 Garcilaso de la Vega writes *Comentarios reales de los Incas* (Royal Commentaries of the Incas)

1615 Portuguese expel French from Maranhão, Brazil; first exports of Caribbean sugar reach Spain

1624 Dutch invade Brazil

1638 Spanish Inquisition in Peru burns 11 Jews at the stake

*A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* by Friar Bartolomé de las Casas

*The Labyrinth of Solitude* by Octavio Paz  
*Woman Hollering Creek* by Sandra Cisneros

*Days of Obligation* by Richard Rodríguez

*The Fragmented Life of Don Jacobo Lerner* by Isaac Goldemberg

*Iracema, the Honey-Lips* by José de Alencar

1640 Portugal reasserts independence from Spain  
 1654 Portuguese and mestizo forces repel the Dutch in Brazil  
 1670 Spain cedes Jamaica and Cayman Islands to England  
 1695 Spain cedes western Hispaniola to France in Treaty of Ryswijk

1700

1780 Túpac Amaru II (José Gabriel Condorconqui) leads unsuccessful Indian revolt in Peru

1800

1805 Spanish navy is decimated by the English at the Battle of Trafalgar

1808 Portugal's Prince Regent João (the future João VI) flees the French forces of Napoleon Bonaparte, moves Portuguese court to Brazil; opens Brazil's ports to world trade

1808 Napoleon places his brother Joseph on Spanish throne, ousting King Ferdinand VII

1814 Ferdinand VII returns to Spanish throne

1821 João VI returns from Brazil to Portugal

## SLAVERY

In their new Latin American colonies, the Spanish and Portuguese found immensely rich natural resources. To exploit these resources, they exacted forced labor from the Indians, then imported hundreds of thousands of Africans and enslaved them on sugar and other plantations. Slavery across the region ended in the second half of the nineteenth century when European public opinion turned against the practice, and when modern industrialization made it preferable to rely on wage labor.

1500

1500 Inca Empire reaches its height, extracting forced labor from conquered peoples

early 1500s *Encomienda* system is established—Spanish Crown gives control of a region to a designated Spaniard, whose natives owe him labor and goods in return for protection and religious instruction

1503 Sugar is first produced on Hispaniola

1512 Laws of Burgos regulate how much work slaves can be forced to do and how they can be punished; laws also define the slaveowners' obligation to provide food, rest, and religious education

1513 *Requerimiento* clarifies the conditions under which the Spanish can make war on and enslave native peoples

1518 Spanish government grants permission for 4,000 Africans to be sent as slaves to the West Indies

1523 Sugar mills start up in Jamaica

1528 Spanish government sends 700 additional Africans as slaves to Cuba

1530s Portuguese Crown makes massive land grants in Brazil to military men and members of the nobility

*The Heights of Macchu Picchu* by Pablo Neruda



## Historical Events

## Related Literary Works

1600

1534 Africans are first brought to Argentina as slaves

1537 Pope Paul III issues the bull *Sublimis Deus*, which declares that Indians were created by God with human souls

1542 New Laws enact sweeping reform of encomienda system throughout Spanish colonies (repealed 1545)

1550s–1600 Encomiendas decline; haciendas, or private estates, grow increasingly common

1550s–1850 Africans are shipped to Brazil as slaves

*A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* by Friar Bartolomé de las Casas

*Deep Rivers* by José María Arguedas

1700

1685 The *Code Noir*, or Black Code, is passed by Louis XIV of France; establishes legal conditions for treatment of slaves, defined as property

1727 Europeans introduce coffee into Brazil

1793 Slavery abolished in Saint-Domingue (Haiti)

*The Kingdom of This World* by Alejo Carpentier

1800

1808 United States and Great Britain abolish slave trade

1813 Revolutionary government in Buenos Aires, Argentina, discontinues slave trade

1817 Cuban slave trade is made illegal by treaties between Spain and Great Britain

1833 August 26—Britain passes Emancipation Act, abolishing slavery in all British lands

1845 Spain passes anti-slavery measure

1850 Brazil bans import of African slaves

1854 Peru abolishes slavery

1856–69 90,000 Africans are taken to Cuba as slaves

1861 Argentina abolishes slavery

1865 Last slave ship arrives in Cuba; slavery ends here 21 years later, in 1886

*Biography of a Runaway Slave* by Miguel Barnet

1871 September 28—Law of the Free Womb frees Brazilians born to slaves

1879 Spanish Prime Minister Arsenio Martínez Campos frees all Cuban slaves without compensation to the owners

1888 Brazil abolishes slavery

*A Brazilian Tenement* by Aluísio Azevedo

1880s–1920s During Peru's short-lived rubber boom, Machiguenga Indians are enslaved and forced to tap rubber trees

## INDEPENDENCE AND REVOLUTION

In 1804, Haiti (formerly Saint-Domingue) declared independence. Starting in 1810, other Latin American countries followed suit, taking advantage of Spain's weakened position as a victim of Napoleon Bonaparte's invading armies. The swiftness of the transition between colony and independent nation encouraged economic and political instability. Beginning a political tradition that extends to the present, individual strongmen rose to assume the absolute power once enjoyed by the European colonizers. Soon the new nations were at war with themselves and one another to assert autonomy, and to ensure economic power.

1794 Revolution begins in Saint-Domingue

1800

1804 Haiti (Saint-Domingue) becomes first independent black country in the world; French troops are driven from Brazil

*The Kingdom of This World* by Alejo Carpentier

1806 Argentines begin conscripting gauchos to fight in wars; they will continue to do so into the 1870s

*The Gaucho Martín Fierro* by José Hernández

1810

1810 In the absence of Spanish King Ferdinand VII (who had been dethroned by Napoleon Bonaparte), a local council claims temporary autonomy for Viceroyalty of La Plata—a region including present-day Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia

1811 Spanish forces quash Venezuelan independence movement under Simón Bolívar; Paraguayan creole officers stage coup against Spanish governor Bernardo de Velasco

1813 Paraguay becomes first independent republic in South America; Mexico declares independence; Simón Bolívar returns to Venezuela and earns title of "The Liberator"

1815 José María Morelos, a priest and leader of Mexico's pro-agrarian reform, anti-Spanish contingent, is executed

1816 La Plata region declares complete independence from Spain; fighting continues until 1824, when Spain finally cedes the point; José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia becomes Supreme Dictator for life of Republic of Paraguay

*I the Supreme* by Augusto Roa Bastos

1818 Chile declares independence

1819 Simón Bolívar takes control of Venezuela

1820

1821 Peru and Guatemala declare independence from Spain; Mexico gains independence

1822 Under Pedro I, Brazil becomes independent monarchy

1824 Peruvian forces under Bolívar defeat Spanish at Battle of Junín in Peru; Francia nationalizes Church lands and takes fiscal control of Catholic wealth in Paraguay

1825 Upper Peru establishes itself as Bolivia (in honor of Simón Bolívar)

1826 Unionists and federalists fight civil war in Argentina

1828 Cisplantine War results in creation of Uruguay

1829 Juan Manuel de Rosas becomes governor of Buenos Aires; deposed 1852

*Facundo* by Domingo F. Sarmiento

## Historical Events

## Related Literary Works

1830

1837 Peasant and Indian revolt in Guatemala

1840

1840 15-year-old Pedro II takes the throne in Brazil; Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia dies, Carlos Antonio López (1840–62) becomes new dictator in Paraguay

1850

1858–63 In Colombia, Liberals win civil wars against Conservatives, who will wrest power back in 1885

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez

1860

1861–65 Spain occupies Dominican Republic

1862 The French Army invades Mexico, establishes empire with Mexican conservatives in 1864

1865–70 Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay wage War of the Triple Alliance against Paraguay

1866 Spanish fight naval war against Peru and Chile

1868–78 Ten Years' War in Cuba fails to gain independence

1869 Spain officially recognizes Peru's independence

1870

1873–85 Under President Justo Rufino Barrios in Guatemala, the army becomes a tool for oppressing the Indians

1876 Argentina returns to Paraguay the lands to the east of the River Paraná

*Men of Maize* by Miguel Ángel Asturias

1879–83 Chile fights Bolivia and Peru in the War of the Pacific

1880

1889 Brazilian emperor Pedro II is exiled; Brazil becomes a Republic

1889–1930 Arid backlands in northeastern Brazil are plagued by constant warfare between competing landowners

*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands* by João Guimarães Rosa

1890

1891 Chile fights civil war

1895 U.S. president Grover Cleveland helps establish border between Brazil and Argentina; José Martí dies at Battle of Dos Ríos in Cuban war of independence

"Our America," by José Martí

1897 Federal army of Brazil conducts Siege of Canudos to rout a religious enclave in northeastern Brazil

*Rebellion in the Backlands* by Euclides da Cunha

1898 Manuel Estrada Cabrera becomes president, then dictator, in Guatemala; he is deposed in 1920; Cuba wins independence