Salvador Herrera
Under the Supervision of Marissa K. López

The Long 19th Century in American Literature

The long 19th century (1789-1914) was a historical period of global transformation. In the Americas, this period marked the rise of modernity and nationalism from the roots of coloniality in the New World. Western expansionism and exceptionalism were made possible by technological developments, the growth of industrialization and finance capital, and new scientific discourses that accompanied the violence of racial hierarchies and exploitation of natural resources. Emergent conceptions of citizenship and humanity in this period are byproducts of the institution of transatlantic slavery and its afterlives, Indigenous genocide and relocation, and the subjugation of Latinx and Asian laborers. In short, the long 19th century charts the rise of modernity across the Americas as officially free from formal colonialism, and yet a far cry from liberation for all.

The dehumanization of colonized subjects—those who are made to assimilate, labor, and perish under a capitalistic modern world-system—forms the underside of Western conceptions of the human. The texts below chart the literary strategies and sensitivities of these subjects to their subhuman or other-than-human conditions in captivity and coerced affinity, along with their aesthetic articulations of resistance, rehumanization, and flying under the radar. Additionally, this list examines the ways in which Anglo-American writers imagine their own place in society, often through anxious conceptions of selfhood and demonstrations of power at the expense of their racialized counterparts. Some of the later writers also critique the industrialization of the world-system itself or offer alternative models of belonging in transcendental, posthuman terms.

Primary Texts

1. Samson Occom, from *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan* (1768-1774)
5. William Apess, *A Son of the Forest* (1829)
6. Washington Irving, *Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus* (1830)
7. Black Hawk, *Life of Black Hawk, or Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak: Dictated by Himself* (1833)
10. Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1843)
11. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845)
12. Herman Melville, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846), *Benito Cerino* (1855); “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids” (1855)
16. Martin Delaney, *Blake; or the Huts of America* (1859)
18. Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872)
21. Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona* (1884)
22. Sui Sin Far, *Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian* (1890)
24. Henry James, “The Real Thing” (1892), *The Beast in the Jungle* (1903)
25. Richard Harding Davis, *Soldiers of Fortune* (1897)
27. Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (1900)
29. Maria Cristina Mena, *The Collected Stories of Maria Cristina Mena* (1913)
30. Mariano Azuela, *The Underdogs* (1915)

**Critical Texts**

1. Eric Hobsbawm