

## LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY – Early Modern Period

Has there ever been anything even remotely like it? Imagine the advanced civilizations of two entire continents vanquished by couple of ragtag bands of adventurers arriving by wooden ship. But, thanks to the adherence of the masses to the apocalyptic pronouncements of the elite, that's exactly what happened. In fact, in some cases (the Aztecs, the Inca), powerful civilizations that had made a bone-chilling reputation as indomitable warriors, seemed to be magically transformed into obedient sacrifices, who passively allowed themselves to be struck down. We are just now recovering from the weird spellbound state we entered into, and we're able to start to catalogue, analyze, and publicize without imposed Eurocentric racism and prejudice.

### POLITICAL HISTORY

#### GOVERNMENT

**Audiencias / Viceroyalties:** The Spanish monarchy established the Consejo Real y Supremo de las Indias (Royal and Supreme Council of the Indies) in the early years of the Conquest (in 1524), and soon thereafter, began establishing new provinces, which was called an "audiencia" or Viceroyalty. Each Audiencia was staffed by members of the Spanish nobility. Later, the "Viceroy" was established, and it was the direct representative of the king, and was the center of power. The first viceroyalties were of New Spain (1535) and Peru (1543), and later New Granada (1717) and Rio de la Plata (1776).

**Gobernaciones:** Viceroyalties and Audiencias were subdivided into smaller units. They were the "gobernaciones" and each had its own governor who was in charge of collecting taxes, maintaining law and order, and administering the rules of commerce.

**Alcaldias / Corregimientos de indios:** The Gobernaciones were subdivided into "Alcaldias" (counties / mayorships), which were in charge of the cities. They were largely run by creoles (rather than the "peninsulares" from Spain), and they tended to favor family relationships. As a result, they were known for nepotism and general corruption.

**Pirate Strongholds and Outlaw Enclaves:** Because the prevailing economic system of mercantilism, which meant vast amounts of gold and silver shipped across the waters from Latin America to Spain and Portugal, there was a widely dispersed and extremely active underground economy headed by pirates of all kinds and outlaws. They often dominated the culture in certain island and coastal communities, resulting in often anarchic and Bacchanalian cultures. The biggest pirate city was Port Royal, Jamaica, which was destroyed by an earthquake and tsunami in 1692.

#### Discussion/Questions

When Spain formed "New Spain" and the other Viceroyalties and "Audiencias," they installed loyal members of the Spanish aristocracy. Maintaining connections with the Spanish monarchy was considered vital. Describe how the other divisions and subdivisions of the Spanish-controlled monarchy both helped maintain a relationship that was beneficial to Spain, but yet at the same time, resulted in nepotism, cronyism, and corruption.

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## MILITARY

**Conquest of Mexico:** Historians continue to be astounded that a ragtag army of Spaniards who were, by all accounts, malnourished and with less than perfectly functioning firearms, armor, horsemanship, and European armaments, could subdue an army of more than 100,000. The accepted narrative is that the Spanish arrived at a convenient point in time, and in a convenient religious framework, in which the prevailing religious narrative asserted that the Aztecs would be dominated by invading, pale Sky Gods. The Aztecs, who had been so adept at practicing psychological warfare on their adversaries, were in large part vanquished by their own belief system and their own tactics. Once they let the Spanish in, they also had close enough contact to be victims of the contagion of smallpox and other European diseases, hitherto unknown in South America.

**Conquest of the Incas:** In a bizarre parallel to what happened in Mexico, when Pizarro arrived in Cuzco, he was greeted by large, militaristic society with highly advanced engineering and astronomical observatories. However, those same constellations and movements in the sky that gave them a surging sense of identity, destiny, and history to help them defeat neighbors also predicted a total extinction by an outside force; something that eerily coincided with the arrival of Pizarro. So, while it was true that Pizarro's groups of greedy mercenary soldiers had more advanced weapons (as well as being carriers of smallpox and other diseases), they were far outnumbered by the Incas. The Incas simply let Pizarro's army slaughter them in what looked like willing self-sacrifice.

**Warfare associated with Conquest:** Uprisings took place throughout Latin America, but disease was the most effective weapon that the Europeans had against the indigenous peoples. There were a few uprisings, such as the Inca Rebellions in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but for the most part, the Church and the new criollo class (descended from the Spanish "peninsulares") controlled most of the resources, and thus were able to quash civil unrest.

## Discussion/Question

The military activities of the Incas often led to traumatic brain injuries. To deal with the potential for injury, the Incas developed copper and leather helmets. They also developed medical procedures to help relieve pressure on the brain. Please describe the battle surgery developed by the Incas, and the anthropological evidence we have for it.

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## **SOCIAL HISTORY**

### **SOCIAL STRUCTURE**

**Encomienda:** When the Spaniards established themselves in Latin America, they aimed to keep control by installing their own countrymen in grand estates. They were expected to pay a portion of their annual production to the crown, and for that reason, the encomiendas (or grand estates) that happened to be in mining territory were considered the most desirable. The encomienda system essentially kept the land controlled by Spaniards (by proxy), and essentially disenfranchised the majority of inhabitants in Latin America.

**Roman Catholic administration of Class:** Class was essentially race-based, and it was determined at birth. It was entered in the records of birth by the local Roman Catholic clergy. Thus, if you were determined to be a "criollo" (European descent born in the New World) by the clergy you enjoyed better social standing than if you were considered a "mestizo" (mixed race). Your race directly determined your opportunities in life. There was a very clear hierarchy, which consisted of European, Indigenous, African, and mixed race peoples.

**Peninsulares:** Peninsulares were Spaniards who were born in the Iberian peninsula. They were considered to be "pure" or "true" blood, and they possessed privilege, power, and prestige. Because of their direct link to the Spanish monarchy, they were given the right to control the entire government, and all its economic affairs.

**Criollos (Creoles):** When the Peninsulares had children in the New World, they were considered to be of nobility due to their "pure" blood. They were also given control of resources.

**Mestizos:** Mestizos were of mixed ancestry, with both European and Amerindian heritage. It is important to keep in mind that when a Creole married someone of Amerindian descent, their race was entered in the church records as "mestizo."

**Mulattoes:** A mulatto was a person with mixed European and African descent. They were considered to be of mixed race, and did not enjoy the same rights and privileges as the Creole class.

**Amerindian or "Indio":** Although the Amerindians were the original inhabitants of the land, they suffered the same negative fate of conquered peoples, and were placed on a lower rung of the social hierarchy than Mestizos.

**Negro / Zambo:** Dark-skinned peoples of African descent, the "Negro" or "Zambo" had few rights, and tended to live in poverty. They were considered the second lowest social class, and were essentially the descendants of slaves who had somehow achieved their freedom.

**African Slaves:** The survivors of the inutterably cruel "Middle Passage" voyage on a slave ship from Europe to the United States, the slaves had no rights whatsoever, and were considered, by society to occupy the lowest rung. They had no freedom, no rights, and could be beaten and otherwise mistreated with impunity. The legacy of slavery means that despite the fact that countries such as Brazil have declared themselves to be colorblind and that there is equal access for all, there still exists a kind of tacit racism that results in exclusion.

### **Question / Discussion**

In order to establish control, the Spanish immediately executed leaders, tortured non-believers, and imposed their own order. It was not enough to maintain physical control. It was necessary to try to

eliminate all with a competing mindset; an activity which replicated in many ways what happened in the Iberian Peninsula in the clashes with the Muslim North Africans (the Moors). Thus, the priests and representatives of the Catholic Church worked closely with the government placed themselves at the highest level of the social hierarchy. Those directly from Spain were considered the closest to the desired values. Analyze the situation and propose a step-by-step process of establishing classes.

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### GENDER RELATIONS

**Mexico:** The appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe in 1531 to a poor indigenous man, Juan Diego, demonstrates the willingness of the populace to embrace a female deity, as well as the persistence of female deities in the culture. Although the Spanish culture was deeply patriarchal, it encountered one that possessed multiple deities, many of which were female. The Catholic Church was uniquely equipped to accommodate the matriarchal elements of the indigenous culture since it had its own female deities (the Virgin Mary and various female saints).

**Guatemala:** The Quiche Maya believe that the Moon goddess produced the Maya people, and thus, by extension, the roles of women were important, particularly in the home and also in the care of domesticated deer (used for food). However, not everything had a gender, although everything (animate or inanimate) had a spirit. The spirits were invoked by means of incantations and song, which channeled the energy to help with daily life in what we could consider to be a spell, or magic. Thus, great areas of Quiche Maya life were considered to be gender-neutral, with an emphasis on transformative potential.

**Latin America:** The colonial legal and social structure are European and they create the framework that is administered by colonial governments and the Catholic church. Women could not own property, vote, or enter into positions of authority in the government or church. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Mexican nun, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, wrote important essays arguing for the rights of women.

### Discussion/Questions

Women's roles were shaped by class as well as gender. The female descendants of Europeans had a dramatically different set of experiences than that of indigenous or mestizo, largely because of rank, wealth, and access to education. If you were a woman during Colonial times in Latin America, how would being female give you unexpected privileges if you were a Mexican-born daughter of parents born in Europe? How might you have unexpected privileges as a mestiza?

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## **ECONOMIC HISTORY**

### INNOVATIONS

**Churrigueresque Architecture:** In the Seventeenth Century, construction on large churches and cathedrals was enhanced by the use of new ornamentation, which was an exuberant, extremely ornate Baroque style developed in Spain and known as Churrigueresque. In Mexico, Peru, and Ecuador, the style took an even more dramatic turn, and was modified using different colors, types of shapes, and figures.

**Mining Engineering / Tunneling:** Mexican engineers developed new ways to mine gold and silver, and developed interconnecting tunnels with innovative ways to provide fresh air, and also to monitor air quality. While the work in the mines continued to be difficult and dangerous, the methods developed by the Mexican mining engineers in 18<sup>th</sup> century Guanajuato contributed to safety.

**Dance:** Innovative dance forms emerged during the Colonial era, as Spanish music and dance blended with indigenous and African beliefs. For example, the Cueca (Chile) and the Zamacueca (Peru), are a blending of criollo and Spanish fandango.

**Amalgamation:** Amalgamation was perfected in Mexican and South American gold mines. In this process, gold ore was placed over mercury-coated copper plates and tables, which resulted in dissolution of the gold into the mercury. Large quantities of water were required in the process, with the unfortunate consequence of contamination of rivers, streams, and aquifer.

**Textiles:** Handloomed cloth, woven from wool, cotton, llama, or alpaca blended European technologies with preHispanic designs and colors. Examples of innovative clothing include the Quechquemilt, a Mexican light poncho used by women to cover the neck and shoulders; the serape, a brightly woven blanket worn by men; the huipil, a brightly woven, patterned blouse worn by women in southern Mexico and Guatemala; the polleras (skirts) worn by the “cholas” market women in Bolivia, over layers of petticoats; the rebozos (shawls) worn by women to stay warm and to carry babies.

**Lace and Embroidery:** Lacework was innovated in Brazil and also in Paraguay, where indigenous materials and patterns were used, thanks to the isolationist policies of President Lopez Solano. In addition, embroidery was developed and widely used, in Mexico, Guatemala, and in Brazil, each developing their unique forms. In Brazil, a unique kind of “padded embroidery” was developed and later exported to Europe.

### Discussion/Questions

The ongoing influence of the European invaders resulted in a tremendous fusion of cultures. Many of the activities of daily life were deeply affected, such as dress, customs, dance, and music. Describe some of the innovations of Colonial times that reflected a fusion of cultures.

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## TRADE

**Mercantilism:** The dominant economic model during the Spanish conquest of Latin America was mercantilism, which is a trade-based system of exchange. The use of gold and silver as the backing for the currency system was extremely inflationary as increasing amounts of gold were brought to Spain. At the same time, the development of the Audiencias and Viceroyalties engendered a great deal of demand for European manufactured goods. As a result, the economy quickly became one with trade as its principle foundation.

**Plantation Products Trade:** The market for raw materials for manufacturing in Europe stimulated the market for raw materials (sugar, coffee, indigo, cotton). As a result, vast mono-economies were developed with plantations specializing in one, perhaps two crops. Operational efficiencies were high, but eventually productivity dropped off because the practice was very hard on the soil.

**Slave Trade:** One reason why the slave trade persisted, particularly in Brazil, was that not only was the labor needed for the plantations (sugar, indigo, and coffee were dominant), the slave trade itself conquered the problem of empty ships in their return from Europe after selling the plantation products. The infamous "Middle Passage" from Africa to the Americas often resulted in high profits for the ship owners and joint stock companies because the slaves were acquired cheaply and sold at a high price in Brazil (or the West Indies).

**Black Market and Informal Trading Networks: Pirates, Buccaneers, Corsairs:** Ships bearing gold coins, silver, and other treasures were irresistible targets for bands of individuals as well as for countries feeling the pinch of tight budgets after engaging in wars and indulging profligate monarchs. As a result, trade-based crime networks abounded, both unofficial (pirates) and officially sanctioned (buccaneers). The crime networks also gave rise to smuggling, contraband trading, and arms dealing (during various uprisings and wars).

## Discussion/Questions

The Incas "franchised" their brand through an extensive confederation of city states, tribes, and outlying groups. Trade networks were held together by common beliefs, but more than that, by their "quipus", the knotted string accounting, messaging, and inventorying system that allowed the groups to communicate by means of the language of math and calculations. Describe the potential strengths and weaknesses of an economy based primarily on relationships and accounting.

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## CULTURAL HISTORY

### SCIENCE

**Chemistry and Physics:** In conjunction with mining, the Seminary of Mining was established in Mexico in 1792. In addition to engineering, there were laboratories in which scientists conducted physics and chemistry experiments. Andres Manuel del Rio discovered the element vanadium at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Mexico.

**Meteorology:** Jose Antonio de Alzate y Ramirez, who studied in the Colegio de San Ildefonso in Mexico City, was a distinguished scientist in many fields during the 1700s. His observations about meteorological phenomena were ahead of his time in that they included mathematical modeling as well as observations about the conditions of various cloud formations. His focus was resolutely scientific, and he debunked a number of unscientific claims. For example, he proved that the psychedelic effects of the plant, *pipilzintzintlis*, were due to natural plant oils and chemicals, and not due to the devil.

**Civil Engineering:** Large earthworks were successfully implemented and came to be more advanced than in Europe. Examples include the mines of Guanajuato (Mexico) and Potosi (Bolivia). Guanajuato is honeycombed with tunnels that are so well built that they are in use today.

**Metallurgy (for mining):** Metallurgical processes for economically extracting gold, silver, and tin were developed in Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador. The processes that were developed using mercury, antimony, and sulfur were later adopted in other parts of the world, mainly North America and Africa.

**Botanical experiments (Brazil):** With its extensive plantation system in the northeast part of the country, Brazilian farmers and botanists developed new varieties of indigo, rice, sugar cane, and tobacco that had longer harvest periods, which meant a much higher yield. Due to the high demand by textile mills in Europe, Brazilian botanists developed indigo with many different shades of blue, violet, and purple.

### Discussion Question:

The scientific and technological breakthroughs after the Conquest had much to do with commercial relations with Europe, and the fundamentally mercantilist relationship between Spain, Portugal, and their colonies. Not surprisingly, the most dramatic step-changes in technology occurred in mining and also in agriculture, where plantations provided raw materials for the factories in Europe. In your opinion, which of the advances in technology had the greatest impact? Which ones may have been unethical from today's perspectives? Why?

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## RELIGION

**The Catholic Church** served as a powerful force to eradicate the belief systems of the indigenous peoples and their civilizations, and to replace them with that of the Roman Catholic Church, which was a powerful and rich political entity, which often ruled “hand in glove” with the Spanish and Portuguese invaders. The conquest was brutal in many ways. Religious centers were razed to the ground and Catholic churches quickly built on top of them.

**Spanish Priests:** Early accounts by writers such as Father Bartolome de las Casas provide important descriptions of the religious practices as viewed through the eyes of a European. They were, without exception, shocking to the European, particularly the practice of human sacrifice and polytheism. Catholic priests, such as the Jesuits, established missions with the express purpose of imposing a new culture on the old one, and along the way, harness native labor and talent in the construction of Christian monuments, churches, schools, monasteries, and more.

**Syncretic Catholicism:** The Catholic religion, as practiced in Mesoamerica and South America, quickly absorbed and even appropriated the different gods and their functions, to the point that many saints and saint days were thinly veiled practices of indigenous religions.

### Discussion/Questions

The Conquest was a two-pronged effort with government / military on one side, and religion on the other. The most coordinated attacks occurred in the large religious centers, including Tenochtitlan, Cuzco and Quito, where the Church was quick to build over the temples. But, they did not succeed in eradicating the religions. Please describe how the ancient religions persist.

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## PHILOSOPHY

**Rights of Conquered Amerindians:** Amidst the tremendous carnage of the conquest, there were a few priests and writers who argued for the protection of the conquered peoples in his *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, and *The History of the Indies*. His writings were apologies for the rights of Amerindians, and he opposed slavery and abuse. His writings deal with questions of human dignity. Alfonso de la Vera Cruz also wrote to defend the human rights and dignity of the indigenous peoples.

**Bartolome de las Casas (1484-1566):** A Spanish priest, de las Casas maintained journals of his experiences in Mexico and wrote impassioned letters in defense of the indigenous peoples. His view of the indigenous peoples is that they were ignorant and barbaric, but somehow innocent. De las Casas’s viewpoint, unfortunately, was very influential and incorporated in literature, where the indigenous person or “noble savage” became a stock figure of a wild human or outsider who was not yet corrupted.

**Alonso de la Vera Cruz (1504-1584):** His philosophical treatises revolved around the nature of logic and justice, emphasizing the ethical treatment of all people. Born in Spain, but emigrating to Mexico, Vera Cruz was a priest who founded a number of universities in central Mexico. He espoused the philosophy of Aristotle and Augustine.

**Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651-1695):** A Mexican nun who spent her youth in an estate with access to her family’s library, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz was largely self-taught, with access to her grandfather’s

collection of European literature. She wrote important works of poetry, philosophy, and treatises. Her work includes her "Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz" which argues for the right of women to education. Her poetry reflects a philosophy of oppositions, in which the essence of something is known by juxtaposing it with its opposite.

### Discussion/Questions

Liberty, equality, fraternity. Does that sound familiar? It should, except it's in English and not in French, where the French Revolution turned the world upside down. Simon Bolivar and Andres Bello were definitely two of the intellectual Pied Pipers who periodically recruited True Believers into their fold, where they would foment dissent and agitate for uprisings so that the countries could separate from the mothership. Describe how French revolutionary thought had an impact on Latin American philosophy and philosophers.

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### ART

**Indochristian Art: Arts of the Mission Schools:** When the Spanish and Portuguese established missions in Latin America, their objective was to convert the Amerindians. At the same time, they needed to construct missions, churches, chapels, and other buildings. In using the converted Amerindians, a great fusion of indigenous and European traditions occurred. The Catholic priests brought in architects and artists from Europe, but they could not complete their work without the help of the local artisans. Indochristian art often incorporates the techniques of carving, sculpting, and uses the bright colors of the indigenous art.

**Cuzco School:** Cuzco, which was built on the foundations of a great Incan religious center, became known as the first center of European-influenced painting in the Americas. The Quechua artists, under that tutelage of European artists, became masters of the Andean Baroque, and developed their own ornate decorative styles. In addition, the artists included uniquely Andean elements, such as documenting the meeting of Atahualpa and Francisco Pizarro. Artists included Guaman Poma de Ayala, Jose Manso de Velasco, and Vicente Alban.

**Casta Paintings:** In eighteenth-century New Spain, artists often painted portraits that included placed the subjects within racial categories (castas). The titles of the paintings would record the racial category as well as the names; for example, the Peruvian casta painting entitled *Mestizo, Mestiza, Mestizo* which depicted a married couple and their child. Casta paintings were popular until the Nineteenth Century, when legal racial categories were abolished.

**Botanical Drawings:** Because so many of the Europeans arriving in the New World wished to chronicle their discoveries, there as a surge in still lifes and sketches that carefully depicted the fauna and flora. Many discoveries were made by such artists. Perhaps the most dramatic was that of John Lloyd Stephens, who, while drawing sketches of the flora, fauna, and landscape, discovered that the small hills were really vegetation-covered Maya ruins. Other examples include still lifes of fruits, painted by an Ecuadorian artist.

**Art of Scientific Inquiry:** In addition to still life paintings and sketches of flora and fauna, painters such as the Dutch-born Brazilian painter, Albert Eckhout painted detailed ethnographic representations of Brazil's inhabitants, still lifes of flora and fauna, and depictions of indigenous (Tupi) dance traditions. Painted in the tradition of Flemish realism, Eckhout's paintings provide valuable records of social life, flora, fauna, and ethnography in colonial Brazil. Frans Post was another painter who chronicled life in Dutch Brazil. Post was well-known for his sweeping landscapes.

**Artisan and decorative painting:** In a fusion of Spanish and indigenous traditions, designs were developed for painting on ceramics, tiles, furniture, and pottery, all for use in everyday life. One of the most celebrated examples is that of Talavera, which feature whimsical patterns, bright colors, and a distinctive thick glaze. Talavera pottery is a kind of maiolica pottery which was imported by the Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century where it flourished in Talavera, Puebla (often referred to as Talavera Poblana to differentiate it from Talavera, Spain).

**Baroque in Cathedrals:** As mines were developed, and wealth acquired from the vast stores of gold and silver, funds were available to construct elaborate churches and cathedrals throughout Mexico. In addition to containing sculptures, the often included frescoed ceilings and walls. Excellent examples can be found in Puebla, Mexico, with its vaulting with frescos, and in Guanajuato, Mexico, all of which are characterized by pronounced chiaroscuro.

**Ultrabaroque (or Churrigueresque).** Examples of the highly ornate painting can be found in the Retablo de los Reyes (Metropolitan Cathedral, Mexico City).

### Discussion/Questions

When the spirit of independence began to inflame regions in Latin America, Simon Bolivar and others who shared his enthusiasm for the French philosophers' notions of liberty, equality, and brotherhood, sought ways to communicate the break from the past. Independence needed to look like heroic victory, although war rarely looks as glorious as it does in a painting or as statue. Discuss how painting was used to express emerging national identities separate from Spain and Portugal during the nineteenth century.

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## LITERATURE

**Letters:** After the arrival of the Europeans, letters became an important form of communication, not just to inform the authorities and funding sources in Europe of conditions and needs, but to also frame a narrative that described the culture, religious rituals, architecture, food, clothing, and other important anthropological information. Needless to say, they were described from the vantage point of the writers, whose purpose was often to support a specific ideological or political agenda. So, the narratives were not at all neutral. After he returned to Spain after his first voyage, Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) described the voyage, encounters with the indigenous peoples, and the culture. His goal was to obtain funding for future voyages. This letter, printed in Latin, became extremely influential. In Mexico, Hernan Cortes wrote elaborate and fascinating descriptions of Tenochtitlan and the Valley of Mexico, with their floating gardens, markets, and daily life. His letters were sent to Carlos V, with the goal of continued financial support. Bartolome de las Casas wrote to defend the rights of the Amerindians and to describe the inhumane abuses. In South America, El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega chronicled the history of Peru, including the civil wars between the Spanish conquistadores of Peru.

**Poetry:** The Catholic Church was very wary of literature, worried about the possibility of subversion and destabilization. They held an Inquisition mindset, imported from Europe and shaped by the centuries of conflict to wrest control of the Iberian peninsula from the non-Christians. For centuries, the Moors, who were largely Muslim, had dominated the political sphere, and Sephardic Jews had dominated proto-banking. As a result, the Church and colonial government worked together to censor literature and carefully review anything that was imported or published locally. Not surprisingly, this chokehold on creative expression had a dampening effect on literary production, and only stylistically conservative work tended to be published. Thus, the accomplishments of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz are all the more remarkable, especially given that her sonnets, long poem, and philosophical epistolary essay, all chafe at the bonds / limitations of women.

**Philosophical Essays:** Some of the letters and treatises that were written during the Colonial period would best be described as philosophical treatises, particularly since they address the ethical treatment of Africans and Amerindians, the rights (or lack of rights) of women, the nature of reality.

**Drama:** Dramatic productions tended to fall into two different categories: first, the narrative performative enactments of the Church and in folkloric dance, both of which usually revolved around religion and represent a fusion of European, African, and indigenous cultures; and formal drama following European genres which were often written and performed in honor of the colonial governor or viceroy's events.

**Novel:** In Spain, the picaresque novel, *Lazarillo de Tormes*, broke new ground as the first extended narrative / novel. In Mexico, satires were considered particularly dangerous, and so when Jose Joaquin Fernandez de Lizardi wrote *El Periquillo Sarmiento* (The Mangy Parrot) as a critique of the newly independent Mexico, it was not embraced with open arms. In fact, the publication was delayed, due to controversy. It was, in many ways, a direct response to the hyper-idealistic revolutionary essays. This work straddles Colonial and the nineteenth century works from the newly independent nations.

### Discussion/Questions

1. What was the function of diaries and autobiographical writings immediately after the Europeans began invading Latin America? What were some of the topics that were covered, and what did they reveal about the author's mindsets or rhetorical goals?
2. Hernan Cortes wrote highly descriptive accounts of his experiences in the great city of Tenochtitlan and he sent them to King Carlos V in order to report to him what he had found and also to request funds. Bartolome de las Casas also wrote a diary, but his purpose was to argue for the rights of the Indians. What can we say about the objectivity of their work? What was the structure of the diaries and autobiographical writings immediately after the Europeans began invading Latin America? What were some of the topics that were covered, and what did they reveal about the author's mindsets or rhetorical goals?

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