

LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY

Overview It's hard to imagine a series of cultures more maligned than the MesoAmerican and South American cultures encountered by the Europeans in the 16th century and later. Although in many ways, the Latin Americans were light years more advanced than the Europeans, they were not able to compete militarily, mainly due to preexisting beliefs that encouraged them to simply give up and submit to the conquerors. Consequently, the cultures were not only obliterated politically and physically, their legacies were tainted by prejudice – a prejudice that only began to correct itself in the late 20th century, thanks to commercial and political interests that no longer felt threatened by a long-vanquished and subjugated foe. What we now know about the pre-Conquest Latin American cultures makes us appreciate them with eyes unclouded by fear or imperialistic designs.

ANCIENT PERIOD

POLITICAL HISTORY

GOVERNMENT

Maya (250 CE – 900 CE): The Maya began to establish smaller centers, and each city-state had a unique king or queen. The basic organizational structure remained intact. The power of the ruler was maintained by assuring sufficient food and water for all (by placating the gods with human sacrifice). There is evidence that during droughts, there was a dramatic uptick in the number of human sacrifices.

Discussion/Questions

The cosmology and religious beliefs of the Olmecs resulted in a human sacrifice-based government. It was, as far as we can tell, perhaps the first one in Mesoamerica, and served as a pattern for those that followed. Describe how and why human sacrifice might have been not only tolerated, but encouraged by the people of the Olmec civilization and those that went later.

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MILITARY

The large quantity of Stone Age artifacts found in Mesoamerica demonstrates that PreColumbian warfare was perhaps achieved the highest level of all Stone Age civilizations. It was unique in that all the warfare technology was developed without the wheel, metallurgy, explosives, pack animals, or ships. The Olmecs (1200 – 400 BCE), who lived in on the coast in southeast Mexico near what is now Veracruz, developed obsidian-edged weapons for hand-to-hand combat against encroaching groups.

La Venta (900 – 400 B.C.E.): An Olmec stronghold near Veracruz, Mexico, La Venta was an Olmec stronghold which shows evidence of extensive warfare and weaponry. In addition to creating a fortress-type structure, the Olmecs developed weapons that included the sling, clay projectiles, obsidian-tipped spears, spear throwers, shields, yucca-fiber armor, and helmets made of animal hides.

Monte Alban (400 – 100 BCE): The largest fortified city in Mesoamerica, Monte Alban served as the center for a large territory, and in it they produced weapons such as obsidian knives, spears, axes, knives, shields and new kinds of armor. They used their military prowess to protect trade routes.

Tiwanaku (500 BCE): In the Andes, the ancestors of the Inca engaged in organized conflict and warfare, according to the artifacts that have been found. They fought their neighbors for control of trade routes and of resources, primarily arable land and water.

Conquest of Mexico: Historians continue to be astounded that a ragtag army of Spaniards who **Teotihuacan (100 – 700 CE):** The people of Teotihuacan in the Valle of Mexico, appropriated the Monte Alban technology and improved it. The Teotihuacanos focused on combining military and trade routes. Their trade centers were well stocked with the latest weaponry, including larger and more effective obsidian-tipped spears, knives, axes, which could be launched with slings and different types of throwers. The warriors were equipped with protective gear, and there are storehouses for supplies such as tortillas as well as armor and equipment.

Early Maya (380 – 900 CE): The Maya added innovations to warfare and quickly dominated valuable trade routes. The Maya ruler, Smoking Frog, lived in the complex of Tikal and began to incorporate astronomy and religious ceremony into the warfare. There were many series of so-called “star wars” (planned around astronomical phenomena), and the different population centers were often at war with each other, which led to crippling battles, and potentially contributed to crop failures and the disappearance of the Maya.

Discussion/Question

The wars waged by the Toltecs, Aztecs, and Incas were not just about a simple need to defend their territory or to keep trade routes open. They also served an important purpose in that they needed to keep the gods happy in order to keep apocalypse at bay. Describe the ways in which the ancient civilizations in Latin America blended warfare, the taking of prisoners of war, and their beliefs in the efficacy of blood sacrifice.

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SOCIAL HISTORY

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Priests: Throughout Latin America, the priests and shaman classes occupied a position of privilege. They were the spiritual leaders, which meant a great deal, given the prevailing belief that the only way to keep the world from entering into oblivion was to placate the gods, often by means of rituals led by the priests.

Kings, Royal Family: The Pre-Conquest Latin American world was one of distinct social hierarchies. They were monarchies, and the members of the royal family enjoyed a higher standard of living than the other city dwellers. However, they did pay a price, since the Maya and others believed that blood sacrifice should also come from the ruling class.

City-Dwellers: The average city dwellers were engaged in the arts, trades, and crafts of daily life. For example, in Tenochtitlan in the Valley of Mexico, many city dwellers were vendors and they sold their goods in the central marketplaces.

Question / Discussion

If you were a captured warrior in a Pre-Hispanic culture, chances are, you would already understand the rules of the game, and you would know that you were likely to be painfully murdered in order to placate someone else's gods. Chances are, you would simply hope that it would be a quick death, but you would hold out hope that you would have a reward and be able to ascend the social hierarchy in another life. You might look at the ruling class -- the kings, priests, and princes -- and think that they had a much better life. But, did they? The more we know about Maya, the more we realize that they had to subject themselves to periodic blood-letting, flagellation, and ritual torture. Imagine a society where the ritual torture, self-torture, and human sacrifice extend across every level of society. How might that affect one's sense of one's place in society? How does it contrast with the view that those who fail to conform are those who merit torture? How might the Maya mindset result in a flatter, or less hierarchical society?

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GENDER RELATIONS

Maya: For the Maya, the earth was created by the wind and sky god, Huracan, who was male. And yet, the male force was transformed into the feminine as the Ceibe Tree of Life knit together the sky and the earth, and positions branches where life could emerge. The tree's essential energy was female, and the flowering of plant and animal life was considered to be a feminine force. Gender could be complicated, as were all representations of identity. The fact that the Maya deities were shape-shifters and had more than one manifestation (male, female, animal), suggested that all beings possessed attributes of both male and female. An example of this could be found in Chorti, the Maya death god, which was described as both male and female. In addition, the Maya believed in the concept of animal spirits and shamanistic energy transfer. The animals (jaguar, serpent, etc.) were likewise gendered.

Discussion/Questions

In the ancient civilizations of the male and female could co-exist in the same person, mainly by means of the animal totem that they identified with. For example, a man could clearly be male, but his spirit guide or totem could be an animal identified with feminine energy or power. Also, all observable beings and objects were considered capable of animation. A priest could sing an invocation and an object could spring into life, sometimes acting as a fertility accelerant, either male or female.

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ECONOMIC HISTORY

INNOVATIONS

Mayan Calendar: The idea of the Mayan calendar is something of a misnomer, since it was not a single calendar, but a series of three separate interpenetrating, corresponding calendars, which was a dramatic improvement over the calendars that had been used before the Maya. The three calendars consisted of the Long Count (solar universal cycles), the Divine Calendar (260 days, tied to religious and ceremonial events), and the Civil Calendar, which is a solar calendar divided into 18 months of 20 days each, with a leap year. The Long Count calendar predicts the end of cycles, and potentially the end of the world. The end of the last Long Count cycle was said to have corresponded to December 21, 2012.

Mesoamerican Hallucinogenic Herbal Concoctions: Mesoamerican and South American cultures were often shamanistic, and the use of hallucinogenic herbal substances was a part of religious rituals. The herbs were said to have healing properties: psychological as well as physical, and represented an innovative way to use herbs, not only as medicine, but as a spiritual healing substance. They were used by the Maya in their sacrificial rites.

Discussion/Questions

The calendars of the Maya were very complex, and they did not consist of a single calendar, but of two or three interpenetrating ones. They simultaneously marked solar time, religious festival time, and government / civil activities. Further, they were broken down into blocks of time, and each block of time (for example, 13 days) corresponded to a god or a vital life force. Describe how the information from the calendars figured into daily life.

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TRADE

Olmec: La Venta (1200 – 400 B.C.E.): The Olmecs achieved their legendary warrior status and the ability to create large artifacts because they controlled an extensive trading network. They manufactured goods such as cloth and leather, and they sold the products of their agriculture and fishing activities. They were highly effective at using their military to protect and expand trade routes and markets.

Maya (1500 BCE – 250 CE): The Maya had an agriculture and manufacturing-based economy, with a surplus which they were able to trade with groups as far away as the Mississippi River Valley.

Moche (400 – 100 BCE): The Moche's economy was based on agriculture and also the production of fine potteries and textiles. They used trade relations to obtain the raw materials (dyes, pigments, etc.) that they needed, and they sold their textiles and ceramics to neighboring villages.

Discussion/Questions

The Olmecs and other Mesoamerican economies were more complex than they might appear, and their success had much to do with their militarism. Open trade routes and the health of manufacturing required a well-equipped and prepared security force. Describe the dependence of the Olmecs on their war-like stance.

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CULTURAL HISTORY

SCIENCE

Maya agricultural methods: In order to provide enough food to support the large population centers in what is now southern Mexico and Guatemala, it was necessary for the Maya to develop innovative approaches for managing arable fields for the cultivation of corn, tomatoes, chili peppers, beans. Their innovations included the development of raised fields, stone-wall terraces, and crop rotation technologies.

Maya water management: The Maya lived in the Yucatan peninsula and in the part of Central America that is now Guatemala, Belize, Mexico, and Honduras. Much of the land is flat and low, with a bedrock of limestone, which has many caves and sinkholes. As a result, there are few rivers and above-ground lakes and ponds. To have enough water for life and agriculture, the Maya developed an extensive system of canals and cisterns (chultunob). They also developed a system of collecting and distributing water from limestone sinkholes (cenotes).

Astronomy: The Maya relied on elaborate and detailed calendars for virtually all aspects of their lives. For that reason, they built observatories and developed very accurate systems of tracking, predicting, and communicating the movements and alignments of the sun, moon, stars, and planets. The Maya believed that the sun and the entire world had gone through apocalypses (total destruction and rebirth).

Discussion Question:

The level of technology possessed by the Maya and Tiwanaku civilizations was so advanced that many people have proposed that the technology came from space aliens. While we do not have any evidence for such a far-fetched hypothesis, the accomplishments of the preHispanic civilizations deserve merit for their accomplishments. Please take a look at the technology and science of the ancient Maya and Tiwanaku civilizations and evaluate their contributions. Which are the most surprising? What questions do their accomplishments provoke? What more would you like to know about their civilizations?

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RELIGION

Mesoamerica: Olmecs The Olmecs lived in the tropical lowlands of south-central Mexico on the Gulf of Mexico. The most important location was San Lorenzo Tenochtitlan, where a civilization arose in the fertile alluvial plains. Artisan items and rather ornate artifacts were produced of jade, obsidian, and magnetite, which suggested trading networks. Shamanism was important in the Olmec religion, and the shamans possessed powers associated with an animal or animal-quality (spirit or essence). One of the most important was the jaguar god, which was recognized by its almond-shaped eyes and downturned open mouth. The animals that imbued the shamans with their powerful qualities were called “nuhuals” and the shamans who has the jaguar power were referred to as “were-jaguars” (like “were-wolves”). In addition to creating monuments that reflected the religious beliefs. They also incorporated their religious beliefs about the “nahuals” in their pottery, figurines, and jade carvings, which were traded and exchanged in the region. Their ceremonial centers included massive sculptures of heads, and also ornate stelae, which included carvings representing the Olmec gods. There were at least 10 different Olmec deities. The Olmec beliefs were shared by subsequent peoples, including the Toltecs and Mixtecs, who also adopted the shamanistic traditions of animal spirits and gods.

Mesoamerica: Maya religious texts and beliefs are in evidence in San Bartolo (northern Guatemala), Monte Alban (southern Mexico / Oaxaca), and Tikal (northern Guatemala). The Maya believed that both animate and inanimate objects have sacred qualities, and that there is an innate spirituality in everything in the world. Their word for the sacred quality was “k’uh” and also “k’uhul.” For the Maya, the earth was created as a result of the god of the skies and wind, Huracán (Hurricane), who made the sky and the

earth come together. Animals and plants were created first, and then only later, humans were created in order to honor the gods.

Shape-Shifting and Cyclic Extinction: The most recent Mayan cities and temples demonstrated an evolution in the religion in that it tended to emphasize transmogrification and shape-shifting, as well as the animation of inanimate objects. The cosmology of the underworld is not as prominent, nor are the creation myths that detail the three episodes of creation (clay people, wood-reed people, flesh&blood people). However, the calendar is emphasized as is a narrative pointing to a future cycle of mass extinction and rebirth. The event is predicted as the end of the world, which is, in reality the end of a cycle.

Creation Mythology The Popol Vuh has an account of three different creations: the first were made of mud, but they were not able to speak intelligently and were destroyed with water. The second creation involved creating men from wood and women from reeds. They, however, did not have souls and could not honor the gods. So, they were destroyed with hot, boiling water. Finally, the third creation involved making humans made of white and yellow maize, and the blood of the gods. While the different creation myths vary, what they have in common is the idea that creations are cyclical, and that there will undoubtedly be another destruction of humans, with a subsequent rebirth. The apocalyptic narrative focuses not only on destruction, but also in regeneration and rebirth.

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South America : Chavin Culture The Chavin people lived in the Andean highlands in Peru and Ecuador from 900 to 200 BCE. Their religious practices took place in the Chavin de Huantar temple, which has several interesting design elements. The first is that it is constructed of heavy rocks which are not found near the temple, but were desirable for their black and white appearance which allowed meaningful patterns. Also, the temple was constructed to maximize the sounds of rushing water and wind, which were considered sacred. The Chavins considered the jaguar to be a spirit guide, and an agent of transformation.

South America: Mochica (or, Moche) flourished along the Pacific coast of Peru, from 100 – 700 AD. The religion reflected the culture’s need to defend itself against its neighbors, and from the artifacts that remain, seemed to center on human sacrifice, with an emphasis on decapitation and blood-letting.

Whether or not this was actually the case is not easily determined; after all, the archeological record consists of the materials that resist the assaults of weather and time, and the time-resistant sculptures of stone are those that speak for the entirety of the culture. The fact that they feature individuals holding the decapitated heads of others, and portray ritual blood-letting gives the impression that such practices predominated when it is possible that they did not.

Discussion/Questions

The Aztecs believed that they were created by the blending of the blood of the gods and corn. However, they were not the first people to be created; the gods had to destroy two other attempts, because their creations were defective. The Inca believed that they were created from giants from the stars who descended into the earth, and where they emerged, they created human beings. In both cases, the ongoing existence of the human beings was provisional. They had to please the gods or be destroyed. Describe the creation stories or myths from Mesoamerica and South America and evaluate the nature of the gods in terms of archetypes and models.

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PHILOSOPHY

K'uh: The dominant Maya philosophy had to do with identifying, preserving, and channeling divine life force in order to maintain cycles of existence. The divine life force is also understood as a sacred force and the most important role of humans is to respect the divine life force, or the sacred. Showing respect for the divine force is a way to please the gods. Humans were created in order to honor the gods.

Three Creations / Three Apocalypses: The sacred texts, Popol Vuh, and the Chilam Balam, give insights into the Maya worldview and underpinning philosophy. According to the Popol Vuh (of the highland Maya), there is no permanence and the world and people are to be created, destroyed, and recreated, each time to correct a defective approach to the gods. On a metaphorical level, the idea of all of life and consciousness as cyclical rather than linear will have an influence on one's mindset.

Time / Calendar: Reality and hence all of existence for the Maya tied closely to the calendar, which showed the peak moments for contact between the gods and human beings.

Sacrifice: The underlying philosophy perpetual change helps understand the need for constant and recurring rituals and sacrifice to assure mankind's continuance.

Discussion/Questions

Conquest which involves the virtual extermination of people and cultures does not often pause to contemplate the finer points, such as the question, "What are we doing to the fate of women? And, heaven forbid, how are we to work with the highly educated freemen and women? Explain how the Spanish colonialist philosophers addresses issues of the condition of women and indigenous peoples.

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ART

Cave paintings: Cueva de los Manos (Santa Cruz, Argentina) 13,000 – 9,000 years ago. Stenciled hand paintings (mainly left hands), 9,000 years old. Also, sun, geometric shapes, hunting scenes.

Petroglyphs: Pedra Furada, northeast Brazil. Iron oxide pigment, animals, hunters, geometric shapes. Carved 9,000 years ago. Altavista, Pacific coast of Mexico. Carved by the Tecoxquines (2300 – 2000 BCE). 56 petroglyphs representing rains, crops, religious rites. The petroglyphs in Checta, Peru feature animal, human, geometrical shapes.

Moche: Predating the Incas, the Moche created elaborately decorated ceramics. Very little was known about Moche life except for their pyramids until the 1980s when explorers happened upon untouched tombs. In them, they found elaborate murals that depict everyday life. The ceramics are also painted. What is unique about the ceramics is that more than 500 are explicitly sexual and display not only giant genitals, but also human figures engaged in sexual acts, including intercourse between heterosexuals, intercourse between human females, intercourse between females and mythical creatures.

Maya: The painting of the Maya was often expressed through their hieroglyphics, which were painted in their codices.

Discussion/Questions

Being able to envision the gods, and to point out just how different they were from human beings was very important to the different groups of people who lived in Latin America before the arrival of the Europeans. Showing the people the consequences of the gods' displeasure was important, particularly in the case of the "Decapitator" gods of Tiwanaku, the Moches, and later, the Incas in the Andes. At the

same time, the worldview extended far beyond the bounds of the earth, and incorporated depictions of calendars and celestial bodies. Explain how pre-Hispanic painting depicted beliefs and traditions, both religious and secular.

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LITERATURE

Maya Codices: Written in Maya hieroglyphics on bark cloth with a unique, bright ink, there are four extant Maya codices. They have not been completely deciphered, but from what we know now, the content tells the story of the history of the world, and contains almanacs and astronomical descriptions. They also depict the Maya gods. Unfortunately, Spanish priests burned the majority of the codices.

Popol Vuh: Transcribed by an unknown writer, the *Popol Vuh* is an account of the Maya creation story and other important religious and mythical stories of the Quiche Maya who lived in Guatemala.

Discussion/Questions

Unfortunately, the Conquistadors burned the elaborately painted paper codices because they were convinced they were of the devil. But, both the Aztec (Nahua peoples) and the Maya codices were very rich in cultural significance. They contained details about the history of the world, main beliefs and traditions. Of the few fragments that have been preserved, what are main elements found in the Aztec and Maya codices? How do we now interpret them?

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POSTCLASSICAL PERIOD

POLITICAL HISTORY

GOVERNMENT

Aztec: The Aztec government was ruled by an elite class of priests and shamans. They administered the economy, land rights, and administration of trade and commerce. At the same time, there was a co-existing branch of government organized around the military also entrusted with maintaining commerce. While human sacrifice is often considered a religious activity, in Aztec culture, it was a regular part of the administration of the government, since it both enforced rule of law and demonstrated to the people the effort made to maintain favor of the gods.

Inca: The Inca government was organized around the ruling elite, with vast number of administrators throughout the Andes, who communicated through a complex system of knots and strings (quipus). There were 40,000 functionaries who administered a kingdom of 10 million subjects who spoke more than 30 different languages. They practiced diplomacy as well as a strict system of law enforcement. The nations that were conquered found there were many benefits of being a part of the empire. There were state-sponsored public works, roads, banquets, art productions, and religious festivities.

Discussion/Questions

Extensive confederations of far-flung city-states requires extremely effective care, coordination, and administration. It also requires a kind of “lingua franca” for the member states. The Inca Empire extended throughout the Andes, and incorporated more than 30 languages. Describe how their system of quipus, as well as other actions helped maintain control and unity.

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MILITARY

Toltec (900 – 1200): Long revered and feared as the most ruthless of the Mesamerican warriors, the Toltecs developed fire-tipped spear throwers, firing platforms, and military watercrafts. Like the Olmecs and Teohinacans before them, the Toltecs had a highly militaristic society that used its prowess to dominate commerce. They used psychological warfare as well as direct attacks, and their human sacrifices were both a means of appeasing their gods and inspiring terror in their rivals.

Aztec (1200 – 1519): The Aztecs had consolidated power through a series of bold moves, that spoke to a culture of war. They did not necessarily hold military superiority in terms of technology, but they used logistics and sheer numbers to their advantage. Located as they were in the Valley of Mexico, they were able to withstand long sieges, and to maintain production of arms and supplies, resulting in the ability for huge armies (100,000 or more) to maintain long campaigns, and to incorporate religious rituals with the captured warriors on imposing platforms and pyramids.

Incas (1430 – 1530): The Incas were a militaristic society, with obligatory training of soldiers, a clear rank and highly-structured hierarchy. They had large numbers of highly disciplined and organized warriors who tended to overwhelm their adversaries and to maintain control over their land, which was the most fertile part of the Altiplano, and which had been rendered extremely productive due to elaborate and complicated engineering that allowed high-yield crops and a water supply. Their technology included slingshots, maces, axes, spears which had copper and wood. They used copper and leather for armor and protection.

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

Priests: Throughout Latin America, the priests and shaman classes occupied a position of privilege. They were the spiritual leaders, which meant a great deal, given the prevailing belief that the only way to keep the world from entering into oblivion was to placate the gods, often by means of rituals led by the priests.

Kings, Royal Family: The Pre-Conquest Latin American world was one of distinct social hierarchies. They were monarchies, and the members of the royal family enjoyed a higher standard of living than the other city dwellers. However, they did pay a price, since the Maya, Aztec, and the Inca believed that blood sacrifice should come from the ruling class.

City-Dwellers: The average city dwellers were engaged in the arts, trades, and crafts of daily life. For example, in Tenochtitlan in the Valley of Mexico, many city dwellers were vendors and they sold their goods in the central marketplaces.

Captured Warriors and Slaves: Life was not pleasant for the warriors unlucky enough to be captured by the Aztecs. They were often the first to be sacrificed in rituals of human torture and sacrifice, the spilled blood believed to placate and satisfy their gods.

Question / Discussion

If you were a captured warrior in a Pre-Hispanic culture, chances are, you would already understand the rules of the game, and you would know that you were likely to be painfully murdered in order to placate someone else's gods. Chances are, you would simply hope that it would be a quick death, but you would hold out hope that you would have a reward and be able to ascend the social hierarchy in another life. You might look at the ruling class -- the kings, priests, and princes -- and think that they had a much better life. But, did they? The more we know about Incas, Maya, and Aztecs, the more we realize that they had to subject themselves to periodic blood-letting, flagellation, and ritual torture. Imagine a society where the ritual torture, self-torture, and human sacrifice extend across every level of society. How might that affect one's sense of one's place in society? How does it contrast with the view that those who fail to conform are those who merit torture? How might the Inca or Maya mindset result in a flatter society?

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GENDER RELATIONS

Aztecs: The Nahuas (Aztecs) did not have a category for individuals possessing both genders, but they did acknowledge a continuum of behaviors and attributes, such as the "effeminate men" and "masculine women." There are no deities that shift from one gender to another, which may explain the distrust and suspicion of gender ambiguity, expressed in cultural history and also in the *Codex Magliabechiano*.

Inca: For the Incas, everything in the world of perceivable phenomena was gendered. The Inca gods also had clear genders. For example, the creator god Viracocha was male, as was the destroyer god, Illapa. In general, the sun was considered male, while the moon was female (Mama Kilya). In certain ways, time itself was considered female, because Mama Kilya was also the ruler of the calendar. But, given that the Inca believed that they were originated from the stars, and that each city had a star of origin, it's not too surprising that the movement of the stars would be governed by a female mother goddess.

Discussion/Questions

In the ancient civilizations of the Andes, everything had a gender, either male or female. Each gender was ascribed attributes as well, which carried into the beliefs about the essence of the things. Ironically, some of the preHispanic Tiwanaku and Inca gods were sometimes male and sometimes female. The overall focus was that of divine procreation and continuity. What are the implications of such a worldview? How might they translate into beliefs and attitudes about human behavior?

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ECONOMIC HISTORY

INNOVATIONS

Aztec Calendar: Like the Mayan calendar, the Aztec calendar is actually built on separate inter-related calendars. The Xiuhpohualli (the agricultural year count) has 365 days. The Tonalpohualli (the day count) has 260 days, and was used for religious purposes. The system was based on 13, and each calendar wheel moved in conjunction with each other in intervals of 13. After 20 “trecenas”, and the passage 260 days, the two wheels were back in their original position. Each Trecena (13-day block) corresponded to a god or elemental force, as the provider of the “shadow soul” life energy for the day.

Inca Calendar and Constellation Stories: The Inca calendar started on December 21, which is the solstice. It was a 365-day solar calendar. They also had a lunar calendar, which was 328 days. However, very little is known about how the Inca used their solar and lunar calendars. More is known from mythology about how they created sky maps. There are a few remaining artifacts that seem to depict a ruler’s relationship to specific constellations. One of them, the Inti Punchaco, has been extensively studied, and it seems to point to the specific constellation that was thought to be the origin of that group.

Aztec Agriculture (1200 – 1519): The Aztecs devised a unique system of aquaculture known as “chinampas,” in which they created anchored floating islands within Lake Chapultepec in the Valle de Mexico. They were very productive, and in them, the Aztecs raised corn, beans, tomatoes, chilis, squash, and other products. At the same time, they were able to raise fish and ducks.

Inca Engineering (1430 – 1530): The Incas were master engineers, and it is a stunning testimony to their inventiveness that they could construct massive earthworks, drainage systems, waterways, and roads without the use of blueprints or drawings (as far as we know), but with quipus (knotted string). The ceremonial buildings at Cuzco have running water and are built on a mountaintop whose sides were reinforced to eliminate the possibility of erosion and flash floods.

Inca Quipus: The quipus were elaborate sets of knotted strings carried by runners along the Inca highway from community to community along the vast federation. They a series of knots tied in cotton string and they were used for numeric and other values. The quipu could have as many as 2,000 cords. They indicate that the culture was essentially focused on numbers, accounting, trade, construction, and military operations.

Mesoamerican Hallucinogenic Herbal Concoctions: Mesoamerican and South American cultures were often shamanistic, and the use of hallucinogenic herbal substances was a part of religious rituals. The herbs were said to have healing properties: psychological as well as physical, and represented an innovative way to use herbs, not only as medicine, but as a spiritual healing substance. They were used by the Incas in conjunction with major astronomical events.

Discussion/Questions

The calendars of the Aztecs were very complex, and they did not consist of a single calendar, but of two or three interpenetrating ones. They simultaneously marked solar time, religious festival time, and government / civil activities. Further, they were broken down into blocks of time, and each block of time (for example, 13 days) corresponded to a god or a vital life force. Describe how the information from the calendars figured into daily life.

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TRADE

Aztec: The Aztecs developed an innovative trade culture that relied on the military for protection. In certain ways, it anticipated the drug cartel culture of the 20th century. Territories and transit routes were viciously controlled by a well-equipped, well-fed, and well-trained army of warriors who were noted for their brutality (and the enthusiasm with which they sacrificed their kidnapped foes). The Aztecs had innovative agricultural technologies (chinampas), and also a unique method of warehousing, which allowed them to have extensive trade networks and also to hold onto the goods for propitious conditions.

Inca: The economic activity Incan federation of states included agriculture, exporting public works, consulting, above all trade, but peaceful, through win-win (not cartel-type). The Inca were very adept at creating what resembled today's franchises. The leaders of the Inca did not persuade through force, but through the idea of mutual gain. Because their network was trade relation-based, their "language" for communicating consisted of quipus, which are intricate sets of knotted string, essentially the language of accounting, cyphers, and calculations.

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

Aztec chinampas: Known as “floating gardens,” the Aztecs further developed and expanded “chinampas,” a type of aquaculture which allowed them to cultivate shallow lake beds in the Valley of Mexico. The chinampas are small, rectangular artificial islands that were fabricated by weaving reeds and anchoring fences that were made of reeds. Canal waterways and drainage ditches crisscrossed the chinampas, which gave the impression that the islands were floating, when in reality they were anchored to the bottom of the lake. The chinampas were extremely fertile, and were well known for producing bountiful harvests of beans, tomatoes, squash, watermelon, chilis, cilantro, and even corn.

Aztec aqueducts: The Aztecs developed a unique system of aqueducts for transporting fresh water to the large city center of Tenochtitlan, which was located in the middle of the large lake, Texcocol. The aqueduct system consisted of twin pipes in order to have redundancy so that if one required repair or cleaning, the other would still be available for transporting fresh water.

Astronomy: The Aztecs and Inca relied on elaborate and detailed calendars for virtually all aspects of their lives. For that reason, they built observatories and developed very accurate systems of tracking, predicting, and communicating the movements and alignments of the sun, moon, stars, and planets. The Aztec (Mexica) calendar consisted of a 260-day ritual cycle, which formed a 52-year “calendar round.” Both the Aztecs believed that the sun and the entire world had gone through apocalypses (total destruction and rebirth). According to the Aztecs, the current sun is the fifth one, and it will eventually perish due to its imperfections.

Civil engineering in the Andes: The Inca were able to develop extremely complex and effective methods for transporting water, stabilizing mountain slopes, engineering terraces for agricultural purposes, and precision-cutting building stone so that it would not be necessary to use mortar.

Surgery and Inca medicine: The well-preserved Inca mummies reveal that the Incas were well-versed in surgery, and in particular, cranial surgery used to relieve intercranial pressure that could be a result of concussion or inflammation. The Inca skull surgeons were highly skilled at trepanation, and it appears that the majority of the individuals who underwent the surgery survived.

Discussion Question:

The level of technology possessed by the Aztec and Inca civilizations was so advanced that many people have proposed that the technology came from space aliens. While we do not have any evidence for such a far-fetched hypothesis, the accomplishments of the preHispanic civilizations deserve merit for their accomplishments. Please take a look at the technology and science of the ancient Aztec and Inca civilizations and evaluate their contributions. Which are the most surprising? What questions do their accomplishments provoke? What more would you like to know about their civilizations?

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RELIGION

Mesoamerica: Aztecs Like the Maya, the Aztecs believed that the world and humanity would be destroyed and regenerated, not once, but with predictable regularity. Their calendar helped them follow the progression to the present day, which was considered to be the final age. The Aztec calendar was also very important in helping keep track of the special feast days for the Aztec gods and goddesses. The Aztecs had a large pantheon of gods, and the ones listed above represent only a few. Virtually all aspects of life had at least one corresponding god. All the gods required abeyance, and so it was important to find a way to coordinate the ceremonies and festivals that honored them by means of festivals, banquets, dancing, music, decorations, incense-burning, penance and human and animal sacrifice. It was important to honor the gods, because if they were not sufficiently honored, they would punish humanity by means of natural disasters. The larger the need, the bigger the sacrifice. The highest-quality sacrifices were considered to be warriors who had shown valor in battle.

South America: Inca The Inca Empire was the largest empire in the world at the time that it flourished, between 1400 – 1533 CE. At their height, there were 10 million inhabitants in the Inca Empire, and they were ruled by 40,000 Incas. Within the empire, there were at least 30 different languages, which led to the development of quipus (coded knots and strings), which recorded statistics and communicated calculations. Central to Inca religious belief was the progression of the Sun, Moon and stars, and a sense of how the world's history could be predicted through the movement of the constellations and the Milky Way. The Inca religion possessed several aspects in common with other religions of the time, such as the Aymara, Moche, and Tiwanaku.

Inca religious practices centered around ancestor worship, and they often offered food, drink, and precious items to the ancestors at their tombs. The Inca practiced mummification. As in other parts of South America, the Incas practiced sacrifice of animals and humans, even children in order to appease the gods. The pouring of libation (water or chichi beer) was also included in the rituals. In comparison with other South American or Mesoamerican civilizations, the Incas did not devote as much space or time to temples or religious practices. However, the Temple of the Sun in present-day Quito was sufficiently imposing to motivate the invading Spaniards to take it down and to erect a huge cathedral in its stead.

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

Ontological Instability: For the Aztecs, the key problem of existence is its essential ephemeral nature. It is not stable, and the corporal, tangible aspects are impermanent. The nature of human spirit and the heart, however, were considered unchanging.

Calendar: The Aztecs believed in five consecutive worlds of the sun, which translates into a philosophy of time and change, and the idea that nothing is ever permanent and that the world is constantly in motion. The calendar is a vital tool for imposing balance.

Sacrifice: The underlying philosophy perpetual change helps understand the need for constant and recurring rituals and sacrifice to assure mankind's continuance.

Dualism: The Aztecs believed that everything has a potential duality, and hence many of the deities had contradictory qualities. They also believed in rituals in which individuals are able to take on attributes of animal spirits. Shape-shifting is an important manifestation.

Nature of Reality and Destiny in the Stars: The Incas believed that every tribe or community sprang from a specific place in the earth, where they had been seeded (in the form of clay figures) and brought to life based on the energy from the heavens. Each community had a specific star that was their place of origin. They truly believed they were people from the stars, and their destiny was mapped in the constellations.

Ancestors as Shapers of the World: Although it may seem grotesque now, the Inca liked to have their mummified ancestors accompany them at important events including harvests and marriages. They stored the mummified ancestors in tombs, and then would bring them out to participate. The mummies would be dressed in ceremonial clothing and ritually fed. For the Inca, the ancestors also embodied gods and spirits, and the essential spirits manifested on earth in mountains, rivers, caves, and other forms.

Search for Truth: The Incas believed in the necessity of understanding one's own inner nature in order to appreciate the truth in the world. The truth, for the Incas, was in the messages in the stars and in the bodies of their ancestors, both of which communicated directly with the gods.

Ethics / Right Action: The Incas expressed respect for all forms of life: At the heart of all forms of life is the sun, according to the Inca. They did not worship the sun, per se, but the fact that it expresses the divine. Pacha Yachay, the Universe, is the magnetism and linking force that holds everything together.

Discussion/Questions

Conquest which involves the virtual extermination of people and cultures does not often pause to contemplate the finer points, such as the question, "What are we doing to the fate of women? And, heaven forbid, how are we to work with the highly educated freemen and women? Explain how the Spanish colonialist philosophers address issues of the condition of women and indigenous peoples.

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ART

Inca: Incorporated painting in articles for daily life as well as for religious ceremonies. The dedicated a great deal of work painting with ceramics. Woven art, while not painting, also created meaning through colorful patterns that could be found in the textiles they created. The geometric shapes and colors had symbolic meaning. The finely woven textiles were used as currency.

Aztecs: The Aztecs painted to communicate, and much of their painting was in the form of brightly colored and detailed pictograms which appear in the Codices.

Discussion/Questions

Being able to envision the gods, and to point out just how different they were from human beings was very important to the different groups of people who lived in Latin America before the arrival of the Europeans. At the same time, the worldview extended far beyond the bounds of the earth, and incorporated depictions of calendars and celestial bodies. Explain how pre-Hispanic painting depicted beliefs and traditions, both religious and secular.

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LITERATURE

Aztec Codices: Written in colorful pictograms (as opposed to the hieroglyphics of the Aztecs), the surviving Aztec codices are written on cloth paper. They tell the story of the Aztec journey from Aztlan to the Valley of Mexico, and also they include the Aztec calendar.

Discussion/Questions

Unfortunately, the Conquistadors burned the elaborately painted paper codices because they were convinced they were of the devil. But, both the Aztec (Nahua peoples) and the Maya codices were very rich in cultural significance. They contained details about the history of the world, main beliefs and traditions. Of the few fragments that have been preserved, what are main elements found in the Aztec and Maya codices? How do we now interpret them?

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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 16th 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 17th 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 18th 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 Quechquemil, 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 18th 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, *pipilintzintlis*, 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 was 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 16th 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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19TH CENTURY

POLITICAL HISTORY

GOVERNMENT

Republics: After Simon Bolivar inspired uprisings throughout Latin America, the newly formed Republics were ruled in a system of government that had a parliament, a president, and ministry of justice. Although there were elections, not everyone had a right to vote (slaves, indigenous, and women could not vote), and so what resulted was a replica of previous domestic power structure, and the same elite families continued to hold the reins of power.

Military Dictatorship: Latin America saw the rise of a unique kind of isolationism that expressed itself through military dictatorships. One of the most celebrated was that of Solano Lopez of Paraguay, the protagonist of “Yo, El Supremo” (I am the Supreme One) by Agosto Roa Bastos (the Gabriel Garcia Marquez of Paraguay). The military dictatorships were isolationist and nationalistic, and they often plunged into suicidal wars rather than compromise.

Utopian Settlements: Elizabeth Nietzsche, the sister of Friedrich Nietzsche, was one of several utopian thinkers who decided to leave what they considered to be a “degraded” Europe, and to establishments in Latin America that would allow them to maintain their vision of purity (of race, religion, or odd belief system). Elizabeth Nietzsche’s dream of an all-white utopia in Bolivia ended in disaster. On the other hand, the Mennonites in the Chaco and in Mexico survived and, in some cases, thrived.

Discussion/Questions

The new republics forged by Simon Bolivar and his followers were portrayed as something absolutely new. However, there were many aspects of the government that were not new at all, and the ruling elites, the creoles, continued to be in power. Describe the pros and cons of keeping the ruling elite in power.

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MILITARY

Raiding: Indians were renowned for their “raids” in which a group would attack a settlement, generally setting fire to the homes, killing the men, sometimes kidnapping women, and almost always taking scalps. It was a tactic so brutal that it inspired terror in the settlers and made them demand military protection.

False Flag: Groups that wanted to cast the blame on others or to provoke a war between two countries would often disguise themselves as members of another group as they attacked and performed war

crimes (killing civilians, stealing their goods). Examples of this took place in northern Mexico as whites would dress up as Indians in order to blame them for attacks on stagecoaches and trains carrying gold.

Civilians as Targets: In the Spanish-American War, the military deliberately attacked civilian targets in order to break their spirit, and to break up any centers that were doubling as military hubs. Considering civilians targets is often legitimized in a setting where the civilians are also using guerrilla tactics.

Blockades: A foreign navy would attack all boats seeking to enter or leave a particular port, resulting in privation for the people as they ran out of food, supplies, and ways to earn a living. The blockades were particularly effective in the Spanish-American War because they did not allow munitions to enter, resulting in poorly outfitted Spanish troops.

Privateers: Privateers were pirates with a license to steal, granted by governments and the crown (English and French in particular) to attack Spanish galleons in order to rob them of their gold (and young men) to bolster their finances and troops (seamen). They were very effective in the Caribbean and in Baja California.

WARS

Wars of Independence: The first war of independence took place in Haiti, and started as an anti-slavery and anti-colonial insurrection by self-liberated slaves. The Haitian Revolution, which ended in 1804, was highly lauded by the French philosophes, as well as by Simon Bolivar, who recruited Haitian soldiers to help him fight to liberate Venezuela from Spain. Bolivar, with the help of various generals, travelled from country to country, attacking the Spanish centers of government. Bolivar's notions were enthusiastically received because they meant that the "criollos" of the various nations could throw off the shackles of Spain (and no longer have to pay the 20% tax (la quinta)), and could control the countries and the resources directly. What at first seemed to promise a solution actually destabilized many countries and triggered civil wars and uprisings. It also changed the role of the Catholic Church and made it more overtly political, as the church and its resources were marshalled into supporting the local elites / criollos. The wars of liberation began in Venezuela, to be followed by Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Central America, and Bolivia.

Civil Wars: After the rule of Spain was cast off, not surprisingly, a number of bloody turf wars arose over control of territory, trade, and resources. They took place throughout the nineteenth century, and many of the countries had several episodes of civil wars, as the warring factions were never completely content with the territory and resources they controlled. The first civil war took place in Colombia, and it had several episode. A Uruguayan civil war was triggered by the desire to control trade and competition with Argentina and Brazil, as well as to control the rivers (and trade). It gave rise to larger, more regional wars. The Chilean civil war involved European interests and was motivated by the newly discovered mineral resources, and the opportunity to take advantage of a newly weakened Bolivia (which at one point extended to the Pacific Ocean). Central America, which united under the Captaincy General of the New Spain (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala), fragmented into individual countries, which virtually assured control by a few dominant families, ease of corruption, and widespread poverty of the masses.

Mexican-American War (1848): Triggered by the corrupt and incompetent General Santa Ana, this war had disastrous consequences for Mexico as it lost approximately 50 percent of its territory; all of what had once been a part of "New Spain" with the capital in Santa Fe, New Mexico, north of the Rio Grande River.

French-Mexican War (1861-1867): The French, like citizens of other nations, took advantage of Mexico's independence in 1821 and the sudden opening of the borders to French emigrants. Later, in the 1860s, Maximilian I of Mexico allied himself with France. The French left many cultural impressions on Mexico, particularly in architecture, music, and cuisine. However, the French over-reached and invaded Mexico, resulting in bloody battles. Perhaps the most famous was the Battle of Puebla, which took place on the 5th of May (Cinco de Mayo), in which Mexican peasants defeated the French forces.

Uprisings: Extreme social inequality following independence resulted in a number of uprisings, as the elites (criollos) who controlled the lands after independence from Spain refused indigenous and poor to have access to land.

Brazilian Ragamuffin: The cattle ranchers of the south wanted to secede from the Brazilian nation because they were charged high taxes, which made their primary product, dried beef, uneconomic compared with that of Argentina. Their uprising was put down after much bloodshed.

Argentine Conquest of the Desert: Settlers of European descent fought the indigenous peoples of Patagonia in order to control the fertile territory which was converted into the breadbasket of South America. It is generally considered a genocide and it took place in the 1870 until 1884.

Comanche-Mexico / Apache-Mexico / Yaqui Wars: Mexican settlers wished to utilize the lands in Northern Mexico controlled by the Comanche, Apache, and Yaqui Indians. The battles were brutal and genocidal. As in the United States to the north, the Indians who were not killed were captured and deported ("resettled"), this time to the Yucatan.

Triple Alliance War (Paraguay – Argentina – Brazil): The most brutal of all the Latin American wars, which essentially reduced Paraguay from an important trade center to a massively depopulated and increasingly isolationist nation under the control of a series of repressive dictatorships. The war was fought from 1864 – 1870 in order to further control the River Plate area of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil in order to have a direct access to the Atlantic Ocean through the Parana River. Before the war, Paraguay was prosperous due to control of trade along a massive system of rivers. However, President Solano Lopez's military tactics were disastrous, and the death toll was more than 400,000 people. Paraguay lost 70% of its male population and important territory to Argentina and Brazil.

Spanish American War (Cuba and Puerto Rico) – 1898: Famously referred to by President Theodore Roosevelt as a "bully war" (meaning a good little war), the battles were vicious and both sides committed atrocities, while troops were riddled by tropical diseases. The result was that Spain lost control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines, which came under the control of the United States.

Discussion/Questions

1. Simon Bolivar, the Liberator of Latin America, led campaigns for independence from Spain. It happened at a moment when the philosophical mindset was ripe for change, as well as economic conditions. Describe how and why the monarchy of Spain lost its influence, while the families and traditional "criollo" encomenderos were actually more powerful than ever. Describe the economic benefits to the encomenderos and the role of the Catholic church.
2. Privateers were pirates who were legitimized by the monarchies of England or France, and as such, they were both economic and military agents of change. Many fortunes were made because the privateers were able to keep a part of the cargo that they seized. However, there were complaints from many the ethics of augmenting the Navy in this manner. What would you find morally or ethically problematic about using privateers when you do not have enough money to equip a navy?

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SOCIAL HISTORY

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Independence: Social hierarchies stayed in place, even with the gaining of independence from Spain. The only major change was that there tended to be more social mobility among the middle class and the professions (medicine, accounting, engineering, etc.).

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.

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.

Discussion/Questions

If you found yourself recently captured from your home in West Africa, dragged to a large wooden ship where you were chained to a wall in the sickeningly dirty quarters below decks, fed very little, and abused daily, just to be sold as a slave to a West Indies, Brazilian, or coastal plantation, would there be any hope for you? As a slave, what was your position in society? If you escaped and invented a false identity as a freedman, could you ascend in society? How? What would you have to do? If you had children with a "criolla" woman of European descent, would your children have any hope of ascending the social hierarchy? What would they have to do? Could establishing a flourishing and profitable business help you? Could learning to read, write, and produce eloquent writings in support of the church or a head of government help? What would you have to do?

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GENDER RELATIONS

Women at home; men at war: The traditional roles of women and men were reinforced during the wars of independence throughout Latin America. Women stayed at home to take care of children and other family members. Girls were trained to take care of the home, and at least one of the girls was expected to not marry, but to stay behind in order to take care of aging parents.

Women's entrepreneurship: The "Chola" market women in Bolivia and Peru who are easily recognizable with their bowler hats, bright shawls, and long skirts. In the altiplano of Bolivia and Peru, men tended to work in the mines, while women worked at home and in raising children. However, roles expanded and women organized small businesses; often fruit stands, vegetable stands, handcrafted items, woven goods, and more at the local "mercado" (market). The roles were well described in costumbrista fiction. One such work, "La Nina de Sus Ojos" (The Apple of Her Eye), by Bolivian author Antonio Diaz Villamil, revolved around the dreams of social mobility of one such "chola" marketwoman and her desire that her daughter be considered of high social class.

Women in the arts and education: Women reformers such as the educator and poet Gabriela Mistral (Chile) worked tirelessly to reform the educational system to expand the rural school system and to provide more opportunities for girls to obtain an education and for women to become teachers and professors.

Discussion/Questions

Women started assuming the role of educator for individuals outside the immediate family in the nineteenth century. Women such as Gabriela Mistral fought hard for the right of girls to have an education and to become teachers, school administrators, and more. What are some of the advantages of having educated girls and women?

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ECONOMIC HISTORY

INNOVATION

Music and Dance: Many dances and songs which were previously suppressed under Spanish rule as being subversive became lively and energetic celebrations of cultural heritage and national identity. For example, the Jarabe Tapatío (Mexican hat dance), is a folkloric dance that includes elements of courtship and the music is performed by mariachis. It was banned because it was considered challenging to the Spanish rule, but after independence quickly became a symbol of nationalistic pride, not only for the dance and the music, but also for the dance costumes themselves, which include the "china poblana" (brightly embroidered and beribboned skirts and blouses), and the "charro" men's outfit with silver button-lined pant legs and bedecked sombrero.

Innovative forms of government (isolationist military dictatorship): The isolationist military dictatorships that emerged in some countries while there was still some euphoria of independence from Spain were innovative in their willingness to completely wall off their country in the attempt to be self-

sufficient. The result was both hyper-nationalism and corruption, as smuggling and trafficking of contraband were secretly sanctioned by the dictator. The dictatorship preserved national identity, but in the end, was pernicious in that it allowed the country to be led into disastrous wars.

Rubber: During the 19th century, innovations in the collecting and harvesting of latex from the rubber tree led to a tremendous boom in the Amazon rain forest in Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia and also parts of Peru, such as Iquitos. The process allowed clothing to be waterproofed, and later for tires to be developed. The “Rubber Barons” developed highly labor-intensive rubber plantations and forced Indians to tap the latex from the trees. New, more productive hybrids of rubber trees were created, leading to even more production. The innovations were eventually the undoing of the Brazilian rubber industry, because they were adopted in Southeast Asia, where they thrived, creating competition.

Indicator Minerals / “Pathfinders”: Geochemists found that, using new technologies, there were “indicator minerals” or “pathfinders” that could be used in the exploration of gold and silver. These minerals were typically ones with zinc, cobalt, arsenic, or mercury and they led to new discoveries in areas that had been given up as depleted in Bolivia, Mexico, and Peru.

Mining Processes: The Chilean mining industry was a world leader in developing the ability to mill rock into very fine particles that could then be used in new chemical processes, such as the cyanide process, which allowed fine-particle gold to be extracted.

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

Free Markets: One of the primary appeals of independence to the elite in Latin America was that they could have a free market. They would no longer have to trade exclusively with Spain, nor would they have to pay “la quinta”, or the automatic 20% tax. The elite saw that they could potentially make significant profits if they could freely trade their products, set prices based on supply and demand, and avoid the obligatory tribute, or tax system.

Protectionism / Military Dictatorship: After a few years of independence some new republics, such as Paraguay, fell under the thrall of a powerful military dictatorship, with a charismatic narcissist dictator holding forth. In many of the military dictatorships, contact with the outside world was considered suspect and destabilizing. So, free trade was discouraged, and the country's economy isolated itself behind a wall of tariffs and import restrictions. The result on the economy was ultimately negative, since companies could not generate enough surplus to reinvest and grow.

Communism and Socialism / Utopian Settlements: Latin America was also the location of new experiments in socialism and communal ownership. While many of the settlements were founded by religious groups, such as the Mennonites, others created settlements that were focused on trade within small, exclusive groups, and there was suspicion of outsiders. Most were unsustainable because they were undercapitalized, did not have enough technology to grapple with the realities of the climate, and were crippled by bad leadership.

Discussion/Questions

In the 19th century, the leaders of countries like Paraguay believed that isolating their populace from the outside world would strengthen it and make it less likely to be corrupted by outside influences. Import restrictions stimulated the production of import substitutions, such as the hand-tatted "spiderweb lace" (called "ñanduti" in native Guaraní) and other artisan items. However, there were several disadvantages to isolationism. Please describe a few of them.

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CULTURAL HISTORY

SCIENCE

Panama Canal: After more than 50 years of surveying and planning, the Panama Canal construction began in 1881, with a workforce of more than 40,000 individuals. The project was plagued by setbacks and scandals, and was finally abandoned. The United States took over, and completed the work in 1913. A total of 75,000 people worked on the project, and almost 6,000 died of tropical diseases and accidents. The project, which was largely designed during the 19th century, was one of the wonders of the world, and was of extreme economic and strategic value.

Railroads in Mexico: The railway system in Mexico featured some of the most advanced engineering in the world, and the Veracruz – Mexico City line that was inaugurated in 1873, was renowned for its mountain bridges, engineered track beds, and systems of controls. Financed largely by British, American, and French investors, the railway system consisted of more than 15,000 miles of in-service track by 1900.

Medicinal Plants: The medicinal properties of the coca leaf, grown primarily in Bolivia and Peru, were integrated into medicines and products used in 19th century United States and Europe. An influential

paper by Dr. Paolo Mantegazza discussed its stimulating effects on cognition, which in turn stimulated the production of a number of patent medicines and tonics which included the liquid extract of the coca leaf.

Shipbuilding: Italian immigrants in the 19th century settled in Buenos Aires where they continued their practice of shipbuilding. In doing so, they developed innovative ships that were able to navigate rivers as well as oceans. The innovative designs, navigation equipment, and lightweight materials were groundbreaking for their time.

Chemical Engineering Processes: The demand for rubber to make impermeable footwear created a huge boom in the Amazonas part of Brazil, especially after the development of chemical processes involving sulfur and heat, called “vulcanization.” Vulcanization was first developed in the U.S., but Brazilian chemists further perfected it, which made it possible to export even more rubber from the Amazon region, without worrying about its oxidation.

Discussion Question:

The Industrial Revolution in Europe and the United States during the nineteenth century resulted in a demand for a number of raw materials and inputs that would help build machines and products. While simple agricultural inputs were often needed, there was a larger need for inputs that contributed unique attributes and represented a step-change in industrial efficiency and in the standard of living of the consumer. Rubber was one of those products. There were others as well. Select one product and analyze the reasons why scientific and technological innovation resulted in a multi-tiered economic boom associated with that product.

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RELIGION

The Catholic Church often supported the Spanish or Portuguese rulers, which is one reason why the power base stayed intact for so many centuries. However, in the 1830s, when Simon Bolivar started to move through South America and country after country declared independence from Spain, many priests and representatives of the Catholic Church supported independence from Spain.

Mennonites: Religious persecution in Europe resulted in waves of emigration to Central and South America. While it never achieved the same intensity as in North America, the diaspora of diverse persecuted groups did result in clusters of different isolates, which include Mennonites and also Mormons.

Discussion/Questions

The Catholic Church had a complicated role in the independence movement and then the conflicts of territory, trade, and political influence. On the one hand, the Church collaborated with the independence movement. Later, the Church often played a role in helping the families with power maintain control of

assets, influence, and political power. In those circumstances, how did the Catholic Church potentially escalate conflict?

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PHILOSOPHY

Philosophes in the New World: The French Enlightenment deeply influenced Latin America, and the notions of self-determination, freedom, and liberty were deeply appealing to a group rebelling against old aristocratic orders (and concentration of power). Thus, Hidalgo, Bello, and Bolivar essentially evangelized the French Enlightenment throughout Latin America. The tangible first expression was in independence from Spain.

Miguel Hidalgo (1753-1811): Mexico. Miguel Hidalgo was a Roman Catholic priest and a brilliant strategist who not only led the uprising of the Mexicans against the Spanish, whose tariffs, crop controls, and restrictive rule resulted in poverty for peasant farmers, but also transformed the previously Spanish-aligned Catholic Church to something uniquely Mexican, and a powerful player in the development of a clear idea of Mexican identity. The Virgin of Guadalupe was given an even higher place of prominence and became the heraldic image (or battle flag), thus suborning at least on some level, the power, influence, and riches of the church.

Andrés Bello (1781-1865): Born in Venezuela, Bello embraced the ideas of Diderot, Rousseau and Voltaire which formed underpinnings of the French Revolution and then applied them to the situation in Latin America. He taught Simon Bolivar and participated with Bolivar in convincing the people of Venezuela to become independent from Spain.

Simón Bolivar (1783 – 1830): Venezuela. Simon Bolivar has achieved the reputation as The Liberator of Latin America, although he worked closely alongside the Argentine general Jose de San Martin and also Antonio Jose de Sucre (later the first president of Bolivia). Bolivar traveled throughout South America and encouraged individual countries to become republics. Unfortunately, most converted instantly into dictatorships, but the prevailing political philosophy was not of dictatorship, but of free societies with individual liberty and self-determination.

Positivism in Latin America: The 19th century, and its thrust toward Independence from Spain, rejected mysticism and intuitive knowledge. Instead, it focused on logical, mathematically-supported arguments, all of which were directed at giving individuals the freedom to make their own rational decision. This was a variation of the positivist writings of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Ernst Haeckel.

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888): A prolific writer and the president of Argentina, Sarmiento's philosophy was deeply positivist and focused on the rational advancement of human society by means of technology and modernization. He was not a technocrat, and yet, his major Works, including *Civilization and Barbarism*, point to the rational organization of human beings and their collective efforts to incorporate labor-saving technologies as the prime drivers and transformative forces of a society.

Jose Ingenieros (1877 – 1825): Ingenieros was a positivist philosopher in late 19th century and early 20th century Argentina, which saw the great rise of the middle class and the production of wealth, and the development of a city, Buenos Aires, with culture that rivaled and some cases outshone Europe. His focus was on the use of rational thought to improve the human condition, and he focused on individual

responsibility to overcome what he considered “mediocrity.” In fact, his most famous work, *El Hombre Mediocre*, focuses on how to develop a code of values and ethics, and to truly differentiate oneself by being an Idealist. Those values would, when combined with actions and correct decisions, help one succeed in the world. His views were very popular as they encouraged upward social mobility and aspirational striving.

José Martí (1854-1895): Influenced by Bello and Bolívar, Martí was a Cuban writer, thinker, and philosopher who led the Cuban War of Independence. His philosophy is idealist and socialist, with a belief that the collective efforts of individuals can bring about a better world for all.

Discussion/Questions

Costumbristas recognized and documented indigenous cultures and folklore, along with mestizo traditions. The 20th century philosophers took it a step further and made a conscious effort to incorporate indigenous beliefs into a philosophical framework. Explain how the 20th century philosophers incorporated older ideas and traditions with the new ideas coming from Europe.

Discussion Question:

Along with a proliferation of newly formed independent states, 19th century Latin America experience a dramatic expansion of the number of writers who pointed to the responsibility of the individual to take responsibility for social change. Discuss positivism in the 19th century in Latin America.

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ART

Self-portraits by indigenous and mestizo artists. The nineteenth century was a time of breaking away from Spain and Brazil, and also of creating a national identity. While the indigenous peoples were still denied access to the economy in significant ways, there was a tacit understanding that they were needed in order to attain critical mass in breaking away. They were also valuable soldiers and support in the battles for independence. There were also examples where the artists were able to obtain formal training, as in the case of Manuel Ocoranza, born in Uruapan, Mexico. His self-portrait shows influences of the philosophy of the Cuban Jose Marti, positioned as it is with the Castle of Chapultepec in the background.

Heroic depictions of battles. Romanticism began to supplant the neoclassicism of the colonial period. One of the most popular genres was that of the military painting, particularly that which showed valor in fighting for independence from Spain. Examples include Patricio Ramos Ortega's *Hand-to-Hand Fighting* (1862) (part of the Battle of Puebla series), and *Fusilamiento de Maximiliano, Miramon, y Mejia* (unknown artist, 19th century).

Costumbristas. Perhaps the most important artistic movement of the nineteenth century was that of the "costumbristas" whose focus was on the daily life and times in towns, villages, and among ordinary people. They were painted in realist style, and have come to be of great importance in understanding the social customs, traditions, and change of the societies of Latin America. The movement progressed in tandem with the development of the regional novel. Examples artists include Francisco Pradilla y Ortiz, Agustin Arrieta (Mexico), Juakin Pinto (Ecuador), and Prilidiano Pueyrredon (Argentina). Pueyrredón, whose father was the first president of the republic of Argentina, painted landscapes and portraits that capture the vastness of the Argentine pampas, and working people's connection to agriculture, ranching, and the construction of a dream.

Discussion/Questions

The French influence Latin American culture in many ways during the nineteenth century. Not only did the spirit of revolution result in a torrent of Romantic work, it also focused on other aspects of society that were not considered worthy subjects of art by the NeoClassicists who bulwarked the monarchies. In France, writers such as Zola started to write about the working class and even the underclass. In Latin America, the same emphasis on realism could be found, with an emphasis on authenticity and cultural history. The paintings that depicted everyday life and the customs and activities came to be known as "costumbrismo." It was as much as a philosophical statement (a refusal to idealize) as an aesthetic exercise. Describe costumbrista painting styles.

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LITERATURE

Romanticism: Tied closely to independence, romantic fiction and epic poetry focused on establishing a sense of identity and acknowledging the groups that were often excluded by colonial rule. Examples include Domingo Sarmiento (Facundo, 1845, Argentina), Jorge Isaac (Maria, 1867, Colombia), Euclides de Cunha (Os Sertoes, 1902, Brazil), and Jose Fernandez (Martin Fierro, 1872, Argentina).

Revolutionary Essays: The philosophy leading to the French Revolution deeply influenced Latin Americans living and studying in France. They were inspired to bring their message to the various regions of Latin America, inspiring moves to break away from Spain and form independent nations. The most influential essays were written by Andres Bello and Simon Bolivar, who started in their native Venezuela and then traveled throughout Latin America. Later, Jose Marti of Cuba became an active force for independence and a peaceful future.

Literature of Resistance: The revolutionary essays had counterparts in other genres, especially novels and poetry. The main themes were utopian; the idea of independence from Spain, access and inclusion for previously excluded groups, and a peaceful future were characteristic features. Key literary figures include Jose Marti (Cuba), Ruben Dario (Nicaragua), and Clorinda Matto de Turner (Peru).

Costumbrismo: The Latin American correlate to literary realism in Europe (particularly in France (Zola) and England (Gissing)), Latin American "costumbrismo" focused on everyday life, including the customs (hence "costumbristas"), activities, manners, attitudes, and daily life. The genre became very important in Latin America, particularly in short stories and novels, and was often used later in the century and even into the twentieth century as a rallying cry for social reform movements. Important nineteenth-century costumbristas include Esteban Echeverria, whose *El Matadero* (The Slaughterhouse) gained fame and acceptance. Other important costumbristas include Jose Milla (Guatemala), Roman Vial (Chile), Jose Manuel Marroquin (Colombia), Jose Maria Vergara y Vergara (Colombia), Ricardo Palma (Peru), and Manuel Alonso (Puerto Rico).

Discussion/Questions

1. The desire for independence from Spain did not form in a bubble. Instead, many of the people who were involved such as Simon Bolivar had studied in France and were very influenced by both the philosophes and the early Romantic writing. When Simon Bolivar returned to Venezuela, he and others wrote with the goal of convincing people to break away. Which writings were influential, and how did they whip up enthusiasm?

2. Costumbrismo reflected an attitude of wishing to cherish and preserve the traditions of the local cultures, which was particularly pronounced after independence. Describe how costumbrismo helped countries develop a sense of idea and also of respect for their unique cultural heritage.

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20TH CENTURY

POLITICAL HISTORY

GOVERNMENT

Democracies: The 20th century was a time of revolutions as the ruling elites were viewed as corrupt and oppressive, and also did not allow land ownership, voting rights, or open commerce. The revolutions were struggles over economic control as well as for freedom of expression. The first in the 20th century was the Mexican Revolution. The democratic form of government that resulted centered on a detailed constitution and a separation of church and state.

Military Dictatorships (Juntas): The revolutions that shook the young countries in Latin America often resulted in a uniquely Latin American military dictatorship. The military dictatorships of Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay (Stroessner), Chile (Pinochet), differed from the military dictatorships of the 19th century. The 20th-century military dictatorships were able to garner outside support by playing into Cold War politics, and they utilized brutal techniques to maintain control. Argentina was not the only country where many thousands of youth “disappeared” never to be seen again. They were tortured and then murdered. Military dictatorships were stunningly long-lived, which demonstrates the level of complicit favoritism on all levels of society.

Communist Dictatorships: There was little difference between a Communist dictator and a military dictatorship, except for ideology and the ownership of the countries means of production and land. In a Communist government, the government seized all assets, thereby making all land, equipment, and means of production chattels of the state, and in theory, owned communally by everyone. In practice, the ruling elite controlled the assets of the land, which looked strangely feudal rather than communal. Communist dictatorships were in place in Chile (Allende), Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Nicaragua, and famously, Cuba.

Doomsday Cult: An echo of the utopian experiments in the nineteenth century, cults took advantage of the fragile (and easily corruptible) legal systems to set up communities that were often nominally religious, but more often about the twisted vision of a charismatic leader who obtained funds through his followers, whom he entrapped both physically and psychologically. The best-known was Jim Jones's The People's Temple in Guayana, which ended tragically with the mass suicide of all its followers.

Discussion/Questions

Independence from Spain did not mean that all groups had a voice in the government. In fact, it simply reinforced the fact that the indigenous peoples, women, and slaves had no voice at all. Finally, however, times changed. Revolution meant that dreams of inclusion could become a reality. Describe some of the ways in which revolution meant more participation for the previously disenfranchised groups.

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MILITARY

Guerrilla Warfare: Guerrilla warfare was developed into an art form by Pancho Villa during the Mexican Revolution. He would not obey the traditional rules of engagement, but would attack by night, using the element of surprise. They would not use uniforms, but would dress as ordinary civilians, which increased the likelihood of unintentional slaughter of civilians and war crimes. It was, however, a good way to fight an asymmetrical war, where one side greatly outnumbered the other. Guerrilla warfare came to be practiced in many countries.

“Desaparecidos”: The military dictatorships of Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina responded to the guerrilla tactics of the Marxist rebels by secret, nighttime arrests that were effected without due process, and which amounted to kidnappings. The goal was to penetrate the Marxist rebel groups by taking the key members and then torturing them until they produced the information they needed. What happened in reality was that many young students who followed Marxist fashion and became involved in street protests were arrested, tortured, and killed, never to be seen again. Many were buried in mass graves or their bodies were dumped in the ocean. The goal of this tactic was to allow the dictator to maintain total control.

Domestic Terror: Embassies were bombed in Colombia and in Argentina. At first the attacks seemed to be motivated by conflicts between factions of the military. But, the reality was that they were attacks against the countries perceived to be financing one faction or the other. In Argentina, the Israeli Embassy was bombed. In Colombia, the American Embassy was bombed.

Cartel Warfare: Essentially a war for control of trade routes and the sources of supply (of people for human trafficking and of drugs for narco-trafficking), the tactics include kidnapping, symbolic ritual mutilation (with bodies dumped where most likely to be seen in order to communicate a terror-inducing message), money laundering, guerrilla warfare, and the misuse of the military in order to protect illegal (and immoral) activities. Cartel warfare has been a significant problem in Mexico, Honduras, and Colombia.

WARS

Mexican Revolution (1910 – 1920): The revolt against elitism that characterized much of the world manifested itself in Mexico as well. Anarchist, socialist, and communist ideologies united in order to oust the repressive regime of Porfirio Diaz, and to break up the stranglehold that a few families had on the nation’s resources. The result was a country with a Constitutional democracy and separation of church and state.

Colombia-Peru War (1932): The control of resources (rubber, oil and gas, lumber) was at the heart of the border conflict.

Chaco War (1932-1935): This war, which took place in the Chaco Desert of Paraguay and Bolivia, was over the control of land expected to be rich in hydrocarbons. Ironically, nothing economic has ever been found in that area. The war was brutal, with thousands of soldiers dying of thirst, and black dogs feasting on their cadavers at night. The war gave rise to many revitalized Guarani folktales, particularly of the “luison” or the black dog werewolf, often seen on nights with full moons in the

Peru Civil War (Sendero Luminoso): This ongoing civil war that took place throughout the 1970s and 1980s was an outgrowth of the Cold War, as communist guerrillas united under the banner, “Sendero Luminoso” (the Shining Path), and followed the teachings of Mao Tse Tung.

Falklands War (1982): The Argentinian military dictatorship decided to retake the Islas Malvinas (Falkland Islands), largely because of the discovery of oil and gas in territorial waters. They miscalculated the response of the British, who dedicated all resources necessary to sink Argentine ships and to win the

land war, the “Battle of Goose Green.” The Falklands stayed in the British Empire, with an economy fueled by wool, fishing, rockhopper penguin photography, and outfitting scientists heading to Antarctica.

Drug Wars: Cartels, narco-trafficking, and human trafficking (and kidnapping) account for a large portion of the unofficial gross domestic product (informal economy) of countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Honduras, and Peru. As a result, turf wars have erupted, often with government military involvement, often because government officials are a part of a particular cartel and they use the military to dominate the market. The wars started in the early 1980s, and continue to the present day.

Discussion/Questions

The so-called Drug Wars of Latin America are in reality trade wars in the informal economy. Explain why they are difficult to resolve, and explain the role of corruption and why the national military is often involved.

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SOCIAL HISTORY

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

From Peon to Patron – Land Reform and Upward Mobility: In the twentieth century, major reforms led to more opportunities for individuals who had never had access to land to become landowners and “patrones” instead of “peones.” In Mexico, the 1934 Agrarian Code involved the expropriation of American-owned agricultural property. The land was divided and given to citizens in the different Mexican states. This change was not always an easy one, because even though the poor now owned land, it did not mean that they had enough for it to support their family, and nor did it mean that they would be able to afford equipment, seeds, or storage facilities. The dilemma of the smallholder was captured in Juan Rulfo’s short story, *Nos Han Dado la Tierra*. Later in Mexico, with the 1970s Land Reform, there was another surge of repatriation of foreign-owned private farms. The farms were placed in the name of community members. These collectives were called “ejidos,” and they became increasingly contentious after a generation and more collective owners between the children (additional heirs).

Entrepreneurs: An important new social class emerged in the twentieth century throughout Latin America. Entrepreneurs encouraged investment and growth in all sectors of the economies, particularly after the privatization of public utilities and services. Entrepreneurs were a strong force for positive growth, but in countries where there did not exist a strong anti-monopoly framework, unscrupulous entrepreneurs often emerged as possessing control of the market, reducing the situation to essentially a one-source oligopoly.

Discussion/Questions

When land reform first took place in Mexico, big blocks of land that had previously been controlled by the viceroy were deeded to families that were long-established in a community. Suddenly, instead of simply working for a wealthy landowner, they had the chance to become self-sufficient. However, there were challenges. The first was the problem of investment capital. The second was the problem of inheritance, and the fact that the blocks of land had to be distributed among the heirs, resulting in small chunks of land that were often isolated and too small for raising crops or establishing businesses. So, your chance at upward mobility (moving from a landless peon to a landed patron), could evaporate like a light rain on cactus. What would you do? In such a situation, how could you marshal forces and make your dream of ascending in society a reality? If you were one of the class who recently lost your land, how could you make the best of the situation? Would you team up? Or, would your class prejudices block you?

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GENDER

Frida Kahlo: Artist, writer, and cultural icon, Frida Kahlo embraced the indigenous cultures and made their artisan items a subject of formal art. She painted many self-portraits in which she explored the complex and often conflicting identities found within the Mexican culture. She painted herself as a blend of cultures and genders, many times with a Mexican rebozo (shawl), traditional hairstyle, flowers, earrings, and a small moustache and thick eyebrows. Living a life marked by harrowing pain due to childhood polio and then a vertebrae-shattering bus accident, Kahlo painted in a remarkable "outsider" style that brought together all the paradoxes of her life: joy, pain, masculinity, femininity, self-taught art, repression and extreme self-expression, Mexican traditional dress, and western men's suits.

Manuel Puig: *Kiss of the Spider Woman*: Argentine fiction of the mid-twentieth century began to incorporate coded homosexuality, and to bring a taboo subject into the open. Perhaps the most well-known example is Manuel Puig's *The Kiss of the Spider Woman* that dealt with not only repressive dictatorships, but also the fact that homosexuality was deeply hidden and considered shameful in a typically macho Latino culture.

"Travesti" Culture: The taboo against homosexuality resulted in a great deal of repression and an underground culture of cross-dressing and gender ambiguity. Men who assumed ultra-feminine roles were generally shunned by society, resulting in deep poverty and a sub-culture that involved prostitution and sexual violence. Works of art and cinema began to include the "travesti" culture in the 1990s. They include the Mexican film, *Danzon* (1991) as well as Argentine writer Manuel Puig's *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1976) and Brazilian writer Adolfo Caminha's *Bom-Crioulo*.

Discussion/Questions

In Latin American literature, film, and art helped express the previously taboo areas of gender identity. For example, Frida Kahlo appears in photographs dressed in men's clothing, and in her self-portraits, she gives her attributes of both the male and the female. Later in the century, author Manuel Puig

incorporated gender-ambiguous men, and directors explored the underground culture of transvestites. What has the overall impact been? Is the depiction of gender ambiguity truly a recognition of essential truths about human nature, or does it more align with a tendency to produce spectacles in order to commodify “difference” with the result that human beings are further objectified? Take a position and provide examples to support your points.

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ECONOMIC HISTORY

INNOVATION

Ecotourism: Because of the many miles of seacoast, the unique tropical rain forest ecosystems, dramatic mountains, Latin American countries have been in the forefront of developing innovative tourism, including eco-tourism and cultural tourism. Costa Rica was one of the first countries to basically convert the entire country into an ecotouristic center, which meant that real estate and recreation development had to be strict, transparent, and uniformly enforced. Other countries that have made eco-tourism an emphasis include Brazil, Belize, Guatemala, Mexico, and Argentina. Argentina’s Patagonia region attracts tourists due to its proximity to the South Pole. Mexico has developed a protected regions that are supported by the government. Many are offshore, but others are in delicate ecosystems such as hot springs and waterfalls. The ecotourism is usually coupled with efforts to protect specific species, such as the endangered sea turtle, and with scientific research.

Medicinal plants and herbs: Many experiments have been conducted with fruit, plants and herbs of the Amazon rain forest and in subtropical rain forests of Latin America. Some of the results of the experiments have become household names and widely adopted products, including lapacho bark, stevia (used as sweetener and in anti-diabetes), yerba buena, yerba mate, and more.

Magical realism: One of the innovations of the Latin American literary world in the 20th century was the development of the genre, magical realism. It is a philosophically based approach to narrative which juxtaposes a detailed, realistic setting and characters with the supernatural. If there are antecedents in literature, perhaps the most obvious one would be Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and the introduction of Prospero’s books and Caliban. Alejo Carpentier, coined the term, “lo real maravilloso” which aligned itself with surrealism. But magical realism is much deeper than that, and often the juxtapositions of realism and magic give rise to critiques of the status quo, namely fascist dictatorships (which is why so many purveyors of magical realism ended up in exile).

Mexican handcrafted toys: Traditional Mexican hand-crafted toys are unique in the world because their inspiration dates back to the civilizations before the arrival of the Europeans. Mexican hand-crafted toys enjoyed a global revival in the 20th century as they were publicized in art exhibits (Museo de Arte Popular) and in magazines. The most popular and influential hand-crafted toys include the cup and ball, felt and yarn dolls and animals, miniature clay dishes, and miniature dioramas that include people, animals, Nativity scenes, and features of the countryside, such as fruit stands, open air markets, and more. The

traditional toys became so popular in the 20th century that they were often exported for use as home decorations as well as for their intended use as toys.

Mexican Handcrafted fireworks: The Mexican Independence Day, patron saint days and religious festivals are almost always accompanied by evening spectacles of dance and then fireworks. The fireworks are not the type you'll see in China or in the United States, but are unique to Latin America. They are hand-crafted, and in Mexico, and the fireworks fit within different shapes of frames. The most common are the "torito" (bull), the "Castillo" (castle), and other shapes. The fireworks are mounted on the frames and then set off by hand. Needless to say, this is dangerous.

Lithium Mining: Lithium is produced from the salt brine in ancient lake beds. There is lithium in the salt lakes and flats of Nevada and Utah, but the largest reserves are in Bolivia, in the Salar de Uyuni, located in the southern part of Bolivia, in the Andes. To process the lithium it is necessary to extract the water trapped in gravel in the old lake bed, and Bolivian chemists developed a new way of concentrating the lithium from the brine. The implications for the lithium battery industry are staggering.

Discussion/Questions

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were times of great political change as well as industrial transformation. Some of the ways in which Latin American innovations impacted the world had to do with improvements in industrial processes in mining. Later, new forms of political activism having to do with ecological activists helped spur on ecotourism. Describe the way in which Latin American natural resources have formed the foundation of innovation.

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TRADE

Free Trade with Capitalism /Democracies: The revolutions that took place in many of the countries in the early 20th century were often economically motivated by the desire to expand networks and have access to markets, and to control production and trade. For example, the Mexican Revolution resulted in land reform, and more access to the economy and upward mobility. In addition to having a democratic form of government, Mexico and other countries developed support for small-holder farms and small entrepreneurial businesses.

Protectionism / military dictatorships: Many Latin American countries with military dictatorships controlled the economy through a wall of tariffs. The Latin American dictatorships such as Chile under Pinochet, Paraguay under Stroessner, and Argentina under Peron, invented an economic system that centered on giant infrastructure projects that would modernize the country. The large infrastructure projects, such as the huge hydroelectric dam at Itaipú, generated electricity for the nation and to export. It also gave exclusive concessions to trade in state-owned or state-regulated commodities. Unfortunately,

this economic system also included payoffs and sweetheart deals to family and political cronies. It also tended to foster an underground informal economy that included trade in contraband as well as drug cartels.

State-Run, Centrally Planned Command Economies / Communist Dictatorships: In the countries that embraced Communist dictators, such as Cuba, Nicaragua, and the late 20th century Venezuela, a new type of centrally-run command economy was developed. Modeled after the Soviet paradigm, the South American command economies were also focused on the violent overthrow of governments, and how best to use economic factors as a weapon against the Western economies. They traded exclusively with each other, and sought to shore up the economies of countries such as Peru that were seen as able to set up guerrilla training camps. Trade consisted of selling arms, as well as exporting drugs to finance the training camps.

Cartels: Some economists assert that the underground economy of the cartels, which control human and drug trafficking, among other things, is in fact larger than the “formal” economy. The countries for which this statistic could hold true could be countries like Mexico, where the drug and human trafficking activities are interlaced with the formal government. The result is invariably tremendous economic insecurity, violence, and a lack of investment by the state in schools, medical services, and more.

Discussion/Questions

In certain parts of Colombia during the height of the cartels, the underground “informal” economy was much larger than the formal economy. What this meant in functional terms was that while there was some circulation of the money used in trafficking (money spent in food, fiestas, rent, clothing, transportation, etc.), the flows were not official, and it was impossible to properly apply an income tax or to assure that the business contributed to the general good. Explain why it is problematic for a country to have informal trade networks (cartels, etc.) and discuss how they can have a devastating impact on legitimate trade.

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CULTURAL HISTORY

SCIENCE

Animal husbandry: Beef became a main export in the early 20th century with the advent of new canning and freezing technologies. Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico were leaders in developing breeds of cattle with genetic qualities allowing them to resist heat and to gain weight quickly. Brazil quickly dominated the international beef industry, thanks to the vertical integration of the beef, from farm all the way to stockyard, slaughter, and packaging.

Canning science: Canning is a way to preserve and transport processed food in an airtight container. Canning technologies were developed in Argentina to export beef (primarily in the form of corned beef),

and the double-seamed process was perfected with a double-coated liner to assure the integrity of the contents.

Cataract surgery: Cuban eye clinics are world-renowned for their state of the art technology for the diagnosis and surgical intervention for eye diseases including cataracts and glaucoma.

Lithium mining: The Uyuni Salar of Bolivia, with its lithium-rich brines that lie within layers of an ancient lake bed, has been the site of process innovation in the production and processing of minerals such as lithium. They are found dissolved in the salty brines of the lacustrine deposits.

Astronomy: The largest single-aperture telescope in the world was launched in 1963 in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. Puerto Rican scientists, collaborating with scientists from around the world, developed new workflows and processes for using the telescope for radio astronomy, atmospheric science, and radar astronomy. Major breakthroughs were accomplished in the areas of detecting perturbations in the ionosphere, which would potentially portend the deployment of nuclear warheads, which made the Arecibo telescope a vital part of military defense.

Color Television: Guillermo Gonzalez Camarena, who lived and worked in Guadalajara, Mexico, is widely recognized as the inventor of the color-wheel type of color television. As both an electrical and mechanical engineer, Gonzalez Camarena was able to integrate the transmission system and the electronic production of images. His first patent for the system was awarded in 1942.

Discussion Question:

In the twentieth century, scientific and technological breakthroughs were often very futuristic and utopian, and their main justification for funding was the promise they held out of contributing to a better, potentially utopian, world. The inventions from Latin America have fit that set of parameters quite well. What are your opinions about them? How do the advancements in science and technology in Latin America in the twentieth century create solid scaffolding for a better world? When? Where?

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RELIGION

A Religious War: The failure to truly achieve a separation of church and state resulted in the violent Cristera War in Mexico. After that war, the government of Mexico officially declared that church and State must remain separate.

Liberation Theology: Politically active priests such as Romero in El Salvador, sided with Marxists rebels during the Cold War, resulting in clashes between priests, nuns, the Church, and fascistic right-wing dictators. The use of Christian doctrine to rise up against social inequality and fascism was referred to as "liberation theology," and it was often mixed with the Marxist writings of Che Guevara and others.

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

Generation of 1900 (Generation of Founders) (1910 – 1940): The “Generation of Founders” was a movement that reacted against the positivist philosophies of the time because they were seen as simply reinforcing the very rigid class hierarchy. Jose Enrique Rodo (1871-1917) published his seminal work, *Ariel*, in 1900, in which he argued that the world tended to see Latin Americans as “Caliban” in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, but instead it should be an idealistic spirit, such as the character of Ariel. Other important members of this generation are Alejandro Korn (Argentina), Antonio Caso (Mexico), and Raimundo de Farias Brito (Brazil).

Generation of 1915: In this generation, the anti-positivist revolt continued. It was seen as a revolt against the social, economic, and cultural domination of the elites and a desire to recognize the indigenous peoples, and the poor mestizos. The underlying dream or vision was to create a new mixed race that would fuse all races and achieve peace and a restoration of ancient traditions. Jose Vasconcelos’s *The Cosmic Race* (1925) articulates the vision, and suggests that the 1910 Mexican Revolution was an enactment of the vision of creating a peaceful world through a new people. Interestingly, this also corresponded with the American writer, Jean Toomer’s mystical vision of a brave new race in *The Blue Meridian*.

Generation of 1930: Known for forging the framework of what was considered to be a new philosophical framework that was uniquely Latin America, and thus fused from multiple traditions (indigenous, African, European). Their main focus was on finding a new perspective, and they were deeply influenced by the work of the Spanish philosopher, Jose Ortega y Gasset, who encouraged looking at reality deliberately from a different perspective. Miro Quesada first used the term, “forjadores” (forgers) to describe the process, and he was accompanied by Samuel Ramos (1897-1959) and José Gaos (1900-1969) in Mexico; Francisco Romero (1891-1962) and Carlos Astrada (1894-1970) in Argentina; and Juan David García Bacca (1901-1992) in Venezuela.

Generation of 1940: Philosophies of norms and institutions. This group of philosophers turned to the universities and state-supported institutions of culture and education to solidify and codify what was considered to be a uniquely Latin American philosophical perspective. The Latin American philosophy continued to emphasize a fusion of indigenous mindsets, as well as deep questioning of the European social fabric. In many ways, this group put together a framework that made universities not only bulwarks of identity, but also the muscle behind future revolutions or paradigmatic upheavals later in the 1960s and 1970s. It is important to note that these institutions were state-supported and access was free to qualifying citizens, which allowed greater diffusion within society. Philosophical thinkers included Risieri Frondizi (1910-1985) and Augusto Salazar Bondy (1925-1974) in Argentina; Miguel Reale (1910-2006) in Brazil; Arturo Ardao (1912-2003) in Uruguay; and Leopoldo Zea (1912-2004) and Luis Villoro (1922-) in Mexico.

Generation of 1960: Liberation philosophies. Philosophy manifested itself in social upheavals and political action in this generation. Marxist ideologies found receptive hearts and minds in the universities and public institutions that had been focused on the efforts of looking at the world through uniquely Latin American lenses. Thus, Marxist and deconstructivist philosophies that emphasized discovering the often hidden hegemonic and self-interested forces that determine (and enforce) a socially constructed notion of reality, were welcomed because they could find many examples in Latin American daily social, economic, and political daily life. Further, ethics and issues of the rights of the indigenous, women, and issues of protecting the environment were incorporated. Key thinkers include Paulo Freire, Arturo Andrés Roig (1922-2012), Enrique Dussel (1934-), and Horacio Cerutti Guldberg (1950-). Most were imprisoned or fled in exile due to the fact that their ideas were destabilizing for the dictators that ruled their countries.

Generation of 1980 and Beyond: The ideas of the Europeans, primarily Rorty, Habermas, Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida, were extremely influential in the 1980s and beyond, since they provided a framework upon which the ideas of globalism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism could rise. Feminist thought, which expanded into a general notion of the phenomenology of oppression, and the exposure of the webs of exclusion based on gender, class, ethnicity, language, sexuality, and level of "otherness" was powerful. Many authors (along with artists) focused on the ways in which otherness manifested itself. They opened the door to an examination of how existing power structures tended to fall into a state of decadence instead of finding ways to adapt or grow. It is useful to note that the "Power/Decadence" decline happens to all, regardless of how "pure" the original philosophy might have been. Important thinkers include Raul Fornet-Betancourt, Walter Mignolo, María Lugones (1948-), and Susana Nuccetelli (1954-) from Argentina; Jorge J. E. Gracia (1942-) and Ofelia Schutte (1945-) from Cuba; Linda Martín Alcoff (1955-) from Panama; and Eduardo Mendieta (1963-) from Colombia. One example is Luis Villoro (1922-2014) a Mexican philosopher who explored the metaphysical concept of Otherness, the limits and extents of reason, as well as the link between knowledge and power. Completed an important study about Indigenismo in Mexico, which he called 'The Revolution of Independence', after the uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation in 1994.

Discussion/Questions

Costumbristas recognized and documented indigenous cultures and folklore, along with mestizo traditions. The 20th century philosophers took it a step further and made a conscious effort to incorporate indigenous beliefs into a philosophical framework. Explain how the 20th century philosophers incorporated older ideas and traditions with the new ideas coming from Europe.

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ART

Avant-garde: All art is political and has an agenda that involves convincing the viewer of the validity of the world it represents. It may be produced to supplant existing belief systems, and also to illustrate social norms and aspirational goals (sometimes tangible in the here and now; but more often pointing to a glorious afterlife). Dramatic art production was also used to overwhelm the masses with the sheer sensory overload of the cathedrals and churches, to reinforce the spiritual and governmental powers. In the twentieth-century, art was charged with open subversion; social change that went far beyond the independence of the nineteenth-century, which left the church and the class system brutally in place. The anarchist (and later Bolshevik) political movements in Europe found artistic expression in Futurist, Vorticist and Dadaist art. In Mexico, the Mexican Revolution was accompanied by art that demanded action and also envisioned social justice.

Modernism in South America: In Brazil, 1922 was a pivotal moment in art, which reminds one of the impact of the Armory Show in 1909 in New York City. For Brazil and the rest of Latin America, modernist art was not tied to political activism but was more of a celebration of the arrival of technology, with important developments such as electricity, telephone communications, dams, transportation systems, and more. In that sense, they were perhaps more aligned with the Italian and French Vorticists who sought to represent machine and electric energy on a canvas. As a result, the elements one sees in South American modernist art are of then geometric shapes representing wire, electricity, transformers, gears, and machines.

Modernist Ethnographies on Canvas: Inspired by Europeans Paul Gauguin and Henri Rousseau, whose art explored the primal, the exotic and the world of the imagination, Latin American artists turned to their own cultures. Their work may be said to explore the exotic (as did the Latin American modernist poets), but above all, it affirms the “Otherness Within” – and constitutes an auto-exoticization, which is to say that it “makes it new” and imbues a procreative mythos into what was previously relegated to a lower social class. Examples include the Uruguayan painter Pedro Figari (1861–1938) who painted numerous canvases that explored the Creole traditions of his homeland. The Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres-García (1874–1949), who later studied and worked in Barcelona incorporated pre-Columbian motifs into his constructivist works.

Impressionism: Latin American impressionism was influenced by the French Impressionists, but it focused less on the effects of building up the surface by applying paint with small brush strokes, and more explorations of color fields. For example, Venezuelan artist Armando Reveron painted white-on-white to represent a coastal landscape suffused in harsh light and haze. He also sculpted dolls that he used as models. .

Mexican Muralism: The “big three” Mexican Muralists: José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949), Diego Rivera (1886–1957), and David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896–1974), painted in a naturalist and representational genre that inspired many of the world’s reformist and utopian artists (Thomas Hart Benton is perhaps the distinguished in North America). The muralists were asked to paint murals on the walls of public buildings in Mexico in order to unite a fragmented post-Revolution Mexico, and to develop a coherent sense of

Mexican identity. The philosophical underpinnings were spelled out in a 1921 manifesto published by Siqueiros, which suggests that public art should teach and engage (and in this sense is very much like the Renaissance philosophy of poetry – to delight and instruct - as expressed by Sir Philip Sidney)

Frida Kahlo: A talented diarist and artist and a passionate advocate of Mexican culture, Frida Kahlo dedicated herself to painting after she was gravely injured in a bus accident. She painted many self-portraits (55) as mirrors of her conflicted sense of identity as a Mexican woman. Her naive style, which some categorized as Social Realism, but which artista Andre Breton considered Surrealist, explored identity, gender, cultural heritage, life, death, myth and constructed narrative.

Abstract Expressionism: In Latin America, abstract expressionism took a different form, and began as Constructivism and then metamorphosed into two different movements: the “Concreto Invencion” (Concrete Invention), and then the “Neo Concretism” of Brazil and surrounding nations. Works from the later Concreto-Invención included shaped canvases by Carmelo Arden Quin (Uruguay), Lidy Prati (Argentina), and Tomás Maldonado (Argentina). Neo-Concretism emerged in Brazil with Brazilian artists Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica as well as the kinetic and optical abstractions of Gego (Venezuela), Soto, and Carlos Cruz-Diez (Venezuela).

Surrealism: The most recognized Latin American surrealist painter was born in Barcelona, and moved to Colombia with his parents as a young child. Alejandro Obregon (Colombia) was unique among surrealists in that he explored the boundaries between surrealism and abstraction. Another surrealist, Roberto Aizenberg, was born in Argentina and his work is evocative of Andre Breton, Salvadore Dali, and Rene Magritte.

Abstract / Color Fields: Manabu Mabe (Japanese-Brazilian) began his work as an artist who painted silk ties. Later, he painted large canvases, becoming well-known for his bold brush strokes, dripping paint, bright colors and calligraphy.

Discussion/Questions

The Mexican Revolution occurred after years of dashed hopes as the Mexican Independence in the Nineteenth Century did little to level the playing field, but simply reinforced the power of the colonial families. Coincidentally, the same frustration was felt in Europe as Russian and Italian Futurists created art that simultaneously celebrated technology (electricity, motors, film) as it embraced the anarchist, avant-garde spirit of the times. The Mexican Revolution’s messages were reinforced by artists who embraced abstraction as well as the vibrant blends of typography, geometrical patterns, bold colors, and abstraction. Explain how political and artistic agendas merged in the twentieth century, and how Futurism, Vorticism, and Abstract from Europe merged with indigenous influences in Latin America.

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LITERATURE

Modernismo: In Latin America, the movement that came to be known as “Modernismo” actually began in the late nineteenth century. It was deeply influenced by French symbolists and fin-de-siecle writers who rebelled against what they considered to be a limiting and materialist view of life (realism). Instead, they preferred to explore the hidden, the occult, and the transcendental, in the same manner as the French symbolist poets such as Baudelaire and Rimbaud. They focused on jarring metaphors and an emphasis on decadent sensuality to explore reality in a new way. Modernismo was forged by the Nicaraguan poet Ruben Dario, and deeply influenced by the literary journal, *La Revista Azul* (The Blue Magazine). He influenced other poets, including Antonio Machado, and the writers Juan Ramon Jimenez and Ramon Maria del Valle-Inclan. Amado Nervo, who was born in Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico, wrote intensely emotional poetry in the style of Modernismo. It emphasized the quest for peace after tragic loss, and was clearly impacted by the suicide of his brother and the death of his wife. For Nervo, the Modernist style aligned with his quest for spiritual peace and understanding.

Before the Boom: The beginning of the twentieth century saw the rise of “indigenismo” which referred to literature that focused on restoring and respecting indigenous cultures. It took the “costumbrista” tradition a bit further as it sought to validate and legitimize the culture of the indigenous peoples, long devalued and forced to occupy lower rungs on the social hierarchy. Writers included Jose Marti, and the Peruvians Manuel Gonzalez Prada and Jose Carlos Mariategui.

Psychological Fiction: A type of literature that incorporated philosophical exploration was born with Jorge Luis Borges, whose works, most notably “Ficciones,” explored the nature of reality and consciousness, and aligned well with both minimalism and surrealist art trends. Other explorations of reality (of people and of civilizations) took shape in novels and short stories. They included Romulo Gallegos (Venezuela) and his novel, *Dona Barbara*. Other authors of fiction (both novels and short stories) who explored psychological states included Horacio Quiroga (Uruguay), Machado de Assis (Brazil), Juan Rulfo (Mexico), Alejo Carpentier (Cuba), and Mariano Azuela (Mexico).

Boom: The “Boom” referred to the time of economic prosperity after World War II, and it ushered in a time of remarkable literary innovation. In poetry, Pablo Neruda (Chile) developed a style of poetry that brought together earth, desire, and a sense of wonderment. Gabriela Mistral (Chile) and Mario Benedetti (Uruguay) addressed social issues, while Octavio Paz (Mexico) plunged into the heart of Mexican identity and history.

Novelists of the Boom were also recognized for their stylistic innovations as well as their willingness to explore non-linear narratives and fragmentations of self and identity. The most famous, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, received many accolades for his work, especially *100 Years of Solitude*. In it, he pioneered what came to be known as magical realism. Other authors such as Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru), Julio Cortazar (Argentina), Carlos Fuentes (Mexico), Augusto Roa Bastos (Paraguay), and Jose Donoso (Chile).

Post-Boom and Beyond: While the Boom explored magical realism with the goal of exploring the limits of the phenomenal world, the Post-Boom world embraced the world, often with the goal of satirizing it, or reinforcing its essential gritty humanity. Authors include Roberto Bolano (Chile), Paulo Coelho (Brazil),

Laura Esquivel (Mexico), and Luisa Valenzuela (Colombia). Authors also responded to the “dirty wars” and “disappearances” of the political dictatorships of Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay with scathing novels, often written in exile. Authors included Ariel Dorfman (Chile), Eduardo Galeanos (Uruguay), Isabel Allende (Chile), and Clarice Lispector (Brazil). Transgressive fictions were explored by authors such as Jaime Bayly (Peru) and Fernando Vallejo (Colombia).

Discussion/Questions

The twentieth century was a time of rapid technological, social, and communication change, all of which is explored in the literature of the century. Describe the types of writing that seem to be most extreme (social realism as opposed to minimalism, for example) and discuss how they could, despite their different modes of expression, be exploring the same basic questions about the human condition.

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