



# Proust's Latin Americans (Hopkins Studies in Modernism)

*Rubén Gallo*

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Part biography, part cultural history, part literary study, Rubén Gallo's book explores the presence of Latin America in Proust's life and work. The novelist lived in an era shaped by French colonial expansion into the Americas: just before his birth, Napoleon III installed Maximilian as emperor of Mexico, and during the 1890s France was shaken by the Panama Affair, a financial scandal linked to the construction of the canal in which thousands of French citizens lost their life savings.

It was in the context of these tense Franco–Latin American relations that the novelist met the circle of friends discussed in *Proust's Latin Americans*: the composer Reynaldo Hahn, Proust's Venezuelan lover; Gabriel de Yturri, an Argentinean dandy; José-Maria de Heredia, a Cuban poet and early literary model; Antonio de La Gandara, a Mexican society painter; and Ramon Fernandez, a brilliant Mexican critic turned Nazi sympathizer.

Gallo discusses the correspondence—some of it never before published—between the novelist and this heterogeneous group and also presents insightful readings of *In Search of Lost Time* that posit Latin America as the novel's political unconscious. Proust's speculation with Mexican stocks informed his various fictional passages devoted to financial transactions, and the Panama Affair shaped his understanding of the conquest of America in a little-known early text.

*Proust's Latin Americans* will be of interest to scholars of modernism, French literature, Proust studies, gender studies, and Latin American studies.

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