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# World Literature in Spanish

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## Machado y Ruiz, Antonio (1875–1939)

Born in Seville, he is considered one of the most outstanding poets in 20th-century Spain and the linchpin poet of Spain's *Generation of 1898. After spending time in Paris, he worked as a French teacher in Soria, and later lived in Segovia and Madrid. To escape Francoist troops at the end of the Spanish Civil War, Machado went into exile in Collioure, France, dying there soon after. In his pocket was found his last poem: "Estos días azules y este sol de la infancia" ("These azure days and this sun of childhood").

For Machado, poetry served to capture the essence of things and the course of time. He defined poetry as the dialogue a poet establishes with his time period. His verse evolved from a modernist, romantic expression that describes the poet's feelings and inner world, to a poetry that focuses on Spain's situation and its people from a social perspective. Writings from his final years also reveal his interest in philosophy.

Machado's poetic work began in 1903 with publication of *Soledades* (Solitudes), followed by *Soledades, galerías y otros poemas* (1907; *Solitudes, Galleries and Other Poems*, 1987), a corrected and more complete version of the previous book. In this work, poems address such themes as time, death, God and nostalgic reminiscences of childhood. These introspective pieces use water imagery, especially water wheels and fountains, to symbolize feelings of solitude, melancholy, and anguish.

Machado's next poetry collection, *Campos de Castilla* (1912; *The Landscape of Castile*, 2005), describes the Castilian landscape and shows the poet's special bond with it. In these poems, Machado also criticizes certain negative aspects of Castile and Spain, including poverty and backwardness. One of the most relevant poems, the ballad "La tierra de Alvargonzález" ("The Land of Alvargonzález"), reinterprets the myth of Cain and Abel. A later edition of this volume added several poems dedicated to friends and to Machado's dead wife, Leonor Izquierdo.

His last poetic work, *Nuevas canciones* (1924; New Songs), contains poems about the Andalusian landscape as well as short poems, called "Proverbios y cantares" ("Proverbs and Songs"), of a philosophical and conceptual bent. In editions of his collected works, Machado included new poems, like "Canciones a Guiomar" ("Songs to Guiomar"), dedicated to his last lover, Pilar de Valderrama. During the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), he also composed some poems in favor of the republic, such as "El crimen fue en Granada" ("The Crime Was in Granada"), recounting Federico *García Lorca's murder. During his last years, Machado wrote in prose *Juan de Mairena* (1934–1936), a collection of articles dealing with metaphysics, logic,

aesthetics, and politics. Besides poetry, he also coauthored several plays with his brother, Manuel *Machado.

Antonio Machado's continued devotion to Spain greatly influenced Spanish social poets of the 1950s and 1960s. Some of his poems have gained wide, popular circulation through iconic singer-songwriter Joan Manuel *Serrat's reinterpretations of them as songs.

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*See also* Civil War Literature in Spain; Spanish Civil War and the Dictatorship of General Franco (1936–1975).

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