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Latin American Popular Culture since Independence: An Introduction

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This unique reader offers an engaging collection of essays that highlight the diversity of Latin America's cultural expressions from independence to the present. Leading historians explore funerals, dance and music, letters and literature, spectacles and monuments, and world's fairs and food. These themes and events highlight the ways in which a wide range of individuals with copious, at times contradictory, motives attempted to forge identity, turn the world upside down, mock their betters, forget their troubles through dance, express love in letters, and altogether enjoy life. The authors analyze case studies from Argentina, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Trinidad-Tobago, tracing how their examples resonate in the rest of the region. They show how people could and did find opportunities to escape, if only occasionally, their daily drudgery, making lives for themselves of greater variety than the constant quest for dominance, drive for profits, or knee-jerk resistance to the social or economic order so often described in cultural studies. Instead, this rich text introduces the complexity of motives behind and the diversity of expressions of popular culture in Latin America.

Contributions by: Sal Acosta, Thomas L. Benjamin, John Charles Chasteen, Darién J. Davis, Lauren (Robin) H. Derby, Matthew D. Esposito, Ingrid E. Fey, Stephen Jay Gould, Graham E. L. Horton, Fanni Muñoz Cabrejo, Blanca Muratorio, Jeffrey M. Pilcher, Janet Sturman, and Pamela Voekel.

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