

# **Important Themes in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Mexican Literature in Connection with Works from the Rest of the Americas**

William Rothman

Comparative Literature R1B Section 014 at UC Berkeley



# Notes

Basically a presentation on Latino literature with a special emphasis on Mexico.

Quantitative information from my own personal analysis using data science techniques.

Qualitative data from trusted sources.

The background features two stylized, high-contrast faces in white and black. The faces are composed of thick, wavy outlines and have large, white, almond-shaped eyes with small black pupils. The faces are positioned on the left and right sides of the image, with their features partially obscured by the central text. The overall style is graphic and minimalist.

**How many modern great  
works of Latin American  
Literature are there?**

The image features a large, stylized number '757' centered on a black background. The first '7' is red, the '5' is cyan, and the second '7' is green. The numbers are bold and have a slightly rounded, modern font style.

**Works of great Latin American literature**

Handbook of Latin American Studies

566

**Of those are written in Spanish**

Handbook of Latin American Studies

116

**Of those are from Mexico**

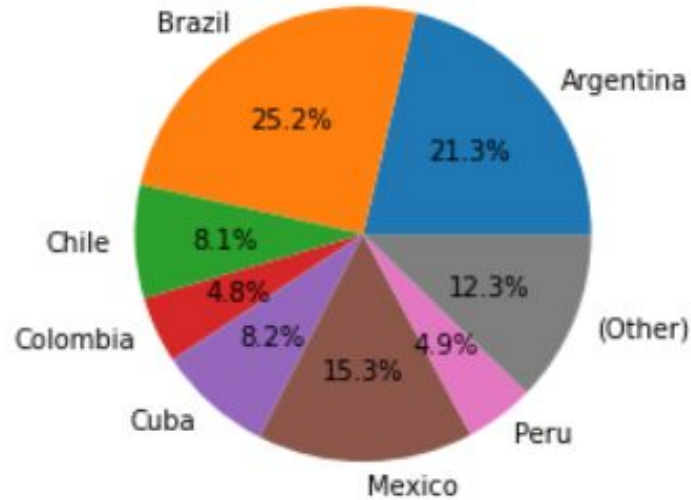
Handbook of Latin American Studies

# Included Books

1492: the life and times of Juan Cabezón of Castile, A Tuesday like today , A change of skin , A murmur of bees , Adam in Eden , After the winter , Almost never , Among the lost , Aura , Bubbeh , Cartucho; and, My mother's hands , Christopher unborn , Cleopatra dismounts:a novel , Dear Diego , Desire and its shadow , Destiny and desire:a novel , Diana, the goddess who hunts alone , Distant relations , Down the rabbit hole , El Zarco, the blue-eyed bandit:episodes of Mexican life between 1861-1863, Empty set , Faces in the crowd:a novel , Farabeuf , Flowers and Mishima's illustrated biography : Flores y biografía ilustrada de Mishima , Gazapo , Gray skies tomorrow , Here's to you, Jesusa! , Human mourning , Hurricane season , In spite of the dark silence , Jacob the mutant , Jakarta , Kill the lion!, Leaving Tabasco , Like a brideand Like a mother , Like water for chocolate:a novel in monthly installments, with recipes, romances, and home remedies , Lost in the city:two novels , Lovesick , Magdalena:a fable of immortality , Malinche:a novel , Me, woman who dove into the heart of the world:a novel , Mexican bolero , Modelo antiguo:a novel of Mexico City , Mogador , News from the Empire , No one will see me cry:a novel , Notes of a villager:a Mexican poet's youth and revolution , Otilia's body:a novel , Our lady of the circus , Out of their minds:the incredible and (sometimes) sad story of Ramón and Cornelio , Palinuro of Mexico , **Pedro Páramo** , Persephone , Poisoned water : Agua envenenada , Quesadillas:a novel , Quetzalcoátl , Rasero:a novel , Santa:a novel of Mexico City , Season of ash:a novel in three acts , Señora Rodríguez and other worlds , Shadow without a name , Shadows of silence:a novel , Shiki Nagaoka:a nose for fiction , Shipwrecked body , Signs preceding the end of the world , Sudden death , Swift as desire:a novel , Tear this heart out , Terra nostra , Texas:the great theft , The Battle of Tomochic:memoirs of a second lieutenant , The Gospel of Lucas Gavilán , The Mongolian conspiracy , The black minutes , The book of lamentations , The campaign , The child poet , The crystal frontier:a novel in nine stories , The dead leaves , The death of Artemio Cruz , The empty book:a novel , The enlightened army , The fair , The false years , The house of the pain of others:chronicle of a small genocide , The house on the beach:a novel , The hydra head , The law of love , The lean lands , The lightning of August , The love you promised me:a novel , The mangy parrot:the life and times of Periquillo Sarniento: written by himself for his children , The norther : El norte , The obstacles , The old gringo , The orange tree , The precipice: El bordo , The princess of the Iron Palace , The secret book of Frida Kahlo:a novel , The secret gardens of Mogador:voices of the earth , The skin of the sky , The story of my teeth , The taiga syndrome , The two mujeres , The underdogs , The underdogs:pictures and scenes from the present revolution: a translation of Mariano Azuela's Los de abajo with related texts , The wake , The years with Laura Díaz , They're cows, we're pigs , Three novels , Tinisima , Tomb song:a novel , Tula station:a novel , Within these walls , Yankee invasion:a novel of Mexico City , You will die in a distant land



# Distribution between countries



# Family and Anxiety

- Comes from **Roman Catholic belief system**
- Ties back to **colonialism**
- Love-hate relationship with the Catholic **church**
  - Mexico is especially religious
- Evil colonial trash or saving grace?
- **Overextension** of churchly powers
  - Pinochet justifying actions with religion





## On Pinochet and the Church

"Pinochet remains popular with about half of all Chileans even today; obviously, a large proportion of Catholics support a government criticized by their church."

Katherine Davis  
Georgetown University



# Family and Anxiety

- *Pedro Parámo*
  - **Doña Eduviges:** regret of not having a family
  - **Pedro Parámo:** composite character for bad parenting
  - **Pedro Parámo's** Mother: anxiety over losing loved ones
- *Violeta*
  - **Violeta:** Lived in an eccentric household that felt better than everyone else, Violeta's inability to start a normal family of her own constant anxiety over children

# Word Map



# Rebellion and Violence



- **Colonialism and Post-Colonialism (1521 to now)**

- Since total Spanish invasion of Aztec Empire
- Established capital over ruins of Tenochtitlan, former Aztec capital

- **Mexican-American War (1846-1848)**

- American invasion of Mexican territory

- **Mexican Revolution (1910 to 1920)**

- “Defining event of modern Mexican history”
- War against Porfirio Díaz’s dictatorship



- **Ongoing organized crime in Mexico (~1990s to now)**

# Rebellion and Violence

- ***Pedro Parámetro***

- Love and hatred towards him throughout the entirety of the book
- Pedro Paramo wreaks havoc on the town of Comala

- ***Violeta***

- Dictatorship was a huge plot point
- Heavily implied to be Augusto Pinochet's Chile
- Violeta's family's liberal ideology clashed with the reality of their government

- ***Breaking Bad***

- Brought American attention to Mexican drug cartels
- Themes of the ongoing violence in Mexico, manifested from years of Mexican suffering





# Reality and Fragility

- **Magic Realism:** realistic view of humanity with magical elements
  - Boom Period in Latin American Literature (1962-1967)
  - Critique of powerful people
  - Political turmoil from Cold War, with particular pressure coming from Cuba

# Reality and Fragility

- *Pedro Parámetro*
  - **Allegory for Hell:** Comala is Hell, Pedro Paramo is the Devil, Everyone is dead
  - **Distortion:** no differentiation between reality and nightmare
- *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings (1920)*
  - Brief summary
    - ...
    - **Total Disregard of Beauty:** despite believing the old man to be an angel, Pelayo and Elisenda profit from its suffering
    - **Religion:** religious imagery prompts reader to reconsider their own value of Catholicism

# Detour

- Brief Summary
  - Crab fisherman, Pelayo, and his wife, Elisenda, discover an old, dying homeless man with wings in his yard
  - He concludes he must be a fallen angel
    - Priests warn him it's not
  - Turns the old man into a circus attraction
  - Old man flies away

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**That's all folks!**

