



Twentieth Century Spanish American Poetry: European Replication and Experiments in the New World

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Received: April 23, 2025

Revised & Accepted: May 26, 2025

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Abstract

Twentieth century Spanish American poetry, while deeply rooted in its own cultural and historical contexts, reflects and adapts European avant-garde movements. During this period, major European literary experiments, including modernism, surrealism, and existentialism, significantly influenced the trajectory of Latin American poetic expression. Spanish American poets engaged with these European movements by incorporating new techniques such as free verse, and unconventional imagery, and rejecting traditional forms. Key figures like Vicente Huidobro, Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda, and Octavio Paz played pivotal roles in this shift, pushing the boundaries of language and representation. For example, Huidobro's creation of "the poet as a god" in Creationism mirrored the surrealist focus on imagination and the unconscious. Likewise, Neruda's *Residence on Earth* blended surrealist techniques with social and political commentary, reflecting European influences. Poets such as Octavio Paz, influenced by European existentialism and surrealism, crafted works that defined a unique Latin American identity and engaged with broader intellectual currents. While absorbing European innovations, these poets reinterpreted them in ways that reflected their national and regional realities, blending global movements with indigenous and local cultural elements. Thus, 20th-century Spanish American poetry represents both an echo and a creative transformation of European literary experimentation.

Keywords: Representation, innovation, transformation, modernismo, identity, regionalism



Introduction

The term "New World" reflects the European perspective at the time, overlooking the ancient civilizations and rich histories of the indigenous peoples living in the South American continent for thousands of years. The world is, in reality, millions of years old since its origin, but it has been only about five hundred years since its "discovery" by Europeans, who referred to the American continent as the "New World." The conquistadors brought art, architecture, and literature to the New World from a European perspective, and creativity began to emerge in the Americas as Europeans directed. During conquest and colonization, the Spanish Empire Christianized and Spanishized more than half of the continent, and this Spanish-speaking geographical region is known today as Spanish America. A body of literature was developed in Spanish America during the first four centuries, and the 20th century further enriched this literary tradition.

The twentieth century witnessed numerous upheavals on both sides of the Atlantic. The philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and the psychoanalytic works of Sigmund Freud can be considered harbingers of twentieth-century thinking. Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, published in 1906, played a significant role in shaping the mindset of the twentieth-century intelligentsia. These three phenomena undermined common perceptions of the psyche and reality. Different movements like Impressionism, Dadaism, Cubism, and Symbolism, which emerged in European poetry, likely influenced Spanish American poetry in one way or another. The avant-garde tradition in European art and literature directly influenced creators in Spanish America. The devastating events of two World Wars, the Mexican Revolution, the Mexican Civil War, the Cuban Revolution, and Marxist/socialist movements in the continent all shaped the poetry of Spanish America in the twentieth century.

Spanish American poets of the 20th century were not mere imitators of European poetic traditions but instead forged their own distinctive modes of expression. In the early decades of the century, many poets were significantly influenced by Rubén Darío, the Nicaraguan poet often regarded as the father of Modernismo. This movement sought to blend European influences with Latin American cultural elements. This period was marked by a fascination with aestheticism and a desire to elevate Spanish American poetry to international prominence. However, as the century progressed, particularly after the Second World War, there was a notable shift in poetic trends. Poets began to look beyond the influence of Darío's Modernismo and embraced the evolving currents of European modernism, which pushed the boundaries of form, style, and subject matter. This shift was characterized by exploring fragmented narratives, disillusionment with traditional ideals, and a break from the idealized imagery that had dominated earlier works. Thus, Spanish American poetry in the 20th century can be seen as a complex interplay of both replication and reinvention. While it drew on European influences, it also became a vibrant experiment that reflected the unique realities and challenges of the Spanish American experience.



Poetic Figures and Their Contributions

In terms of poetry creation, Mexico, Chile, and Argentina were comparatively better than other Spanish American countries. Mexican journalist, educator, and poet Amado Nervo (1870–1919) was one of the most widely read poets of his time, and his works are still included in anthologies and prescribed in school and college curricula. Nervo was influenced by the mystic tradition of poetry, oriental religions, and the works of Nietzsche. His poetry is simple, prosaic, and lacks the musicality found in the contemporary poetry of Modernismo. One of his simple poems, titled "At Peace," reads:

Certainly, winter is going to follow my youth
But you didn't tell me that May was eternal
I found without a doubt long my nights of pain
But you didn't promise me only good nights
And in exchange, I had some peaceful ones.

.....

I loved, I was loved, the sun caressed my face
Life, you owe me nothing, Life, we are at peace! (Nervo, 199)

In this poem, the poet declares his contentment with his destiny and the world. His use of simple language, combined with profound thought, established him as the first notable modern Mexican poet. His significant collections include *The Hermanagua*, *The Day You Love Me*, *Black Pearls*, *Mystical Poems*, *The Exodus and the Flowers Along the Way* (1902), *The Inner Gardens*, *The Lotus Pond*, and *The Divine Archer*. These poems primarily explore themes of personal obsession, erotic passion, and religious doubt.

Nervo's companion, Enrique González Martínez (1871–1952), was a twentieth-century Mexican modernist poet influenced by French symbolist poetry. His work marks the end of modernismo, and he is even referred to as "Darío's slayer" (Echeverría, 53). A famous line in one of his sonnets reads, "Swing the neck of the swan, its descriptive plumage," which critics interpret as symbolizing the poetry of Rubén Darío. A few lines from his sonnet read:

Swing the neck of the swan of deceptive plumage
which gives its white note to the blue of the fountain;
he walks his grace no more, but he doesn't feel
the soul of things or the voice of the landscape (Martínez, 12).

In this work, Darío's poetry is symbolized by the swan, while the owl represents reason and wisdom. Martínez's first volume, *The Hidden Ways*, was published in 1911, followed by *World of the Wind* in 1921, *Short Poems* in 1935, and *Under the Mortal Sign* in 1942. In a poem from *The Hidden Ways*, a character named Romero travels to Rome in search of truth, utilizing strong symbols. Martínez's poetry is noted for its musical quality, featuring frequent alliterations, such as "Your pupils pregnant with problems." Over 49 years, Martínez published nineteen collections of poetry.

Ricardo Jaimes Freyre (1866–1933), a Peruvian-born Bolivian historian, diplomat, and poet, is regarded as one of the key figures of Spanish American modernism. Freyre advocated



for the use of free verse in poetry and incorporated medieval and Nordic myths and legends into his work. His first poetry collection, *Castalia Bárbara*, was published in 1899 and included six early examples of free verse in Spanish poetry. His second and final collection, *The Day You Love Me*, features both free verse and metrical verse. One of the poems in this collection, titled "Helencia Soul," is a complex poly-metric work.

Guillermo León Valencia (1873–1944), a Colombian politician and poet, pioneered Modernism in Colombia by creating pictorial poetry influenced by Romanticism and Parnassianism. He served in the Colombian congress in high administrative positions and contested the presidential elections twice, though he lost both times. An expert in many languages, Valencia translated many European masterpieces into Spanish, including works by Rabindranath Tagore and Japanese haikus. His poetry collection *Ritos* was published in 1899, with an expanded version appearing in 1914. His poems are serious, with symbolical density and linguistic sophistication.

José María Eguren (1874–1942), a Peruvian inventor, painter, and journalist, is best known for his poetry. He began publishing his poems in Lima's magazines around 1889, with his first poetry book appearing in 1911. Considered the first Symbolist poet in Peru, he is credited with inaugurating contemporary poetry in the country and being a precursor to avant-garde poetry. Early on, his work received little attention, criticized for being obscure, difficult, and hermetic, but he later gained recognition as a Symbolist poet. Four of his collections, *Symbolic Lima*, *The Song of the Figures*, *Shadow*, and *Rondinelas*, were published in early editions. His poetry continued to be published in multiple editions, even after his death.

Leopoldo Lugones (1874–1938), a poet, literary critic, and social commentator, was a prominent figure in Argentina's cultural life. He strongly influenced younger writers, including Jorge Luis Borges, and played a key role in shaping national development in the arts and education. Lugones dominated Argentina's literary scene as a poet, an inspector of education, and the director of the national library. His first collection of poems, *Golden Mountains* (1897), established him in the Argentine literary world. His second book, *Garden Twilights* (1905), solidified his position within the Parnassian side of modernismo. Many other collections followed, including *Lunario Sentimental* (1909), *Secular Odes* (1910), *The Faithful Book* (1912), *The Book of Landscapes* (1917), and *The Gold Hours* (1922). One of his notable works is the poem "Bachelor," which reads:

Through the pink clouds
The swallows, hunting
Invisible butterflies,
Trace mysterious letters
As if penning goodbyes.

The images of swallows and butterflies contrast effectively, with one being active and the other invisible. This contrast allows the poem to transcend modernismo, serving as a precursor to modernism.



Julio Herrera y Reising (1875–1910), a Uruguayan-born playwright, essayist, and poet, was an early proponent of modernism. Although he never traveled outside his country and had second-hand knowledge of other places, his most celebrated collection of poems, *The Sphinxes' Tower* (1909), is inspired by a tower he constructed near a brothel. He named the tower *The Tower of Panoramas* because of the spectacular views of the Río de la Plata from its summit. This tower became a gathering place where Herrera invited his poet friends for discussions. An avid reader, he mastered Greek, Latin, and mythological allusions from a young age. His anthology of poems, *The Stone Pilgrims*, was published in 1910. In 1908, he also published a collection of sonnets titled *Basque Sonnets*. Through his works, he anticipated the avant-garde trends in poetry that would emerge a few years later.

Chocano, J. S. (1875–1934) was a Peruvian writer, diplomat, and poet, regarded as one of the most important Spanish American poets. He was widely read across the Spanish-speaking Americas. In his poetry, he vividly portrayed South American geography, history, legends, landscapes, peoples, flowers, and animals, capturing them with the precision of a painter's brushwork. In 1922, he was crowned the national poet of Peru. Over his career, he published more than a dozen collections of poems between 1895 and 1941. His first collection, *In the Village*, and his ninth, *Gold of the Andes*, received positive responses from audiences. In his 1906 collection *Alma América*, he claimed to have rediscovered Latin America through verse. His vision was distinctly Spanish American, and he criticized poets who incorporated European imagery into their works.

This is the story of three princesses, which seems like a fable of those in which Spanish verse is imposed. This is the fairy tale or story of three princesses in love – at the same time all three – of the Sun! The images are purely Spanish American. The European conquistadors had used the South American continent for the production of three main crops: coffee, tobacco, and sugarcane.

Some women poets wrote poetry in the *Modernista* tradition before the emergence of the towering 20th-century poet Gabriela Mistral. These women included Juana Borrero, Delmira Agustini, Juana de Ibarbourou, and Alfonsina Storni. Cuban poet Juana Borrero (1877–1896) composed her poems during the heyday of Rubén Darío. Some of her poems were featured in the anthology *Family Group, Poetry of Borrero* (1895). A year later, her solo collection *Rhymes* was published in Cuba. Her works appeared in several Cuban journals, including *Elegant Havana*, *Grey and Blue*, and *Figaro*. Borrero wrote remarkable poems in her teens and foreshadowed the rise of Nobel Prize winner Gabriela Mistral in Latin American literature. Borrero's poetry often explored themes of love and desire from a female perspective, employing feminine imagery and symbols. Female experiences, such as motherhood, breastfeeding, and lullabies, began to shape the trajectory of Spanish-American poetry.

Uruguayan poet Delmira Agustini (1886–1914) captivated Rubén Darío with her beauty, charm, and poetry. Darío even wrote the preface for her poetry collection *The Empty Chalices* in 1913. Agustini's work explored unabashed eroticism, which was groundbreaking for its time. Colombian poet Porfirio Barba Jacob (Miguel Ángel Osorio, 1880–1942) also



published sexually explicit poetry, shocking the bourgeois society of her era. In contrast to Osorio, Agustini's elevated eroticism lacked any vulgarity. However, her conjugal life was troubled; she separated from her husband just one month after marriage but later took him back as a lover. Tragically, he killed her in a clandestine meeting. Another Uruguayan poet, Juana de Ibarbourou (1895–1979), gained widespread recognition throughout her long life, earning the title "Joan of America." Her poetry focused on the human body, as she was keenly aware of its beauty, its movements, and its eventual decay. Rather than linking her poems to Judeo-Christian themes, she exalted physical beauty for the sake of aesthetic pleasure. One of her sonnets entitled "The Earth" reads:

I feel a bitter pleasure in lying down on the earth
With the morning sun warm as a bed.
Underneath my body, how much life is enclosed in its entrails!
Who knows what diamond hides here, its flame! (1-4)

Argentine poet Alfonsina Storni (1892–1938) was one of the first women to achieve success in the male-dominated literary world of Argentina. She became an influential writer, not only among readers but also for fellow writers. Storni criticized a wide range of topics, from politics to gender discrimination. Three volumes of her poetry were published consecutively from 1918 to 1920: *Sweet Pain*, *Irremediably*, and *Languor*. The poems in these collections are characterized by contradictory emotions: the passionate lover and the tortured, subservient woman to a man. This duality may have contributed to her later suicide. *The World of Seven Wells* (1934) and *Mask and Clover* (1938) represent the peak of her poetic experimentation. Toward the end of her short life, she abandoned the type of poetry that had brought her fame and began writing more hermetic, deeply troubled verse. In one of her sonnets, "I am going to sleep," she indirectly expressed her intention to commit suicide:

Teeth of flowers, hairnet of dew,
hands of herbs, you, perfect wet nurse,
prepare the earthly sheets for me
and the down quilt of weeded moss.

After a few days of writing the above sonnet, she walked into the sea and drowned herself.

Lucía Godoy Alcayaga, known as Gabriela Mistral (1889–1957), was the first Chilean and Spanish-American writer to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1945. Born into a poor family of Basque and Indigenous descent, Gabriela had no formal education. She was a self-taught individual who became a teacher at the age of fifteen. Mistral wrote on a wide range of themes, with popular topics including nature, betrayal, love, a mother's love, sorrow and recovery, travel, and Latin American identity. The suicide of her lover deeply affected her and tormented her for the rest of her life. Her first publication, *Death Sonnets* (1914), was inspired by his death. She received provincial literary prizes for her first book, which helped her gain recognition as a poet. Her second volume, *Dissolution* (1922), earned her international acclaim. In 1924, she published *Tenderness*, a collection of poems on childhood themes. This was followed by another collection, *Felling* (1938), focused on motherhood. Mistral's grief over



the death of her lover led her to write poems that addressed God and the deceased soul. Some of her works also explore biblical themes and characters. In one of her poems, she identifies herself with Ruth. Though she never had children, her poems reflect maternal tenderness, themes of childhood, and a cosmic longing for wholeness. The first four lines of her *Lullaby Night*:

So you might sleep, my little boy,
the sky now bears no trace
of gleaming. There's no glow but dew,
no whiteness but my face.

Mistral worked for the education of children, gained national and international recognition through accolades, including the Nobel Prize, and served as an ambassador. Emotionally she was not happy in her life, but she has left a great heritage not only in Spanish but in world literature. Most of her works have now been translated into many languages.

César Vallejo (1892–1938), a journalist, playwright, and poet, is considered one of the greatest poetic innovators of the 20th century in any language. A descendant of a white grandfather and an Indigenous grandmother, some of Vallejo's poems are infused with Quechua terms. He published his first collection of poems, *Black Heralds*, in 1918, which helped him secure positions as a teacher and journalist. Vallejo became involved with the artistic and intellectual avant-garde in Lima, and due to his participation in this group, he was briefly imprisoned in 1923. In 1931, he joined the Communist Party. The poems in *The Black Heralds* reflect the influence of modernismo and mark a turning point in Spanish-American poetry, signifying the emergence of modernism in contrast to modernista poetry. In *Heralds*, Vallejo broke with traditional syntactic and prosodic conventions, making his poems challenging to read. The concept of poetry in modernismo—deep, sober, and comprehensible to all—no longer applied to Vallejo's work. The poems in *Heralds* share characteristics of modernist poetry after the First World War and remind readers of T.S. Eliot's famous poem *The Waste Land*, conveying a message that Western civilization had collapsed. The first four lines of *Herald* are now common for the Spanish Americans to express gloom and sadness:

One suffers such harsh blows in life... I can't tell!
Blows like God's hatred; blows so hard it is
As if the dregs of all suffering
Pooled within the soul... I can't tell.

The lines express a sense of betrayal by God and the futility of religious rituals and prayers. Vallejo's second book, *Trilce* (1922), foreshadowed much of the avant-garde movement of the 1920s and 1930s. The book pushed language to radical extremes, inventing words, stretching syntax, and employing surrealist techniques. It seems as if Vallejo was not just writing poetry, but creating language itself. His posthumous collection *Humorous Poems*, compiled by his wife, is considered one of the best in Spanish literature, rivaling works by Lorca, Neruda, and Paz. These poems explore ordinary lives, the randomness of evil, and human misery, yet convey transcendental messages about suffering. *Humorous Poems* includes



a powerful political section titled "Spain, Take Away This Chalice," with poems on war that echo English war poetry and Picasso's *Guernica*.

Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro (1893–1948) was a key promoter of the avant-garde movement in Chile. He spent several years in France, publishing poems in French in the Paris-based journal *Nord-Sud*, edited by Pierre Reverdy, and befriending many French poets. Huidobro often theorized about poetry, arguing that poets should not merely represent reality but create new ones. He founded the international magazine *Creation*, and his magnum opus, *Altazor* (1931), is a 111-page-long poem that exemplifies the avant-garde movement. The poem reimagines the myth of Icarus, presenting him flying in a parachute, and is written in dialogues with God, the reader, and an implied interlocutor. Its allusions evoke works like Joyce's *Ulysses*, Heidegger's *Being and Time*, and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Although Huidobro published several anthologies between 1911 and 1976, *Altazor* secured his place in the history of Spanish-American literature. His name is closely tied to Creationism, a poetic movement focused on the power of language, image, and metaphor to reshape reality into a poetic object. An example of Creationism is a poem entitled "Way" by Huidobro:

An empty cigar
Along the way
I have on off my fingers
And never look back.

The poet has used the typographical space in his own way, trying to depict the object on a representational surface.

Ultraism, a poetic movement associated with Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) and Guillermo de Torre (1900–1971), sought to go beyond traditional notions of language as mere representation. It is characterized by free verse and complex metrical innovations. Borges's *The Fervor of Buenos Aires* (1923) is considered an example of ultraism, blending real and imagined spaces. Borges's other work, *Front Moon* and *San Martin Notebook* transforms Buenos Aires into a mythic space. De Torre, Borges's brother-in-law, also published his collection *Propellers* in 1923, contributing to the movement, though it was later repudiated. Despite this, both poets were true avant-gardists.

Peruvian poet César Moro (1903–1956), born Alfredo Quíspez Asín, wrote most of his poems in French and was the only Spanish-American poet included in André Breton's surrealist journal. Moro joined the surrealist group in Paris, where his work, filled with blurred imagery, echoed the style of Chilean surrealist painter Roberto Matta. He published *The Château de Grisou*, *Love Letter*, and *Trafalgar Square* in French, later returning to Lima and Mexico to write in Spanish. His posthumous collection, *The Equestrian Turtle and Other Poems*, reflects his homosexuality. Another Peruvian poet, Emilio Adolfo Westphalen (1911–2001), was influenced by Moro. Westphalen, who participated in Lima's first surrealist exhibition in 1935, published numerous works, including *The Strange Insula* (1933) and *Abolition of Death* (1935). His poetry, marked by surrealist influences, remains fundamental in Spanish-language literature.



Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904–1973), one of the greatest figures in world literature, was known for both his poetry and political activism. His early work, *The Twilight* (1923), was followed by *Twenty Love Poems and Songs of Despair* (1924), which became a bestseller. His subsequent collection, *Residence on Earth* (1933), reflected his engagement with surrealism, English poetry, and French symbolism. *Residence on Earth* (1935) expanded his reputation, featuring emotionally powerful, surrealist poetry that depicted a godless, apocalyptic world. Neruda was a key figure in the Generation of 27, a group of avant-garde poets from Spanish literary circles.

Neruda was dismissed from his job due to his communist sympathies but later organized a congress of anti-fascist intellectuals and published *Spain in the Heart*, the first major collection of political poetry by a Spanish-American poet. Following a change in government, he was reinstated in the Foreign Service, sent to Paris, and then returned to Chile. In 1943, he received a grand farewell banquet in Mexico attended by 2,000 guests. His *General Songs of Chile* (1950) became a significant work, expressing the hope that Latin America would rise from the ruins of Europe and Western civilization. The collection delved into pre-Spanish America and the birth of civilization.

Neruda's political affiliation with the Communist Party influenced his poetic shift towards simpler language to connect with the common people. In 1952, he anonymously published *Captain's Verses*, a collection of love poems, followed by *Odes* in the 1950s. After the Cuban Revolution, he moved to Cuba and wrote an *Epic Song*, praising the revolution. Returning to Chile, he published two volumes, *Ceremonial Songs* and *Isla Negra Memorial*, reflecting on his childhood. In 1970, after Salvador Allende's election, Neruda was appointed ambassador to France. He received the Nobel Prize in Literature, but by then, he was suffering from cancer. The legendary poet passed away on September 23, 1973. One of his popular poems, *If You Forget Me* reads:

I do not love you except because I love you;
I go from loving to not loving you,
From waiting to not waiting for you
My heart moves from cold to fire.

José Gorostiza (1901-1973) was a Mexican diplomat, educator, and poet, honored with membership in the Mexican Academy of the Language for his contributions to poetry. He began his career with the publication of *Songs to Sing in the Boats*, a collection of popular and seemingly simple verses that brought him recognition. His second book, *Endless Death* (1939), is a philosophically complex work, exploring the relationship between form and content in the context of creation and destruction. His final collection, *Complete Poems* (1969), presented poems that resist interpretation through metaphor alone and require deconstruction of their imagery.

Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén (1902-1989) was a leading figure in the Afro-Cuban movement, which sought to exalt the African elements of Cuban culture. He infused music from African languages into his poetry. His first collection, *Song Motifs* (1930), stirred



attention in Cuba and nearby islands. His subsequent books, *Songoro Cosongo* (1931), *West Indies Ltd.* (1934), and *Songs for Soldiers and Songs for Tourists* (1937), presented political poetry. In 1937, he published *Spain: A Poem in Four Anguishes and One Hope*, and attended the anti-fascist congress in Valencia, Spain, organized by Pablo Neruda. After Fidel Castro's rise to power, Guillén served as President of the Writers' Union until his death.

Octavio Paz (1914-1998), a Mexican poet who participated in the anti-fascist Congress of Spain in 1937, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature and became a critic of both Neruda's political stances and Communist ideologies. Initially a Marxist, his first book, *They Shall Not Pass*, championed the republican cause in Spain. After the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, Paz became disillusioned with Communism and, like George Orwell, became a lifelong critic. Paz founded two journals, *Taller* and *El Hijo Prodigio*, in the 1940s, and his travels to Japan and India in the 1950s influenced his work. His essay *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950) solidified his intellectual reputation, while *The Bow and the Lyre* (1956) offered a poetic theory. *Sunstone* (1957), Paz's masterpiece, is a vision of history and one of the defining works of 20th-century Spanish American poetry.

Cuban poet José Lezama Lima (1919-1976) lived a reclusive life in Havana, recognized only by a small group of admirers. He co-published the magazine *Orígenes* with poet José Rodríguez. Lezama's poetry, from *Death of Narcissus* to his final poem *Magnet's Shards*, is marked by obscure idioms and a departure from modernist and Freudian influences. His writing often defies conventional syntax, punctuation, and grammar, suggesting a language from before original sin or the fall of man.

Chilean poet Nicanor Parra (1914-2018), contemporary to Neruda, Vallejo, and Paz, was an avant-garde figure who made his mark with *Poems and Antipoems* (1954), a collection of works that embraced popular Chilean music and poetry forms like the cueca. Gonzalo Rojas (1917-2011), another important Chilean poet, founded a surrealist group in the 1930s. His *Against Death* (1964) contains optimistic and whimsical poems, including *To Silence*, which speak to the all-encompassing voice of the cosmos.

Conclusion

With the death of Octavio Paz in 1998, the era of 20th-century Spanish American poetry came to a close. The towering figures of Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz, and César Vallejo left behind an extraordinary legacy, defining the voice of the century. These poets, among others, shaped the poetic landscape with their mastery of language, depth of thought, and exploration of universal themes such as identity, social justice, and existentialism. Yet, despite their monumental contributions, no poet of their stature has emerged in the years since their passing. The 20th century was marked by a dynamic fusion of European influences and the distinct cultural realities of the New World, with Spanish American poets often replicating and reinterpreting European poetic movements in a manner uniquely tied to their own environments. The modernist experimentation of figures like Vicente Huidobro and the surrealist investigations of Nicanor Parra echoed the European avant-garde, while poets like Mario Benedetti and José Emilio Pacheco infused their works with deeply rooted regional



concerns. Their writing, whether in the form of verse, free verse, or prose poetry, sought not only to embrace and adapt European innovations such as symbolism, modernism, and existentialism but also to respond to the political upheavals and social transformations occurring in Latin America. In this way, Spanish American poetry in the 20th century can be seen as both a replication of European experimentation and a profound reinterpretation of these movements, rendered through the specific lens of the New World's complex histories, cultures, and struggles. This era of Latin American poetry thus remains an essential chapter in world literature, where universal experimentation met the local demands of voice, revolution, and identity.

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