

LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN WRITERS



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Latin American Women Writers

Latin America is immense not only in its size—twice the area of Europe, and stretching from the Rio Grande in Texas to Cape Horn in Patagonia—but in its range of cultural and literary expression. What we call "Latin American culture" is a composite of the rich and diverse output of 20 sovereign countries. Each had its unique struggle for independence and particular ways in which it evolved after the end of colonization.

Literature is the best blueprint for following the social and cultural developments within these Ibero-American nations. In *Latin American Women Writers*, Alexander Street Press presents an electronic collection of literature by Latin American women from the colonial period in the seventeenth century forward to the present. Literary works, along with memoirs and essays, comprise the 100,000 pages of works in their original language. Scholars will see how, throughout the centuries, women wrote about their families, their economic hardships, their subjugation, and their identity. They wrote about folklore, food, indigence, abolitionism, and race. They wrote from the heart, whether poetry, prose, or memoir. With *Latin American Women Writers*, Alexander Street brings together all the voices of Latin American women and presents a tool for understanding the diversity and development of Latin America through a feminine perspective.

CONTENT

The project begins with the autobiographical writing of nuns who, like their seventeenth-century European counterparts, wrote accounts of their spiritual journeys. Representative are the works of the Mexican mestiza Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a sister in the Convent in the Order of St. Jerome, a prolific writer of plays, poetry, and other meditative texts.

As the collection moves through eighteenth-century works into the nineteenth century, researchers will see how women writers incrementally gained access to the writing world outside of religious contexts. Initially, they wrote under pseudonyms or anonymously, but from this position they were able to start the critique of their own status within heavily patriarchal societies. Included from this period are works by Clorinda Matto de Turner (Peru), Juana M. Gorriti (Argentina), Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda (Cuba), Delmira Agustini (Argentina), and Julia Lopes Almeida (Brazil), among others. A number of important figures from the early twentieth century are also present, such as Rachel de Queiroz (Brazil), Juana de Ibarbourou (Uruguay), Claudia Lars (El Salvador), and Sarah Bollo (Uruguay).

The production and publication of women's writing during the second half of the twentieth century shows how the ongoing critique became sharper, more direct, and more feminist. Other women, influenced by broader political currents sweeping these nations during the time, focused on dictatorial regimes, censorship, and themes of exile, as in the works of Ida Gramko (Venezuela), Isidora Aguirre (Chile), Lya Luft (Brazil), and Claribel Alegria (Nicaragua).

Besides the literary works, over 25% of the collection is comprised of feminist works. Writers such as Clorinda Matto de Turner (Peru), Nisia Floresta and Bertha Lutz (Brazil), and Luisa Capetillo (Puerto Rico) among many others are represented. Pamphlets, booklets, small serials and larger feminist newspapers were also included making this the largest electronic collection of Latin American feminist writings and feminism related materials available.

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