CONCLUSION

Looking back, one ought to acknowledge the fact that there was an explosion of interest in the Latin American novel from the early 1960s, and four product leaders, the Big Four of Latin American Boom: Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortazar, Garcia Marquez, and Vargas Llosa emerged to dominate the new market. Julio Cortazar died in 1983 and Carlos Fuentes in 2012. But the others remain undisputedly the two leading novelists – the most prestigious literary brand names of the continent almost forty years after the birth of their Boom. They are well known beyond the frontiers of Latin America and all are in a position to make a living from their writing. Gerald Martin in Sara Castro-Klaren’s edited book, *A Companion to Latin American Literature and Culture* (2008), rounds out:

Thanks to the Boom, Latin American Literature has been “normalized” at home and “universalized” abroad. It is safe now for Latin Americans to write in minor key because the Boom writers demonstrated once and for all that the continent’s literature was also capable of a major key – even if works in major key were about to go out of fashion. (493)

The Boom is the turning point in the history of the Latin American literary tradition. It was both a literary movement and a marketing phenomenon characterized by a dramatic increase in the publication,
distribution, and translation of Spanish American works. It is with the Boom, the movement in Spanish American literature had entered the international “mainstream”. Throughout the 1960s, they and other Spanish American writers had carefully cultivated their reputations in Spanish America, Europe, and the United States. Jorge J. E. Gracia in *Philosophy and Literature in Latin America* (1989) says that Boom must be viewed as “a privileging of the mainstream, the masculine, the universal, and the commercial” (119). The Boom really put Latin American literature on the global map.

An important indication of the difference between the pre-Boom and the Boom novels can be calculated in their respective circulation figures. For example, Jose Donoso’s *Veraneo* (1955), published in the pre-Boom era, came out in 1,000 copies, of which Donoso had himself to sell 900. The Boom changed all that, and literature became a lucrative industry. Meanwhile, a new type of writing from Latin America caught the attention of the Spaniard Carlos Barral, editor of Seix Barral of Barcelona. Julio Cortazar’s *Hopscotch*, for example, came out with 4,000 copies in 1963, ran to 10,000 in 1966-67, and then rocketed to 26,000 in 1968. But the novel which fundamentally changed the paradigm was Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* which started with an initial print-run of 25,000 when it was published in 1967, and from 1968 onwards, sold about
100,000 copies for year. The 100,000 first-edition copies of Vargas Llosa’s
*Captain Pantoja and the Special Service* itself is a good indication of the
commercial success of this substantially different but still typical novel.
The Boom stimulated both Latin American intellectuals and the
mainstream public to read the works by Latin American authors who
weren’t known to them before. With the increasing flow of works and
publications, local and international interest in other Latin American
literary productions that had been marginalized until then, also increased.
The New Novel in Latin America did not fade away with the end of the
Boom. There has been a rich literary production by both experienced and
newer writers from the late 1960s up to the beginning of the twenty-first
century. The legacy of the Boom has continued evolving through the years
and its effects have caused a great deal of controversy. However, in a
significant sense, the Boom has not ended; the writers associated with the
Boom have continued to publish books that have been read by audience.

The prolific Peruvian writer Vargas Llosa is according to many,
*THE* Voice of Latin American literature. He is the most consistent
professional novelist to emerge from the Boom and has established a long
and ongoing career as a much-translated and internationally recognized
writer. Indeed, his literary production proves that the unique natural and
social environment of the Americas in general and Peru in particular
remains the main source of his creative inspiration. His stature as a major
writer of the twentieth century is testified by his broad international appeal.
The reader finds all the three basic values of writing that Wayne C. Booth
has proposed as the possible interests of fiction: intellectual, qualitative,
and practical. The intellectual interest in his novels concerns numerous
facets of Peruvian and Latin American society. The qualitative is seen in
his incorporation of varied literary tradition, such as realism, romance, etc.
The constant practical interest in his novels lies in plot development,
suspense, and the resolution of character development.

Several characteristics of his themes and techniques contribute to his
universality. His novels and essays confirm his status as a “man of letters”
whose interests are wide ranging. Vargas Llosa continues to be in search of
narrative structures and techniques that would enable him to portray his
own contemporary, multifaceted experiences of urban Peru. It is evident as
Vargas Llosa unveils his new novel in Spanish titled *El heroe discreto* in
2013, which is yet to be translated into English as *The Discreet Hero*. Julio
H. Cole in his article “Mario Vargas Llosa: An Intellectual Journey”,
affirms Vargas Llosa’s stand as one of world’s greatest living writers: “In
the Spanish-speaking world, however, he is more than just a great novelist.
He is a public intellectual in the full sense of that expression, and his
regularly aired opinions on political events, literature, culture, and the arts are a fixture of the intellectual life of this part of the world.

Few contemporary Latin American novelists have been as expansive in writing about their personal interpretation of literary and political theory as Vargas Llosa. The essence of this former aspect can be summarized quite simply: the writer is basically a rebel, a man who is unhappy with the world that he sees around him, and who therefore writes in order to make people conscious of the problems facing their society. It becomes clear that Vargas Llosa was lamenting the human and social condition much more than critiquing specific societies, and like so many others, he was saying that society was everywhere corrupt, but it was even worse and hopeless in Peru.

One of the pillars of the Boom of Latin American fiction, Vargas Llosa now ranks as one of the leading novelists in the world. Jorge Luis Borges, who was extremely influential for the Boom generation, used to say that the true writer is constantly assaulted by writing itself. The fire never cools. There is no schedule for this work, no limits, no respite. This is the case with the Peruvian Vargas Llosa. Since the publication of his first novel, *The Time of the Hero*, Vargas Llosa has never ceased producing works of art. The fire, the impulse to write, to tell stories, still burns with a constant flame.