

# LATIN AMERICAN CULTURAL HISTORY

## Contents

Part I : Science  
Part II : Art  
Part III : Religion  
Part IV : Philosophy  
Part V : Literature

### Part I : SCIENCE

**Overview** Latin America's contributions to science and technology are often overlooked because they form a continuum with other countries and cultures, or have been appropriated and overshadowed by their partners. But, upon careful examination, it is clear that Latin America has contributed in many ways, and that the contributions are just beginning, particularly as we unearth more information from PreColumbian civilizations.

### PRECONQUEST

**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).

**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 Maya, Aztecs, 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 (Mexico) calendar consisted of a 260-day ritual cycle, which formed a 52-year "calendar round." Both the Aztecs and the Maya 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.

#### Colonial (Early Modern)

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

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

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

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

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

#### Nineteenth Century:

**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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Twentieth-Century:

**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/Questions

1. The level of technology possessed by the Maya, Aztec, Tiwanaku, 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 Maya, Tiwanaku, 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?

2. 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?

3. 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.

4. 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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### Part II : ART

#### **Contents**

Part I : Painting

Part II : Sculpture

Part III : Architecture

#### Performing Arts

Part IV : Dance

Part V : Music

Part VI : Theatre

Part VII : Cinema

### Part I : PAINTING

**Overview** Painting in Latin America extends from the pre-history long before the emergence of the pyramid-building forgers of civilizations, the Maya, Aztec, and Inca. The earliest inhabitants of Latin America painted in the caves they lived and practiced religion in. Later, painting became a form of communication (hieroglyphics and pictograms). After that, it was used to communicate value systems, beliefs, and practices. Finally, art came full circle as it sought to deconstruct and destabilize a system of beliefs and aesthetics that it had, in earlier times, sought to unite church, state, and the hearts of men and women. Latin American art has both inspired and followed European traditions, even into the most contemporary art.

#### PRECONQUEST

**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.

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

**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.

**Inca:** Incorporated painting in articles for daily life as well as for religious ceremonies. They 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.

### Colonial (Early Modern)

**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 the 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 16<sup>th</sup> century where it flourished in Talavera, Puebla (often referred to as Talavera Poblana to differentiate it from Talavera, Spain).

**Baroque in Cathedrals:** As mines were developed, and wealth acquired from the vast stores of gold and silver, funds were available to construct elaborate churches and cathedrals throughout Mexico. In addition to containing sculptures, they 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).

### Nineteenth Century

**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 Maximilano, Miramon, y Mejia* (unknown artist, 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

### Twentieth Century

**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

1. 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 Moche, 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.
2. When the Spanish established their system of government, while they continued supporting the growth of the Catholic Church, they wanted to build a solid foundation of European-style art. To that end, they encouraged artists from Spain to travel to the New World and guide public works projects, as well as the construction of churches and schools. There were not enough artists, though, and it was necessary to recruit indigenous or mestizo artists and artisans. As a result, a new style emerged, which was a fusion. Describe the form and function of early Colonial painting.
3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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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## Part II : SCULPTURE

**Overview** Sculpture has played an important role in Latin American culture because of its use in the public sphere where it served to remind people of history, beliefs, identity, and community. While the Conquistadors often attempted to destroy the artifacts of the indigenous peoples, later artists integrated the cultural history of the past to reflect the often complex blend of cultures and traditions which typifies the Latin American nations.

### PreConquest

#### **Mesoamerica**



**Olmec (1200 – 400 BC):** Living in the tropical forests of south-central Mexico (Veracruz and Tabasco), the Olmec produced massive basalt portrait heads of their rulers. They also created small-scale jadeite objects that corresponded to religious roles and practices. The Olmec were remarkable in their ability to create sophisticated products without the use of knives.

**Maya:** Maya sculptures, especially during the Classic Period (250 – 900 AD) are worked from limestone and volcanic tuff. They are primarily carved bas relief into walls and portals in the pyramids and large buildings. The subjects are individuals, deities, and animals, the most common being Quetzalcoatl, Chac (rain god), aristocracy, priests, and animals (jaguars, lizards, etc.). They also carved calendars and representations of the Tree of Life.

**Jade figurines:** Costa Rica (400 – 800 AD) Atlantic watershed. Abstract figures of people and animals, masked people, frog (fertility), birds (offerings).

**Gold figurines:** Colombia and Costa Rica. (400 – 800 AD) Primarily animals, reflecting shamanistic beliefs and practices. Frog, birds, deer, jaguar, iguana, lizard gods.

**Terracotta figurines:** Small terracotta figurines have been found in tomb shafts in Mexico and in graves in the Andes. They often depict people, roles, and daily life in their communities.

**Aztecs:** Archeologists have found many thousands of Aztec sculptures that were produced in all many sizes and with many functions ranging from personal homes, public monuments, temples, ball courts, and more. They were produced from volcanic rock as well as from semi-precious stones such as jade. In addition to shapes corresponding to gods, animals, and leaders, the Aztecs also intricately carved calendars.

## **South America**

**Moche:** A pre-Inca civilization, the Moche (100 – 800 AD) lived in northern Peru where they produced useful yet intricate ceramics for daily and ceremonial use. The ceramics were often in the form of humans and animals, often in humorous or surprising poses (monkeys sitting next to each other, arms on each others' shoulders; a couple engaged in the act of copulation).

**Tiwanaku (300 – 1150):** Large carved blocks in shape of human, with huge heads, massive eye sockets. These are largely monumental to accompany the blocky architecture of the ceremonial centers. The figures are sometimes depicted with human heads in their hands, which suggests human sacrifice.

**Inca:** The Inca created vast quantities of sculptures and figurines of all sizes. Some of the sculptures and figurines had a purpose in daily life, but the vast majority was used in conjunction with ceremonial practice.

## Colonial

**Baroque sculpture:** Often carved of wood, then gilded with a layer of gold, or covered in plaster and then painted. They were often dressed in rich costumes. The subjects tended to be religious (Virgin Mary, Jesus, saints and the apostles). There were also elaborately carved crucifixes and altarpieces, often quite ornate, as in the case of the complex and detailed ultrabaroque Churrigueresque style, which features ornate decorative detailing.

**Antonio Francisco Lisboa (1730 – 1814)** (Brazil) created painted wood sculptures as well as stone statues of the twelve apostles.

**Bernardo de Legarda (1700 – 1773)** sculpted the Virgin of the Apocalypse (1734) of wood. It is the most outstanding example of the “Quito School” which is characterized by color, motion, and intricate carved details.

**Retablos**, which resemble triptychs, often contained tiny figurines depicting religious scenes such as the Nativity and the Ascension. They represent a blending of folk art and religious monuments.

**Rococo sculpture:** Life-sized carved sculptures of the Virgin Mary were painted with bright pastel colors then dressed in elaborate costumes, and installed in a church where they served as reminders of religious teachings and devotion.

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century : Independence and Nation-Building

**Monuments to liberators and heroes:** Simon Bolivar, who led independence movements throughout Latin America, appears on horseback as a triumphant figure in many countries. Many countries recognize national heroes, particularly those who died during a turning point battle. One example is the Monument to the Heroic Cadets of Chapultepec (Mexico City).

**Pegasus statue, Cartagena, Colombia.** A large statue of the winged horse, Pegasus, was erected to commemorate the valor of the people of Cartagena after declaring independence from Spain in 1811, and then enduring a siege in which more than 7,000 died. The sculpture, which was erected in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, is near the gates of the wharf. The artist is unknown.

### 20<sup>th</sup> Century : Modern

**20<sup>th</sup>-Century Latin American Sculpture:** Sculpture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Latin America was often commissioned by governments to honor indigenous cultures. Other works were commissioned by hotels or tourist developments to unify themes associated with the town or region. Often surreal or abstract, the sculptures are often placed in colonial settings, where the juxtaposition with buildings from the 17<sup>th</sup> century creates a postmodernist blend.

**Christ the Redeemer (1921-1933).** Created by French sculptor Paul Landowski and constructed by Brazilian engineer Heitor da Silva Costa, the Christ the Redeemer statue is an enormous Art Deco monument 125 high (including the pedestal). It is located on Corcovado Mountain, and has become a cultural icon of Rio de Janeiro and of Brazil.

**Fernando Botero** (b. 1932, Medellin, Colombia) is the best-known Latin American contemporary sculptor. His large bronze sculptures depict people and animals with large, balloon-like bodies, often with humorous or satirical effect.

### Discussion/Questions

1. When the Spanish arrived in the Americas, they found a veritable treasure trove of sculptures. Unfortunately for the indigenous peoples, many of the sculptures were made of gold and precious stones, which inflamed the greed and ambition of the explorers. The most finely worked were in gold and in jade. While many were melted down, some still exist. Describe some of the gold and jade sculptures and explain how the cultures differed from each other.
2. When construction began on churches, cathedrals, and government buildings, one primary goal was to create a monument that would transmit many messages, both of religious and political importance. How did religious sculpture communicate Christian history and values? How the large sculptures also communicate the wealth, power, and influence of Europe? Please provide at least four examples that explain how sculpture communicated history, values, and collective aspirations?
3. PreHispanic art tended to be semi-representational, which is to say that it clearly indicated what it was, but it was rarely realistic in the sense of Greek and Roman sculpture. Colonial and Nineteenth Century sculpture tended to be every elaborate and realistic. However, Twentieth Century sculpture represents a dramatic break, and is often abstract or uses unusual colors or materials. How do the Modernist styles reflect the larger political and aesthetic trends that were occurring at that time? Please provide at least four examples.

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### Part III : ARCHITECTURE

**Overview** Latin American architecture reflects its history and the relationship with its very hierarchical society in a way that encourages the individual to contemplate the true impact of environmental art on its beholder. When the Europeans arrived, they attempted to dominate the culture by erasing it; but in reality what occurred was a fusion. In fact, in some cases, the resulting blended art forms that were created by mestizo artisans were deeply subversive. In any event, the architecture of Latin America changed from being an intricately planned city that closely correlated to the religious cosmogony, to a fusion anchored by massive European constructions designed to communicate complete cultural dominance. The architecture reflects both the success and failure of the attempt to impose a new culture and system, because the original beliefs and customs have been remarkably vibrant, and in fact, a point of enduring pride and sense of identity.

### PREHISTORY

**Stilt houses with grass roofs:** The earliest dwellings in MesoAmerica and South America consisted of wood frames with grass roofs. They were often on stilts, particularly in coastal or jungle areas.

**Cave dwellings:** Cave art throughout Mesoamerica and South America indicates that early peoples lived in caves. Perhaps the famous, the “Cave of the Hands” in the Serra da Capivara National Park in northeast Brazil. In the archaeological site, Pedra Furada, more than 15,000 drawings depict animals, humans, birds, representations of the sun, and hunting scenes. So, while the people who lived in the caves did not construct the caves, they did modify them for their purposes.

### CLASSICAL

**The Philosophy of the Latin American Precolumbian City:** Latin American religious systems had, at their heart, the need to express their belief in outward manifestations – tangible, concrete forms – that perfectly replicated the structure and relationships of the gods, the solar system, the movement of moon and stars, the history of the world, and how they related to the life of beings on the earth. The cities were microcosms and living models of a cosmogony. The cities were a framework for worship, but even more profoundly, they were a framework – even a machine – that shaped behaviors, inculcated beliefs, and unified mindsets. Whether there was any room for new ideas or the discussion of new paradigms is not clear; but what is very clear is that throughout Latin America, the architecture of the cities was used to harmonize (even control) the thoughts and behaviors of the people, and it may explain why it was possible to attain a high level of productivity and to sustain populations of 100,000 inhabitants and more, who cohabited in evident peace and prosperity.

**Pyramids:** Perhaps the most characteristic Latin American architectural form is the pyramid. While it is important as the focal point in the city or religious center, it is by no means the only building in the typical Latin American city. The Olmecs, Maya, Aztec, and Inca placed the pyramid at a point of prominence in their cities. There they brought people together for religious ceremonies, sacrifices, and for interment of their leaders. The pyramid became a living symbol of power; at times of the great transcendent and protective power of the belief system; at times an internalized control mechanism to demonstrate how precarious life was and how important blood sacrifice was. The Maya rituals that were enacted in the pyramids were typical: The ruling class mutilated themselves (women piercing their tongues; men drawing blood from the penis), and in the spectacle of extreme pain and bloodshed, established a connection to the gods and even took on attributes of the gods.

**Orientation of the City:** The cities were very carefully designed so that they aligned with celestial occurrences such as equinoxes, alignments of planets, and more, not only to achieve certain lighting effects, but to instill a relationship between the time of day and conditions of light. What resulted was a mental programming that related times of days to certain rituals or beliefs, which were carved on the walls and embedded in the design. For example, in the “Castillo” of Chichen Itza, a Mayan pyramid, the lighting is such in the stairway that the serpents carved on the walls appear to move, which reminds the viewer of the fact that the powerful sky god, the Plumed Serpent, Kukulcan, is alive and always present.

**Ball courts:** The architecture of the ball court resulted in the fact that the individuals playing the sports were also enacting the journey between the underworld and that of the living, and the mysteries of being in two places simultaneously. While much has been said of the fact that the game itself had sacrificial elements, the focus really should not be on the individual feats of strength or athleticism. Instead, the ballcourt represents the dynamic processes of life and community, and the spectators (who actively participated and bet on outcomes) enact the collective energies in the struggles to emerge from darkness, and the need to understand what happens in the underworld. Not all cultures had the same emphasis on ballcourts. The largest ballcourt can be found at Chichen Itza. The Olmecs in Veracruz state had, at El Tajin, more than 18 ballcourts.

**Portals to the Sun (Tiwanaku):** The pre-Incan culture of the Tiwanaku and the Incans themselves built their cities to connect the human spirit with the energy of the sun. As a result, they constructed portals or gateways that represented that moment in which the human being merges with sun energy. The Gate of the Sun at Tiwanaku, Bolivia, is oriented so that the rays of the sun shine through the portal and illuminate the figure of a man whose head is surrounded by 24 linear rays. The carvings on the gate – human heads and condors – suggest transmutation, and a merging of human and soaring condor spirits.

## COLONIAL

**Impact of Catholicism:** The Catholic Church, with its roots in Roman and medieval Europe iconography, had already developed an ecclesiastical architecture that was designed to instruct and to awe a largely illiterate population. So, it, too, functioned as a kind of machine to construct knowledge by means of a kind of enforced pattern of behavior or ritual. However, as opposed to the Latin American PreHispanic approach to architecture, the Catholic Church focused on the places of worship and the supporting buildings, but was not at all concerned about the city as a whole. Thus, European cities were often chaotic, squalid, and labyrinthine, with a dramatic, ethereal cathedral rising up from the fetid maw of the city. When the conquistadors arrived in Latin America, they tore down what they viewed as the equivalent of their cathedrals, and then replaced them with their own cathedrals. The rest of the city was left to its own devices, which quickly replicated the European counterparts, but many Latin American cities were, thanks to mining riches, newer, cleaner, and more architecturally advanced than European cities. It is useful to keep in mind as well, that the monarchies of Spain and Portugal also needed to establish their power, sway, and legitimacy in the “New World,” and they, too, had a need to construct architectural monuments that communicated their message. They did not necessarily coordinate their efforts with the Church, resulting in a more random city design than in the case of the Olmecs, Maya, Aztecs, and Inca. The attempts of thought control were equally intense; but one can argue that the architecture of the twisting, narrow alleyways (callejones) introduced a mindset of secrecy, duplicity, and espionage, on the one hand, and protected, creative, and divergent thinking on the other.

**Baroque Cathedral:** The original cathedrals in Latin America were constructed over the most important active religious sites, much in the way that Henry VIII razed the Catholic monasteries and used the stones to construct his own Anglican Church religious buildings. They were constructed in the style of European cathedrals, with gothic and Romanesque elements. The largest were constructed over Aztec and Inca cities, mainly in Quito and Mexico City.

**Baroque Governor’s Palace:** While the Catholic Church worked to replace what they viewed as satanic rituals with their own religion, the kings and queens of Spain and Portugal were eager to lay claim on the gold, silver, and other riches of the territories they claimed as their own. The architecture was designed to put the stamp of European culture. So, in each main city, the Europeans constructed a center plaza and usually at one end, or at least nearby, a “Palacio del Gobierno” which incorporated Spanish and Portuguese architectural elements, including Romanesque arches, rows of columns, windows to individual offices, and a clear message that these were the offices that housed the power to influence day-to-day life. Important examples are in Quito, Rio de Janeiro, Cartagena (Colombia), Guanajuato (Mexico), Guadalajara (Mexico), Antigua (Guatemala), and more.

**Missions:** Missions were simple chapels surrounded by workshops and sleeping quarters for the priests and hundreds of converted indigenous peoples who were kept separate from possible bad influences. The missions were often established in outposts, rather than in the large city centers, and were a mechanism for expanding the reach and influence of the Europeans. They were established by different Catholic orders of priests: mainly Jesuit, Benedictine, and Dominican. The Jesuits were very active in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, where they

set up “reductions”.” Very little remains of the missions, which were built in the 1600s. They typically have a central chapel, a belltower, and numerous outbuildings. The indigenous peoples were taught trades such as masonry and carving, and in doing so, they developed a unique “mestizo” style of decorative work characterized by ornate, “churrigueresque” patterns, gilt overlay, and flowing robes.

**Churrigueresco:** Extremely ornate, with expressive and intricate styling, the “churrigueresque” style began in Spain in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the Catalan sculptor, Jose Benito de Churriguera (1665-1735). It achieved full flowering in Latin America where the indigenous craftsmen and artisans in the missions developed a Mestizo style that was florid, ornate, and detailed, while it also incorporated the colors and stylings of earlier, Pre-Hispanic art. As such, the Churrigueresque of Latin America is, at some level, deeply subversive, because it does not take much to see the echoes of the writhing plumed serpent, Kulkulcan (Maya) or the ornate costumes and masks of Quetzalcoatl. In South America, hints of the decapitator gods and the condors are evident in the altarpieces and also in the colors and movements in the wooden statues carved to mimic the robes and the hair of the Madonna. Important examples of churrigueresque art are in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Mexico City, in the main cathedrals of Potosi, Bolivia; Arequipa (Cusco, Peru); Santo Domingo Cathedral, La Paz (Bolivia), Catedral El Carmen (San Luis Potosi, Mexico); San Francisco de Acatepec (Mexico); Cusco, Peru.

**Andean Baroque:** The Andean Baroque is an artistic movement that appeared in the Viceroyalty of Peru. It was used in both secular and religious buildings in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and is characterized by ornate carvings, sculptures and elaborate paintings that narrate history (Biblical or mythological). The purpose is to communicate to the people that the established European church and government was a strictly hierarchical society, and that the power emanated from the top. Excellent examples are in Cusco, Cajamarca, and Lima.

## 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

### **French influence (Mexico, Argentina, Chile)**

The French philosophes influenced Simon Bolivar and the individuals who urged independence from Spain. The independence was often followed by occupation by French (or at least enhanced commercial interests). As a result, many Latin American cities have a very significant French influence in their architecture and design. In Mexico City, there is the French Rococo; in Brazil, the main cathedral of Rio de Janeiro possesses the characteristically white, gold, and cerulean blue walls, pillars, and ornamentation. The Biblioteca Nacional of Santiago de Chile is another example. Later in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, French influence was expressed in Art Nouveau. Examples exist in Mexico City, Guanajuato (Mexico) and especially in Buenos Aires, which is considered the capital of Art Nouveau in Latin America.

**Public Sculpture in Buildings:** While there is a great deal of sculpture that stands alone in street corners and plazas, much of the architecture of Latin America includes sculptures of human personages. They may be heroes of the revolution or independence, or may be luminaries of art and music. Of course, the preponderance of such art forms is religious. For example, the indigenous Madonnas such as La Virgen de Guadalupe are important presences that are placed not only in churches and cathedrals, but on the ledges of the roofs of buildings and in windows, where they reinforce national and cultural pride.

## 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

**Art Nouveau:** Called Modernismo in Spanish, Art Nouveau represented a break from academic rigidity of design. It is characterized by numerous curves, plant-inspired decorative elements with the goal of harmonizing with nature. Excellent examples in the Palace of Fine Arts (1904-1934) in Mexico City. Other examples are in Guanajuato, Mexico. The most dramatic examples are in Buenos Aires, where buildings as well as interior décor feature art nouveau, with floral and plant-inspired windows. In addition, there is stained glass in the style of Louis Tiffany.

**Art Deco:** Art Deco is a style of visual arts, architecture and design that emerged in France before World War I, and was adopted in New York City and in Latin America. Its sleek lines, use of chrome and frosted glass, and the polished surfaces made it ideal for communicating optimism about technology, the future, and human invention. In Latin America, Havana was deeply influenced by Miami, which is renowned for its Art Deco buildings on South Beach. In Mexico City, the National Insurance Building utilizes Art Deco. Brazil embraced Art Deco in a dramatic

way in Rio de Janeiro and in Sao Paulo. Many of the hotels in Copacabana Beach had Art Deco, and the massive Christ the Redeemer statue is a good example of Art Deco style.

**Nationalistic Modernism:** Although Le Corbusier only designed one building in Latin America selected to be included in UNESCO World Heritage sites, the Maison Curutchet in La Plata, Argentina, Le Corbusier's clean grid-like lines, generous use of glass and open spaces, were embraced by many countries seeking to demonstrate their entrance into the modern age. Le Corbusier-inspired buildings tended to be massive and part of the public space. They included public housing projects in Rio de Janeiro, the library of the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, and numerous airports, government buildings, and private residences. The modernist stylings were perfect for appropriation as they could be used as spaces for massive murals (often socialist realism or abstract), elaborate mosaics, and other spaces that could cheerfully and openly proclaim an ideological position or vision.

**Surrealist Modernism:** A subset of the Nationalistic Modernism, "Surrealist Modernism" can be found throughout South America where adventurous architects experiment with curves, angles, and unique placements in nature. Examples include the architect Eladio Dieste's church in Atlantida, Uruguay, a rose-brick and wood building that looks like waves in an ocean. Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, was designed to be the first entirely modernist city. In this aspect, surrealist architecture reveals itself to be deeply utopian as in the case of the architect Tadao Ando, whose use of Le Corbusier-inspired openness mesh with natural materials (stone and wood), and a use of windows to bring in the dramatic mountain landscapes, sunsets, and storms, as in the case of the University of Monterrey, Mexico.

#### Discussion/Questions

1. Early man was attracted to caves. Certainly they could be dark, and potentially filled with danger if they were a part of an extensive karst system with underground rivers and potential cave-ins. However, they represented a unique type of shelter as well as a location for religious rites and ceremonies. The early cave dwellers were hunters and gatherers. Describe the cave drawings and what they illustrated. What do they tell us about their lives and lifestyle?
2. The movement of the sun, moon, and stars were deeply important to Latin American civilization. Not only did they dictate when crops would be planted and ceremonies would be held, they predicted their history, including invasions from other peoples, death, and destruction. Describe the observatories, pyramids, ball courts, gates, and temples in the Pre-Hispanic (Maya, Olmec, Inca, Aztec, Tiwanaku, etc.) world and speculate how daily life might have been in these early cities.
3. When the Europeans arrived in Latin America, some of the first building projects were designed to convey the message that the twin powers of Europe – the Catholic Church and the Spanish monarchy – were too rich and powerful to be resisted, and in fact, they should be regarded in awe. Select five or six examples of buildings in the colonial era that communicated that message and describe the architectural and design elements which reinforced the message.
4. Technological breakthroughs resulted in new materials as well as new ideas about the man's potential in the world. Many countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico celebrated great modernization and breakthroughs while they also took pride and embraced their indigenous roots. Modernist styles and the use of steel, glass, mosaics, murals, and bright colors characterized the architecture. Analyze examples of twentieth century architecture in Latin America and make connections between the architecture, the function of the buildings, and the messages they were intended to convey.

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#### Part IV : DANCE

**Overview** Latin America is known for its dances, both folkloric and ballroom, which exert a deep and highly diverse influence on dance forms and practices throughout the world. In Latin America, dance was originally used as a vital part of religious practices, particularly those that incorporated shamanistic rituals with transformation and animal spirits. Later, during colonial times, dance was used as in Europe in conjunction with social events. The use of dance in conjunction with religion persisted as well, and many dances were developed in conjunction with religious ceremonies, especially Carnaval. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, formalized dances were developed for social dancing, which also incorporated competitions. Dance establishes ties to unique subcultures and is incorporated in everyday life, and is vibrant, relevant, and constantly evolving.

#### Pre-Conquest: MesoAmerica

**Masked Dances:** Early dances were included in shamanistic rituals, with dancers wearing masks that represented animals such as in the Yaqui Baile de Venado (Yaqui - deer dance) and the Maya Baile de Nagual (Deer Dance).

**Totonac Voladores (Flying Pole ceremony):** As a part of a religious ceremony, young men ascended a tall pole where they suspended themselves with ropes tied around one leg and hung upside-down from a platform. They twirled around the pole. In other variations of the dance, they plunged 80 feet to soar like birds.

**Owl Dance:** In Mayan culture, the Owl is a symbol of death and a messenger of the underworld. In the Owl Dance, the dancer wears a feathered cloak and paints his face to represent the knowledge that comes from the “inframundo” (underworld).

**Animal Spirit Dances (Toltec and Aztec):** As in the case of the masked dancers of the Yaqui and the Maya, Toltec and Aztec dancers wore elaborate costumes of animal skins, spectacular accessories, feathers, showy headdresses. To intensify the experience, the dancers often held rattles (maracas, for example) in their hands and put on rattles made of nutshells on their ankles.

#### Pre-Conquest: South America

**Qhapaq Ch'uncho (Peru):** This dance reenacts encounters and skirmishes between the Antisuyo rain forest peoples and the Incas. The dance costumes include macaw feathers to symbolize the rain forest.

**Ukuku (Peru):** The main dancer wears a stringy coat that represents an animal's pelt. He is a trickster figure, and dances randomly and out of sync with very tightly choreographed dancers.

**Huayno (Peru and Bolivia):** This is an Andean dance which has become very popular. The male dancer invites the woman to dance by either offering his right arm or placing his handkerchief on her arm. The dance enacts courtship, and the music that accompanies the Huayno brings together typical Andean instruments, including the quena (flute), siku (panpipe), harp, accordion, charango, and guitar.

#### Colonial: MesoAmerica Folkloric Dance

**Jarabe Tapatío (Mexican Hat Dance):** Perhaps the most famous Mexican folkloric dance, the Jarabe Tapatío is danced to music performed by mariachis. Like many folkloric dances, the dancers enact courtship and contains elements that made it controversial in its early years in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The man wears the traditional charro outfit, while the woman wears a heavily embroidered blouse and a voluminous and also heavily decorated skirt, which she moves with wide, rhythmic sweeping motions.

Son Jarocho (Veracruz, Mexico): “Jarocho” refers to the culture and people of the Veracruz coastal area of southeastern Mexico. The “son” (meaning “sound”) is the music, and in this case, it is known for its energetic, intense, complex rhythms. Perhaps the best known *son jarocho* is “La Bamba” and also “Cascabel” (rattlesnake). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCBhicHcFvY>

Danza de los Viejitos: (Dance of the Old Men) is a traditional dance in the state of Michoacan, Mexico. It harkens back to Prehispanic times, and it is related to rituals to honor “old man” God and its execution is very humorous as the dancers enact the parts of the elderly people and in doing so, ironize their own helplessness. The performance involves a kind of tap dance, with rhythms that relate to conquest.

La Danza de los Quetzales (Mexico) : The dancers wear enormous headdresses of feathers, and they carry hand-held rattles. The music includes drums and flute. The meaning of the dance has to do with enchantations and transformation.

La Danza Huehues (Mexico): Also known as Danza de los Viejitos: This is a humorous dance that uses the more serious religious dances as a point of departure. The main dancer is the “Diablo” or devil, who is a picaresque trickster figure. There is also the “Huehuentzi” (the oldest”) who wears a beard and a mask. The men wear black pants with a vest or jacket, masks, boots, tie, handkerchief, gloves.

La Danza de los Chinelos (masks / disguises): Originating in the state of Morelos, the Danza de los Chinelos is characterized by elaborate sequined, feathered, and fringed headdresses and brightly colored wooden masks. The costumes are very striking for their highly sequined and embroidered costumes and headdresses that feature appliques (similar to Molas from Panama). The dance is typically performed during Carnival.

Arrieros (Mexico): A tribute to history in which dancers enact the drovers who guided mule trains with their merchandise and silver. The mule-drovers worked in central Mexico and followed the Camino Real from the highlands to the coast during the 16th through the middle of the 20th century. The dancers wear white shirts, white pants, and highly embroidered scarves, belts, and vests.

Jarana Yucateca (Yucatan Peninsula): Easily identified by its 6/8 meter, the Jarana Yucateca features dancers in traditional Yucatecan embroidered loose blouses (huipil) and long white (and also highly embroidered) skirts. The men wear white shirts, Panama hats, and white pants. The dance is colonial in origin and celebrates mestizo culture. The music, descending from colonial “sones,” is renowned for being vibrant, joyous, raucous, with brass instruments such as trumpets, trombones, and cymbals.

Las Vaquerias (Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico): A popular festival dance that dates back to the colonial era in cattle-raising areas of the Yucatan. The dance is usually performed during the Patron Saint day parades in villages. In the festivals, women and men dress in typical Yucatecan embroidered dresses. The performances are punctuated by someone in the crowd who shouts “Bomba!” upon which the dancing stops, and one dancer must recite a verse to his partner.

#### Colonial: South America and Caribbean Folkloric Dance

Bomba (Ecuador): The full name of the dance is the “Bomba del Valle del Chota (Ecuador).” The result of blended African, Spanish, and indigenous influences, the dance is very sensual and flirtatious, in which the woman dances around her partner, who is bent on seduction. She wears loose, wide skirts, and balances a bottle of spirits on her head as she dances. The dance evokes a great deal from the time of slavery.

Cumbia (Colombia): Originating in Colombia, the cumbia has become very successful and has penetrated almost all of South America. The music fuses indigenous PreHispanic melodies with African rhythms and Spanish forms. The dance features women with wide, flowing skirts, usually red and white, while the man wears a white shirt, white pants, with a red bandanna and a red belt.

Galerón (Colombia): The Galerón Llanero derives from plains areas between Venezuela and Colombia, and is a very joyous dance which involves intricate footwork reminiscent of Spanish flamenco. In the dance, the man pursues the



woman and attempts to tie her with his bandanna, as she flirtatiously stays just outside his reach. The main instruments in the music are the harp, the cuatro, and maracas. When performed, there are generally six couples.

**La Cueca (Bolivia, Chile, Argentina):** Found in many parts of South America, the “cueca” enacts courtship, flirtatious evasions, and contains elements of the Spanish fandango. In Chile, the cueca has become the national dance, and there are competitions for all age groups, beginning with very young children. The cueca became quite popular in the early 19th century, and in Chile, the outfits are traditional Chilean dress, where the colors blue, red and white predominate. The woman wears a flowered dress, and the man wears the “huaso” black hat, white shirt, flannel poncho, riding pants and boots. The man and woman face each other, hold their handkerchiefs in the air and move with each other. They do not touch, but waive the white handkerchief as they dance with each other.

**Guaranía (Paraguay):** A dance performed with the “Guarania” form of music, the women and men wear traditional Paraguayan outfits which feature wide skirts, hand-tatted lace and crochet panels (nanduti). The music is a derivation of polka, with harp, guitar, and bass guitar. The men typically wear white hats, white pants, red shirts, and blue belts.

### Modern: Latin American Dance

**Bachata (Domenican Republic):** Emerging in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Bachata is danced to music that blends European, African, and indigenous musical traditions. It is similar to the Cuban bolero, and featured highly stylized choreography. The bachata has become very popular in many communities, with “sensual bachata” and the rise of bachata competitions.

**Cha Cha Cha (Cuba):** A highly energetic and stylized dance of Cuban origin which is performed to a very characteristic rhythm, the Cha Cha Chai s stunningly popular with dance clubs, proms, and competitions.

**Mambo (Cuba):** An Afro-Latin dance which originated in Cuba with Arsenio Rodriguez, a composer and musician. The dance was invented by Perez Prado, and became very popular in the 1940s and 50s in Havana, Mexico City, and New York City. At first, the dance form was very improvisatory, but later became standardized in order to penetrate markets and appeal to ballroom dancing constituencies.

**Merengue (Dominican Republic):** The official dance of the Dominican Republic, the merengue is a ballroom dance in which two dancers hold hands and perform a series of rapid moves, maintaining a closed position.

**Salsa (Caribbean):** With possible origins as the Cuban son, the current salsa is extremely popular, and has penetrated virtually all of Latin America. It is a social dance, and the movements are very easy to learn, which makes it ideal for gatherings, parties, and contests. The salsa is a relatively new genre, as it originated in the 1970s in New York, mainly as a hybrid fusion of son, cha cha cha, and mambo.

**Samba (Brazil):** Danced to music in a quick 2/4 time, the samba is an energetic African-Brazilian dance form that evolved from African rhythms and movements. The samba originated in Rio de Janeiro in the early 20th century. It is often danced during Carnival, and the dancers wear dramatic costumes with elaborate headdresses, beaded dresses, and brightly colored feathers.

**Tango (Argentina):** Originating in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Argentina, the tango achieved extreme popularity in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century where it was danced in tango-themed dance clubs in Argentina and Uruguay. The dance is a fusion of Spanish and African slave traditions, and it originated in the working-class neighborhoods of Buenos Aires and Montevideo. There are many different types of tango, but all have the typical accordion and small concertina (bandoneon), which are used for melody as well as the characteristic tango rhythmic stylings.

### Discussion/Questions

1. The Spaniards who saw the indigenous peoples dancing witnessed nothing like anything they had seen before. It wasn't just the costumes, which were, in their own way, very different. It was the way the dancers wore masks and painted their faces and bodies to transform themselves in truly frightening representations of animal spirits and

gods. What was different about the indigenous peoples' way of dancing in comparison with the dancing of the Europeans?

2. What was the purpose of using animal masks and skins in PreHispanic dance?
3. Describe the influence of three different dance forms that became popular during colonial times.
4. Select three modern dance forms and discuss their similarities and differences.

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## Part V : MUSIC

**Overview** Tied to dance in many cases, Prehispanic music was a sacred art for the Incas and used to communicate with the divine world. It was also used in conjunction with dances that represented shamanistic rituals to transmit the energy of animal spirits. After the arrival of Europeans, musical forms explored different types of fusions between European, indigenous, and African music. Many musical forms are associated with dance, and others embrace cultural heritage. Composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century often incorporated folkloric elements, including rhythms, chord progressions, and melodies.

### PRE-HISPANIC MUSIC

**Mesoamerica** Music was an important part of the religious ceremonies and social life. The musical instruments were often shaped from materials found almost intact in nature: conch shells, three-hole flutes, drums created from skins stretched on frames, or created from hollow nuts. Rattles created from nuts and seedpods were also used.

**Andean music** Prehispanic music in the Andes consisted of chants blended with different types of instruments, many of which were flutes. The flutes include panpipes (can be very large, with many pipes), and also quenenas, which are smaller and have notched ends. Both are made of aquatic hollow cane plants. Drums are also prevalent.

### COLONIAL MUSIC

#### Central America and Caribbean Folkloric Music

**Ranchera** Traditional Mexican music often performed by mariachis or norteros, which often has a theme of love, patriotism, or nature. They have been influenced by polkas, the waltz, and also the bolero. They include the "grito mexicano" (Mexican shout).

**Punta** Music from the Garifuna people of the Caribbean who arrived in Central America in the 1790s. Their music is a blend of Spanish and African rhythms and forms.

**Corrido** A ballad, or narrative song. The themes are often about legends, the stories of criminals, doomed love, and revenge. A popular example is *La Cucaracha*.

**Conjunto jarrocho** This is a kind of "son" (which is a mixture of Spanish and indigenous music).

**Banda** Loud, polka-like music played by brass bands (tuba, trumpet, trombone) that derive from the military bands in the 1860s in Mexico, during the Second Mexican Empire. The origins are from Polish emigrants who settled in Sinaloa. For what it's worth, they often seem very out of tune.

**Mariachi** A characteristically Mexican musical form, the Mariachi emerged near Guadalajara (Coquila) and has influences from Spain, Portugal, and France. The mariachi ensemble consists of a guitar, violin, large bass guitar (guitarón), a vihuela (a small guitar-like instrument) and a trumpet. Mariachis perform at weddings, anniversaries, and events.

**Norteño** Popular music that is often found in northern Mexico and southern Texas, which includes accordion. The polka elements reflect the influence of German and Polish miners who arrived in the early 1800s.

### **South America and Caribbean Folkloric Music**

**Milonga** (Argentina) Originating in the Rio de la Plata area of Argentina in the 1870s, milonga music often deals with love and dreams. It is characterized by punctuated rhythms and the use of small hand-held accordions (bandoneons).

**Zamba** (Argentina) A form of music that originated in the Salta area of Peru, but then was further developed in Argentina. It is a slow dance in three-quarter time, and is often danced in the streets of Argentina and in folklore festivals.

**Diablada** (Bolivia) The "Dance of the Devils" originated in Bolivia and is performed during Easter (Semana Santa). The dancers wear elaborate costumes and there is traditionally a dance representing the war between good and evil, luz entre tinieblas (light and dark).

**Cumbia** (Colombia) A musical form that began as a courtship dance in the Caribbean areas of Colombia and Panama. Similar to salsa, the cumbia blends Amerindian and European instruments. It has spread throughout Latin America.

**Reggae** (Jamaica) Originating in Jamaica, reggae has come to be associated with island culture as well as Rastafarian philosophy. Reggae was popularized by Bob Marley and it blends ska, calypso and rhythm and blues.

**Guaranías** (Paraguay) Developed in the 1920s in Paraguay by José Asunción, Guaranías are a music form that are sentimental and express nostalgia for times past and lost loves. They feature the harp, guitar, bandoneon, and a singer.

**Sanjuan** (Ecuador) Incorporating Quechua musical instruments and forms, the Sanjuan is a music form found in Ecuador primarily in Quechua communities. It is played on traditional instruments.

**Samba** (Brazil) Associated with Brazil and Carnival, the Brazilian samba has its roots in West Africa and in the religious practices. The samba has a "batucada" rhythm, with an emphasis on percussion and a distinct rhythm and meter. The samba is now considered the defining musical genre of Brazil.

**Cueca** (Chile) The national dance of Chile, the Cueca blends together Spanish and indigenous musical instruments, and includes several European musical instruments: Guitar, drums, accordion, harp, Chilean guitarrón, violin, mandolin. It reflects the Chilean gaucho culture, with rhythms that reflect Spanish flamenco.

**Andean music** Huaynos and others include tambores (drums), quena (panpipe), cavaquinho, rattles, Andean flute, maraca, charango.

### **MODERN 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY LATIN AMERICAN MUSIC**

Composers

Alberto **Ginastera** (1916 – 1983, Argentina) Alberto Ginastera was influenced by his teacher Aaron Copland, and like Copland, he incorporated folkloric musical elements and indigenous instruments.

Antonio Carlos **Jobim** (1927 – 1994, Brazil) Jobim was born in Rio de Janeiro and was well known for incorporating the bossa nova music in orchestral works.

Manuel **Ponce** (1882 – 1948, Mexico). Ponce was a scholar of Mexican folk music and he incorporated the elements into classical guitar and orchestral compositions.

Ernesto **Lecuona** (1895 – 1963, Cuba) Lecuona wrote more than 600 pieces, mainly for the piano, and incorporated traditional Cuban songs into his own. Many of his compositions, such as Malagueña and Andalucía, became standards.

Heitor **Villa-Lobos** (1887 – 1959, Brazil) Born in Rio de Janeiro, Villa-Lobos is the best-known Brazilian composer, and his use of dissonance, indigenous melodic and rhythmic elements within traditional classical Western forms influenced many composers.

### Discussion/Questions

1. The Spaniards received a surprise when they encountered the music of the indigenous peoples. It was nothing at all like European music, and what is more, the instruments were utterly different. The Spaniards were quick to denounce the music as being of the devil, because it often accompanied dances and rituals (including human sacrifice and self-mutilation). Further, the instruments were often made of bone, skin, and shells. Describe some of the musical instruments and how they were used.

2. Music could be considered a kind of technology, a mechanism / sound machine that influences the human brain to move it into different emotions and states of consciousness. Pre-Hispanic music was used in conjunction with religious rituals, to the point that individuals entered into a trance-like state. The music associated with Carnaval could also be considered a technology of consciousness as well. Describe how and why the music associated with Colonial festivals altered the attendees affect and states of consciousness.

3. When the Spanish brought their music to Latin America, many different fusions occurred. Compare and contrast the different Latin American music forms that are associated with dance and which have clear European influence.

4. Modernism, nationalism, and a pride in the nation's indigenous heritage were major influences on musical composition in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century. Who are some of the main composers of 20<sup>th</sup> century Latin America, and what are they famous for?

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### Part VI : THEATRE

**Overview** Latin American theatre as an art form has an interesting history. Before the arrival of the Europeans, narrative forms of performance and religious rituals constituted the theatre of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca, and they generally took the form of dance. The dancers enacted the roles of gods and of critical points of time in their history, and the dances themselves may have culminated in sacrifice and ritual blood-letting. Later, after the Conquest by the Spanish and the repression of indigenous religion, many of the Catholic holidays and traditions began to incorporate some of the dance and theatric traditions of the past. At the same time, European literary influences were felt, resulting in a more formal European tradition of drama as well. The two paths – folklore and

formal – have continued to the present day, with efforts to preserve folkloric dance (and theatre) forms, while adopting the formal and often avant-garde theatre of Europe.

### Pre-Conquest

**Maya:** The Maya incorporated dance and performative art in their religious ceremonies. They wore elaborate costumes of feathers, headdresses, paint, rattles, spears, and more to depict the gods and events. The rituals corresponded to specific points in the Maya calendar, and the goals were twofold: to “merge” with the god spirit and allow that spirit to enter the body; and second, to please the gods and maintain balance in the universe. The rituals often ended in blood-letting and sometimes human sacrifice.

**Aztec:** The Aztec calendar consisted of 18 months, and each had a number of days dedicated to the devotion and appeasement of the gods, in particular to the sun god, Huitzilopochtli. The sun god, Huitzilopochtli, required blood sacrifice in order to conquer the forces of the night (and darkness), and so the rituals (which were performative enactments and could be considered theatre), were elaborate and invariably ended in human sacrifice.

**Inca:** The most important Inca rituals (and performative enactments) took place in the “huacas” – the locations in the earth where each tribe supposedly emerged from the earth after the bearded giant from the stars buried a clay figurine that transformed into people. Each “huaca” corresponded to a specific star or constellation that was thought to be their place of origin, and thus the Inca truly considered themselves to be people from the stars. The rituals and theatrical enactments would include the carefully preserved mummified remains of their ancestors, whom they dressed in finery and even fed. The most important festival was the Inti Raymi (Sun Festival) event.

### Colonial (Early Modern)

**Patron Saint Days:** The Conquistadors established a church in every town, and it served as a point of control and cultural cohesiveness. In establishing Catholicism, the Europeans were able to subsume the indigenous religions, and also tacitly acknowledge the fact that the native beliefs never really died. Each community had a patron saint, which not only corresponded to a saint in the Catholic Church, but also often took on attributes of indigenous gods. Thus, the parades, dances, and performative enactments represented a profound fusion of European and indigenous belief systems. The celebrations take place once a year, and are typically a week long, and filled with parades, rituals, dances, and end with fireworks that include religious symbols.

**Carnival / Semana Santa:** The week before Easter became one of the most important festivals in Latin America, and represents a profound fusion between the European and indigenous traditions. In Europe, Mardi Gras and other festivals take place, with parades and performances that center around the idea of a sin-penance cycle. In Latin America, the tradition incorporates personae who resemble many of the ancient deities, namely sun gods, feathered serpents, and animal spirits (jaguars, snakes, condors).

**Brazilian Carnival:** In Brazil, Carnival is dominated by African influences, not only in dance and music, but also in rituals that incorporate symbolic acts derived from West African religious practice, which merged with Catholicism to become Santería. The core belief of the African religion is that there is divine energy in the world that takes expression through the worship of deities and through music, dance, and ritual. The dances, costumes, and expression of Brazilian Carnival are a performative enactment of that belief, and designed to instill procreative, regenerative energy in the participants.

**Carnival in Oruro, Bolivia: Dance with the Devil.** One of the most unique of the fusions of indigenous and Catholic beliefs, the performative rituals of colonial mining town of Oruro, Bolivia, include the famous dances with the devil, which dramatically enacts the conflict between good and evil, light and dark. The performances include extremely elaborate and colorful costumes. La Diablada (Dance of the Devils) emerged from the miners who revered and feared “El Tio” (god of the underworld) would punish them for sharing their devotion with the Virgin Mary. So, to honor and please El Tio, the miners decided to dress as Diablos (devils) and dance in the festival. The Diablo costumes feature horned masks, velvet capes, and costumes with sequins and gold embroidery. Their boots contain elaborate designs of snakes.

European-Influenced Formal Theatre:

**Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz:** The Mexican nun who wrote poetry and philosophical essays, also wrote three plays: *The Pawns of a House*, *Love Is More a Labyrinth*, and *Second Celestina*. They were performed in the 1680s in conjunction with celebrations for the viceroyalty. The plays are well-respected for their structure and form, which incorporate many of the tropes of European plays, including mistaken identity, love doomed by fate, and more.

### Nineteenth Century

**Patronage and “Actos”:** Many one-act plays, or “actos” were written and performed in conjunction with celebrations of the viceroys and governmental officials of Latin America. Actos were also written and performed in the church as “morality plays” and “virtue / vice” plays, similar to those in the Middle Ages. Their function was to educate largely illiterate indigenous populations about Biblical stories and parables.

**Folkloric Theatre:** Preserving the performative arts of Latin America gained momentum after nations became independent from Spain and during the costumbrista movement. The cultural patrimony became newly important, not only intellectually and artistically, but as a great source of economic development in the form of the development of national identity. Performative art blended religious devotion with an emerging local and national pride. The energies were also used for recruiting soldiers for wars.

### Twentieth Century

**Marco Antonio de la Parra (Chile):** Best known for his play, *Lo crudo, lo cocido, lo podrido* (The Raw, the Cooked, and the Rotten), written in 1978, de la Parra attacks what he sees as corrupt and ultimately mediocre politicians and the overall political system. The play features three protagonists who come to a restaurant where their conversation reveals them to be not the great men they are thought to be, but instead, shallow, cruel, even sadomasochistic. De la Parra’s other works continue the same themes, and also attack consumer culture and the invasion of alien pop culture.

**Roberto Ramos-Perea (Puerto Rico):** Born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, Ramos-Perea has written numerous plays as well as essays and columns. His most-acclaimed works, *Miéntame Más* (*Lie to Me Some More*) and *Morir de Noche* (*To Die by Night*) have been widely performed. *Miéntame Más* explores the impact of unethical medical experimentation and the ultimate uselessness of revenge.

**Rodolfo Santana (Venezuela):** The author of more than 80 works of art, Santana first won recognition on the stage for *La Muerte de Alfredo Gris* (*The Death of Alfred Gray*). His work has also been made into movies, such as *El caracazo*, *Travelling Companion*, and more. His work explores the nature of relationships and perception.

**Eduardo Rovner (Argentina):** In one of his most lauded works, *Tinieblas de un escritor enamorado* (*Darkness of a Writer in Love*), contains echoes of the surrealist tradition of the Boom and Post-Boom writers. In it, the protagonist, Ernesto, enters into an altered state of consciousness (either post-death or in a fantasy) and then embarks on a quest for a long-lost love. In the labyrinths and catacombs of the psychological netherworld, converses with people along the way and explores the nature of connections, the past, and the essential fragility of true love.

**Guillermo Schmidhuber (Mexico):** Considered one of Mexico’s most important writers, Schmidhuber’s plays build on his literary research, which includes work with long-lost manuscripts of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz that he discovered and translated. His play, *Los Héroes Inútiles* (*Useless Heroes*) three soldiers in the Mexican Revolution find themselves trapped in someone else’s aspirations, and instead of being able to rise and achieve their dreams, they are trapped in banality and mediocrity.

**Maritz Núñez (Peru):** In addition to writing plays, Maritz Núñez has received acclaim for her works of poetry. Her play, *La Niña de Cera* (*The Wax Child*), is a play in two acts which explores the life of Chilean poet and educator, Gabriela Mistral. The play touches on the wrenching childhood and traumatic formative events in Mistral’s life and how she used the tragedies to transform herself.

**Nelson Rodrigues (Brazil):** Originator of the concept of the “Theatre of the Unpleasant,” Rodrigues was born in Recife, northeast Brazil, and then moved with his family to Rio de Janeiro, where his father owned a newspaper. Covering stories for his father’s paper, Rodrigues was exposed to many aspects of Brazilian society, and in doing so,

he formed a philosophy of theatre in which he believed it should hold a mirror to society and reveal, with unflinching honesty, its true state.

**Ariel Dorfman (Chile):** In *La Muerte y La Doncella (Death and the Maiden)*, Dorfman explores what could happen when a victim of torture encounters her torturer. She kidnaps him, and then contemplates subjecting him to the same tortures he exacted upon her. In a move reminiscent of *A Clockwork Orange*, Schumann's *Death and the Maiden* is the work always played during the torture sessions, with deep psychological consequences.

### Discussion/Questions

1. When the Spaniards arrived in MesoAmerica, they were shocked to see the enactment of what could have been theater, religious rite, or a dance festival? Which was it? There may have been relatively benign or happy performances, but they were not what caught the Spaniards' attention. They were riveted by the torture, dismemberment, and death, performed as a spectacle. The Spaniards were undoubtedly familiar with bloody fight-to-the-death bullfights. What would make these enactments different?
2. When the Europeans and the African slaves inhabited Latin America, they brought their own traditions. However, the traditions did not stay completely intact. Instead, they began to incorporate aspects of many cultures at the same time. Select a few examples and analyze how the blend of cultures made them into a theatrical / performative event that could satisfy the need to resolve the painful history of the Conquest.
3. The formal theatre of the Europeans was often enacted for very different purposes than the popular folkloric theater and performance. The European theatre when performed in Latin America did two things. First, it reinforced cultural dominance and the authority of the crown and the viceroyalty. Second, with plays that enacted Biblical history, the church was able to teach the stories from the Bible, and at the same time, were able to teach moral lessons. How might some of the European traditional theatrical forms have been also coopted and subtly subverted? Please give at least two examples.
4. The plays of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been very political, with messages that could be dangerous because they enact political repressions, kidnapping, torture, and the efforts of a military dictatorship to suppress dissent or resistance. Consider the examples of the plays that have political themes and discuss whether they stand up as works of art rather than propaganda. Why or why not? How can they be meaningful during times of peace?

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### Part VII : CINEMA

**Overview** Latin American films have been widely recognized for their rich diversity, innovative themes, and ability to move audiences. While almost all nations have had filmmakers who have developed works in many genres, the bulk of Latin American filmmaking has been concentrated in Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil. All have experienced varying degrees of influence from social, political, and economic movements, and they also incorporate national and regional culture and folklore. The result has been a film tradition is identifiable and richly satisfying.

**Origins** The first filmmaking efforts in Latin America were inspired by the Lumieres Brothers in France, and they tended to focus on capturing objects in motion. For example, the first Argentine film was *La Bandera Argentina (The Argentine Flag)*, which involved a large Argentine flag waving in the breeze of the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires. In Mexico, the short films were those documenting battles of the Mexican Revolution. In Brazil, the first

short films were inspired by the Lumiere brothers as well as Thomas Edison, and showed such things as the arrival of trains, young people dancing, and passengers disembarking.

**Genres** Latin American cinema has been instrumental in helping develop its own versions of classic genres such as documentaries, musicals, and romances. Musicals that feature folklore and regional music were not only popular in Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, but found enthusiastic audiences throughout the world. The often harsh explorations of poverty, social inequality, and political corruption have also been a feature of Latin American cinema. The very popular long-running telenovelas (Latin American soap operas) resulted in a new form of consciously and often rather ironically melodramatic romance.

## Mexico

**Mexican Cinema** Mexico's rich cinematic tradition when audiences flocked to see Mexican screenings of Thomas Edison's one-minute kinoscope films such as *Arrival of a Train*. Salvador Toscano Barragan is generally considered to be the first Mexican filmmaker. He created a film version of the novel, *Don Juan Tenorio*, and then went on to film battles during the Mexican Revolution. Inspired by European film-makers, Mexican directors and film studios received a huge boost when U.S. and European film-makers had to severely curtail their activities due to rationing of celluloid and other materials. Mexican studios, which had no such restrictions, were able to produce films, and they found an enthusiastic global export market. The Mexican studios, as in Hollywood, focused on creating bankable stars and screenplays with wide appeal. What resulted was the "Golden Age," launched by Maria Candelaria, and followed by hundreds of high-quality movies produced by well-funded studios who relied on a domestic network of movie theaters and a well-developed export market. After decades of pre-eminence the Mexican film industry declined in the 1970s, but experienced a resurgence in the 1990s and 2000s with films that probed the human condition, made great satirical statements about politics and "progress," and took intellectual and aesthetic risks to parallel the literary world. Standouts include *Amores Perros* and *Pan's Labyrinth*.

**Mexico's "Epoca de Oro" (Golden Age): 1933 – 1964** Because of the relative paucity of U.S. and European output during the late 1930s and 1940s, Mexican films were embraced by enthusiastic audiences who enjoyed the studios' output, which ranged from adaptations of famous films (for example, Ramon Gallegos's *Dona Barbara*), comedy (such as the films of Cantinflas), romance (Maria Candelaria), and musicals that featured rancheras (*Siempre Tuya*). Many of the films explored social issues such as the problems of rural poverty and systemic prejudice against indigenous peoples. The studio system generated a number of well-liked stars, which included Dolores Del Rio, Pedro Infante, Jorge Negrete, Maria Felix, and Cantinflas.

**Maria Candelaria** (dir. Emilio Fernandez, 1944) Starring Dolores del Rio and Pedro Armendariz, Maria Candelaria explores issues of true love, romance, social inequality, prejudices against the indigenous peoples of Mexico, and the natural beauty of the Mexican countryside. It was the first Mexican film to win the First Prize (Palme d'Or) at Cannes.

**Cantinflas** (Mario Moreno) (1911 – 1993) The comical "Everyman" of the underclass, Cantinflas often played the quick-witted scamp from society's underclass who exposed "polite society" as pompous, and whose activities often made him a champion of the underdog. He was well-known for his costume (sagging pants, frayed shirt, ragged towel over his shoulder) and for his way of speaking quickly but saying nothing, and for his comical dancing. Cantinflas made more than 50 films, primarily working with the director Miguel M. Delgado.

**Maria Felix** (1913 – 2002) Maria Felix achieved great fame and recognition during the Golden Age of Mexican cinema. Known as a fascinating femme fatale, Maria Felix was often referred to as "La Dona" after her character in "Dona Barbara" (1943). With a total of 47 films, many of which were distributed in multiple countries around the world,

**Pedro Infante** (1917 – 1957) When it was announced that Pedro Infante had died in a tragic plane crash near Merida, Yucatan, the entire nation plunged into mourning for their beloved actor and singer. He often portrayed a hero in his more than 60 films, and as such, he embodied the qualities that Mexican (and indeed, global) audiences admired: a loyal and courageous friend, a devoted family member, and a passionate and impassioned lover. His range of songs made him very popular as well, and many of his recordings continue to be considered standards even today.



**Jorge Negrete** (1911 – 1953) Born in the historic mining town of Guanajuato, Jorge Negrete entered a prestigious military academy when he was a young teenager. There, he distinguished himself not only for his academic excellence but for his musical talent. Negrete trained as an operatic singer, where he met his initial success. Negrete later began singing music of mariachis. He also embraced acting, where he often acted the part of heroes who could also sing. He appeared in more than 40 movies, and helped develop the “charro” (Mexican cowboy) singing tradition. When he died from complications of a sudden illness, his fans were devastated.

**Dolores Del Rio** (1904 – 1983) Dolores Del Rio was born in Durango to parents who had been wealthy during the time of Porfirio Diaz, but who lost everything during the Mexican Civil War. Dolores fled with her mother to Mexico City, where she received an education in a Catholic private school. Del Rio was unusual among Mexican actresses in that she first achieved fame and fortune in the U.S. in Hollywood. Later, she returned to Mexico, where she acted in numerous films in genres that included romance, adventure, musical, and comedy. Del Rio was considered one of the all-time beauties of the cinema. She made more than 50 films.

## **Argentine**

**Argentine Cinema** Historically, Argentina has been considered one of the top three countries in Latin America for cinema, along with Mexico and Brazil. The first Argentine movies were silent shorts, made in the manner of the Lumiere Brothers. Later, Argentine film-making blossomed during Argentina’s “Golden Age” which extended from the 1930s and into the 1950s. In the 1960s, the French “New Wave” (Nouvelle Vague) emphasized an art-house sensibility and explored the way the camera could reflect and problematize identity and reality. During the military dictatorship, most filmmakers found it safest to focus on comedy. However, after the return to democracy in 1983, filmmakers began to probe the themes that had been off-limits, with a resulting surge in movies that addressed political atrocities (torture, the “disappeared”), as well as social problems. At the same time, film adaptations of literature of the “greats” such as Cortazar and Borges were made. Argentine cinema continues to be highly respected, and to receive prestigious awards.

**Argentina’s “Third Cinema”** (1950s and 1960s) For many, the “First Cinema” consisted of escapist spectacles, and the “Second Cinema” was focused on self-absorbed “auteur” works. However, a “Third Cinema” followed on the heels, and even though they were not commercially as successful as the first and second phases, they were important. During the 1960s and 1970s, a Latin American film movement emerged that had as its core mission to expose the evils of neocolonialism and capitalism. While its core values may have been political, the resulting works are most known for their exploration of psychological conditions, and the consequences of exile and estrangement. One of the most influential of the “Third Cinema” directors is Fernando Solanas, whose works are often overtly political.

## **Brazil**

**Brazilian Cinema** The early development of Brazilian cinema was slow, and the dominant genre, the chanchada (burlesque musical comedies), were popular, but not considered serious art. Later, in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, the chanchadas achieved even more popularity, and their emblematic star, Carmen Miranda, was adored by many. In the 1960s and 1970s, the “Cinema Novo” emerged as a more “serious” movement. Cinema Novo changed the focus of Brazilian cinema from entertainment, to works that explore social inequality in Brazil, neorealism, working class / middle class. The song, “The Girl from Ipanema” (written by Antonio Carlos Jobim and performed by Astrud Gilberto and Stan Getz) captures the emotional elements of beauty and sadness, an anticipation of nostalgia.

### **Carmen Miranda** (1909 – 1955)

Carmen Miranda, born in Portugal but relocated to Rio de Janeiro when her parents emigrated to Brazil. Miranda embraced opera and music, despite her parents’ disapproval. Miranda entered show business as a singer, but quickly showed her flexibility by acting and dancing for “chanchada” movies, and for participating in Carnival (Mardi Gras). Her most famous films featured Miranda in all the roles she loved: singing, poetry, and dancing. Miranda quickly became well-known as a “Brazilian Bombshell” instantly recognizable by her tall headdress replete with tropical fruits.

**Brazilian “Cinema Novo” Movement (1960s and 1970s)** Influenced by the French New Wave, Italian Neorealism, and Soviet cinema of the 1960s, the Brazilian Cinema Novo (New Cinema) changed the focus of films from big-budget musicals, comedies, and adventure to one that encouraged a freedom of aesthetic, political, and ideological expression. Led by director Glauber Rocha, the movement probed rural poverty and social inequality with a style that was resolutely avant-garde. His development of an “aesthetics of hunger” brought together the literal and the metaphorical. Rocha’s film, *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol (God and the Devil in the Land of the Sun)* (1964), follows the fate of people in rural areas during a time of drought. The film is characterized by a combination of realism and symbolism, and seeks to encourage the audience to question the prevailing cultural values. The film’s use of hand-held cameras and its disturbing violence gave it authenticity, and also encouraged other filmmakers to take risks.

### Discussion/Questions

1. While the first cinematic experiments took place in France and in the United States, where the focus was often on whimsical explorations of science fiction, such as in the case of *Voyage to the Moon*, in Mexico, film was used to chronicle important aspects of its history. What are some of the ways in which Mexican filmmakers sought to use film to chronicle their unique history as a nation, and also to make people aware of the heroes of the Mexican Revolution?
2. Mexico’s Golden Age was fueled by a time of relative peace and prosperity following the Mexican Revolution and also a surge in demand for their films, due to the fact that American and European filmmakers were not able to continue during World War II due to rationing of film and other supplies. The Golden Age made international stars of many Mexican actors. Who were some of the main actors and actresses in Mexico’s Golden Age? What were they known for?
3. Brazilian and Argentine filmmakers have long been lauded for their willingness to tackle very difficult social issues. In Brazil, the influence of 1960s French filmmaking (*nouvelle vague*) was very intense, and it resulted in films that featured rather unlikely heroes who were often of the underclass. In Argentina, films exposed the military dictatorship and the disappearance of youth who dissented. Describe films that explored social issues and evaluate their impact.

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## Part III : RELIGION

### Preclassic: (1<sup>st</sup> Millennium BCE)

**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.” 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.

**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.

### Classic Period (1<sup>st</sup> millennium CE)

**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 transmutation 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.

**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.

## Postclassic (2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium)

**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.

## Post-Conquest: Early Modern Period

**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 Cases 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.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Century : Independence

**Catholic Church Aligned with New Nations:** 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.

## Modern (20<sup>th</sup> Century)

**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*

1. 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.
2. The idea of ritual human sacrifice is repugnant to most people living today. Yet, it was common throughout the Americas. What were the characteristics of human sacrifice? Were they simply religious ceremonies? What were deeper purposes of ritual human sacrifice and displays of self-torture? How did the Spaniards respond to human sacrifice?
3. 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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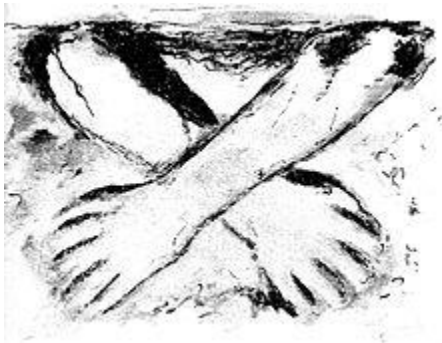
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## Part IV : PHILOSOPHY

**Overview** Latin American philosophy contains ideas that seem to have come full circle, from the first peoples who imprinted their philosophies on the consciousnesses and worldviews of the all subsequent inhabitants, even the Spanish, who incorporated deities and beliefs into their religion, even as they ostensibly actively resisted or rejected indigenous beliefs and practices. Latin American philosophy is a fusion of indigenous, African, and European ideas and beliefs, and philosophers have often used their unique perspective for idealistic, transformational purposes, first on a personal, individual level, and later to transform society itself.

### PRECONQUEST

**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.

**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:** 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.

#### Colonial (Early Modern):

**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.

#### Nineteenth-Century:

**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 Bolivar, 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.

### Twentieth-Century

**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 Fariás 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

1. The Spaniards walked into a deeply unstable world. The Aztecs, the Incas, and then the remnants of Mayan culture that persisted all spoke of world after world, apocalypse after apocalypse. The main thrust of their religion was to keep the gods happy enough to not destroy the world. Given the Spaniard’s recent experience with the “Other” that threatened to destroy their world, how do you think that the Spaniards regarded the beliefs? Discuss the key elements of Maya, Aztec, and Incan thought.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 19<sup>th</sup> century in Latin America.
5. Costumbristas recognized and documented indigenous cultures and folklore, along with mestizo traditions. The 20<sup>th</sup> 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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## Part V : LITERATURE

**Overview** Latin American literature has influenced world literature in a very tangible manner, beginning with the early post-Conquest diaries, which inflamed imaginations and triggered fantastical imaginings in such works as Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Michel de Montaigne's "On Cannibals." Four hundred years later, the voyages became psychological and philosophical as Latin American authors created poetry, novels, and essays that challenged world authors to embrace a method of writing that forced readers to reconfigure perception and to fuse modern, ancient, indigenous, European, and African influences in order to represent the human experience in a number of new, innovative ways.

### PRECONQUEST

**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.



**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.

### Colonial (Early Modern)

**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.

### Nineteenth Century

**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).

### Twentieth Century

**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 Nigaraguan 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 Ficiton:** 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

1. 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?
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?
3. 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?
4. 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.
5. As opposed to costumbrismo, Modernismo looked forward rather than backward. Modernismo focused on the idea of positive change and the potential for transformation and industrialization. Other aspects of Modernismo focused on symbolism and a desire to find new ways to express fierce, harsh emotions in a new world of disconcerting technology and change. What were the characteristics of Modernismo? Describe the work of three different authors.
6. The economic boom in the middle of the twentieth century led to the rise of new forms of literature that brought together philosophy, ideas of reality, identity, and existence. Authors found a wildly receptive audience. Describe the Boom authors and their accomplishments.
7. Boom authors responded to military dictatorships, and many wrote their work while in exile. Many of the Cold War issues led to changes of power and also different types of repression. This change in the geopolitical and economic situation resulted in another wave of post-Boom authors, many of whom wrote to expose or resist military dictatorships and/or communism. Who were some of the main authors in the post-Boom era?

### Readings

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