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The Latin American novel includes a wide corpus of texts written in Spanish and Portuguese. Compiling the important contributions and development of the Latin American novel genre is quite a challenge. The *Cambridge Companion to the Latin American Novel* offers "an overview of the novel's history and critical analyses in several representative works" (i) in many regions of Latin America, giving special attention to Brazil, the Caribbean, the Andes and Central America. This compilation in English is the first to offer the contributions to the novel genre and the impact of these novels' translations abroad. Besides being a remarkable resource for students and teachers of the Latin American novel, the *Companion* conveys an introduction to the heterogeneity of Latin American literature in the various regions and an introduction to gender and queer approaches to the novel. This *Companion* offers a great overview of the Latin American panorama beginning with the nineteenth century to the present. In addition, it summarizes the cultural, historical, literary and sociopolitical chronology of events that have impacted the novel from 1810 to 2004.

This 336-page compilation offers a collection of essays divided in four parts, beginning with an extraordinary introduction by the editor, Efraín Kristal. Kristal opens the *Companion* with a new approach to defining Latin America as a term in the twenty-first century and how it has impacted the approaches to Latin American Literature. It was not until the twenty-first century that Latin American intellectuals have accepted the Latin American label. Once the label was accepted, Latin American scholars began capturing and recovering literary expressions that define their heritage. Kristal explains how, in this compilation, it was important to include the different approaches and novels not often discussed in traditional literary history, such as cultural and racial studies, gender and queer studies and the development and impact of the translations abroad.

Part I offers the traditional literary history of the novel's developments and landmark moments in the evolution of the Latin American novel from the nineteenth century to the present. Donald L. Shaw's *A Companion to Modern Spanish American Fiction* (2002) includes a similar discussion of the four important turning points of the novel: the nineteenth-century novel; the regionalist novel; the boom novel;

and the post-boom novel. However, the *Companion* has more to offer the student and teacher of the Latin American novel: a discussion of the main historical events and changes of the novel and the main contributions to the genre. Other literary history discussions include too many examples of novels without fully describing their importance. On the other hand, the *Companion* chooses the novels that caused a change in the genre and describes the reason for their importance using scholarly support.

Part II describes the "heterogeneity" of the Latin American novel through the important problematizations of race and culture: the African in Brazil, the Caribbean and Central America; and indigenism in Brazil, the Andes and Central America. This section is divided into four selections: "The Brazilian Novel," "The Caribbean Novel," "The Andean Novel" and "The Central American Novel"—not common in traditional literary history books, such as Shaw's. This section also presents the non-Western and multicultural contributions to the novel, literary production and current anthropological scholarship of indigenous and African cultures in these four countries. For example, in the chapter titled "The Brazilian Novel," Piers Armstrong discusses how the five regions of Brazil portray the "miscegenation of European, indigenous, and African populations in five distinct regions" (105): Northeast; Southeast; North; South; and the frontierlands of Center-West. The chapter discusses the history of the novel in Brazil beginning with the nineteenth-century novel *A moreninha* by Joaquim Manuel de Macedo to *Cidade de Deus* by Paulo Lins (1958), which inspired the film *City of God* in 2002.

Particularly important is the chapter on "The Caribbean Novel," due to its complete discussion of novels and their political, social, and economic context in each Caribbean country—not often discussed in traditional literary history books. William Luis discusses the novel's trajectory in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hispaniola and Jamaica. Luis describes this trajectory beginning with nineteenth-century novels, which describe the moment for development of a national consciousness and unique historical circumstances unfolding in each country up to the twentieth-century novel. The most influential novels of the nineteenth century in Cuba were *Autobiografía* (1835), *Cecilia Valdés* (1839) and *Sab* (1841), all which include questions of race and culture. At the same time, Ramón de Palma defines "ciboneyismo" with *Matanza y el Yumurí* (1837). Antonio Zambrana's *El negro Francisco* (1873), among others, continue the antislavery theme which persists

today. In the twentieth century, two themes persist in Cuba: the decay of Cuban society and slavery. The two novelists that inaugurated the twentieth century are Miguel del Carrión and Carlos Loveira. However, the most important writers of Cuba are Alejo Carpentier, José Lezama Lima and Guillermo Cabrera Infante. On the other hand, during the nineteenth century, Puerto Rican literature emerges from individuals and not movements. Furthermore, Luis recognizes Eugenio María de Hosto's *La peregrinación de Bayoán* (1863) as one of the earliest novels, which discussed Bayoán's travels, the Amerindian past and the current colonialization process. However, Manuel Alonso's *El gíbaro* (1882) is accepted as the first major work because of its description and definition of Puerto Rican identity. Luis recognizes Manuel Zeno Gandía's acceptance of naturalism over Romanticism as one of the major turning points in Puerto Rican literature, which influenced later authors. In the twentieth century, Puerto Rican novels focused mostly on their relationship with the United States. The most influencial writers were Pedro Juan Soto, Luis Rafael Sánchez, Edgardo Rodríguez and Rosario Ferré. On the other hand, the novel of the Dominican Republic begins with Manuel de Jesús Galvan's *Enriquillo* (1877), where it traces Dominican identity back to Spanish rule. The novel in the Dominican Republic recognizes their heritage back to the Amerindian past, not African. Other novels however, did not abandon the historical past and introduced the historical novel, such as Francisco G. Billini's *Engracia y Antoñita* (1892). In the twentieth century, novelists from the Dominican Republic were inspired by three historical turning points: the U.S. occupation of the country, the Trujillo Dictatorship, and the U.S. invasion of 1965. The task of the twentieth century's novelists was to comment and question the authority of the country. At the same time, novelists were also writing in experimental techniques like "the boom" novelists, such as Marcio Veloz Maggiolo. William Luis offers novels that follow a similar technique as the Boom novelists in Caribbean novels. Even in the history of Latin American novels in Spanish, such as Angel Rama's or John Brushwood's, the contribution of these important novelists to the Caribbean and the Latin American novel is not included.

Part III includes a summary of gender and queer studies and a discussion of the way by which they have introduced a new approach to reading the novel in Latin America. This section in particular discusses the novels written by women and the novels that describe "queer" scenes and discussions—the taboos—throughout Latin America. Part IV

includes six of the greatest contributions and turning points of the novel of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Machado de Asis's *Dom Casmurro* (1899), Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo*, Clarice Lispector's *The Passion According to G.H.*, Gabriel García Marquez's *One Hundred Yeas of Solitude*, Isabel Allende's *The House of Spirits* and Mario Vargas Llosas's *War of the End of the World*. It is important to note however, that these essays offer a reading or understanding of the text for the student of the Latin American novel; the scholar may need to refer to the "Further Reading" section for a deeper understanding and criticism of these novels. For example, Claire Williams's "*The Passion According to G.H.* by Clarice Lispector" attempts to guide a basic reading of the book, but fails to mention the author's importance in Brazil's feminist thought. She does mention briefly a comment made by Hélène Cixous, a leading feminist, but does not, until later in a footnote, elaborate more on how Lispector was a leader of feminist writing in Brazil.

Finally, the "Epilogue" defines the position of the Latin American novel in Europe and North America and how it has successfully entered the American and British literary production and readership. Suzanne Jill Levine notes that "the context that accounted for the literary revolution taking place in Latin America was impossible to appreciate, until the late 1960s, in the United States and Britain where Latin American local-color-type novels were the only kind being translated" (300). The type of novels being translated were Mariano Azuela's *Los de abajo* (*The Underdogs*), Ricardo Güiraldes's *Don Segundo Sombra* (*Don Segundo Sombra: Shadows of the Pampas)* and Eduardo Mallea's *La bahía de silencio (The Bay of Silence)*. Even Jorge Luis Borges's short stories were rejected because "Borges, who was a presence in the Argentine literary world at the time, did not 'represent' the image of the Latin American writer that would entice American publishers" (299). With the novels that were translated there were problems that Levine cites. For example, by 1941, Harriet de Onís was considered the leading translator of Spanish and Portuguese; however, her translations were not accurate. Levine states that "she was not terribly accurate and tended to normalize (with flowery language) both the regionalisms of some novels and the original experimental language of others" (301). The beginning of translations of other writers such as Borges began with Borges's Formentor Prize in 1961. Besides the translations, Levine also discusses the term "Latin American" and how writers and critics challenged the notion. However, this term was most important to the United States since "it

was a designation of a geopolitical area which was also convenient for the business of teaching courses and selling books" (302). In addition, it was the Cuban Revolution in 1959 that struck interest in the Latin American novel in the United States. As a result, the Association of American University Presses (AAUP) was given a grant of $225,000 to translate Latin American novels. It is important to note, however, that no boom novel was translated through this translation program; instead, they were published directly by pocket book publishers such as Harper and Row, Farrar, Straus, Pantheon and Grove. Some of the leading translators were Gregory Rabassa, Helen Lane, Margaret Peden, Alfred MacAdam, Hardie St. Martin, Edith Grossman and Gerald Martin. By the 1970s, North American and European readers wanted to read more of the magical realist novels produced in Latin America. By the 1980s, the role of the translator changed with the new interest of the Latino experience in English. Levine notes that "there is now a large bilingual readership (the Hispanic majority is by far the largest in the United States), which was not the case in 1970" (311).

The *Companion of the Latin American Novel* gives the student and teacher of the Latin American novel a comprehensive discussion of the novel, and the ruptures and changes that arose out of its many turning points. Each selection also offers reading and critical approaches that propose a different interpretation, including the questions of race and cultural, gender and queer studies. This *Companion* presents a literary history of the Latin American novel and how writers continue to warp new experimental approaches to discuss their political, social, racial, cultural, gender and historical agendas. From the "Introduction" of the *Companion,* Kristal clearly states that this book includes an overview of the genre as well as analyses of six classic texts. The selected essays attempt to "offer several entryways into the understanding and appreciation of the Latin American novel in both the Spanish- and the Portuguese-speaking realms" (16). Therefore, for historical and contextual knowledge, the *Companion* is an asset. In addition, the *Companion* offers a five-page comprehensive bibliography of suggested resources for those seeking further research. Also, at the end of every section, there is a bibliography entitled "Further Reading" which is helpful for those students and scholars of the Latin American novel that seek further scholarship.

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