ASCENT TO GLORY

How *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Was Written and Became a Global Classic

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Tree shape: detail from Vicente Rojo’s cover for *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967).
Butterfly shape: detail from cover of first edition of *Leaf Storm* (1955).

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1965, an unknown writer was driving from Mexico City to Acapulco for a vacation with his wife and two children when, suddenly, a cow crossed the road in front of his car. He stopped abruptly. What happened next was a Newtonian moment, a miracle of the imagination. Right there on the road, in a stroke of brilliant insight, the writer came up with the first sentence of a novel that would change world literature: "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice." Knowing there was not a second to lose, he turned his car around and rushed back home to Mexico City. He quit his job and locked himself up in his studio until he finished the novel. Debts skyrocketed as he spent months writing. He fell behind on rent payments, lived on the generosity of his friends and neighbors, and ended up pawning his car, his wife's dowry jewels, and even his typewriter. Nothing could stop him. Eighteen months later, he emerged from his studio with a completed manuscript. When he went to the post office to mail it to a possible publisher in Argentina, the bankrupt writer realized that he did not have enough money to send the whole manuscript. He had to divide it into two parts and mailed only one part. When he arrived home, he looked at the pages in his hands and discovered his mistake: he had just mailed the second part of the manuscript, not the first as he had intended. What a terrible way, he might have thought, of pitching the novel that took him so much effort to write! Luckily, the pages that he sent astonished the publisher, who knew that the novel would be a great success and hurried to offer the writer a publishing contract. The writer was Gabriel García Márquez and the novel was *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (*Cien años de soledad*).[1]

This story about how this Colombian author created *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is in reality a fascinating legend, now passed on from generation to generation. Parts of this legend are true and other parts are not, like Isaac Newton's story about discovering the theory of gravity after an apple fell on his head. What is remarkable about these cases is how legends often find in the pages of famous books and in the minds of people the most fertile soil to take root and grow. Shared and reinvented again and again, legends eventually become myths. One such myth refers to the artist who, after a stroke of inspiration, has to struggle financially in order to create a work of art. Poverty loomed over Mozart while composing works that revolutionized music, over Edgar Allan Poe while

writing short stories that transformed modern literature, over Picasso while striving to sell his first cubist paintings, and over García Márquez while writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Yet this myth of the creative genius cornered by economic hardship is more than a familiar story: it is a social pattern that ends up magnifying the difficulties that artists faced while creating their work. And as myths of this kind grow over time, they also obscure important details about how a work of art was really conceived and hence make it more challenging to explain how it turned into a classic.

The story of how *One Hundred Years of Solitude* actually came into being is even more fascinating than the legends and myths that surround this novel. When it was released in 1967, neither the publisher nor the author expected much of it. They knew, as publishing giant Alfred A. Knopf once said, "many a novel is dead the day it is published."[2] Yet something unexpected happened. This novel did not die the day of its publication. Instead, it started to live what would prove to be a long life. The story of how this novel about a remote Caribbean town has become the most famous work of Latin American literature and a global classic is spellbinding. *Ascent to Glory* seeks to tell this story, using especially numerous new sources, including the ones kept in García Márquez's personal archives.

At the heart of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the tale of the Buendía family and their town of Macondo, which was the scene of natural catastrophes, civil wars, and magical incidents. In the end, as prophesized by a manuscript that generations of Buendías tried to decipher, a biblical hurricane destroyed Macondo after the last Buendía was born with a pig's tail. To readers familiar with the global success of the novel since its publication in 1967, choosing it as the subject of this book comes as no surprise. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the work of Latin American literature par excellence. It is also the most read literary work in Spanish after *Don Quixote*. It has been translated into forty-nine languages, has sold over fifty million copies, and is listed among the top thirty best-selling literary works of all time. A 2009 survey among international writers published in the British newspaper the *Guardian* ranked it as the novel that has most influenced world literature over the past three decades. This influence still continues and is largely due to the novel's association with magical realism, a style that mixes stories of ordinary life with magical events. This style has now expanded into a global genre with its own art market.

Magical realism is present in award-winning works and international best sellers such as *The House of the Spirits* by the Chilean writer Isabel Allende; *Pig Tales* by the French author Marie Darrieussecq; *Big Breasts and Wide Hips* by the Chinese author and Nobel laureate Mo Yan; *Midnight's Children* by the Indian Salman Rushdie; *Illywhacker* by the Australian Peter Carey; *The Wind-Up Bird*

Chronicle by the Japanese Haruki Murakami; and *Beloved* by the American author and Nobel laureate Toni Morrison. The influence of magical realism has grown so vast in literature that scholars and common readers use the term to talk about literary works written in different countries and decades before the birth of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, books such as *The Master and Margarita* by the Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov; *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by the American Zora Neale Hurston; or *Ficciones* by the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges. The reach of magical realism extends beyond literature. In cinema, this style is present in Hollywood productions, international blockbusters, Oscar winners, and indie movies such as *Life of Pi*, *Amen*, *Birdman*, *The Shape of Water*, *Amélie*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, and *Beasts of the Southern Wild*. In these and other works of art, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is customarily (and incorrectly) credited as the founding work of magical realism, an attribution that helps to maintain the global visibility of this novel generation after generation.

The global impact of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* now extends beyond its magical realist style. One finds the presence of this novel in paintings, operas, ballets, plays, cartoons, video games, social media, web pages, newspaper articles, blogs, scholarly publications, songs, drinks, household objects, public parks, restaurants, peoples' names, and even distant celestial bodies. The 2020s started with the announcement that Macondo is the name of the star HD 93083, located about ninety-one light years away from the Earth. Orbiting this star is the extrasolar planet HD 93083 b, also known as Melquíades, a character in the novel.

Not coincidentally, one of the most familiar characteristics of the classic is its unstoppable power to be a part of our lives, often without our permission and often in formats that are different from the one set by its creator. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is linked to one of the worst environmental accidents in history: the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 took place in a prospect called Macondo. If a classic is a social institution that shapes the taste and actions of artists, art industry gatekeepers, influencers, and consumers across generations, nations, and cultures, then *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has become one. Its total number of readers forms a community that, if it were a country, would be among the thirty most populous in the world.

THIS BOOK AT A GLANCE

I wrote *Ascent to Glory* for two kinds of readers: first, fans of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and García Márquez in general and, second, sociologists, historians,

and literary scholars. To both audiences, this book offers a study of the novel's conception, best-selling success, and consecration as a classic. Fans will find detailed answers to many of their questions about how the novel was written and how it became so famous globally. Sociologists, historians, and literary scholars will find that this book throws new light on key issues in their disciplines, such as value and cultural brokerage, genius and the universal, and power and world literature. (For more details on these and other issues, see the appendix.)

Chapters 1 through 4 cover the years 1920 through 1967. Using rare and new evidence from the García Márquez archives and libraries in five countries, these chapters examine the four decades prior to the novel's publication. They study the ideas, conventions, styles, objects, people, and organizations that made *One Hundred Years of Solitude* imaginable as a work of art in the first place. When García Márquez was born, the artistic principles of Latin Americanism and cosmopolitanism were spreading in Latin America, and years later they compelled him and his contemporaries to imagine and write their works as region-spanning Latin American literature. These principles were central to imagine his novel but not enough to produce it. The fate of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* could have been completely different without the rapid modernization of the Spanish-language book industry in the 1960s. Due to this booming industry, the novel was part of an avalanche of literary works that began in 1962. Their success created a space of imagination, production, and reception; thanks to this space (or niche), *One Hundred Years of Solitude* easily entered the publishing market five years later as a best seller. But how did García Márquez actually write the novel? While struggling to put it on paper for seventeen years, he learned many professional skills and conventions over two decades of traveling in more than ten countries and after joining several groups of artists. Collaborators in Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Spain assisted him as he was writing it. When the novel was published, it became an instant hit. It was the new product of the modernizing Spanish-language book industry and of the successful trend known as the New Latin American Novel. And it was written by a skillful and well-connected Latin American author.

Yet being a best seller guarantees nothing long-term. A work of art, no matter how successful was at first, is not born a classic but rather becomes one. Chapters 5 through 7 show what happened to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* over the next six decades, from 1967 to 2020. These chapters analyze data from more than ninety countries and forty-five languages to explain its ascent to glory. For this ascent to happen, scores of cultural brokers had to intervene. They facilitate the circulation of the work of art from one culture, country, and generation to another.

These brokers are more than the usual suspects, critics and scholars. They are a broader constellation of people, groups, objects, and organizations quite often unrelated to one another. Yet their individual actions yield a collective result: the consecration as a classic work of art. Thousands of brokers have done so for *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

These cultural brokers are, for example, the Chinese reader that despises this novel as a story about "a bunch of lunatics"; a private company that named one of its cargo ships after Macondo, a vessel that now sails under the flag of Panama; the Japanese company that manufactures a US$130 alcoholic drink called "One Hundred Years of Solitude"; or an African American father who recommends this novel to his daughter and just happens to be the president of the United States.

To further understand how a literary work becomes a classic, chapter 8 studies five literary works that met the conditions to become global classics but did not do so. Their trajectories show us that the making of a classic work of art is never simply a Newtonian moment but a social story. In the case of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, this story spans over a century and includes millions of readers and thousands of cultural brokers on seven continents, including Antarctica, where a British explorer read the novel during the first circumpolar navigation of the Earth. More generally, the making of a classic is a social story that can help us understand why it is so difficult to imagine social life without classics. To preserve classics, we bury them deep down within the Earth and we even launch them into outer space. Digitized copies of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Edvard Munch's *The Scream* are protected in the Doomsday Vault, constructed in the event of an apocalypse on our planet. In this vault, these and other classics are stored within the permafrost of an abandoned coal mine in Norway's Arctic archipelago of Svalbard. And musical selections from classics such as Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* can be played from a golden record attached to the outside of the *Voyager 1* and *Voyager 2* spacecrafts, launched into the depths of space where no human has ever been.

PART I

FROM THE IDEA TO THE BOOK

Many years before García Márquez sat down to write *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, he first had to learn how to transform the memories of his childhood and family history into literary characters and stories. In 1950, the writer, who was then twenty-two, visited his hometown of Aracataca, a village in Colombia's Caribbean region. This visit prompted vivid memories of his childhood, when he lived in his maternal grandparents' house and spent time with his relatives and extended family. The same year, he published "The Buendía House: Notes for a Novel," the first known version of what eventually became *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. For the next two years, he kept publishing fragments of a manuscript in progress called "The House." These fragments described the everyday life of a rural village as seen by a child. In these, certain characters in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* appeared for the first time, Úrsula and Colonel Aureliano Buendía among them. Central themes in the future novel appeared, too: solitude and nostalgia. García Márquez returned to Aracataca in 1952 and expected to finish the novel in two years. To do so, he worked as an itinerant book salesman and spent several months touring the region, conducting literary fieldwork, and listening to people and their stories. Old memories and new experiences started making their way into his imagination. At the same time, he had to figure out how to connect life to literature, that is, how to turn people's lives and stories into literary fiction.

THE MAKING OF *ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE*

1927 García Márquez born in Aracataca, Colombia.

1927–1936 Spends childhood in his maternal grandparents' house in Aracataca, source of inspiration for his novel.

1944 Starts reading writers who shape his literary imagination.

1948 Joins art groups in Cartagena and Barranquilla that train him professionally.

1950 Visits Aracataca and comes up with the first ideas for the novel that becomes *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

1950 Publishes the story "The Buendía House: Notes for a Novel."

1950–1951 Publishes fragments from a manuscript called "The House."

1952 Visits Aracataca and announces that "The House" will be ready in two years.

1953 Travels in the Colombian departments of Cesar, Magdalena, and La Guajira, where the novel is partly set.

1956 Resumes work on "The House" in Paris but ends up writing *No One Writes to the Colonel*.

1957–1961 Publishes numerous pieces of literary journalism in which he develops the style in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

1961 Joins, in Mexico City, the art group called the Mafia, which soon leads the way for the New Latin American Novel.

1962 Tries to resume work on an old project, a book of fantastic stories, but instead stops writing fiction and moves to scriptwriting.

1963 A defeated García Márquez gives up on writing the biography of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, the central character in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

1964 International success of the New Latin American Novel, of which García Márquez was well informed and more involved.

1965 Signs a contract with Balcells Agency to represent him in all languages.

1965 Starts writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and initiates conversations with publishers Sudamericana, Seix Barral, and Harper & Row.

1965–1966 Friends, writers, and critics in eleven countries on three continents do research for the novel or read fragments as García Márquez writes it.

1966 The writer and his peers start promoting the novel in over twenty countries three months before finishing it and one year before its publication.

1967 Sudamericana publishes *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in Buenos Aires.

To connect life to literature, García Márquez needed to learn skills and conventions used by professional writers, such as telling a story with a given style and developing credible characters. This professional training came through groups of artists that he joined in several countries in Latin America and Europe over the next decade. Yet these groups did not teach García Márquez skills and

conventions for literary writing in a naked way. They taught him skills and conventions that were dressed, so to speak, with the clothing of certain ideas. And some of these ideas were present in exemplar texts that the young García Márquez imitated in his early works. These texts were written by modernist authors such as William Faulkner, Franz Kafka, and Virginia Woolf, Colombian writers such as poets of the movement *Piedra y cielo*, Latin American authors such as Pablo Neruda and Jorge Luis Borges, and Spanish writers such as Federico García Lorca and Ramón Gómez de la Serna. Other ideas were shared with him in person by influential peers.

Seeking to work as a full-time writer, García Márquez moved from one country to another, joining other art groups. In each location, he practiced new skills, and new ideas entered his literary imagination. Rather than being unique, his imagination in reality was becoming more and more similar to that of three generations of writers, critics, and publishers that had started to believe that Latin American literature existed and that its moment had finally arrived. What followed the collaboration across these generations was the rise of the New Latin American Novel in the 1960s, also known as the Latin American Boom. García Márquez saw this boom unfold firsthand and soon was one of the writers at the center of this international literary movement. By then, he knew that works of the New Latin American Novel were instant best sellers and award-winning books in Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Like several of his peers, he realized that his moment had come. Between 1965 and 1967, he committed all his time and energy to writing a story that he had struggled to finish for more than a decade. The result was *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

García Márquez wrote a book about solitude in the company of many collaborators. They lived in eleven countries on three continents. From their locations, they helped him to imagine the novel and gave him feedback on his writing from beginning to end. Even when he felt alone writing, he could say so to his collaborators in person, over the phone, and by mail, and they listened and sought to relieve him. Never before had the solitary writer been so accompanied as a creator. Some of his collaborators even worked as his research assistants, gathering information that he added to the manuscript. His collaborators also played an active role in the novel's production and early reception. Several of them published reviews of the novel when García Márquez was still months away from finishing the manuscript and over a year away from its publication. This networked creativity, which moved the novel from an idea to a book, from imagination to production, was the true genius behind the making of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

1

IMAGINING A WORK OF ART

The Great Novel of America.

Main line on cover of *Primera Plana* magazine on *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 1967[1]

In 1927, the year Gabriel García Márquez was born, *Revista de Occidente*, a popular Spanish journal among artists and intellectuals, published the article "After Expressionism: Magical Realism," written by German art critic Franz Roh. His piece had nothing to do with literature. It was about the present and future of European painting. Roh ended it with a vague but prophetic statement, "Someday man too will be able to recreate himself in the perfection of this concept."[2] Little could he suspect that magical realism, the concept he just coined, would become synonymous with the literature of Latin America and, especially, with the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. For this to happen, magical realism had to migrate from Europe to Latin America and then to the rest of world.

The newborn García Márquez, of course, did not know that magical realism would influence his literary imagination so much. It took four decades and the participation of dozens of people for this influence to take form in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. One of these people was Arturo Uslar Pietri, a Venezuelan writer living in Paris in the late 1920s. There, he read the article by Roh and mentioned it on the terrace of a Parisian café to two fellow writers, Guatemalan Miguel Ángel Asturias and Cuban Alejo Carpentier. The three were then under the spell of French surrealism. Two decades of writing had to pass before they realized that magical realism could work in literature. In 1948, Uslar Pietri was the first to use this term to make sense of literary works. The same year, Carpentier wrote that the mixture of reality and the marvelous was "the heritage of all of America." And he concluded that the writer's job was to turn this mixture into a literary style.[3]

Fourteen years later, in 1962, Carpentier published the novel *Explosion in a Cathedral*. García Márquez read it and confessed in a letter to a friend, "It is a masterpiece of universal literature." Admiration turned into influence and influence

shaped the imagination of a book. In *Explosion in a Cathedral*, García Márquez found numerous ideas and techniques to write *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a novel he had struggled to imagine for more than a decade. Along the way, he even gave up on it. Tormented, he said in an interview in 1963, "The biography of Colonel Aureliano Buendía [the novel's main character] will never be written." But the following year García Márquez saw Carpentier several times, who advised him on style, language, use of time in fiction, and how to write as a Latin American author. Carpentier's help proved decisive. Three years later, in 1967, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* took the world by storm. The same year, the third member of the Parisian group, Asturias, became the first Latin American novelist to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. The award consecrated his literary portrayal of the magical legends and traditions of the peoples of Latin America. The next Latin American novelist to win this award was García Márquez in 1982. He received it for a similar reason: "for his novels and short stories, in which the fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination, reflecting a continent's life and conflicts." By then, many readers and critics called him the creator of magical realism and praised *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as the novel that put Latin America on the map of world literature. But none of these statements are correct.[4]

The origins of magical realism and its transformation into a literary style was, in reality, part of a larger transformation in aesthetic ideas, intellectual principles, professional values, and social expectations that shaped the imagination of García Márquez and many other writers in the region. This transformation started in earnest in the 1920s. In Peru, writer José Carlos Mariátegui launched his literary journal *Amauta*, in which he aimed to combine ideas from Marxism, European avant-garde art, and the indigenous cultures of Peru. This publishing venture was not unique. Asturias published the literary journal *Nuevos Tiempos* and, in collaboration with Carpentier, *Imán*. The pages of these short-lived journals, along with those of *Proa* and *Repertorio Americano*, tell the story of a major intellectual change underway during the 1920s: the invention of a region-spanning literary tradition, *literatura latinoamericana* (Latin American literature). Its invention is key to understanding how, four decades later, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* became imaginable as a work of art.[5]

Imagination is the first and often overlooked stage that an artist goes through in order for the work of art to move to the stage of production. In the arts, imagination hardly runs free and unstrained. The so-called muses that inspire artists are, at a closer look, ideas, principles, rules, values, and expectations that guide what artists can imagine. These "social" muses enable or restrict an artist's choices during the creative process. Imagination is, simply put, the first gatekeeper. This is why the study of cultural production is incomplete without explaining what goes on in the stage of imagination—that is, during the coming into being of the work of art when it is just an

impulse, intuition, or idea that is worth pursuing. And what occurs during this stage, of course, goes beyond understanding what happens in the artist's head. One of the obstacles that García Márquez had to face in order to imagine *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was the absence of a region-spanning Latin American literature. He was not the only one in the region aware of this obstacle. *Primera Plana*, a popular magazine of current affairs, reminded its quarter of a million readers in August 1966, exactly when García Márquez was about to finish writing his novel, that things were changing. Now there was a "sense of a constituted, autonomous literature, at a level of achievement comparable to that of other literatures of the world."[6]

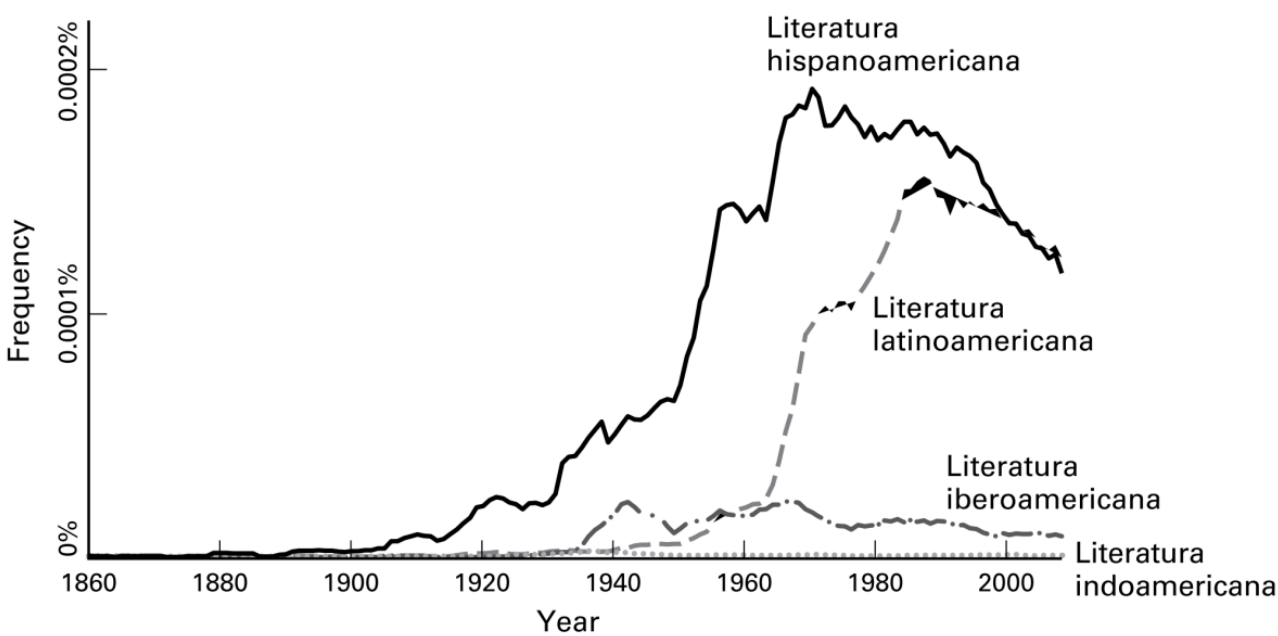
How did imagination take the form of concrete aesthetics, conventions, creators, organizations, objects, and audiences that shaped García Márquez's creativity for four decades before he finished *One Hundred Years of Solitude*? This novel exemplifies the power that imagination has over creators' choices. Having taken the form of ideas, people, and works, this imagination that molds creators' artistic choices can often develop decades before they start creating art. Ever since its publication, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has been considered among the greatest works of Latin American literature. Yet when García Márquez was born, most writers, critics, and readers believed that this region's literature was no more than the sum of its national literatures: Peruvian, Venezuelan, Cuban, and so on. But from the 1920s onward, in the pages of journals such as the ones mentioned above, writers and critics started to imagine the region's literature as different from the sum of national traditions. This collective enterprise paid off. By the 1960s, Latin American literature was an entity of its own and no longer occupied a peripheral position in the international market. Rather, as highbrow journals and mass media agreed, "the literature now coming out of Latin America is of the first importance."[7]

TOWARD A REGIONAL LITERATURE

Geographic labels that designate peoples, territories, and continents are not neutral terms but deeply political ones. So are aesthetic labels. In April 1927, a few days after García Márquez's birth, Spanish critic Guillermo de Torre—who two decades later rejected for publication the writer's first novella—wrote "Madrid, Intellectual Meridian of Spanish America." His essay caused an intellectual tsunami in the region. It attacked the name Latin America for being "false and unjustified" and despised the word "Latin Americanism." For him, the right name for the region could only be "Spanish America." Since he knew that Paris was also attracting a growing number of artists and students from the region, de Torre defended Madrid "as the most authentic line of intersection between America and Spain." And he concluded, "The American intellectual area [is] an extension of the Spanish area." In the following months, over thirty writers from six

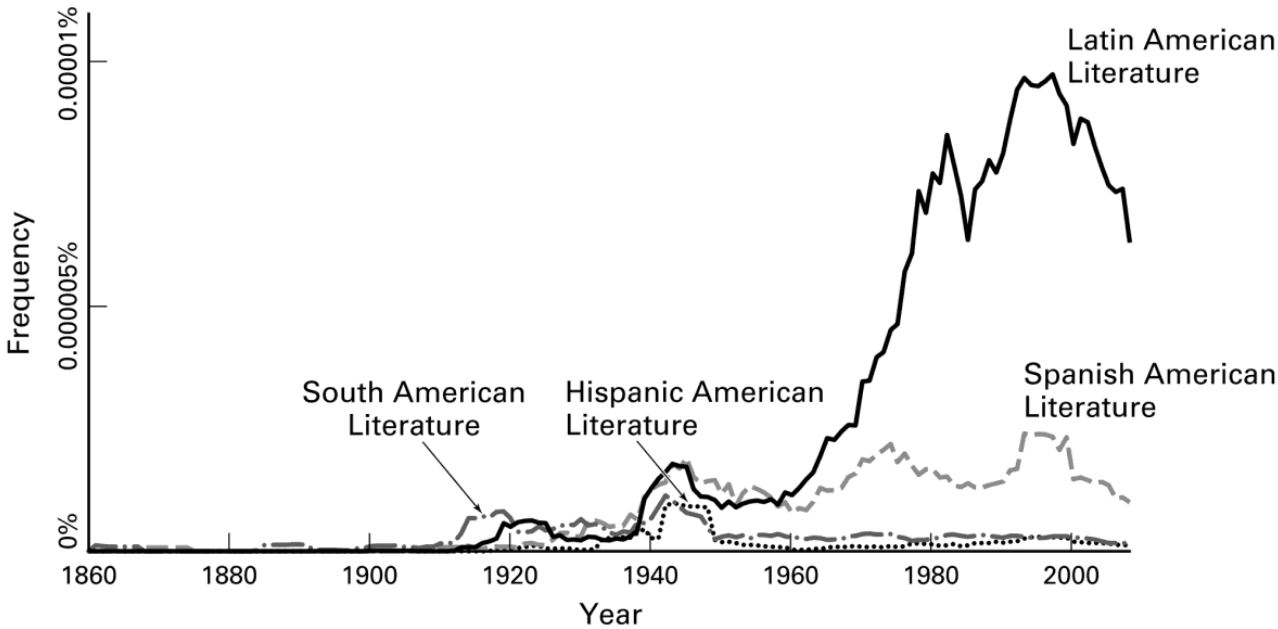
countries in the region united in their rejection of de Torre's arguments. Carpentier summarized the disapproval of many of his colleagues in stating, "The only aspiration of America is America itself." De Torre, though, was right about something; the now popular name of Latin America was invented in Paris. In the 1850s, expat writers Chilean Francisco Bilbao and Colombian José María Torres Caicedo first used it. The latter also coined the label *literatura latinoamericana* in 1879 to argue that the region "does not have a literature of its own" and that it lacked originality because "our literature imitates all others."[8]

The situation described by Torres Caicedo changed in the first decades of the twentieth century. Then, a region-spanning intellectual class started to emerge, including full-time writers such as José Enrique Rodó, Rubén Darío, José Martí, and Eugenio María de Hostos and literary critics and scholars such as Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Alfonso Reyes, Arturo Torres-Rioseco, and Alberto Zum Felde. Although they set the foundations of what was to come, the label *literatura latinoamericana* "had little usage in our own America during the first half of the century." As figures 1.1 and 1.2 show, growth in its usage was part of a process of nationalism in the region that gained acceptance during and after World War II, accelerated with the decolonization of Third World countries, and flourished in the 1960s after the Cuban Revolution in 1959.[9]



1.1 Frequency of labels in Spanish used to name the region's literature (1860–2008).

Source: Google Ngram Viewer.



1.2 Frequency of labels in English used to name the region's literature (1860–2008).

Source: Google Ngram Viewer.

By the 1960s, most writers, critics, and literary scholars could easily embrace the idea of a Latin American literature. They did precisely that during the decade of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*'s publication. By then, the ideas of Latin America and Latin American literature were inseparable components of the imagination that made this novel conceivable as a work of art.

LATIN AMERICANISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM

At the time of García Márquez's birth, when critics and readers referred to *literatura latinoamericana*, they had in mind a fragmented territory of over sixty languages, twenty nations, and their corresponding national literatures. Writers more readily pledged allegiance to a nation or a literary style rather than to the idea of Latin America. For this reason, there were Argentine and Uruguayan realists, Mexican and Peruvian indigenists, Colombian and Ecuadorian regionalists, and so on. But there were no writers regarded as, say, Latin American realists. In fact, most writers were not committed to imagining works that transcended the boundaries of their national literature. So how did the region's literature become more than the sum of its different national literatures? Writers and critics started to develop uniforming principles in the 1880s. But it took four decades before they spread beyond national borders. Two

principles in particular, despite variations of each, came to dominate the idea of a region-spanning Latin American literary tradition: Latin Americanism and cosmopolitanism.

Latin Americanism aimed at rethinking the region's common indigenous roots and its shared history as a whole, rather than emphasizing the singular trajectory of each country in the region. Contrary to the provincial styles of *regionalismo* and *indigenismo*, followers of Latin Americanism had to imagine in their writing that a common history and culture united all countries of Latin America. And they had to believe that this common legacy made the region unique in literary terms when compared to the rest of the world. As Uruguayan literary critic Ángel Rama put it, "Latin Americanism facilitates the mediation between regionalism and external modernity." If practitioners of Latin Americanism imagined the region as a whole, their literary works would connect with the experiences of most of its peoples, regardless of their nationality. If written this way, readers would read their works as truly *Latin American*. This transformation of the collective imagination did not occur suddenly. In the 1940s and 1950s, Latin Americanism was still a conversation among a small group of "isolated creators," among whom was Carpentier. Only in the 1960s, when creators like García Márquez and Carpentier had more opportunities to meet and talk about their works regularly, did Latin Americanism become a widely shared regional conversation and literary agenda.[10]

The second principle, cosmopolitanism, sought to connect Latin America with foreign cultural traditions and to understand the region as part of the world. The cosmopolitan view consisted of inserting the region's literature within the larger cultural tradition of the West. For writers, this insertion meant that they should imagine their works as if they were written for readers in Latin America, Europe, and the United States. Cosmopolitanism did not seek to simply imitate the West but to create a friendly dialogue with works of Western literature. The diffusion of this cosmopolitan viewpoint changed writers' imaginations. A telling case, given the author's influence on the region's literature, was that of Argentine Jorge Luis Borges. In the 1930s, he went from being a local poet inspired by the beauty of Buenos Aires to a fiction writer interested in "universal" themes such as identity, time, and memory. Not all writers welcomed his cosmopolitanism. Argentine nationalists attacked Borges, accusing him of being "foreignizing or Europeanist." But over the years, he found ample support in the region for his cosmopolitan agenda, which he continued to develop. In 1951, in his famous lecture "The Argentine Writer and Tradition," he said, "I believe that our tradition is the whole of Western culture, and I also believe that we have a right to this tradition, a greater right than that which the inhabitants of one Western nation or another may have." By 1966, in *Into the Mainstream*, a best-selling volume of interviews with Latin American writers, Borges went a step further in defending the

region's right to "discove[r] the universality of our tradition," and he added "we no longer have to deny any one part of it."[11]

In the 1920s, when writers like Borges started their writing careers, other fellow writers and critics saw Latin Americanism and cosmopolitanism as incompatible. But in many works published from this decade onward, there was a growing desire to abandon these "Manichaean attitudes," as Peruvian writer Mario Vargas Llosa put it. His colleague Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes defended that these two principles complemented more than excluded each other. For him, the strength of the region's literature resided in the complementarity of these principles. A general agreement that it was possible to reconcile them peaked during the decade when *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was imagined, written, and published.[12]

How did the intellectual principles of Latin Americanism and cosmopolitanism take concrete form in literary writing? Along with the belief in a Latin American race and history, aspiring works of *literatura latinoamericana* had to highlight the region's nature and language as distinctive ingredients of a region-spanning literature. Nature is the first ingredient that plays a large role within the literary imagination of cosmopolitan Latin Americanism. Nature is everywhere in Latin America and fosters an unpredictable relationship with the surrounding civilization. "The man besieged by nature," to use the words of Fuentes, at first natural nature and then urban nature, was a theme present across national literatures. And its presence permitted the uniformization of literature in the region along this theme. Therefore, the struggles of pioneers in Argentina's wild nature in the Pampa described in Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo* (1845) were similar to the fights of characters in *Cumandá* (1879), a novel about indigenous peoples in the Amazon forest by Ecuadorian Juan León Mera. It was also the same conflict with nature that appeared in the uncivilized backcountry in Euclides da Cunha's *Rebellion in the Backlands* (Brazil, 1902), in Horacio Quiroga's short stories such as "The Feather Pillow" and "Anaconda" (Uruguay, 1917 and 1921), in José Eustasio Rivera's novel *The Vortex* (Colombia, 1924), whose characters ended up "devoured" by the jungle, in the clash between civilization and barbarism in Rómulo Gallegos's *Doña Bárbara* (Venezuela, 1929), and in the crudeness of the countryside in the communities of José de la Cuadra's *Los Sangurimas* (Ecuador, 1934), Ciro Alegría's *Broad and Alien Is the World* (Peru, 1941), and Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (Mexico, 1955). And of course, the theme of the conflict between man and nature found its way into the formidable jungle in Carpentier's *Explosion in a Cathedral* (Cuba, 1962), which hindered the diffusion of the French Revolution in Latin America, and in García Márquez's abandoned Spanish galleon in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which locals found in the jungle near the town of Macondo.[13]

Along with nature, language was the second ingredient of the literary imagination of cosmopolitanism and Latin Americanism. Literary texts needed to have a common

language in order to make these two principles concrete. The Spanish language turned out to be an obstacle. In the decades prior to the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a growing number of writers were frustrated about having to write in Spanish from Spain. As Fuentes denounced, "The Spanish American does not feel that he owns a language, he suffers a foreign language, that of the conqueror, that of the lord, that of the academies. . . . The history of Latin America is that of a dispossession of language." Likewise, critic Rama said, "The cultivated American man [feels] that he speaks, applies, manifests, exists, in a language he has not invented and that, for the same reason, does not belong entirely to him."[14]

Writers such as Peruvian José María Arguedas and Paraguayan Augusto Roa Bastos sought to overcome the obstacle of this colonial language by drawing from indigenous words, metaphors, sayings, and narrative structures. But in a region with over fifty indigenous languages, one of them could not help to build the region's literary tradition. By the late 1950s, it was clear to writers that the region's own literary language had to be Spanish but a different kind of Spanish: neo-baroque. The roots of this alternative language were in the seventeenth-century Spanish of the so-called Golden Age. Back then, Miguel de Cervantes, Luis de Góngora, Francisco de Quevedo, and Lope de Vega, among other writers, published their classic works. In Latin America, the baroque was the first regional cultural movement during the colonial era, with authors such as Fray Juan de Barrenechea y Albis, Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Latin American writers from Borges to Octavio Paz to García Márquez read and admired the baroque language of their counterparts from the Golden Age. Three centuries later, writers like Fuentes praised "the [b]aroque [as] the language of our great literary tradition." Fuentes himself, Carpentier, and other writers and critics relabeled this language as neo-baroque to distinguish the Spanish of Latin American literature from the Spanish of Spain's literature. In this distinctive kind of Spanish, writers started to find a stronger Latin American identity than in their nationality. As critic Luis Harss said, referring to what some Latin American authors were trying to achieve in the 1950s and 1960s, "All these people lived more in the language than in the country." (In the 1960s censors in Spain belittled this Latin American Spanish of literary works as "Creole jargon" and tried to repress the political and cultural agenda behind this language.)[15]

Unlike mainstream literature in Spain, Latin America's neo-baroque paid attention to adjective usage (*adjectivación*) and reverie (*ensoñación*). In the 1940s it gave birth to *literatura fantástica* and "the marvelous real" (an effort to reconcile the region's realism with the marvelous in its everyday life). This language started to appear in the mid-career works of Asturias, Borges, Carpentier, Uslar Pietri, Adolfo Bioy Casares, and Pablo Neruda. Their literary language spread among the region's cultural establishment and budding writers in Julio Cortázar's and García Márquez's generations. And the diffusion of this language among them favored the success of

literatura latinoamericana in the 1960s. (As the next chapter shows, readers, too, developed a taste for this Latin American language, which mainstream publishers favored.)

By the late 1950s, regional support for Latin Americanism and cosmopolitanism grew. The result was the collective imagination of literary works that shared an interest for "the historical formation of Latin America, the relation between that history and other mythical versions, and the contributions of both to contemporary Latin American identity."[16] These principles of cosmopolitanism and Latin Americanism permeate *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, with its synthesis of exuberant Latin American nature, neo-baroque language, and countless cosmopolitan references, from the Bible to *Don Quixote* to Faulkner's modernism.

THREE GENERATIONS COLLABORATE

Intellectual principles such as cosmopolitanism and Latin Americanism do not function automatically; they need loyal users.[17] The successful application of these principles to literary texts was the achievement of neither a group of talented authors nor of a single generation. It was the result of an unprecedented collaboration among three consecutive generations of writers, critics, and publishing industry gatekeepers. They were born between 1895 and 1936 and worked in over fifteen countries on three continents. With the assistance of critics and publishers, writers collaborated in magazines, organizations, and meetings. These platforms brought together, as if they were part of a single region-spanning tradition, literary works published in twenty countries, four centuries, and two major languages, Spanish and Portuguese. This collaboration caused a "synchronous flattening of the history of American narrative," to use the words of critic Rama. Of a similar opinion was writer Carpentier, who referred to "the coincidence at a given time, in the span of about twenty years, of a group of almost contemporary novelists."[18] Readers also started to consume the works of three generations.

A basic consensus about what counted as true Latin American literature united what I call the Short Form, Hybrid, and Novel Generations. Each generation is named after the literary format that defined the works of its most influential members.[19] The Short Form Generation was born between 1895 and 1910. Its members mostly wrote poetry and short stories. Among its key members were Borges (Argentina), Asturias (Guatemala), Nicolás Guillén, José Lezama Lima, and Carpentier (Cuba), Neruda (Chile), Juan Carlos Onetti (Uruguay), and João Guimarães Rosa (Brazil). The Hybrid Generation was born between 1911 and 1921. Its members combined the writing of short forms of literature (poetry and short stories) with long forms (books of essays and novels). This generation included Cortázar, Ernesto Sábato, and Bioy Casares

(Argentina), Rulfo and Paz (Mexico), Mario Benedetti (Uruguay), and Jorge Amado (Brazil). The Novel Generation was born between 1922 and 1936. Its writers' main works were novels. The novel format defined this generation's professional identity and how readers and critics first and foremost remember these writers, who included García Márquez (Colombia), Fuentes (Mexico), José Donoso and Jorge Edwards (Chile), Vargas Llosa (Peru), Manuel Puig (Argentina), and Guillermo Cabrera Infante (Cuba).

Previous research has stressed intra- and intergenerational conflict among these writers and overlooked the depth of their collaboration.[20] Yet sustained cooperation across generations until the 1970s was key in putting Latin American literature on the map of world literature. The collaboration happened when the principles of cosmopolitanism and Latin Americanism circulated through an intricate network of strong and weak ties among generations that covered four decades and three continents. In committing to these principles, the three generations helped create an intellectual and professional space that made it possible for novels such as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to be imagined as a cosmopolitan, Latin American work of art, not as a local or regionalist one. (The modernizing publishing industry further strengthened this network, as the next chapter shows.)

A community of readers, including the budding writer García Márquez, was the first step to create a collaborative network among generations. Writers from the three generations, as critic Harss put it, "read and admired each other. That was the New Latin American Novel of those years. In reality, it had not existed before at a continental level." A shared group of readings and favorite authors can help to unify professional literary practice. And these generations shared a cosmopolitan taste for international literature by James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Scott Fitzgerald, Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Mann, and especially William Faulkner, as well as regional literature by Sarmiento, Martí, Rodó, and Darío in particular. They also read the same translations of foreign books and, collaboratively, regional authors managed these translations. Famously, Borges and his literary circle, which included Victoria Ocampo, José Bianco, and Bioy Casares, translated major modernist works of Faulkner, Woolf, and Kafka into Latin American Spanish.[21]

From the 1940s onward, informal gatherings and professional meetings strengthened ties across generations. Attending these reunions were writers as well as critics, scholars, and gatekeepers of the publishing industry. In traveling across the region, participants started to develop a common cultural agenda, and they connected it to their professional aspirations. Collaborating peers and gatekeepers also came from outside the region, in particular from Spain, the United States, and France. Mail correspondence was a site for networking, too. With the expansion of air travel, cheaper and faster airmail between major cities helped to maintain regional conversations in real time, as if they were happening in town. As an organizer of the

1962 Congress of Intellectuals in Chile, poet Gonzalo Rojas wrote, “Every week, every month I receive letters from Fuentes, Alegría, Benedetti, Bianco, Arguedas, and the others. . . . They send me magazines where the debates go on as in *Siempre!* of Mexico and others from Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Lima, and Montevideo.” In 1965, when he started *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, García Márquez, like Rojas, was corresponding with other writers in Latin America and Europe. In their correspondence, writers exchanged ideas for new books and updates about their work in progress (including copies of their manuscripts). They made suggestions on how to solve a technical writing problem (such as how to find the tone of a novel), to improve writing habits, and to overcome the frightening writer’s block. They shared tips on how to find the best acquisitions editors and literary agents for their work and how to market it via mainstream media. Ultimately, the writers not only exchanged trade secrets, but also they became pen pals, lending lots of emotional support coupled with professional advice.[22]

What gave this collaboration among writers a greater advantage to promote their works was the support of three generations of critics and publishers. These included contemporaries of the Short Form Generation such as Enrique Anderson Imbert (Argentina), Mexicans Luis Leal and Antonio Castro Leal, Luis Alberto Sánchez (Peru), and Arturo Torres-Rioseco (Chile), contemporaries of the Hybrid Generation such as Emir Rodríguez Monegal (Uruguay) and Roger Caillois (France), and contemporaries of the Novel Generation such as Francisco Porrúa, Carmen Balcells, Carlos Barral, Víctor Seix, Neus Espresate Xirau, and Josep Maria Castellet (Spain), Emmanuel Carballo (Mexico), Tomás Eloy Martínez, Adolfo Prieto, and Ernesto Schoo (Argentina), Domingo Miliani (Venezuela), Harss (Chile), and Rama (Uruguay). Critics and publishers collaborated with writers to connect their works to the idea of Latin America and the Western tradition. Critics, in particular, helped to internationalize what writers in the region did. For this reason, three years before the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Rama confidently stated in a text that resonated with authors in the region: “Everything that is said about the Latin American writer concerns the writer from anywhere in the world.”[23]

In practical terms, critics helped writers in three ways. First, they wrote about Latin American writers in journals and books; second, they recommended these writers’ works to other writers, critics, and ordinary readers; and, third, they included these writers in courses on Latin American literature that they taught at universities in the region, the United States, and Europe. Critics Rodríguez Monegal and Rama did all three for the works of Donoso, Cortázar, Vargas Llosa, Fuentes, and García Márquez.

PARIS, A LITERARY MEETING POINT

In 1967, two popular Latin American writers, Chilean poet Neruda (of the Short Form Generation) and Mexican novelist Fuentes (of the Novel Generation) met in the fashionable Parisian restaurant La Coupole to talk, among other things, about a new Latin American novel: *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Fuentes praised it and compared it to *Don Quixote*, inspiring Neruda's growing interest in it. Uruguayan critic Rodríguez Monegal (of the Hybrid Generation) was also present at the meeting. He had already premiered two chapters of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in *Mundo Nuevo*, the leading magazine of new Latin American literature, edited in Paris and distributed in over twenty countries. This literary summit of writers and critics from three different generations to talk about a Latin American best seller was unimaginable in the 1920s, when Neruda first visited Paris. Back then, most writers did not believe that Latin America had a region-spanning literature. But they believed that a stay in the city was a rite of passage for any aspiring writer. And in their exchanges with other artists, writers from the region discovered a common identity: "All Latin Americans, unanimously, found in the Paris of the twenties and thirties: their distant Latin America . . . what they have recovered in Paris is the originality of Latin America, its specificity, its accent, its unique reality."[24]

It was in Paris where Uslar Pietri talked to Asturias and Carpentier about Roh's essay on magical realism, and where they started to think of the mixture of realism and magic as the main ingredient of Latin American literature. They came to Paris inspired by what famous writers had accomplished from that city, especially Nicaraguan poet Darío, who lived there in the early twentieth century. Considered the first major regional literary figure, Darío acted as a broker of literary styles: he was a Paris-based cosmopolitan who reworked major literary trends and became a committed Latin American. After Darío's success, the idea of the cosmopolitan American author in Paris entered the imagination of Latin American writers of the three generations. These included the already mentioned Neruda, Venezuelan Uslar Pietri, Cubans Carpentier and Guillén, and Guatemalan Asturias in the Short Form Generation; Argentines Cortázar and Sábato and Mexican Paz in the Hybrid Generation; and Peruvian Vargas Llosa, Mexican Fuentes, Chilean Edwards, and Colombian García Márquez in the Novel Generation.

Several of these writers also lived in Madrid, but they did not develop a Latin American identity there. For many of them, the capital of Spain was synonymous with colonial domination, which de Torre revived after publishing his incendiary essay on Madrid as the intellectual meridian of Spanish America. Paris, on the contrary, meant openness to other artistic traditions and the possibility to affirm the cultural autonomy of Latin America. Writers seeking admission to artistic circles in Paris had to move beyond their local literary traditions and convert to Latin Americanism. They did so by embracing a cosmopolitan cultural viewpoint, discussing current affairs about the region, and commenting on the latest international and regional literature. Cuban poet

Guillén (of the Short Form Generation) led one of such groups, which García Márquez joined in 1955.[25]

CULTURAL VOID AND AESTHETIC LIBERATION

"The Latin American novel," writer Vargas Llosa said in 1966, "is now on an equal footing with any other." He could make such a statement thanks to the aesthetic liberation among artists in the region from the 1940s onward. "In Latin America," as Francisco Porrúa, acquisitions editor of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, put it, "it was considered that we were a kind of Europe and that the reputable literary models came from there. This changed suddenly . . . what happened then was a kind of awareness of a literary identity. . . . People began to consider that we had a literature here, a proper Latin American literature."[26] Two world events channeled this "awareness": the Spanish Civil War and World War II. They caused a cultural void in the region that lasted about fifteen years. This void consolidated Latin American literature as a transnational phenomenon with its epicenter in America not in Europe.

In 1936, as the Civil War was ravaging Spain and fascism was rising in Europe, Mexican writer Alfonso Reyes claimed, "Arrived late to the banquet of European civilization, [in America] we have reached our full age. Very soon, you will get used to counting with us." Reyes delivered this message to the Latin American and European attendees of an international meeting of intellectuals in Buenos Aires. His speech was immediately published by the literary magazine *Sur*, with readers across the region and Europe.[27]

Then, in 1942, two years after the Nazi invasion of France and when the Allies were losing World War II, Asturias dedicated a poem to France written from Latin America: "I sing to you, France, near the tropical blast furnaces / Where sweat flows along the skin like lizards. / I sing to you before your dead rise with resolution / In the somnambulist battle of those who are not defeated." For writers and former residents of Paris such as Asturias, World War II had a deep moral impact. For the second time in less than three decades, Europe was fighting a fratricide war. The situation was not better in Spain; the victory of fascism in the Civil War led to Francisco Franco's dictatorship. To members of the Latin American cultural establishment, World War II and the Spanish Civil War proved that the Old Continent, with its colonial legacy falling apart, no longer was a moral compass on the issues of progress and civilization. Barbarism—the same problem writers in Latin America had frequently complained about since the nineteenth century—was now rampant throughout Europe.[28]

In practical terms, the cultural void meant that neither Spain nor the rest of Europe could offer any worthy literary ideas to draw inspiration from. Western literature, as Fuentes wrote, "lost its universality." Writers in the region decided to favor their own

cultural trends. This inward look boosted the region's aesthetic liberation among writers, critics, scholars, and publishers. Their liberation brought about a region-spanning Latin American literature. It was during the 1940s when writers such as Carpentier and Asturias deepened their commitment to free the novel from nineteenth-century realism, that is, from the viewpoint of the Western, bourgeois, third person, and omniscient narrator. Instead, they paid attention to local peoples—including indigenous peoples and slaves—and experimented with narrative techniques, such as mixing descriptions of reality with marvelous and fantastic stories.[29] (The inward look during this decade coincided with a sudden growth of the Argentine publishing industry; see next chapter).

Not coincidentally, it was in the 1940s when two terms that came to define the region's literature took off. The first term was magical realism, which Uslar Pietri and Carpentier started to apply to literature in 1948, as mentioned earlier. The second term was *literatura latinoamericana*. During this decade, references to this latter term as well as to *literatura hispanoamericana* and *literatura iberoamericana* grew in book publications, as figures 1.1 and 1.2 show. As a result of these region-spanning developments, scholars rightly claim that there was a mini boom of Latin American literature in the 1940s. (But they have not seen the robust connection between this early boom and the rise of these terms.) At that time, Eduardo Zalamea Borda, Uslar Pietri, Carpentier, Guimarães Rosa, Asturias, Onetti, Bioy Casares, and Borges published work that helped convince peers, critics, and common readers that "Latin America could produce great literature."[30]

During this cultural void, the search for inspiration not only turned to Latin America but also to the United States. Back then, few writers were more favorably received than Faulkner, to the point that he became a Latin American author thanks to numerous translations into Latin American Spanish (even Brazilian writers read his works in these translations). Faulkner attracted many writers for his literary language. Critics in the United States, however, disliked his language. For example, critic Allen Tate called him, pejoratively, "a Dixie Gongorist." By Gongorist, Tate referred to writer Luis de Góngora. He was active during the Spanish Golden Age and became one of Spain's most influential poets of all time. Like Faulkner, Góngora achieved fame for his sophisticated baroque style known as Gongorism. It was an original style that used ostentatious language, embellished metaphors, and convoluted syntactical order. As Tate observed, Faulkner's complex style was similar to Góngora's. Translations of Faulkner's works into Latin American Spanish brought this aesthetic connection to the surface. And in his complex prose, reminiscent of the baroque, several generations of Latin American writers found a literary model for their own works. These writers included Jorge Icaza, J. E. Rivera, C. Alegría, Gallegos, Carpentier, Fuentes, Borges, Onetti, Rulfo, and young García Márquez. For them, Faulkner's *Latin Americanized* language was an alternative to Castilian Spanish. Such language was a true means of

aesthetic liberation. As Fuentes put it, “the baroque, Alejo Carpentier once told me, is the language of the people who, unaware of the truth, seek it eagerly.”[31]

García Márquez imitated Faulkner’s style in his first novella, published in 1955, when he was twenty-eight. And a decade later, as he was writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Carpentier and Fuentes advised him on how to use Latin American neo-baroque. Even common readers first heard about García Márquez through his connection to Faulkner. The summer of 1965, when he decided to start this novel, the magazine *Life en Español*, sold in Latin America, the United States, and Spain, mentioned his books in an article about the influence of Faulkner on Latin American writers.

THE LETTERED REGION AND THE CULTURAL COLD WAR

During World War II, unlike Europe, Latin America lived a period of relative peace and expansion of social democracy, with Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and São Paulo functioning as cultural centers. These favorable political conditions helped expand the means of cultural production, including publishing houses, translations, textbooks and anthologies, academic scholarship and literary criticism, institutes and foundations, conferences, awards, and periodicals. Under this new organizational umbrella, numerous literary publishers, critics, and scholars insisted on how unique the region’s literature was—it was something different from the sum of national literatures.[32]

New and refurbished institutes and foundations dedicated to the region’s culture and literature helped develop this regional literary identity. These included the Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana and Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos Rómulo Gallegos. Growing international resources, including awards and fellowships, were key to removing writers’ regional isolation. Up until the 1950s, most writers knew few colleagues from other countries personally. Networks were mainly individual-based, as it was the case even for famous regional writers, such as Rodó and Darío. But regular professional meetings, symposia, seminars, and conferences started to create a transnational network of writers. And many of them would identify with the idea of a Latin American literature and tried to speak with a homogeneous voice. Starting in 1954 with the first International Congress of Ibero-American Literature, meetings brought together writers and critics from the three generations and most countries in the region. Donoso, then an unknown, young writer, commented on the 1962 Congress of Intellectuals in Chile: “The topic . . . that clearly prevailed was the general complaint that Latin Americans knew European and North American literature perfectly, along with that of our countries [but] we almost completely ignored the contemporary literatures of the other countries of the continent.” As part of the effort to end this regional separation, members of the three generations from twelve countries

signed an open letter at the congress. “Overcoming our isolation, our mutual ignorance,” their letter stated, “is to find our common, united voice and grant it the strength, presence, and dissemination that our age—and the destiny of our peoples—demand.”[33]

The Cuban Revolution endorsed this idea of a region-spanning literature and offered a wealth of resources to promote it. As critic Harss said about the revolution, “The Latin American novelist is less interested in its political and economic ends than in its strength. [The revolution] is the realization of a deep socio-cultural transformation within a continent that finally begins to define itself.” Casa de las Américas (literally, the House of the Americas) was in charge of spreading the cultural ideals of the revolution in Latin America. This political and cultural organization opened four months after the triumph of the revolution. It sought to achieve the region’s cultural independence from outside forces and its unity according to the ideals of the revolution. To do so, it organized a regional literary award and published a magazine, *Casa de las Américas*. Already in its first issue, it featured works by members of the three generations. During the 1960s, it promoted the New Latin American Novel and it was mandatory reading for the region’s cultural establishment until the revolution started to purge critical intellectuals the following decade. Also, Casa de las Américas had a library that organized café-conversatorios (coffee-round tables), in which works by Alfonso Reyes, José Bianco, and García Márquez (*Big Mama’s Funeral*), among others, were read and promoted as Latin American literature. In 1968, this publisher released the first international edition of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in its collection *Literatura latinoamericana* (including blurbs by Vargas Llosa, Rama, and the *Times Literary Supplement*). Soon, these and other cultural activities of the revolution attracted the world’s attention to Latin America. As Spanish literary critic Castellet said, “Through Cuba we began to understand the Latin American phenomena and Latin American literature much better, because, first, we began to understand what we could call this dynamic and militant unity of Latin American literature.” Casa de las Américas responded to this international interest by organizing big events such as the Congreso Cultural in Havana in 1968. It gathered five hundred delegates from seventy countries, such as Aimé Césaire, Italo Calvino, Carpentier, Cortázar, and Vargas Llosa.[34]

The cultural activities of Casa de las Américas strengthened the region’s cultural autonomy, which in return helped with the commercial success of the New Latin American Novel. However, something of more international scale fully landed in Latin America after the revolution. As tensions between the Soviet Union and United States rose, the region became a Cold War battleground. This war was waged in the domain of politics and also of culture. And the result of this confrontation between cultural organizations outside and inside was to further develop Latin America as a lettered region.[35]

In the early 1940s, while World War II was spreading throughout Europe, the U.S. government sponsored translations of works by Latin American writers, and the State Department invited experts to lecture on Latin American literature at colleges. After the war, the U.S. government introduced the Point Four Program to counter the influence of the Soviet Union and its communism over developing and Third World countries. The U.S.-based Ford and Rockefeller Foundations seconded the efforts of the government to shape the agenda of the arts and social sciences in Latin America. Also, the Faulkner Foundation created in the 1950s the Ibero-American Novel Project. It followed the desire of Faulkner, who used part of the money from his Nobel Prize in Literature to create fellowships for Latin American writers. The goal was to promote the work of established and upcoming novelists from the region. One of its early beneficiaries was Donoso. His first novel, *Coronation*, received the 1962 Ibero-American Award from the foundation. These awards led to important professional connections and growing excitement about the future of the region's literature. Donoso himself recalled that Scottish literary scholar Alistair Reid told him that Vargas Llosa was going "to be one of the greatest novelists of his time." Reid also gave him a copy of Vargas Llosa's *The Time of the Hero*. Shortly after, in 1964, Donoso published in the leading Chilean magazine *Ercilla* an enthusiastic book review with the subtitle "The Novel that Triumphs Worldwide."[36]

Starting in 1962, cultural philanthropist Rodman Rockefeller and editor Alfred Knopf helped fund the symposia organized by the Inter-American Foundation for the Arts. Three years later, the symposium met in Chichén-Itzá, Mexico. Among its participants were writers William Styron, Oscar Lewis, Nicanor Parra, Juan García Ponce, Donoso, Rulfo, Fuentes, Sábato, and García Márquez. At this meeting, García Márquez and Donoso consoled each other about their writer's block. Having the chance to talk about his writing problems with peers helped him, since a few weeks later he put his writer's block behind him and started working on *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The following year, the Inter-American Foundation for the Arts changed its name to Center for Inter-American Relations and, thanks to the advice of critic Rodríguez Monegal, it shifted its focus away from symposia to the promotion of Latin American books. In ten years, the center sponsored the translation into English of fifty titles, including *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

Like the United States, communist Soviet Union and China promoted Latin American writers. Although more research is necessary to fully understand this promotion, two of the most popular writers in the region before the 1960s, Amado and Neruda, were under the spell of the Soviet Union. Their works were translated and circulated in the countries behind the Iron Curtain as well as in China. The Soviet Union also tempted budding writers. In 1957, a thirty-year-old García Márquez traveled to Moscow to attend the Sixth World Youth Festival as a member of a Colombian cultural delegation. Four years later, the Latin American Institute opened

its doors in this city. In Latin America, the Soviet Union gave not only ideological but also cultural support to the Cuban Revolution. One of its many initiatives was to fund the Cuban book industry. With this purpose in mind, a Czech-Russian book-publishing consortium started to operate on the island. Soon after, "Soviet-financed books [were] sold in South America at what we would call nominal prices, about a third of the price of Spanish books."[37]

In Spain, high-ranking officials of the Franco government were as concerned as their U.S. counterparts about the growing threat of the Cuban book industry, with its cheap pro-Soviet titles and writers. But Spanish officials were equally worried about the threat of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. U.S. funding for writers, books, and publishers endangered Spain's geo-cultural power over the book industry in Latin America. Thus, Spanish institutions sought to influence the region through journals such as *Mundo Hispánico* and *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, organizations such as Instituto de Cultura Hispánica, professional meetings such as Congreso de Instituciones Hispánicas, summer courses, cultural travels, and fellowships for Latin American students. Fellowships, in particular, connected Latin America to Spain by co-opting its artists, as was the case for the twenty-two-year-old Vargas Llosa, who left Peru to study in Madrid.[38]

For France, Latin America was also a target of cultural entrepreneurship. French interventions included journals, professorships, book collections, and organizations. The Maison de l'Amérique Latine was created in Paris in 1945, while the Institut Français d'Amérique Latine opened branches in the capitals of Mexico, Haiti, Chile, and Peru. The same year the prestigious Collège de France established the chair on literature and language of the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America. And France's leading literary publisher, Gallimard, created in the early 1950s the pioneering collection *La Croix du Sud*. This collection promoted the region's literature, mostly novels. Among its forty-two titles, there were indigenists, cosmopolitans, and Brazilian authors. The director of this collection was the French critic Roger Caillois. He lived in Buenos Aires as a World War II refugee. During his stay, he met Borges and his circle and became familiar with the region's literature. When he returned to France, Borges's *Ficciones* was the first volume in *La Croix du Sud*, and its publication in this collection started a national interest in Latin American writers that peaked in the 1960s. Caillois also directed UNESCO's *Collection d'oeuvre representatives*, which published works by "Ibero-American" authors. Its titles included foundational fictions from the nineteenth century such as Sarmiento's *Facundo*, groundbreaking writers such as Martí, and up-and-coming contemporary writers such as Paz. This collection promoted Latin American literature as a unified and well-established tradition.[39]

Along with the strategies of different nations, the works of several generations of scholars were important to consolidate the idea of Latin American literature. While several of the contributions cited below still understood the region's literature as a

collection of national traditions, there was a growing recognition that "in a large part of Spanish-American literature there is an American spirit that differentiates it from that of the mother country," as a U.S. professor put it in 1925. This recognition that the region's literature was no longer an appendix of Spain's literature appeared in textbooks and anthologies published in and outside the region. Some of these titles are Luis Alberto Sánchez's *Historia de la literatura americana* (1937), Óscar Rafael Beltrán's *Manual de historia de la literatura hispanoamericana* (1938), Arturo Torres-Rioseco's *La gran literatura iberoamericana* (1945), *Ensayos sobre literatura latinoamericana* (1953 and 1958), *Nueva historia de la gran literatura iberoamericana* (1960), and *Aspects of Spanish American Literature* (1963), Harriet de Onís's *The Golden Land: An Anthology of Latin American Folklore in Literature* (1948), Julio Leguizamón's *Bibliografía general de la literatura hispanoamericana* (1954), the six volumes of *Diccionario de la literatura latinoamericana* (1958), Ugo Gallo and Giuseppe Bellini's *Storia della letteratura ispanoamericana* (1958), Fernando Alegría's *Breve historia de la novela hispanoamericana* (1959), José Luis Sánchez Trincado's *Literatura latinoamericana, siglo XX* (1964), Zum Felde's *La narrativa en Hispanoamérica* (1964), John Englekirk's *An Outline History of Spanish American Literature* (1965), Raimundo Lazo's *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana* (1965), and Juan Loveluck's *La novela hispanoamericana* (1966). An important voice in this field was that of Pedro Henríquez Ureña, author of the influential *Literary Currents in Hispanic America* (1945), and arguably the first Latin American literary scholar. Among his main contributions was to develop the idea of a unified "Latin culture" that embraced Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries.[40]

Luis Harss's *Into the Mainstream* (1966) occupies a special place in this scholarship on Latin American literature. Originally published in English, it was instantly translated into Spanish as *Los Nuestros* (literally, *Ours*). This book was not an anthology of literary texts but a series of long conversations with ten writers. *Into the Mainstream* brought together as a single literary tradition, that of Latin American literature, writers from the three generations, including a Brazilian author. The selected writers were Carpentier, Asturias, Borges, Guimarães Rosa, Onetti (Short Form Generation), Cortázar, Rulfo (Hybrid Generation), and Fuentes, García Márquez, and Vargas Llosa (Novel Generation). In his conversation with Harss, García Márquez described at length and for the first time his book in progress, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. This conversation turned out to be an unexpected means of promoting his novel, because *Into the Mainstream* became a best seller in Argentina in the months prior to the release of the novel.

Topping the consolidation of Latin American literature were major awards. In general, the impact of an award goes beyond the personal beneficiary, as it can create group closure, spark imitation, and attract the attention of publishers, critics, and scholars.[41] In 1945, Latin America received its first Nobel Prize in Literature. Chilean

poet Gabriela Mistral won it just months after the end of World War II "for her lyric poetry which, inspired by powerful emotions, has made her name a symbol of the idealistic aspirations of the entire Latin American world." Indeed, for the Nobel committee, Mistral was not a Chilean but a Latin American author. This Nobel sent the message to writers in Latin America that a region-spanning literature, one that was independent from Spain, was gaining international attention among powerful gatekeepers. Barely a decade later, in 1956, the second Nobel Prize in Literature traveled to the region. The laurate was the Spanish poet in exile, Juan Ramón Jiménez. He had been publishing in the Americas for the past two decades and was involved in the region's literary scene. In 1960, only four years after J. R. Jiménez's win, poet Saint-John Perse, born in the French-American territory of Guadeloupe, received the Nobel. Partisans of a region-spanning Latin American literature such as Fuentes and Carpentier considered the Caribbean and even French Canada as part of Latin America. So for them, the Nobel given to this Caribbean poet further recognized the region's cultural independence and its autonomous literary voice. Two other Nobel awards in literature followed in the next decade or so for Asturias (1967) and Neruda (1971). According to the Nobel committee, the merit of their work was once more that it spoke for the region as a whole. Aspiring professional writers in Latin America kept up with the news about these and other Nobel winners. So did García Márquez. In 1950, when he was twenty-three years old and had published no book of fiction, he was already commenting in his daily newspaper column about the merits of Nobel laurates in Literature.[42]

Along with these Nobel Prizes in Literature, Latin American writers received a growing number of awards in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1952, Asturias won in France the prestigious Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger (Best Foreign Book Prize) for *El Señor Presidente*, a novel about a Latin American dictator. In 1959, Vargas Llosa published *The Leaders*, which received a Spanish award named after Leopoldo Alas, one of the country's leading nineteenth-century writers. In 1961, Onetti's "Jacob and the Other" was a finalist in the short story contest recently created by *Life en Español* magazine. The same year, Borges and Irish playwright Samuel Beckett together won the Prix International des Éditeurs awarded by the Formentor Group. In 1962, as mentioned earlier, *Coronation* by Donoso received the Ibero-American Award from the Faulkner Foundation. The following year, Vargas Llosa published *The Time of the Hero*, which won the Biblioteca Breve and Crítica awards in Spain. These and other awards attracted the interest of international publishers. In 1964, U.S. publishing house Harper & Row created a division on Latin American literature. It moved fast and signed many writers from the region; a year later it had an option to publish García Márquez's next work, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.[43] These awards also attracted the attention of region-spanning periodicals, which were key to promoting Latin American literature among hundreds of thousands of middle-class readers.

PERIODICALS FOR A NEW LITERATURE

Nowhere was the effervescence of Latin American literature more visible than in literary journals, current affairs magazines, and weekend supplements of newspapers. From the 1920s onward, a handful of literary magazines started to imagine the region's literature as a tradition that was independent from Spain and Europe. These periodicals circulated poorly among the mass public, had small print runs, and were mainly discussed in intellectual circles. But they set the foundations for a Latin American and cosmopolitan community of writers because they emphasized regional unity over difference. Their readership increased in the 1940s and especially the 1950s. Then, general interest magazines spread to cater to the literary tastes of the rising urban middle classes, following the models set by *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Life*, *L'Express*, and *Paris Match*. By the 1960s, many periodicals had become taste-making publications that promoted a regional cosmopolitan culture.[44]

For this period, some influential periodicals were *Sur*, *Panorama*, *El Escarabajo de Oro*, and *Primera Plana* in Argentina, *Contemporáneos*, *El Hijo Pródigo*, *Cuadernos Americanos*, *México en la Cultura* of *Novedades de México*, *Revista Mexicana de literatura*, *La Cultura en México* of *Siempre!*, and *Diálogos* in Mexico, *Marcha* in Uruguay, *Cromos*, *Mito*, *Crónica*, and *Eco* in Colombia, *Orígenes*, *Carteles*, and *Casa de las Américas* in Cuba, *Papel Literario* of *El Nacional*, *Imagen*, *Zona Franca*, and *Papeles: Revista del Ateneo de Caracas* in Venezuela, *Amauta* and *Amaru* in Peru, *Repertorio Americano* in Costa Rica, *Clima* in Brazil, *Ercilla* in Chile, *Asomante* in Puerto Rico, *Mundo Nuevo* in France, and *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, *Revista Iberoamericana*, and *Life en Español* in the United States. At least twelve of these periodicals, published in eight countries and distributed in more than twenty, featured or reviewed work by García Márquez before the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Thus, thousands of readers in three continents first encountered his literary work in periodicals rather than in books.[45]

As García Márquez and his peers realized, the main advantage of these magazines, journals, and literary supplements was twofold. First, they broadened the audience for regional literature. As critic Rama wrote, "The magazines were capital instruments of modernization and the hierarchy of literary activity: replacing specialized publications intended only for the restricted cultivated public, mainly formed by writers themselves; these magazines established communication with a larger audience." Given the limited amount of space on their pages, they were the perfect vehicle to promote short literary works (poetry, short stories, and essays) as well as excerpts of forthcoming novels.[46]

Second, these periodicals reported what was really going on in literature all over the region and beyond. In these publications, regional readers could find essays about mainstream Latin American (including Brazilians), Spanish, and international writers.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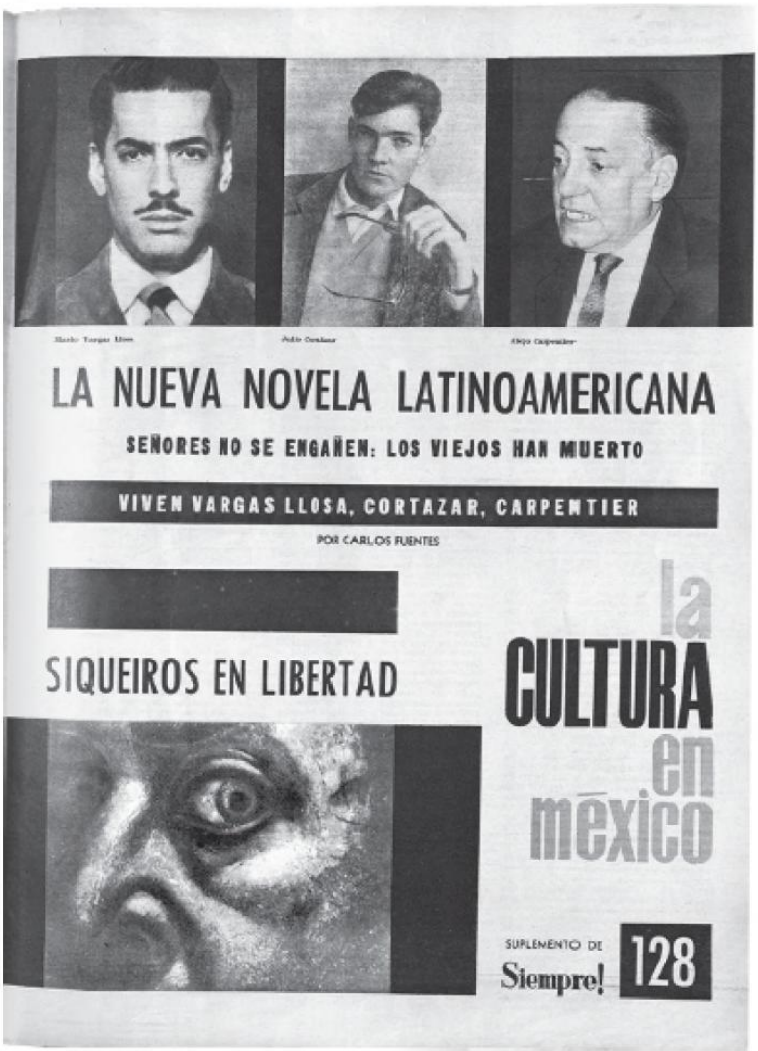

1.3 Cover of Carlos Fuentes's major essay on the rise of the New Latin American Novel.
Source: *La Cultura en México* (July 29, 1964).

Critics like Rama and Rodríguez Monegal used region-spanning periodicals to make similar arguments. The fall of 1964, a few weeks after Fuentes's manifesto, the journal *Casa de las Américas* published a special issue on the "Nueva novela latinoamericana." It included excerpts of new work by Carpentier, Cortázar, Vargas Llosa, and other writers of the three generations, plus eight articles authored by critics and writers about recent Latin American novels such as *Explosion in a Cathedral* and *The Time of the Hero*. The issue opened with a long article by Rama entitled "Diez problemas para el novelista latinoamericano" ("Ten Problems for the Latin American Novelist"). Throughout its forty pages, he diagnosed the obstacles that the region's literature faced, especially its economic structure, the cultural elites, the public, and the publishing industry. At the same time, Rama celebrated that recent Latin American

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