

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Northern Sights: Gender and Race in Latin American  
Nineteenth-Century Travel Narratives of the United States

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“Argentina and the United States’ Gender Situations in Eduarda Mansilla de García’s *Travel Memoirs* (1882).” *Journeys. The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing*, December, 2020

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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During the nineteenth century, when Latin American nations were seeking ways to define home territory as distinct from their colonial legacies, some leading intellectuals sought inspiration in a modernizing hemispheric neighbor, the United States. “Northern Sights: Gender and Race in Latin American Nineteenth-Century Travel Narratives of the United States” analyzes how nine *letrados* interrogated gender and race as they related to imaginary geographies. By examining multiple and even contradictory socially-constructed representations of the “United States Man” (Chapter 1), the “United States Woman” (Chapter 2), and “The United States as a Multiethnic Nation” (Chapter 3), this project challenges the predominant North to South trajectory in travel writing studies that implicitly considers Latin America to be a passive recipient of cultural modernity developed elsewhere. Drawing from Benedict Anderson, I argue that travelogues contributed to the consolidation of the nation-building project and to *letrado* dominance within this project. This study, comprised of three chapters with an introduction and a conclusion, illuminates how these authors established their positions in nascent national canons as well as challenged notions of United States exceptionalism through the genre of travel literature.

## INTRODUCTION

Territory is only understood to the extent it is written, represented, and inscribed.

– Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*

If the differences between fiction and non-fiction are often blurred in contemporary narratives or even denied in postmodern thought, there is no place where imagination and actual events intersect as seamlessly as in the genre of travel writing. This ever-popular literary expression includes such disparate texts as the Exodus story from the Bible, Michel de Montaigne's *The diary of Montaigne's journey to Italy in 1580 and 1581*, and Ernesto "Che" Guevara's *The Motorcycle Diaries* (1952). The heterogenous nature of this genre has made its very definition a challenge to scholars. One way that we can begin to unpack this literary practice is through applying Chole Chard's concept of "imaginative geography." Chard has theorized that imaginative geography "entails the construction of particular myths, visions and fantasies, and the voicing of particular desires, demands, and aspirations" (10). Reworking Christian Jacob's conceptualization of maps, Chard offers this concept as a tool to analyze the strategies that authors employ to appropriate the foreign.

Early modern maps, with their decorative borders that included fantastical creatures fancied as existing in remote lands, visually illustrated popular myths about uncharted geographic territories. Like maps, travelogues also re-present spatial imaginaries through descriptive writing in the manner that Lisle and Chard have posited. Imaginative geography throws light on the intersecting purposes of the traveler writer, providing accurate trip representations while also "manipulating language and engaging in a form of imaginative

seduction” in order to appeal to a specific readership (Chard 10). This constant slippage between non-fictional and fictional devices underscores the mutable nature of this hybrid genre.

The concept of imaginative geography raises the question about to what degree travel literature is, in fact, a performative genre that can be readily appropriated to support a writer’s preconceived notions, predetermined agendas, or an existing status quo. Trips are intrinsically temporal by nature; impressions are necessarily limited and even superficial, particularly when the traveler has little or no mastery of the host country’s language. In any case, this truism regarding the limited nature of an individual’s impressions has not prevented the formulation of sweeping pronouncements regarding unfamiliar peoples and places – always evaluated through the lens of the author’s cultural background. My use of the word “lens” is not random, but intended to highlight the profoundly visual nature of this practice. Fundamentally, travel literature expresses an unremitting tension between the poles of identity and alterity, revealing as much about the traveler as the travelee.<sup>1</sup>

Travel writers, as a matter of course, must rely heavily on descriptive language in order to readily transport the reader alongside him or her. Nevertheless, contemporary scholars have exposed the problematic associated with such a seemingly neutral writing convention. Linking imaginative geography to colonialism, Edward Said has theorized that the construct “legitimizes a vocabulary, a universe of representative discourse peculiar to the discussion and understanding . . . of the Orient” (*Orientalism* 71). Said was referring to European accounts of Asia, but his assertions can also be extended to other geographic regions. In other words, travelogues, as

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<sup>1</sup>Georges van den Abbeele offers the term *oikos* (home) as a tool for interrogating travel literature. He formulates that the *oikos* “organizes and domesticates a given area by defining all other points in relation to itself” (xviii). Additionally, although travel often connotes freedom, van den Abbeele contends that the *oikos*, as a touchstone of reference for the traveler, paradoxically constrains this experience.



contingent systems of representation, produce situated cultural artifacts imbued with ideological significances that extend well beyond the individual.

Today's commercial maps no longer include mythical creatures just beyond the horizon. Still and all, textual depictions of unfamiliar people and places continue to be permeated with a density of geo-graphy, a written record of the land, in which each subsequent contribution adds to the density of geographic palimpsests and responds in some way to textual predecessors. Intertextuality, as a key generic convention, reminds us that engaging with the prior written archive is nearly unavoidable for the traveler.<sup>2</sup> An author is, invariably, a reader, and what we read becomes a part of what we know. Although one may attempt to present a fresh vision of an area, the preceding geographic imaginary, be it from novels, other travelogues, photography, or even word of mouth, necessarily impinges on subsequent representations. The concept of geographic imaginary furthermore illuminates why the Spanish American writers included in this study expressed the poles of attraction and repulsion toward a country that, at the time, was widely advertised and even accepted by many as a model republic.

These nine individuals were not casual sightseers. Rather, they were prominent members of the lettered city, elite creoles with prestigious professions related to the written word – poets, lawyers, newspaper editors, government officials, journalists, and more (Rama 16). The discourses of these “mentores de una nueva era” revolved around the recurring themes of “civilizar, ilustrar, europeizar, secularizar [y] nacionalizar” (Bruno, *Paul* 12). These *letrados* debated – some even interpellated – national ideological proposals, truly inscribing imaginative geography into reality. One agenda item for public intellectuals during the post-independence era

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<sup>2</sup>Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan coined the term “textual zones” to explain how travel writing creates an archive of geographic palimpsests. For the scholar, this construct implies examining an author’s experience of territory for ideological and mythical underpinnings (67).

was the establishment of an autochthonous literary tradition.<sup>3</sup> Paradoxically, these *littérateurs* regularly cited the European literary archive by including untranslated quotations and references to canonical works in their texts as a means of validating their own authorial personas (Molloy, *At Face* 5).<sup>4</sup> Irrespective of this practice, their travel writing contributed to the formation of the Spanish American literary canon.

The construct of imaginative geography shares similarities with Benedict Anderson's term "imagined communities." While the former deals broadly with spatial imaginaries, the latter focuses on the construction and consolidation of national imaginaries. Drawing from Anderson, I argue that foreign trip narratives contributed both to the post-independence nation-building project and to the creole elite's dominant place within this project. Taking issue with Anderson, Renato Rosaldo has revealed that this concept failed to address how national identity as a social construct has intentionally excluded marginalized groups (243, 247). Rosaldo's insight without doubt applies to the subjects of this study who, with the exception of one individual, did not include the range of home or even foreign populations equally in their formulations. Extending citizenship rights more amply was, by and large, not an agenda item for leaders across the Americas during this period; their frameworks of ideal citizenry privileged European biological heritage as an essential determinant for granting full citizenship rights (Rosaldo 243).

As a consequence, keeping Michel Foucault's theorization regarding the fundamental connections between knowledge and power in mind, I contend that the gaze of these writers was

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<sup>3</sup>Alejandro Mejías-López has analyzed the struggle that Latin American *littérateurs* experienced to build readership and confer prestige on national textual production in the face of the hegemony of French cultural authority (62-63).

<sup>4</sup>Sylvia Molloy has examined the use of literary references in Spanish American autobiographical writing. While not unique to Latin American authors, this strategy often involved an indirect mediation at the level of language since citations generally were not read or written originally in Spanish. Molloy has posited that "This desire to show oneself competent, a reader of the canon – not realizing that the canon, by the mere fact that one is reading it from Spanish America, translated into a Spanish American context, is no longer the same – might be seen as a result of conventional cultural colonialism" (*At Face*, 22)

never innocent or objective, but sanctioned restricted ideological positions as appropriate, constructive responses for home society. In point of fact, during the post-independence period the *letrado* class “came to fulfil the norms of the national community [and] embodied universal thought, reason, and cultivation,” and the privilege of foreign journeys undoubtedly bolstered their superior social positions (Rosaldo 250).<sup>5</sup> Despite that these authors regularly published in the periodical press, which reached a broader public than limited printings of costly books, they largely represented the exclusive interests of the class to which they belonged.

Susana Rotker’s concept of “style” can illuminate how these travel texts, irrespective of authorial claims of merely providing didactic information as a service to the nation, ultimately served ruling class interests and engrained racial biases. Rotker has sustained that, “communities are distinguished not by how genuine or false they are, but by the style in which they are imagined” (*Captive* 22). Importantly, style “abounds with mechanisms of negation [in which] a part of reality . . . is denied in order to impose the metropolitan conditions of which the lettered elites dreamed” (*Captive* 22). I follow Rotker by contending that the style of these accounts imposed particular worldviews that, consciously or not, negated significant portions of home populations. Therefore, these writers’ insertion into discourses of modernity functioned as tools to forge nations with power hierarchies not unlike those that had existed during colonial times.<sup>6</sup>

Still and all, there have been some Hispanic intellectuals who have discounted the very existence of domestically produced travel accounts. Hoping to stimulate increased national production, Ignacio Manuel Altamirano decried in his 1882 introduction to Luis Malanco’s *Viaje*

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<sup>5</sup>In Miguel Cabañas’ view, nineteenth-century Latin American travel literature “produced a kind of national cultural hero” (8). Cabañas concludes that “the traveler’s quest for self-knowledge becomes the quest of the entire ‘imagined community’” (8).

<sup>6</sup>Linking travel and modernity, Nicholas Thomas suggests that travel “may be more powerfully conceived as a peculiarly modern activity, in so far as it entails expansive steps away from ‘traditional’ ties, and . . . an attitude of extension and displacement towards those traditions” (5).

á *Oriente* that “los mexicanos viajan poco, y los que viajan no escriben, ni publican sus impresiones ó sus recuerdos” (xi).<sup>7</sup> Altamirano clarified that the few texts that existed focused nearly entirely on domestic travel when he professed that “si escasa es nuestra literatura de viajes por lo que respecta al interior del país, sus productos son rarísimos en lo que se refiere á los viajes en el extranjero” (xxv). This opprobrium, ironically, appeared in a travel book by a Mexican author.

Likewise, in a 1884 newspaper review of *Notas y episodios de viaje de los Estados Unidos* by Alberto Lombardo, Manuel Gutiérrez Nájara alleged that “en México este género literario está tan atrasado o más que los otros. Aquí ninguno viaja” (232). Gutiérrez Nájara was presumably exaggerating when he stated that Mexicans did not travel at all, yet his message was clear. Similar to the urban chronicle, travel writing has been (and continues to be) a marginalized genre in the Spanish America canon in comparison with forms of textual production – such as novels or poetry – and perhaps even an afterthought to an author’s other works in seemingly more prestigious literary forms.

These criticisms hold some truth. Before what some experts have labeled the “democratization of travel,” only a limited percentage of affluent Latin Americans journeyed abroad. Well-to-do Argentines journeyed to Europe as a matter of course, while the Mexican elite regularly visited Europe and the United States. In fact, my synchronic study has found that of all the Spanish American countries, Argentina and Mexico produced the highest number of travel writing publications about the United States and Europe during this period. Most likely there are also unpublished travel accounts in the form of diaries, notebooks, ship logs, or private letters that have yet to be uncovered by scholars.

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<sup>7</sup>All direct quotes are unmodified from the original texts and reflect nineteenth-century Latin American orthography in Spanish.

For my purpose, it is published works that were composed for a specific, home readership that have most interested me, for it is in this public forum that post-independence geographic imaginaries can be interrogated. Although Altamirano and Gutiérrez Nájara referred to Mexican travel writing as a corpus, their claims hold some truth for Latin America as a whole. In total numbers, there are fewer published nineteenth-century Latin American authored travelogues than those from the United States or Europe, albeit the texts that exist unquestionably warrant far more scholarly research. This genre reveals unique insights and offers strong scholarly value regarding the intersectionality of *letrado* engagement with deep networks of transnational intellectual discourses and utopian national visions.

As a hybrid genre, travel writing shares many attributes with autobiography, and this is exemplified in the works examined in this dissertation.<sup>8</sup> A travelogue is essentially a self-reflective memoir which, like an autobiography, implies a life story worthy of recording.<sup>9</sup> In effect, the autobiographical elements of a trip account cross the boundary of its purported documentary status by mirroring back on the author's place in home society.<sup>10</sup> Yet this genre performs much more than the work of autobiography.

Domestically produced travel books disrupt the ethnographic gaze, truth value, and colonialist power dynamics expressed in foreign accounts, such as Fannie Calderón de la Barca's 1843 *Life in Mexico*, that largely represented Latin Americans as a less civilized "race" in a peripheral (though picturesque) geographic region. In contrast, the narrative, protagonistic, and

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<sup>8</sup>Sylvia Molloy has theorized autobiography as a revealing act of self-construction in which "la imagen de si existe como impulso que gobierna el proyecto autobiográfico . . . esa imagen es artefacto social, tan revelador de una psique como de una cultura" (*Acto* 18).

<sup>9</sup>John Sturrock argues that autobiography "is the story of singularization, or of how the autobiographer came to acquire the conviction of uniqueness that has impelled him to write" (14).

<sup>10</sup>Autobiography can be conceived as "the story of a distinctive culture written in individual characters and from within—[it] offers a privileged access to an experience . . . that no other variety of writing can offer" (Olney 13). Perhaps this definition can be extended to travel writing as well since, like autobiography, the narrative voice is nearly always the first person singular.

authorial “I” of nineteenth-century Spanish American trip accounts personified the ideal citizen, one who did not accept the intrinsic value of foreign societies without question. Instead, these individuals carefully evaluated the usefulness of their journeys abroad as applied to home circumstances.<sup>11</sup> This re-centering of subject positionality in transnational discourses of modernity elevates the meaningful contribution of Latin American travelogues to the academy.

The new and popular period art form of the panorama also had the aim of unifying narrative vision. The panorama or cyclorama consisted of a series of paintings that either moved on a scroll or were hung in a circular hall for the spectator to stroll by.<sup>12</sup> This artistic medium enframed and ordered a swiftly changing world; additionally, the panorama “reinforced the interest in geography stimulated by Humboldt and by the reports of travel writers and explorers” (Sears 50-51). Panoramas of industrial or military triumphs, such as the Battle of Waterloo, transcended their entertainment function by containing images that “meant to instill the new bourgeois public with a unified, and necessarily patriotic, world view” (M. Williams 134). My study has had an analogous panoramic focus by interrogating contested themes of period intellectual discourse across five Latin American countries, the United States, and Europe. The panorama depicted broad geographic visions; likewise, my study interprets the ontological underpinnings of travel writing as a literary endeavor centered in comparative spaces.

By bringing together a corpus of narratives, I intend for my work to contribute to and stimulate greater scholarly interest in nineteenth-century Latin American travel literature. Following Homi Bhabha’s theorization that modernity is “about the historical construction of a specific position of historical enunciation and address,” my scholarly goal has been to analyze

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<sup>11</sup>Catherine Aristizábel theorizes that these public intellectuals “consideraban la historia de sus vidas o acciones como la mejor fuente de transmisión de la nueva historia de las recientes naciones” (28).

<sup>12</sup>Megan Rowley Williams argues that panoramas on scrolls, as precursors to film, initiated new ways of seeing by requiring viewers to process moving images from left to right while listening to music or a lecture (134).

these works for their ideological positionings regarding nation, modernity, and citizenry (201). The nine authors included in this dissertation were chosen for their preeminence in independent Latin American countries. For the purpose of this study, I have defined a travelogue as a printed account of an individual's movement through space and time outside of one's daily routine that ends with a return home. These parameters excluded certain prominent *letrados*, such as José Martí, who lived as an exile in the United States without returning to permanently reside in a Cuba that was not independent during his lifetime. These criteria stemmed from my interest in examining how this publicly oriented genre composed unique spaces of intervention in complex national and transatlantic intellectual panoramas.

Only one female writer has been included since few Latin American women were uniquely positioned during this period to journey abroad and publish. Travel and writing for a public have conventionally been male freedoms and prerogatives. Period constraints regarding female propriety typically confined women's writing to the private sphere of letters and journals. This situation began to change toward the end of the nineteenth century, in part due to the increase in periodical publications. This increase in periodical publication, combined with a commercial focus on the female consumer, provided women writers with increased opportunities for publishing their work. Overall, though, poetry or romantic novels continued to be more socially sanctioned genres for female authors.

Another contextual issue is that international journeys during that period involved packing trunks for weeks or months instead of for days. Geography and the availability of transportation largely determined itineraries. As a rule, Chilean and Peruvian tourists arrived in the United States via San Francisco, Mexican travelers through New Orleans or Texas, and

Argentinean visitors from Europe.<sup>13</sup> Except for Chileans, who availed themselves of established Pacific coast maritime routes, the majority of Latin American visitors limited their stays to East Coast and a few Midwest cities that offered adequate amenities and touristic attractions to accommodate visitors. Given that the Transcontinental Railroad was not completed until 1869, the regions west of the Mississippi (except for California after the Gold Rush) were sparsely settled during this time, with little to offer the sightseer. (As quintessential symbols of industrial modernity, the national railroad and steamship systems were of keen interest to our visitors who saw infrastructure's importance to commerce, settlement of outlying geographic regions, and national unification.) The slow temporality of travel by today's standards left ample time for reading newspapers and recording impressions in notebooks or letters about the host country.

These nine authors are, by and large, well known for other facets of their literary production and for their engagement in the public sphere. With the exceptions of Sarmiento and Mansilla, their travel books have been underexamined – perhaps even dismissed as subliterate or popular – by the academy and not brought together as a regional corpus. Part of this issue may be one of language. Only Sarmiento and Zavala's travel narratives have been translated to English, which has made them more widely available for academic study.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, United States and European travelogues about Latin America, such as Alexander von Humboldt's *Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Equinoctial Regions of the New World during the years 1799-1804*, have received substantially more scholarly interest. I question whether the

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<sup>13</sup>No direct steamship service existed between the United States eastern seaboard and South American Atlantic ports during the nineteenth century. Argentine travelers could journey north via Chile or, more commonly, journey first to Europe to reach the United States (Fifer 136-141).

<sup>14</sup>Despite the perennial popularity of the genre, British and North American travel studies scholarship continues “to be eminently Anglo-centric and to marginalise texts written in languages other than English” (Polezzi, *Translating* 1). The few comparative studies that have been published in English “tend to ignore the material conditions which affect the reading of ‘foreign’ texts; their genesis in a different tradition and in a different language” (Polezzi, *Translating* 1).



predominant North to South focus in current travel writing studies is another manifestation of neocolonial power dynamics in which the literary production of certain geographic areas (except in university departments dedicated to their study) continues to be dismissed as peripheral to the greater academy. This situation is beginning to change, and this study forms part of this new trend.

Felipe Teixidor's 1939 *Viajeros mexicanos: siglos XIX y XX* offered an early anthology of Iberoamerican travel writing. More recent publications have included Emmanuel Carballos's *¿Qué país es éste? Los Estados Unidos y los gringos vistos por escritores mexicanos de los siglos XIX y XX* (1996), *Espacio, viajes y viajeros* (2004) edited by Luz Elena Zamudio, Thea Pitman's *Mexican Travel Writing* (2008), Claire Lindsay's *Contemporary Travel Writing of Latin America* (2009), Vanesa Miseres' 2017 *Mujeres en tránsito: viaje, identidad y escritura en Sudamérica (1830-1910)*, and Rafaela Solís Muñoz's *Estados Unidos en los diarios de viaje de cuatro intelectuales hispanoamericanos del siglo XIX* (2018). These texts have made significant contributions in the direction of correcting this lacuna in academic studies, though further research is still needed.

The drive to search outside of national boundaries for development models typified Latin American post-independence liberal logic, a logic that often held that “la civilización nacional radica en la imitación de lo foráneo” (Garrels 270). The United States had become independent several decades earlier than Latin America, and was, during the antebellum period, becoming regarded worldwide as the vanguard of socioeconomic progress and republican democracy. Not all *letrados* focused exclusively on the United States model, however. Other nations were also considered – Great Britain and France in particular – while Spain, Latin America's “mother country,” was by and large perceived during the post-independence period by Iberoamerican

public intellectuals as a backward state with little to offer as a source of inspiration.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, most of these individuals were intimately familiar with Europe and therefore well positioned to formulate transnational comparisons.

Many of the same social issues discussed in this study, such as extending suffrage rights or developing public education systems, were debated transatlantically. Nevertheless, during the nineteenth century the United States, as a rapidly industrializing and modernizing sister hemispheric republic, began to emerge as a distinct locus of idealization (as opposed to Europe) for those *letrados* who believed that “modernization represented a utopia” (Ramos 42).<sup>16</sup> Given that the northern republic had experienced a longer period of independence, the country could be inspected as a “work-in-progress” and a possible model for the more recently formed Spanish American nations.

Historically, inter-American relations have been closely imbricated, particularly for those countries closest to the United States. Although Simón Bolívar had at one time envisioned a united Latin American confederation that would exclude the United States, this proposal proved infeasible both economically and geographically (Yúdice 71). In point of fact, Mary Louise Pratt has theorized that during the late nineteenth century, the United States “acquired the status of Latin America’s other . . . when it emerged as a full-fledged imperial power” (“Back Yard” 37). In response, anti-Americanism emerged more strongly in the region following hemispheric interventions that included filibusters led by United States citizens, the secession of Texas from 1836-1845, the 1846-1848 Mexican American War, and the Spanish-American-Cuban-Philippine War of 1898, events that made evident the expansionistic intentions of the northern

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<sup>15</sup>Liberal Latin American statesmen, by and large, blamed Spain for their retrograde colonial heritage and looked elsewhere for national models (Sanders, *Vanguard* 151-155).

<sup>16</sup>From 1870 to 1900, United States industrial production increased five hundred percent (Holmberg 8).

republic. Pratt has clarified that “the most conspicuous coordinates defining anti-Americanism have been anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, nationalism, and anti-materialism” (“Back Yard” 35).

Consequently, it would not be inaccurate to conclude that historical events shaped negative assessments expressed by these individuals regarding the host country. Remembering the greater geopolitical context helps us comprehend why Justo Sierra Méndez evaluated Anglo-American women as grossly materialistic and unfit to educate future generations in contrast to his construct of a superior Mexican womanhood. A distinct, but less common ideological trend during this time period, was the idea of Americanism, an articulation of a shared hemispheric New World identity as the cradle of republicanism and democracy in reaction to European aristocratic institutions (Pratt, “Back Yard” 35). José Arnaldo Márquez expressed this positive assessment of American interrelations in his text when he argued that United States women, in reality, embodied an idealized future.

All of these authors engaged in journalism, the most common form of publication during the nineteenth century, and some first published their travel books as serial chronicles (Mejías-López 69). For his part, Anderson has theorized that the press played a vital role in writing Latin American national identity into reality. The urban chronicle arose in relation to the growth of the city. The genre had its roots in the *cuadro de costumbres*, a literary aesthetic derived from European Romanticism, which focused on the detailed description of popular customs and local “types.”<sup>17</sup> The chronicle has been defined as a type of literary journalism directed to domestic, cultured bourgeois readers, a definition that applies equally to the intended public of these travel books (Ramos 114).

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<sup>17</sup>As a “showcase for modern life,” the Latin American chronicle appealed to “a cultured reader longing for a foreign modernity” by offering what has been labeled an “import journey” (Ramos 86).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the field of journalism underwent shifts that included the proliferation of periodical publications, the professionalization of the writer, and the rise of a new figure – the correspondent. In contrast to the reporter, the *cronista* sought distinction in the press through a personal style (Rotker, *Invención* 116). Like the *flâneur*, the correspondent assumed the epistemological authority to interpret the visible signs of daily life in the evolving cityscape in a literary manner.<sup>18</sup> The Latin American press regularly published the work of leading *littérateurs* who engaged in journalism both as a source of income and as a way to connect with a wider base of readers (Mateo 24).

Still, there were issues associated with looking northward for developmental models. Nineteenth-century intellectuals often conflated the term “modernity” with “civilization.” Civilization encompassed the idea of past and future, a misconception that viewed progress as unfolding in stages. According to this point of view, “there were more or less civilized societies and that societies were moving toward greater civilization, or away from it or in a ‘race of civilization’” (Sanders, *Vanguard* 16). Categorizing Europe or the United States as the locus of advanced progress logically positioned Latin America as trailing behind chronologically, perpetually “situated in a past whose future had already been actualized elsewhere” (Ramos 42). The concepts of “modernity,” “progress,” and “civilization” played a key role in identity politics for the more newly-formed Latin American republics; notwithstanding, these master discourses were transhemispheric and transatlantic in nature.

How can admiration for certain aspects of the United States model be interpreted? Does

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<sup>18</sup>The nineteenth-century *flâneur*, from the French noun for “stroller,” was a privileged male observer of the city. Walter Benjamin, inspired by Charles Baudelaire’s poetry, has studied this figure as an archetype of the modern city (Shaya 47).

recognition of that country's achievements affirm an identity discourse marked by temporal belatedness or spatial liminality? Pratt, expanding on the neocolonist work of Kwame Nkrumah, explored the paradox that while "modernity imagines a progressive process that will eventually make all nations equally modern," the ideology in and of itself entails "subscrib[ing] to the values of the metropole and seek[ing] to fulfill them" (*Imperial* 226). In this paradox, modernity expands outward spatially and temporally to receptive "peripheral" societies, a situation comparable to colonialism. Since "to be neocolonial is to be unable . . . to exit the system and chart a separate course," development options are limited and largely predetermined (Pratt, *Imperial* 226).<sup>19</sup>

One way to confront the discourse of geographic and temporal liminality is by utilizing what Sandhya Skukla and Heidi Tinsman have coined an "Americas paradigm." Skukla and Tinsman's framework "challenges both the myth of U.S. exceptionalism and the idea of categorical Latin American otherness" by emphasizing the "shared histories of connection and interaction between peoples across, beyond, or underneath national boundaries and regions" (2). It has been my intention to emphasize shared connections by examining these texts in transhemispheric political, social, intellectual, and cultural contexts

Extending Jürgen Habermas' conceptualization of modernity as an "incomplete project," Pratt has additionally posited that our theory of modernity also remains incomplete. She has challenged the academy to formulate "a global and relational account of modernity" ("Modernity" 22).<sup>20</sup> Like Pratt, I view modernity and progress as closely entwined concepts

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<sup>19</sup>The "myth of modernity" can be understood as a hierarchical trope that inscribed the enunciative locus of the modern in the United States or Europe (Alonso 19).

<sup>20</sup>James E. Sanders offered the counterdiscursive term "American republican modernity" to describe an early period during the nineteenth century when the locus of modernity was imagined by *letrados* as located in the American public sphere rather than in Europe (*Vanguard* 5-23).

through which travel and travel writing intersect. Modernity, during this historical period, manifested as both ideological and material for Ibero-American intellectuals. In terms of the ideological, modernity signified the ways in which the creole elite cast aside outdated colonial institutions while affirming their co-equal cosmopolitan standing with Europe and the United States. For liberal leaders, this aspect of modernity entailed developing republican constitutions and debating the extension of suffrage rights, among other reformist acts. In terms of the material, modernity signified constructing public schools, train and steamship lines, and even boulevards modeled after Paris, among other visible markers of national progress.

In spite on their focus on evaluating the northern republican model for possible sources of inspiration, the Latin American *littérateur* could perform a dialectical inversion by presenting his home country as the utopian future under construction in contrast to a decadent Europe or a materialistic, unrefined United States. Without doubt, the transnational exchange of ideas was not entirely one sided; these *litteratos* freely questioned many aspects of United States society and government.<sup>21</sup> Pratt has offered an alternative to the modern center versus backward periphery dichotomy by conceptualizing a teleological space in which there existed a “copresence of modernity’s ‘selves’ and ‘others,’” a perspective that contests the hegemony that the trope of American exceptionalism has imposed on others (*Imperial* 35). This situation was true for these nine writers who closely considered which aspects of the host country could be applicable to and appropriate for the needs and cultures of their countries, particularly when perceived differences were seen as deeply irreconcilable.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Carl Thompson characterizes this move as the “two-fold aspect” of travel writing, a tension between identity and alterity or “report[ing] on the wider world” from the perspective of one’s home culture (*Travel* 10).

<sup>22</sup>Foundational tourism scholar Dean MacCannell, working with the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure, posits that “any difference between signifiers and signifieds is the result of the superimposition of a system of social values . . . we assign . . . aesthetic and utilitarian values according to our own social structure and social organization” (*The Tourist* 119).

In point of fact, the northern neighbor disappointed many observers in terms of its racial relations, government corruption, or materialistic, unsophisticated culture. Many of these authors repeated stereotypes about the country's population, such as their lack of social refinement and aesthetic sensibility. Pronouncing generalizations regarding a national "body" was a period practice "intensified by a sense of the changes sweeping over both the Old and New World during a time of revolutions in ideas and politics, and transformations of the economic order" (Langford 76). Confronting the touted model republic through the written word can be considered as an act of political positioning, a response to what Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron have defined as "symbolic violence" (4). This maneuver validated the cultural capital of Spanish America. One way of stressing one's authority as a national author in the face of symbolic violence was by addressing and forging connections with an imagined homogeneous homeland that had supposedly superior cultural values. The predicament of representation elicited a variety of responses. These responses varied from outright laughter, as when Eduarda Mansilla witnessed young United States women greeting their family members with loud kisses on the lips upon their arrival in port, to Justo Sierra Méndez standing defiantly, head raised, in front of a Mexican American War military statue in Washington D.C. In sum, while these visitors acknowledged the value of certain aspects of the host country, especially in the areas of invention and innovation, they did not necessarily consider their own nations as entirely without merit.

One binary that these individuals commonly evoked to confront symbolic violence entailed conceiving of Latin America as closely historically and culturally belonging to and informed by a greater "Latin" world, in particular France, as opposed to a less civilized Anglo-Saxon United States. Drawing from the cachet of European cosmopolitanism and high culture,

this move constructed Ibero-American territory as a superior aesthetic counterpoint to United States utilitarianism and crudeness. We can see this approach at work when Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Santiago Arcos deplored that Anglo-American men's table manners included eating from the point of the knife and mixing different foods together on the same plate. Ultimately, the critical eye of these writers tempered the symbolic violence inherent in the trope of United States exceptionalism.

Another useful tool for interrogating these writers' ambiguous stances is through the lens of "heterotopicality," a concept that draws from the assumption that cultural comparisons are inherently complex and polysemous. Heterotopicality encompasses the idea that "ambivalences are givens . . . noncorrespondences are not objects to be reconciled or explained; they must constitute the beginning premise of any analysis" (Lowe 28). At times, these authors negotiated cultural differences through a strong identification with Europe, upholding home territory as equal or superior to the alleged model republic. Other times, they appeared to accept the concept of coexisting stages of development and the corresponding idea that Latin American countries were behind in the race of modernity. In all, these public intellectuals participated in deep networks of knowledge that transcended local circumstances. Their cross-cultural comparisons, triangulated between Europe, the United States, and their home countries, were necessarily multifaceted and at times ambiguous.

Like the heterogenous nature of this genre, my theoretical framework has been multidisciplinary, drawn from travel writing studies, cultural studies, geography, anthropology, history, and literary theory. I have engaged in close textual analysis to throw light on the ways in which travel writing has been employed to express utopian geographic imaginaries. Like Doris Sommer's exploration of nineteenth-century Latin American romances, my intention has been to



explore a genre for its relationship to nation and an idealized citizenry – and this relationship can be revealed through a thematic, analytical, and contextual reading of travel texts.<sup>23</sup>

The main argument of my research is unpacked in three thematic chapters, each of which has invoked a construction of national imaginary. Chapter One, entitled “The United States Man, Symbol of a Nation,” explores how concepts of masculinity and the ideal citizen informed Lorenzo de Zavala, Vicente Pérez Rosales, and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento’s interpretations of the host country’s national manhood. For these three visitors, this homogenized figure was not a random representation, but a conceptualization that embodied the core values of a nation. If certain “Yankee” character traits could be admired – his “go ahead” spirit, his visionary city planning, his inventiveness – this figure’s aggressiveness, particularly as the century unfolded, came to be interpreted as a genuine threat to Latin American sovereignty. Despite the country’s increasingly multi-ethnic makeup, these narratives did not examine all iterations of the United States man. Instead, travelers racialized this type as of Anglo-Saxon origin, a move that coincided with the elite creole’s self-identification as a person of European descent. This singular focus reified the connections between idealized citizenry and racial origins that were widely prevalent during this period and had originated in the biological sciences.

Social anxiety peaked during the scientific and industrial revolutions of the late nineteenth century, and much of that anxiety intensified around gender. Chapter 2, entitled “Women as a Transnational Marker of Modernity,” considers the situation of women in the northern republic. Sweeping social transformations accompanied modernization, and the new role of women, as an employee, a student, or just moving freely in public, was an issue of debate.

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<sup>23</sup>Building on Benedict Anderson’s work, Sommer has theorized that nineteenth-century Latin American romances can be read as allegories of the nation. That is, romantic relationships and nation are mutually imbricated in these texts in order as a means of envisioning a productive, idealized citizenry for newly independent Latin American countries.

In the past, women had been more closely surveilled in small, rural communities, while in the urban environment they experienced fewer restrictions and greater anonymity.

As the body that reproduced and socialized the national citizenry, this situation elicited concerns regarding female “contamination” in the metropole. Notably, like the typical male, this female type was categorized as upper or middle class and of Anglo-American descent in these accounts. Changing gender situations abroad offered Justo Sierra Méndez, Eduarda Mansilla, and José Arnaldo Márquez an at times troubling glance at the perceived consequences of female emancipation while raising questions regarding the future of women as caretakers of their own national “homes.”

Chapter 3, “The United States as a Multiethnic Country,” explores how three Iberoamerican visitors interpreted the host country’s multiethnic racial makeup in addition to considering how they applied their notions of race to home territory. If African Americans, Native Americans, or Chinese immigrants did not properly fit into the categories of the typical national male or female, where did or didn’t they belong? Guillermo Prieto, Paul Groussac, and Salvador Camacho Roldán’s evaluations of the “proper” place of subaltern groups largely conformed to prevailing Social Darwinistic theorizations, yet their individual differences said much about how racial issues were being negotiated on home territory. Only Camacho Roldán attempted to construct a narrative that was an alternative to the hegemony of the period’s dominant racial pseudoscientific theories.

## CHAPTER 1: THE UNITED STATES MAN, SYMBOL OF A NATION

The androcentric vision imposes itself  
as neutral and has no need to spell itself  
out in discourses aimed at legitimating it.  
– Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*

Pierre Bourdieu has asserted that the androcentric vision is the unquestioned discourse of the social norm. Indeed, the title of Bourdieu's work succinctly summarized the normalization of androcentrism as "masculine domination." Extending Bourdieu's theorization, I maintain that the imagined typical man – as a public figure and a foil to the woman – can be logically conceived of as "naturally" embodying the essence of a nation. Therefore, if we accept the related notion that "the public sphere sustains and legitimizes masculine predominance," we can understand why foreign visitors to the United States regularly attached broad symbolic value to manhood as a fundamental marker of significance (Fuller 13). As a result, what this hegemonic, idealized male figure achieved in the public sphere, coupled with his perceived intrinsic nature, was commonly thought to closely correlate to his country's unity, progress, and the very definition of a civilized nation. Conversely, the typical man's character flaws could be evaluated as obstacles to domestic progress. While the national male population was neither uniform nor static, certain stereotypes widely prevailed regarding the United States man. An examination of these period social constructs will throw light on the varied ways in which our Latin American travelers scrutinized and interpreted the actions of this dominant "body."

American sociologist Michael S. Kimmel has theorized that three main masculine typologies prevailed in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and they all had their roots in European antecedents. The three archetypes of male identity, represented nationally and internationally in plays, essays, and popular biographies, applied categorically to white, native-born citizens, and could be defined in contrast to women's gender roles.<sup>24</sup> These figures – the Genteel Patriarch, the Heroic Artisan, and the Self-Made Man – help guide an analysis of Ibero-American travelers' representations and evaluations of United States men (Kimmel 16-17). Archetypes clearly are generalizations, but they can reveal how a country views itself, and how those from the outside interpreted persistent social constructs. For this reason, if these typologies did not address the full range of masculine identities extant in the country, they had, without doubt, become engrained in the culture and in visitor's texts, and as such present useful tools for study.

George Washington exemplified the Genteel Patriarch's characterization as a virtuous, dignified, propertied gentleman and patriotic leader. Washington could readily be admired by Latin American intellectuals as an idealized "Father of the Nation" figure similar to Simón Bolívar. This transhemispheric identification fostered a sense of connection across the former American colonies as sites of promising, emerging republics with shared visions and values. This perspective, moreover, established a commendable male construct that validated the social capital of the American hemispheres in the face of Old World cultural hegemony. Still, the bulk of the country's population fell into the other two categories.

Independent craftsmen and family farmers personified the second typology of the Heroic Artisan. With industrial progress, many of these men became wageworkers who ignored their

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<sup>24</sup>Horacio Alger's stories offer an example of popular United States novels about the Self-Made Man, though scholar James V. Catano posits that these stories are more nuanced than commonly received (10-11).

subservient class by uniting with the white elite in support of racist ideology toward freed African Americans and waves of immigrants they conceived of as competition in the paid labor force (Kimmel 23).<sup>25</sup> As the century progressed, the third and most persistent typology emerged.

The Self-Made Man, a uniquely United States product of rapid commercialization, can be characterized as “mobile, competitive, aggressive in business . . . temperamentally restless, chronically insecure, and desperate to achieve solid grounding for a masculine identity” (Kimmel 13).<sup>26</sup> International visitors often remarked about this third type, noting his visionary, progressive spirit that rapidly transformed wilderness areas into planned towns complete with schools and grided roads. On the one hand, this energetic figure brought about material progress through his tenacity and ingenuity. On the other hand, his aggressive (even martial) nature had a dark side, particularly when applied to the area of foreign diplomacy. What’s more, foreign visitors readily faulted the Self-Made Man for his singular focus on moneymaking, accusing him of being only capable of conversing about business affairs and entirely lacking in sophistication.

From the colonial to the early republican period, men had functioned as the socially appointed custodians of civic virtue. Masculine identity was, during that period, strongly linked with the ideas of self-restraint, duty to family and community, and compliance with social roles (Rotundo 12). The ideology of separate spheres, which emerged alongside nineteenth-century urbanization and industrialization, transformed women’s roles from “republican motherhood” to a “new, moral womanhood [that] made the new, individualistic manhood possible” (Rotundo

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<sup>25</sup>During the transition from independent artisanship to wage labor, race played a role in the construction of gender identity for the white male worker. David R. Roediger has theorized that “Whiteness was a way in which white workers responded to a fear of dependency on wage labor and to the necessities of capitalistic work discipline” (13). Interestingly, Irish immigrants, although of European heritage, were for a time conflated with African Americans as employment competition.

<sup>26</sup>Henry Clay has been attributed with coining the term “self-made man” in a 1832 Congressional speech when he declared that “in Kentucky, almost every manufactory know to me, is in the hands of enterprising and self-made men, who have acquired whatever wealth they possess by patient and diligent labor” (39).

18). In effect, when women were tasked with the role of moral custodians from the private sphere, this change permitted men to participate freely in the competitive business world where many of them would succeed – would become self-made. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Self-Made Man had become the dominant national masculine archetype, although foreign visitors continued to invoke the other two figures in their accounts (Kimmel 42).

These masculine typologies fitted most cleanly in settled geographic areas of the nation, yet the country continued to be largely wilderness for much of the century. The frontier, originally just west of the Appalachian Mountains, allowed for masculine variations by providing alternative spaces where lone settlers, backwoodsmen, trappers, cowboys, miners, and soldiers could thrive. Here, a man could free himself from socially imposed gender constraints and successfully perform an identity of adventurer. One of the renowned examples of this alternative male construct was the mythologized folk hero, Davy Crockett, who embodied the role of model frontiersman in national popular culture. Unconventional character traits would have been undesirable and dysfunctional in more settled areas of the country, but in loosely controlled borderlands a wider range of masculine attributes proved necessary for survival. Importantly, peripheral geographic areas provided an outlet for those men who felt constrained by genteel period masculine social norms.

Western civilization has been widely theorized by scholars as an implicitly patriarchal concept. Christopher E. Forth clarified that Western civilization has involved three facets that tie directly to masculinity in urban societies: self-control and refined manners, education and culture, and material comfort and luxuries. More recently, another facet has been added – sedentary lifestyles (Forth 7). With this broader paradigm in mind, we can interrogate how the masculine behaviors our travelers witnessed conformed to or contested Western norms of

civilization. In addition, we can uncover the relationship between representations of masculine normality and notions of national character. Imagining national character was never socially or demographically all-inclusive; the very act of articulating a hegemonic male type inevitably involved racialization and exclusion. Indeed, Lorenzo de Zavala, Vicente Pérez Rosales, and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, the three individuals studied in this chapter, by and large focused on the Anglo-American male (or whom they at times labeled the Yankee) as a yardstick for perceived racio-cultural differences across their home country and the host country.

### **Part I. Lorenzo de Zavala**

Visitors to the imposing neoclassical Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library in Austin might be surprised to learn that the state of Texas also has a county, a city, a road, and numerous public schools and government buildings named for this nineteenth-century Mexican politician. Zavala, the earliest traveler included in this dissertation, was a Yucatecan-born individual who truly embodied the definition of *letrado* in the way that Rama has theorized. His varied occupations included newspaper editor, physician, co-author of the 1824 Mexican Constitution, Mexican state governor, Mexican Secretary of the Treasury, foreign diplomat, historian, land developer – and co-author and signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. If today Zavala is remembered by some historians in his homeland as a traitor for participating in the events that led to the loss of Mexico’s northern territories, in Texas he has been inscribed as one of the state’s founding fathers.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>In disagreement with decisions made by Mexican President Santa Anna, Zavala resigned from his diplomatic assignment in France. Defying orders to return to the capitol (and likely face imprisonment for his outspoken views), Zavala moved with his family to Texas where he held property and colonization options. He soon sided with the Texas independence movement, co-authored the constitution, proposed a (never adopted) design for the flag, and served very briefly as the first vice president of the republic. Zavala died in 1836, one month after resigning as vice president. Historian Justo Sierra O’Reilly, father of Justo Sierra Méndez covered in Chapter 2, wrote a lengthy, flattering preface to the 1848 posthumous Mexican reprint of this travel book, defending Zavala from accusations of

Born during the colonial period, Zavala's deep involvement with domestic post-independence politics marked the trajectory of his life. As a journalist and founder of periodicals, his activities exemplify Anderson's theories regarding the crucial role of print media in nation-building – as an act of writing an imagined community into reality (7, 65). The fall of President Vicente Guerrero's administration, of which he formed a part, led to Zavala's house arrest, followed by his self-imposed exile abroad. He journeyed first to the United States and then to Europe from 1830-1832. During his later political reinstatement as the first Mexican minister to the French court under the administration of President Antonio López de Santa Anna, Zavala self-published, with the Parisian printer Imprenta de Decourchant, limited editions of the first Mexican travel book about the United States entitled *Viage a los Estados Unidos del Norte de América* (1834).

We can situate Zavala's work alongside three other early travelogues about the United States: J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's 1782 *Letters from an American Farmer: Describing Certain Provincial Situations, Manners and Customs not Generally Known; and Conveying Some Idea of the Late and Present Interior Circumstances of the British Colonies of North America*, Ramón de la Sagra's 1836 *Cinco meses en los Estados-Unidos de la América del Norte*, and Alexis de Tocqueville's 1835 *Democracy in America*. The overlap in focus across these four accounts is not unusual when analyzed in the context of period transnational circulation of social and political debates. In essence, for foreign observers, "the Constitution, the institutions, and the democratic practices of the United States lay at the core of contemporaries' understanding of what the country represented in its modernity" (Ferris 51).

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treason. Both individuals were liberals from the outlying semiautonomous region of Yucatán, a fact that likely played a role in their political stances.



One way to evaluate the country's institutions was via an analysis of the male populace's activities.

Similar to these textual companions, Zavala closely examined the government, institutions, and foundational documents of the northern republic. Unlike his co-travelers, his vision could be, perhaps, be labeled a panegyric that expressed unbridled admiration for the host country, as when he directly enjoined Latin American countries to take their cues from the "modelo de todos los pueblos civilizados" rather than from Europe (234). This sweeping statement highlights the performative nature of travel writing in which actual trip experiences may be subsumed to the rhetor's preconceived notions and predetermined agendas. In this case, Zavala, like José Martí later in the century, aimed to establish himself as an authoritative, reasoned voice to guide his country's future, even if from exile. It would, therefore, not be unreasonable to conclude that Zavala appropriated the malleable nature of the genre to promote his political agenda while at the same time addressing ongoing grievances with domestic opponents who had prompted his state of exile.

In contrast to Tocqueville's weighty volumes, which resembled a social science report, Zavala's account followed a traditional linear trip itinerary with reflections on the host country woven throughout the chapters. Unfortunately, while Tocqueville's publication brought him widespread acclaim and recognition, the same outcome did not apply to Zavala's work. The text had limited circulation during his lifetime due to its private publication; it continued to receive little attention even after the 1848 posthumous reprinting despite historian Justo Sierra O'Reilly's supportive introduction. The book was, however, recuperated by Texas historians, translated to English, and more widely circulated in 2005 as part of the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project.

Zavala's journey took him from Veracruz to New Orleans and up the United States river systems with stops in the Midwest, the Northeast, and Canada. In truth, his extensive itinerary appeared more like a pleasure trip than a journey of exile. His sojourn included meeting President Andrew Jackson, Joseph Bonaparte, and General Francisco de Paula Santander, among others. This visit also included Zavala (who was married at the time) meeting and courting his future second wife, Emily West, in New York City.

In his prologue, with a self-deprecating gesture typical of nineteenth-century writing conventions, Zavala alleged that “este libro no tiene ningun mérito en cuanto á originalidad” and “no me ha costado mucho trabajo mental” given that he had freely copied material from existing printed sources to supplement his trip notes (2). For this reason, he included lengthy quotations from other writers and wholesale extracts of governmental documents, such as state constitutions, in his narrative. Intertextuality, a typical convention of the genre of travel writing, serves to provide verifiable evidence of a trip's authenticity while at the same time underscores authorial credibility and reliability. Copyright infringement and proper citation were not an impediment to freely duplicating information from other authors into one's own work during that period. Zavala's intertextual references also remind us that impressions garnered during an individual sojourn are necessarily limited and at times even superficial.

Despite the modest disclaimer, this narrative proved singularly original and brashly opinionated. In his introduction, Zavala articulated a clear two-fold purpose. The first, was to publish his memoirs as he had promised his home readers earlier in his lengthy *Ensayo histórico de las revoluciones de México desde 1808 hasta 1830*. Referring to that earlier pledge, he recognized that “es ya tiempo de que comience, aunque sea por partes incoherentes según lo permitan las circunstancias [su exilio]” (1). Zavala's second purpose was to didactically and

thoroughly provide what he labeled “lecciones . . . á mis ciudadanos” about the “usos, hábitos y gobierno de los Estado-Unidos, cuyas instituciones han copiado servilmente” (1).<sup>28</sup> This latter purpose revealed that despite this writer’s laudatory comments regarding the host country’s governmental and social models, his interpretations were more nuanced than they appeared at first glance.

Instead, Zavala encouraged his countrymen to selectively adapt those masculine practices of the northern republic that were most applicable and meaningful to local circumstances and home culture. His use of the word “servilmente” underscored his belief that Mexican leaders should forge an original version of federalism, albeit with inspiration from abroad. In essence, Zavala considered blind imitation problematic. This author offered his guiding political philosophy through use of an analogy when he maintained that “Los artistas originales no copian ni imitan á los otros: inventan, crean sobre los modelos de la naturaleza y estudian sus secretos y misterios divinos” (378). This analogy revealed that while many *letrados* actively sought out foreign models in forging their own country’s future trajectories, they did not, as a matter of course, advocate for adopting these systems wholesale.

During the early years of Mexican independence, Zavala dedicated himself to the creation of a liberal state, and the neighboring republic offered a logical source of practical knowledge. If personal visits made sense, Ibero-American leaders were not, in reality, obligated to travel abroad to familiarize themselves with the northern republic’s institutions. Beginning early in the nineteenth century, texts on United States constitutionalism had been translated, printed primarily in New Orleans or Philadelphia, and circulated widely among Latin American

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<sup>28</sup>Similarly, in his *Ensayo histórico de las revoluciones de México desde 1808 hasta 1830*, Zavala proposed to carefully study social practices in order to understand his homeland’s historical trajectory. He intended to produce a portrait of local life or “dar á conocer el carácter, costumbres y diferentes situaciones de aquel pueblo [México]” (9).

*letrados*. The truth was that while some Ibero-American travelers alleged to have composed their narratives as an altruistic service to their own countries, they often had other, more pressing motives to venture north. These motives included exile, commerce, adventure, diplomacy, as a waystation en route to Europe, and more.

In any case, for some *letrados*, this transnational circulation of ideas had the potential to elicit a feeling of a shared ethos of republicanism and Americanism (Zimmermann “Translations,” 386). This mindset, one that expressed a shared-hemispheric identity politics of Americanism, was more common among Latin American leaders during the first half of the nineteenth century, before United States interventions in the region fueled a shift toward anti-Americanism. This early perspective on identity was not unique to Zavala, but shared by José Arnaldo Márquez and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in their travelogues. Evaluating the male residents of a country that he largely categorized as more advanced likely informed Zavala’s highly positive evaluation of this archetype as a useful model for his own countrymen. All in all, for this traveler, masculinity was a concept closely tied to notions of progress and to an idealized national body.

Zavala employed comparison and contrast to generalize and evaluate each of the two country’s national male populations. He aggrandized United States manhood over Mexican normative masculinity and repeated negative stereotypes about his countryman that were familiar in the northern republic’s popular culture. It is safe to say that his narrative offended his intended home readership, a curious rhetorical impulse and one that may partly explain why Zavala’s text has received more scholarly attention on the other side of the border. This is the move we read when Zavala characterized the Mexican man as “perezoso,” “supersticioso,” and “ignorante” as measured against the typical United States male whom he represented as “activo,”

“perseverante” and “laborioso” (2). He admonished the Mexican man, whom he professed spent “hasta lo que no tiene” as opposed to to his northern counterpart who “gasta lo menos que puede” (2). Underlying these allegations was likely the perspective that masculinity was a quality “that certain men have more than other men, either because they were born that way or because of some personal kind of achievement” (Gutmann 3). Despite these unflattering characterizations of his countrymen, Zavala was not completely essentializing in his views. Rather, during a chaotic national period, he entertained the possibility of rehabilitating domestic male citizenry through the intentional acquisition of prosocial male character traits, thus correcting the trajectory of Mexico’s post-independence political crises.

Zavala justified condemnations of his domestic counterparts as constructive criticism and as mere repetition of preexisting stereotypes about individuals of Hispanic origin when he asseverated that “ya otros han dicho eso y mucho mas de nosotros y de nuestros padres los españoles” (2) This remark repeated the trope that the origin of Latin American character defects and any current lack of national progress could be directly attributed to the region’s backward Spanish legacy.<sup>29</sup> In favorably describing the United States male type, Zavala appeared to accept the concept, popular during the period, that cultures coexisted at varying stages of development, and that Spanish America lagged behind the United States on an imaginary timeline of civilized progress. Following this line of thought, advocating for imitating select aspects of the country’s masculine model, then, operated essentially as a “weapon to fight the Hispanic cultural legacy” that Latin American liberals considered to be unsuited to republican national future they envisioned for their countries (Zimmerman “Translations,” 390).

Zavala revealed this mentality when he urged Mexican men to follow the Anglo-

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<sup>29</sup>For many liberal thinkers, including Zavala, “Spain was a retrograde parent whose American children needed to adopt new models in northern Europe and Anglo-America” (Shumway 247).

American example. He exhorted his compatriots to “Dedicaos al trabajo útil: componed vuestros caminos: levantad casas para vivir como racionales” (2). By making a conscious choice to live rationally like their northern neighbors, Zavala envisioned that his countrymen could be uplifted from their current state of stymied development. In line with this perspective, positive masculine character traits could be acquired and cultivated in a national body, even if they were not part of one’s original cultural legacy. In that happy case, Zavala informed his home readers that he would revise his unflattering opinions of domestic manhood when he stated that “entonces seréis dignos . . . de los elogios de los hombres sensatos é imparciales” (2). If this remark displayed partiality to the point of being interpreted as anti-national, it also attributed historical and cultural explanations for perceived differences in national manhoods as opposed to immutable natures.

Manliness in this paradigm, was “first and foremost a *duty*” which “true” men should, rightfully, perform (Bourdieu, *Masculine* 50). Linking manliness to a national duty dovetailed with Zavala’s outspoken efforts to instate a liberal governmental system on home territory. The manly ideal that this public intellectual perceived in a northern republic unfettered by a retrograde legacy, one characterized by industriousness and fiduciary responsibility, coincided closely with Zavala’s political agenda of reforming Mexico. In essence, for this physician, the health of the body politic and the individual male were intimately, perhaps inextricably, codependent.

Zavala, like Thomas Jefferson, privileged the archetype of the Heroic Artisan or the Family Farmer, as the prototypical United States male figure.<sup>30</sup> He romanticized the independent

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<sup>30</sup>Thomas Jefferson has been credited with initiating the image of the yeoman farmer as the ideal United States male figure. Drawing from this ideal, “Jeffersonian democrats argued that the nation’s continued prosperity demanded an agrarian society wherein farmers engaged in this civilizing endeavor” (Peterson 9). Property rights were considered a key aspect for ensuring democratic, individual freedoms. Consequently, “In Latin America . . . liberals had placed their greatest hopes for social harmony and economic progress on the small property holder” (Hale 180).

common man as the foundation of the state. Therefore, this author alleged that “un zapatero, un sastre, [y] un herrero” offered prime examples of this idealized typology abroad, adding that “de éstos hay milares en los Estados Unidos” (81). Zavala depicted the range of male occupations in the northern republic – farmers, merchants, and shepherds and more – as literate individuals who articulated their political viewpoints with calm maturity. He maintained that their informed participation in the political process had created “un gobierno semejante . . . [a] utopía buscada por los escritores políticos” (156-157). The use of the word “utopía” revealed Zavala’s fundamental ideological framework; in this early period of the nineteenth century, he firmly located modernity as originating in the American public sphere in the way that James E. Sanders has explored (*Vanguard* 5-23). This line of thinking left little room for Mexican participation in a utopic future without accompanying radical changes in the male populace.

We can link Zavala’s depictions of northern republican manhood to Jürgen Habermas’ conceptualization regarding the “bourgeois public sphere.” Habermas conceptualized this sphere as “social spaces where individuals gathered to discuss their common public affairs and to organize against arbitrary and oppressive forms of social and political power” (Kellner 264). What is interesting in this case is that Zavala constructed visions of politically engaged citizens located in the New World rather than in the European context that Habermas interrogated. This strategy accomplished the task of reaffirming the notion of the Americas as the future-under-construction. His vision can be further illuminated in the context of Mexican post-independence political instability, a situation that this individual aimed to correct.

Relating the nation’s present with an exemplar from the past, Zavala favorably represented the host country’s male population as embodying Greek and Roman republicanism in comparison to a retrograde Europe constrained by hereditary distinctions. This rhetorical

choice became apparent when he portrayed a scene of classical simplicity to describe President Jackson's visit to Cincinnati. Zavala recounted observing Jackson "rodeado de veinticinco á treinta personas, que por su traje parecian labradores y artesanos, haciéndole la mas sencilla corte del mundo" (75). Looking across the Atlantic, as many well-traveled *letrados* did, this humble scene between a political leader and the common man could be weighed against a European monarch that had little interaction with the general population.

Conversely, many foreign visitors did express criticism of the country's male behaviors. These comments intensified as the century progressed, partly in response to the nation's imperialist actions in the hemisphere that were widely interpreted abroad as indicative of an aggressive male citizenry. One popular censure was the claim that the commonly labeled "Yankee" was highly materialistic and culturally backward, a stereotype that Zavala negated by stressing this type's civilizing efforts. He contended that under the tutelage of enterprising immigrants from the United States, the Texas territory, a neglected backland of the Mexican republic, had been quickly transformed from "lugares enteramente desiertos, bosques y florestas, inhabitados hace doce años, convertidos en villas y pueblos repentinamente por alemanes, irlandeses y norteamericanos" (151). Altogether, the "Yankee" offered an example of an admirable force for national progress.

Zavala's representation of the Texas territory appeared to reference the principle of *terra nullius* or "nobody's land," a legislative means of justifying claims over underutilized land. This was not a surprising perspective given this author's changed national allegiances. Nonetheless, it is significant to note that Zavala had not yet visited the Texas territory, where he owned land and settlement rights, when he recorded these opinions in his travelogue. He likely was informed by newspaper articles or by his United States business partners. This truism reminds readers of the



travel writing genre's constant slippage between fact and fiction in accordance with the rhetor's overriding message and purpose.

In the end, even Zavala was not completely immune from finding fault with the United States male and noting that this industrious type had certain, unmistakable character flaws. He repeated established foreign biases that northern republican men were “esencialmente codiciosos y trabajadores” (165). Based on his trip observations, Zavala added that this type was capable only of conversing about material interests while dining, while other national types appeared to be more well-rounded individuals. In his opinion, the Mexican man spoke of government organization, religion, customs, and theaters, while the Englishman “habla de la calidad de los vinos, de la sazón de las viandas, de la elegancia de la mesa” (165). These descriptions appeared to assign higher levels of sophistication to Mexican and English male types. Yet Zavala ameliorated this indirect criticism by appealing to cultural relativism. He interpreted the domestic man's singular focus on moneymaking and work less a defect of character than a logical part of national culture given that “en ningún país del mundo se trata más constantemente de negocios mercantiles” (164). Still, there were other factors to consider when assessing this hegemonic figure; one important factor was his level of education.

Many foreign observers considered the United States' educational system to be a vital factor in explaining both the country's democracy and its rapid economic growth. Liberal Latin Americans could admire schools that were free, universal, secular, and available to both sexes. Some travelers praised pioneers in the West for founding schools at the same time they founded towns. Education was thought to go hand in hand with informed political participation, and it was widely accepted that universal literacy was an important component of a democratic system. That is, education allowed for social leveling by providing the individual (man) the intellectual

tools to participate effectively in the political process, while withholding education from a citizenry limited the sharing of political power (A. Smith, “Land” 23). We should keep in mind that the inclusion of non-Anglo men across the Americas was nearly absent in political discussions regarding the importance of literacy and suffrage rights.

Drawing on the national binaries he had established in his preface, Zavala provided his readers with an idealized image of United States men as a noble class of literate, hardworking “labradores y artesanos con el arado o el instrumento en la mano y el periódico en la otra” (97). These images linked the material and governmental progress of the northern republic with a corresponding moral progress sustained by an educated, diligent male citizenry. Focusing back on home territory, Zavala deplored the fact that in México and Yucatán, the states with which he was most familiar, “habrá cuando mucho, la proporcion de uno entre veinte . . . que saben leer y escribir” (316). Linking mass literacy to the formation of an active, informed male electorate, Zavala chided Mexican politicians for not valuing and promoting universal education when he labeled them as either “sumamente ignorantes, ó son extremadamente perversos” for not using their influence to uplift domestic citizenry (317).

Extending his pronouncements to Europe, Zavala assessed some regions of England and France as being inferior to the host country with regards to universal public education, a remark that underscored his perspective that the New World was an emerging locus of modernity. This author conceded, however, that in England and France not all men were uneducated; rather, “se encuentran muchas personas que compensan de algun modo la rudeza ó ignorancia de las masas con su instruccion, experiencia y conocimientos generales” (317). In addition to the vital role of universal education in forming the body politic, the issue of race figured into this *letrado*'s formulation of ideal masculinity.

Excluding subaltern racial groups from the definition of ideal citizenry, in particular indigenous peoples who were seen as incapable of full acculturation, was not an uncommon stance for liberal Spanish American leaders during this era (Sanders 173-174). For his part, Zavala noted with dismay that language and cultural barriers had proven to be obstacles to national advancement in Mexico. He maintained that in the state of Yucatán “hay á lo menos un tercio de los habitantes que no hablan el castellano, y en el estado de México un quinto” (317). It is likely from this remark that Zavala did not consider Mexico’s non-Spanish-speaking indigenous peoples capable of informed participation in the political process. This dismissive, but common attitude toward subaltern groups persisted on both sides of the border.

Zavala, like Toqueville, lauded the northern republic as a model political democracy in which all male citizens had voting rights. He included excerpts from state constitutions as evidence, as when he noted that the Kentucky constitution permitted “el derecho de suffragio á todos los ciudadanos varones (á excepcion de la gente de color) que han cumplido veintin años” (72). The reality differed substantially. Restricting male suffrage by class, income level, religion, and, above all, race were ongoing issues in the host country. During the early Republic period the electoral franchise was not universal; until 1856 this right was limited to propertied Anglo-Americans (Quinault 127). Even though reforms of property, tax, and religious voting requirements were enacted in stages from the 1820s to the 1850s, these changes did not include African Americans, at least officially if not in practice, until 1870 (Quinault 127). Some ethnic groups in the country did not receive the voting franchise until much later. Native Americans did not enjoy full citizenship rights until 1924, while Asian Americans became citizens only in 1952. Perhaps this author was not aware that even white male suffrage rights were restricted in the host country, or perhaps that reality impinged on the overriding message of his narrative. In any case,

remembering Rotker's conceptualization of "style" reminds the reader that Zavala's failure to mention or even consider full suffrage rights for subaltern groups was a matter of course for national leaders across the Americas at that time.

When Zavala referenced the host country's educational system or its foundational documents, he linked national practice with creation of an ideal citizenry. He constructed the image of a homogenous, educated male figure that sustained the nation through an admirable work ethic and informed participation in the political process. If this narrative was at times hyperbolic and even somewhat inaccurate is ultimately tangential. Instead, we can garner meaning from a critical examination of Zavala's appropriation of a genre that, on the surface, only deals with trip experiences. This text, in fact, furnished a means for this public intellectual to promulgate his political agenda regarding the utopian future guided by the type of idealized manhood that he wished to effectuate on home ground.

Still, foreigners routinely accused citizens of the younger, more egalitarian republic of lacking in established traditions and refined manners. British author Francis Milton Trollope's scathing 1832 travelogue, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, was one of the first to support the stereotype of the United States population as coarse, vulgar, and lacking in high class breeding. These observations referenced gentility, "a concept that permeated the upper levels of American and European society," and a visible, portable marker of one's personal status that could not be demonstrated entirely by material possessions (Carson 19-20). Given that large items of real property could not be easily transported or displayed, an individual could more readily demonstrate superior social status through refined behavior.

In point of fact and despite critics' allegations, early nineteenth-century United States Americans, particularly those of economic means, did actively seek to display genteel behavior

and observe refined codes of etiquette (Carson 15-20). Nevertheless, some foreign authors, like Trollope, maintained that true gentility could be encountered only in the Old World. The country's social reality that most perturbed Trollope was what she outlined as the familiar interaction of the "grossest and lowest" with the "highest and most refined" (109). She labeled this custom a "positive evil" that led to a "coarse familiarity untempered by any shadow of respect" (109). One should keep in mind that international tourists may have been comparing the host country's masses with upper class Europeans rather than formulating opinions horizontally across class (Carson 62).

For his part, Zavala generally refuted and explained such negative characterizations on the part of foreign visitors. He maintained that the northern republic's typical man was, in actuality, characterized by "la urbanidad de su trato, esto es, comparado con las personas de la misma clase en Francia ó Inglaterra," an affirmation that characterized the European counterpart as less refined (67). When Zavala recognized that men in the host country were "orgullosos y desconfiados" as a whole, he also noted that they were "virtuosos o independientes" (80). Going further, he granted that while this hardworking male type communicated little with strangers ("se abstiene de entrar en comunicación íntima con ninguna persona que no le sea perfectamente conocida"), this behavior had a logical explanation – it was a means of protecting the products of his labor and his family (81). In effect, in Zavala's opinion, those republican male character traits that on the surface appeared as glaring defects had logical explanations combined with underlying benefits.

Unlike Trollope, who originated from a country with a rigid class structure, Zavala viewed the egalitarian nature of social interaction between different classes of men as a positive situation that led to increased national civility. These differing perspectives remind us of the

“two-fold” nature of the genre in the way that Carl Thompson has conceived, as a practice that informs equally about the culture encountered and the author’s home culture. Zavala noted that in the northern republic all social classes of men sat down to dine together. He described a steamboat dining room as the site of “una simplicidad verdaderamente republicana” in which “no se advierten groserías” (67). This description provided proof that contradicted Trollope’s views by affirming that domestic practices had produced universal good manners instead of decreased civility. Indeed, in Zavala’s opinion, the nation’s lower classes strived to improve themselves by imitating the deportment of their social superiors in order to “manifestarse digno de estar en la misma sociedad y mesa con personas ricas y de los primeros rangos” (67). Addressing possible counterarguments, Zavala added that if perhaps the “clases altas pierden alguna parte de su finura por su contacto continuo con este pueblo menos civilizado,” the country as a whole benefitted from social interactions across class divisions that uplifted the mass of male citizens (67). Public behavior alone did not define the civilized man.

As a sartorial sign of national progress, Zavala noted that men in the host country “están bien vestidos y no hay en los Estados-Unidos gente andrajosa” (67). Linking the former colony to its mother country, he emphasized that “la primera impresion que recibe un mexicano . . . al llegar á cualquiera punto de los Estados-Unidos ó de Inglaterra, es el ver á todas las clases del pueblo vestidas,” a comment that appeared to disparage his home country’s state of dress (96). For this traveler, a clean and well-dressed populace revealed more than a country’s visible state; it presented the “estado de civilizacion y de su moralidad” (96). In sum, Zavala’s references to refined manners and appropriate dress can be interpreted as signaling the underlying character of a democratic nation, one in which the visible markers of civilization have been shared across the male social body.

Even Zavala could not deny that United States men did display peculiar habits. Chewing tobacco and spitting in public were rampant domestic practices that foreigners routinely noted and condemned. In an attempt to manage this custom – observable in nearly every public place – spittoons were designed “as a technical implement for controlling this habit in keeping with the advancing standard of delicacy” (Elias 157). Nonetheless, the spittoon as an “implement of civilization” did not appease all visitors who still interpreted this uniquely North American custom as reflecting negatively on the country as a whole. In effect, chewing tobacco and spitting in public were male behaviors that, when raised to the level of nation, “made civility as Europeans understood it impossible” in the northern republic (Kasson, *Rudeness* 58). Trollope apologized to her readers for her own indelicacy in even mentioning the vile subject when she decried that she did not “know any annoyance so deeply repugnant to English feelings as the incessant, remorseless spitting of Americans” (34). One way of excusing these peculiar domestic practices to international visitors was to attribute them to local custom, although Trollope assured her home readers that this explanation was absolutely not the case.

These customs were too widespread to be overlooked. Zavala agreed with Trollope that “la costumbre de los norte-americanos de escupir con frecuencia . . . es defecto repugnante en la buena Sociedad,” though he clarified that this practice was understandable “debido á la costumbre que tienen generalmente de mascar tabaco” (50). He rhetorically asked how Mrs. Trollope would react to witnessing Mexican women (likely a greater affront in females) blow smoke out of their nose and mouth, stain their hands and clothing, and have disagreeable breath from smoking cigarettes, a description that did not favor his own nation (50). With this query, Zavala smoothed over this perceived defect in the host country’s population by pointing to cultural relativism, even to the point of denigrating his compatriots. Eventually spitting tobacco

juice in public fell out-of-favor as an acceptable practice in the country when “etiquette authorities helped turn the face of respectability against tobacco chewing, limiting its scope by the late nineteenth century” (Kasson, *Rudeness* 126).

Instead of focusing on masculine shortcomings abroad, Zavala stressed decorum, unity, and a shared national male identity that rallied around the ideals of democracy. In New York City, he witnessed a massive parade that he reported celebrated the French or July Revolution of 1830.<sup>31</sup> The level of enthusiasm expressed by the male participants astonished Zavala who concluded that “el sentimiento de libertad está profundamente arraigado en aquellas almas independientes, que jamas pueden renunciar a sus simpatías por el progreso” (171). By stressing the importance of individual liberties, he highlighted this concept as a vital aspect of a successful republic. Again referencing the Heroic Artisan, Zavala asserted that 100,000 tailors, cobblers, printers, blacksmiths and other artisans participated in the parade, marching with “el orden, la decencia, el decoro, la circunspeccion,” a collective action that corresponded both to the greatness of the event being celebrated and to “la majestad de la nacion Americana” (172).

Parades, as cultural performances, constructed greater meaning regarding a nation because “the parade was predicated on an open, public political process in which popular forces acted in tandem with constituted authorities” (Ryan, “American” 77). Organizing parades by occupational units was a unique national practice that recognized male professions as vital contributors to the local economy. Widespread participation in these public ceremonies helped forge a common civic identity, one that “celebrated Republican manhood [and] an individual

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<sup>31</sup>Zavala probably viewed the masses of marching craftsmen at the annual New York City Evacuation Day Parade which commemorated the day in 1783 when the British departed from the city after the Revolutionary War. The New York Evening Post reported that on the November 25, 1830: “The Journeymen Tailors led the procession. The Bakers, the Coopers, Tanners and Curriers, Cordwainers, Masons, Chairmakers, House Carpenters, Black and White Smiths, Painers and Glaziers, Stonecutters, Cabinet Makers, Upholsters, Bricklayers and Plasterers, Bookbinders, Saddlers and Harnessmakers, and Carvers and Gilders were in line” (*International Official Journal* 365).



identity exercised through voting, breadwinning, and marching” (Ryan, “American” 84).

Overall, Zavala’s description of a parade stressed a unified male body with a strong commitment to democracy – the physical manifestation of a utopic republic. Nevertheless, even this enthusiastic visitor recognized an undeniable faultline in the host country.

The persistence of the institution of slavery was an issue that was widely condemned internationally. Mexican President Vicente Guerrero had outlawed slavery in 1829. Slavery was a United States reality that Zavala, as an ardent abolitionist, could not condone or justify. In his opinion, the continued practice of slavery revealed a gross inconsistency in an otherwise admirable national model that did not align well with declarations of individual freedoms and universal rights. Crossing the border from Mexico to the United States, Zavala experienced “una agradable memoria por los que han abolido este degradante tráfico y hecho desaparecer entre nosotros los vestigios de tan humillante condición de una especie humana” (37). In terms of slavery, then, Zavala’s home territory was truly the more civilized republic.

There may be those who claim that Zavala, as a founding shareholder in the Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company, only changed national allegiances for economic security and to begin his life anew with his second spouse and new family without reprisals from the Mexican government. While there may be some truth to those claims, Zavala’s impressive record of government service in both countries combined with his outspoken work in pursuit of a republican ideal belie the notion that this was his sole, or even main, purpose. Zavala could have chosen to quietly resettle in the Texas territory without involving himself in politics; still, he chose otherwise.

Overall, Zavala represented the United States male body as a product of an ideal political system, a perspective that can be understood in the context of his exile combined with his

frustration with unsuccessfully realizing a liberal agenda on home ground. His narrative ended with an unusual prediction for cultural admixture in the Texas territory instead of a cry for wholesale assimilation or imitation of foreign practices. In Mexico's northern territories, he declared, Anglo-American settlers had brought with them admirable customs that included "los hábitos de libertad, de economía, de trabajo, sus costumbres austeras y religiosas, su independencia individual, y su republicanismo" (380). He envisioned that over time this northern region of Mexico would "ser amoldada sobre un régimen combinado del sistema americano con las costumbres y tradiciones españolas" (380). Perhaps more significantly, by referring to "esta nueva población" as being "enteramente heterogénea," this *letrado* fashioned a utopic image of a hybrid "New Man" that foreshadowed José Vasconcelos' later, though distinct, concept of "la raza cósmica" (380).

Zavala crafted a largely positive account of the United States male that had much to do with his strongly liberal political agenda and the time period in which he visited the northern neighbor. His flattering depictions of this figure were strongly informed by his desire to uplift his own country's citizenry. All the same, his testimony reveals that even an avid liberal republican like Zavala recognized certain shortcomings in the myth of northern republic exceptionalism. He envisioned a new American man emerging in the Texas territory, one that would fuse the positive masculine character traits of the two national male bodies, a truly unique vision for this historical period. Zavala closed his account with the prescient prediction that "El sistema americano obtendrá una victoria completa aunque sangrienta" in northern Mexico (382). Since Zavala, in the end, aligned himself with Texas' destiny, the singular vision he expressed in his travelogue becomes more understandable.

## Part II: Vicente Pérez Rosales

During his adventurous and peripatetic life, Vicente Pérez Rosales made his living as an herbalist, liquor manufacturer, miner, colonization agent in Germany, journalist, and senator, among other occupations. One of a group of elite youth sent to study abroad at the Colegio Español de París in 1825, and a contemporary of national authors Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, Miguel Luis Amanátegui, and José Victorino Lastarria, Pérez Rosales is best known today for his autobiography, *Recuerdos del pasado 1814-1860*.<sup>32</sup>

His less studied text, *Algo sobre California*, released serially in *Revista de Santiago* in 1850, offered an early Chilean account of the California Gold Rush. Reprinted in the *Revista Chilena* in 1878 as *Viaje a California. Recuerdos de 1848, 1849, 1850*, this second version was incorporated into this author's autobiography, which appeared serially in the Santiago newspaper *La Época* in 1882 and as a book in 1886. The original travel diary included crudely drawn illustrations, humorous poetry, and ribald language that the author excised from printings during his lifetime. Portions of the diary were published in the periodical *Pacífico* in 1915, while *Algo sobre California* plus the complete diary were reprinted together in a 1949 hundred-year critical anniversary edition entitled *Diario de un viaje a California, 1848-1849* (Salas xxv). (I base my readings on this latest edition.)

Valparaíso, as a key intermaritime stopover, had established commercial ties with Pacific ports which facilitated early notice regarding the California gold strike when visiting ships

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<sup>32</sup>Known as the "Liceo Hispanoamericano" and administered by Manuel Silvela Ferrer, the student body came from Spain and Latin America. Its instructors included leading exiled Spanish liberals and authors Leandro Fernández de Moratín and Ángel de Saavedra (Feliu Cruz 18).

brought the news on August 19 and in September of 1848. A November 4 article in the city's *El Mercurio* newspaper immediately prompted mass migration to California. The gold strike also led to the establishment of Chilean commercial houses in San Francisco to furnish foodstuffs and equipment during the early years of the rush before the region managed to increase its agricultural output. Although the government initially attempted to regulate the mass exodus, Chilean officials soon realized the impossibility of controlling the outflux and abandoned any attempt to regulate migrants through passport laws (Rohrbough 59). Forty-one-year-old Pérez Rosales was among the first Chileans to try his luck in California, departing with several relatives, servants, and supplies on the French ship, *Staouéli*, in late December of 1848.

As waves of foreigners poured into California from all parts of the world, competition to secure mining claims intensified. Domestic argonauts resented and persecuted foreigners in the gold fields, particularly if the latter were experienced in mining as was the case for many Mexicans and Chileans. National goldseekers considered foreigners as trespassers on home soil. In the rough and tumble circumstances of mining camps and in the rapidly growing city of San Francisco, foreigners became targets of nativist attacks. The wider public likewise decried what they considered to be an appropriation of (if very recently acquired) domestic territory. Politicians and the print media enjoined the government to take regulatory measures against foreign miners – which it did.<sup>33</sup> For these reasons, Pérez Rosales' party soon left the gold fields where they had achieved little profit but much suffering. Instead, the group returned to San Francisco and engaged in other commercial activities. They redirected their energies to opening a hotel and restaurant in the *Chilecito* neighborhood that had sprung up near Telegraph Hill. The

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<sup>33</sup>One way that foreign miners were persecuted was legislatively. The Foreign Miner's Tax of 1850 required payment of a monthly licensing fee by non-nationals as a prerequisite to engage in mining. Although the law stated that it was intended to generate state revenue and monitor foreign miners, the net (and intended) effect was to expel non-nationals from the gold fields (Kanazawa 784).

business burned in one of the city's frequent fires, and this event prompted the party's return home without riches.<sup>34</sup>

Pérez Rosales' diary covered the period from December 28, 1848 to March 16, 1849 when it ended abruptly in mid-sentence. Ostensibly private life documents, diaries involve some degree of curation; specifically, "in penning an entry, the diarist half-consciously places a grid over the experience of a day, privileging certain kinds of material" (86). Irrespective of the diary format, the narrative point of view varied throughout this text. At times, Pérez Rosales' account conformed to travel writing and diary generic practices by presenting the protagonist and the narrator as identical individuals. In one instance, however, the narrator addressed an unidentified female interlocutor, possibly the author's mother, by stating that "Todos la tienen a Vd. presente" (25). Other times, the point of view switched to the third person singular and referenced the protagonist as the "el decano," a move that added an element of self-deprecating humor. The additional use of "we" referred to a collective point of view and established an "us" versus "them" dichotomy that highlighted the party's negative experiences abroad. In sum, these varied narratorial strategies have revealed that this diary was intended to be less a confidential record of daily events than a deliberate artifact for future publication (Fothergill 90).<sup>35</sup>

A comical voice prevailed throughout this narrative, though criticism lay beneath the humor of the short text. This strategy was revealed when Pérez Rosales began his account with: "Sería un disparate el decir: de esta agua no beberé" to explain his impulsive decision to seek gold in California (1). His declaration opened a tale more akin to a picaresque misadventure

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<sup>34</sup>The Hounds, a nativist gang in San Francisco, targeted foreigners and particularly Chileans when committing their crimes, which included burning *Chilecito*. Richard Stott has linked this group culturally and materially to gangs in the Bowery neighborhood of New York City (146-150).

<sup>35</sup>The Latin word *diarium*, clarifies Barbara Willard, "meant simply a soldier's daily allowance" (9). In a later period, diaries referred to ship logs.

rather than a heroic odyssey. Despite this tone, Pérez Rosales conformed to established generic literary conventions when he depicted himself as an accurate and reliable eyewitness. He claimed to have faithfully recorded events immediately after they occurred, even in adverse conditions. In one instance, after a week-long “ridículo y endiablado” boat ride through the Sacramento Delta, this author alleged to have taken detailed trip notes “sirviendome de mesa un tronco de pino derribado” in order that “tengo presente los incidentes de el” (54). Aside from the humor, this text engaged with the themes of civilization, national identity, and ideal manhood by positioning Chilean men as intrinsically superior to the type of domestic manhood that existed on the United States western frontier.

Although this account did not take place in a European colonial setting, Pratt’s concept of the “contact zone” still provides a useful lens for analysis. Pratt outlined the contact zone as “the space of imperial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated came into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations” (*Imperial* 8). This description equally applies to the California Gold Rush environment given the international makeup of argonauts. News of the gold strike spread quickly, prompting a domestic and a worldwide migration to this outlying region that only a few months earlier had been part of Mexico. During 1849 alone, the number of migrants included 80,000 North Americans, 8,000 Mexicans, 5,000 South Americans and several thousand Europeans (Pitt 52). Unequal power relations characterize the contact zone, what Pratt described as “conditions of coercion, racial inequality, and intractable conflict” (*Imperial* 8). This definition aptly describes the xenophobic reactions directed at foreigners during this tumultuous and essentially lawless period in California history. In response, through his comparison and contrast of national male types, Pérez Rosales challenged prevailing United States biases toward Latin Americans and Chileans

in particular. Reversing these stereotypes, he instead represented the former as discourteous and brutal counterparts to civilized Chilean men, a reframing of racialized notions of masculinity that validated the geocultural capital of his homeland.

The context of the California Gold Rush had much to do with this traveler's overwhelming negative experience. United States argonauts, on the whole inexperienced miners (unlike many of their Iberoamerican counterparts), had arrived in the territory under the illusion that it would be easy to uncover riches. For the majority, this was not the case. What the region certainly offered the almost entirely male population was an unregulated environment conducive to intemperate behavior. If a miner proved unsuccessful in finding gold he could, at the very least, enjoy the opportunity to perform unrestrained gender role identities without social reprisals. Such alternative male gender identities were no longer sanctioned for the Anglo-American middle and upper class man in more established regions of a country that had been experiencing a moral revolution as part of the Second Great Awakening religious revival movement.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, the alternative subcultures of domestic male types located in the "Wild West" included miners, cowboys, trappers, and loggers.

To be sure, the California Gold Rush initiated what became the accepted domestic trope that the American West was "beyond respectability, a place where eastern rules (that is, women's rules) no longer applied, and men had an opportunity to drink and gamble without restraint" (Stott 4). Freed from the moral influences of women, church, temperance reformers, and law enforcement, and living in settlements with names like Whiskey Creek, "there was an atavistic quality to white American male life in California – the routine drinking, the gambling, the

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<sup>36</sup> The second wave of religious revivals occurred in different parts of the country between 1800 and 1858 (Hankins 4). Hankins clarifies that "reforms such as temperance, anti-dueling, and Sabbath observation were all given a major boost, and in some cases actually initiated, by the New England phase of the Second Great Awakening" (16).

practical jokes, and the fighting resembled pretemperance, premoral reform America” (Stott 139). If *civitas* implies individual self-control to participate rationally and responsibly in the nation, this text identified domestic males in California as unwilling to perform this vital task.<sup>37</sup>

Pérez Rosales’ diary-form travelogue engaged in more than self-representation; instead, social and racial issues impinged on its otherwise autobiographical focus. This was the case when he routinely criticized United States male behavior as degenerate rather than civilized, in part due to excessive alcohol consumption. In fact, this author represented all domestic men in California, including those in official capacities, as inebriates. Pérez Rosales alleged that a newcomer could easily locate the trail to the mining camps since “todo el camino está sembrado de botellas. quien quiera seguir a un yankee no tiene más que seguir el rastro de las botellas de coñac” (48). His accompanying comical illustration of a typical national miner depicted a bearded individual carrying whiskey bottles in his hands, inside his boots, and tied in a row to his long rifle. These images left no doubt that the United States argonaut arrived in the mining camps poorly prepared for the hard labor involved in prospecting, thus exhibiting a less-than-admirable masculinity.

Immoderate use of alcohol and rowdy behavior were important issues of social concern across the host country during this period. Mid-nineteenth-century men were “caught in the transition between an age where male revelry was customary and an age in which manly respectability was the standard” (Stott 93). Even though daily use of alcohol had customarily been part of national life, religious revivals combined with the temperance movement – largely fueled by women – brought about a change in social attitudes. In more traditional regions of the

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<sup>37</sup>Scholar Andrew L. Yarrow has examined two early national social constructs performed primarily in the past by men: *civitas*, “the idea of common purpose, responsibility, and community mindedness” and *humanitas*, the “active participation in society and political life” (201). Yarrow concludes that today more women than men are actively engaged in the community.



nation, the Self-Made Man's "aggressive impulses, which no longer could be physically externalized by respectable men, could honorably be channeled into getting ahead in business" (Stott 91). While the East Coast legislated new laws to control aggressive male behavior, drinking alcohol in excess, fighting, and playing pranks persisted in the unregulated California context.

The West (a region that was not fixed, but had expanded throughout the century) offered an outlet for a range of male behaviors that had become less tolerated elsewhere. These were the type of behaviors that Pérez Rosales highlighted as when he declared that "A esta gente le gusta tirar mucho en blanco y no miran siquiera los males que puede ocasionar su torpeza" (41). The use of the word "torpeza" signaled both a lack of tact and a lack of intelligence. Likewise, "esta gente" revealed a disparaging tone and distanced the narrator from a less civilized referent. He furthermore recounted that the United States miner's equipment consisted of "rifle, pistolas de seis tiros, puñal, navaja, polvorines, carmañolas, botas granaderas y muchas botellas de brandy" (41). In all, the domestic miner appeared better prepared for gunfights and carousing than prospecting for gold.

Conversely, the Chilean emerged as a sober, pragmatic, cultured individual who carefully prepared for prospecting, an enterprise that Pérez Rosales had participated in before his journey north. The Chilean miner's supplies consisted of "harina, charqui, frejoles, palas, barretas, bateas de lavar, puñal, culero y poruña [que] distinuguen al aventurero sudamericano" (40). Extending his comparative observations to alimentary habits, Pérez Rosales recounted that "el Yankee come tres veces al dia y siempre lo mismo . . . algun mal guiso," an observation that implied more refined food choices on the part of Chileans (22). These pronouncements revealed that if the national male had degenerated in the Gold Rush environment, this outcome was not true for

the Chilean. In sum, Pérez Rosales' interpretation of the United States male pointed to a normative masculinity lacking in the bodily self-control implicit in the concept of *civitas*; this characterization, by inference, highlighted the superior state of Chilean manhood.

Another marker of civilization was a country's legal system, which was widely accepted as a key component of a modern nation. As we have seen with Zavala, some *letrados* studied the northern republic's foundational documents, such as the Constitution, as possible guides for their own country's path. Other visitors also attempted to discern if the law in practice aligned with the principles stated in these documents. For his part, Pérez Rosales held that an impartial legal system was virtually absent in California. Upon arrival in San Francisco Bay, the *Staouéli* ship captain declared to his passengers that "habiamos llegado al pais de la igualdad," yet this declaration proved far from true for foreigners (16). Instead, Pérez Rosales recounted that the San Francisco court system "sólo sirve si es entre dos yankees" because the court invariably ruled against the foreigner (32). He recorded that gross mistreatment of non-nationals by United States citizens had no legal repercussions, and that Chileans in particular were "el blanco de su odio y sus brutales violencias" (80). This writer reported with indignation that the Chilean in California was treated as "un paria, y era los ojos de la generalidad de los yankees lo que el judío en los siglos medios para un templario" (80). Trying to make sense of the situation, he mused that "O el norteamericano ha cambiado de ser en California, o es mentida la acogida fraternal que dispensa al extranjero en el Atlántico" (80). In other words, either the United States male had deteriorated in the essentially savage environment or he had misrepresented his true character elsewhere.

There was some explanation for the fact that Chileans received an extra portion of nativist aggression. The Chilean miner was regarded as an interloper by domestic argonauts; they

resented the mining experience of all Latin Americans whom they lumped together as a group without national distinction. The Chilean system of mining was typically organized via a profit sharing contract drawn up between the *patrón* and his workers. However, national gold seekers considered that this type of labor contract as a form of slavery and an unfair labor advantage.<sup>38</sup> These issues, combined with ongoing racist ideology in the wake of the Mexican American War, led to extralegal and legislative measures aimed to exclude foreigners from mining. Ultimately, the Foreign Miners' Tax of 1850 accomplished the task of banning non-national argonauts. This law included *Californios* who were equally disenfranchised despite the guarantees of citizenship rights and respect for personal property delineated in Articles VIII and IX of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Rawls 86).<sup>39</sup> If we examine the California Gold Rush in light of Pratt's theorization, we can read this difference in power relations inherent in the concept as it played out in the contact zone of California where national origin was preeminent in determining received treatment.

In addition to an impartial legal system, the ability to astutely engage in commerce and industry can be thought of as another marker of the civilized man. Pérez Rosales identified Chileans as seasoned merchants when he recalled that, on arriving in San Francisco Bay, his party wisely refrained from selling their personal items and supplies at lower prices before disembarking. The party generated more profits from selling their goods on land by merely opening up their trunks and displaying their wares, which this traveler explained as “los chilenos

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<sup>38</sup>One issue that provoked strong nativist reaction was the Chilean contract labor system of *peonaje*. The majority of Chileans heading for the gold fields, including Pérez Rosales, brought contract laborers with them. The contracts were designed to ensure the workers' compliance, and included provisions for fines as well as plans for profit division in lieu of wages (Sisson 271-279). In a related issue, California's entry into the Union as a free state had a close relation to domestic miners' opposition to slave labor crews in the gold fields.

<sup>39</sup>The treaty enumerated guarantees that included *Californios* retaining their property rights. *Californios* could also choose to become United States citizens with full rights or they would become citizens automatically within one year if they did not declare their intention to retain Mexican citizenship (Griswold de Castillo 189-190).

no son tampoco del todo zonzos ni están acostumbrados a tratos a lo yankee” (18). His use of the words “zonzos” and “tratos a lo yankee” painted a picture of the domestic male as a scheming individual quick to take advantage of others, particularly newcomers, for a quick profit.

Contesting popular prejudices against Chileans in California, Pérez Rosales underscored that his countrymen, in reality, actively contributed to the region’s economic growth by building houses, digging wells, making shoes, baking bread, and importing trade goods. Along these lines, he affirmed that “el primer movimiento industrial en San Francisco [que] se debe exclusivamente a los hijos de Chile” (80). These assertions underscored racialized masculine national identities that constructed the Chilean man as a true civilizer in California in the face of a degenerate United States male. Despite this reality, Chileans were treated unjustly in the state irrespective of their vital contributions toward progress.

The European-educated Pérez Rosales likely conceived of himself as equal or even superior to a domestic male population that largely misevaluated and mistreated him. He attempted to represent himself as French rather than a Chilean – perhaps with the aim of avoiding discrimination – to no avail. Pérez Rosales appeared to have resented being categorized broadly with subaltern groups, such as *Californios*, who were widely considered by Anglo-Americans as backward and indolent. Perhaps in response, this author did recognize any United States men in California as worthy of belonging to the category of a gentleman. Upon arrival in San Francisco Bay, Pérez Rosales recognized acquaintances in the crowd that included the “dandy de Valparaíso” and “el fashionable de Santiago” (17). Although these Chileans now had “manos callosas” from their time in California, one could infer that this was not the norm on home territory (17). In essence, this text connected autobiography, national identity, and its implied home readership in “the way autobiographers imagine their national community depends

on the anticipated audience” (Hunsaker 41). Given that this account was published serially in leading Chilean newspapers, the text can be seen as performing the work of affirming a positive archetype of home masculine identity in the face of northern biases.

On the other hand, Pérez Rosales’ representation of United States manhood in his travel diary was not as essentializing when read alongside its companion text, *Algo sobre California*. Here, he contextualized masculine constructs as situational rather than inherent. That is, hegemonic masculinities were “configurations of practice generated in particular situations” (Connell 72). We read this perspective when, displaying a lack of Latin American solidarity, this author upheld racialized stereotypes regarding Anglo-Saxon superiority by representing *Californios* as culturally backward. He recorded after the Mexican American War “la mano de los yankees . . . por donde quiera que pase y cualquiera que sea su actitud, deja rastros de mejoras y de industria hasta ahora desconocidas,” while the provisional state capital in Monterrey had improved “bajo el hacha industriosa del yankee” (64-65). These conclusions were likely garnered from his readings rather than from first-hand observation, but the intention of these claims was clear. This writer confronted xenophobic sentiments in California by offering an alternative construct to the hegemony of United States popular tropes regarding Chileans. He implied that the United States and the Chilean man were homologous civilizing forces in the region as opposed to the *Californio* who was widely stereotyped as having done nothing to improve this outlying northern Mexican territory during his tenure.

Indeed, in *Algo sobre California*, Pérez Rosales recognized positive attributes in domestic men. He noted their drive to efficiently generate profits when he marvelled at “el espíritu mercantil e industrioso del yankee y tal el valor que sabe dar el tiempo” (64). Furthermore, he described this male type as an industrious and visionary individual that “nunca

mira a sus pies cuando camina; fija la vista y la imaginación en el objeto de sus deseos, marcha a él en línea recta, y atropella cuanto se le opone en su tránsito” (72). This portrait of “go ahead Yankee” was not unusual on the part of foreign observers. The author’s opposing images of the same figure across two narratives appeared to imply that this otherwise admirable domestic male type had degenerated in the chaotic context of the California Gold Rush. Pérez Rosales’ varied portrayals of domestic men remind us that cultural comparisons do not always express themselves neatly, but are riddled with ambivalences and contradictions.

This diary of the California Gold Rush, while on the surface an autobiographical memoir, added to transnational debates and cross-cultural imaginaries regarding ideal manhood. The prototypical male set the tone for the nation, and this type’s attributes became racialized in this account. Domestic men in the Gold Rush were clearly lacking in the essential prosocial character traits that defined the ideal citizen. Conversely, the Chilean man emerged as a strong edifying force who had been unjustly characterized and mistreated while abroad. In other regions of the country, nonetheless, the Self-Made Man explained the remarkable growth of the nation. However, when transplanted to the unrestrained all-male environment of the California Gold Rush, this otherwise admirable man became undone. Pérez Rosales knew our next individual, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, whose narrative commended the United States man as a symbol of a modern nation – with a few reservations.<sup>40</sup>

### **Part III. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento**

Educator, journalist, ambassador, political agitator, and seventh President of his country,

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<sup>40</sup>Pérez Rosales expressed an unflattering opinion of Sarmiento whom he felt had slighted Chilean intellectuals during his exile in that country. In his autobiography, Pérez Rosales recalled that, “cuando [Sarmiento] vino por primera vez a Chile, tenía mas talento que instruccion, i ménos prudencia que talento” (*Recuerdos* 183).

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento was living in exile in Chile when he was granted his long-time wish to journey abroad sponsored by his friend, minister Manuel Montt. Sarmiento belonged to the Argentine *generación del treintaisiete*, a group of liberal leaders that included Esteban Echeverría and Juan Bautista Alberdi, who actively resisted the authoritarian regime of Juan Manuel de Rosas. His commission, to study European public school systems for the Chilean government, also diplomatically distanced this outspoken individual from the Southern Cone. Sarmiento's nearly two-year stay to Europe, with a short trip to northern Africa, concluded with a spontaneous six-week visit to the United States. This last portion of the itinerary was Sarmiento's brainchild. In England, he had read about and had determined to meet renowned United States educator Horace Mann.<sup>41</sup> Santiago Arcos, his friend and benefactor for this last portion of the sojourn, accompanied Sarmiento on a whirlwind tour of twenty-one states that was intended to provide this author with a broad acquaintance and understanding of the host country.

Disillusioned with European society, Sarmiento arrived in North America with the mindset of finding better answers in the purported model republic.<sup>42</sup> His was not an uncommon belief for the period; by mid-nineteenth-century, the concept of a modern future came to be strongly and widely associated with the United States (Körner 1). Apart from his official report, this littérateur penned the first published Argentine travelogue about the United States, *Viajes*

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<sup>41</sup>Mary Tyler Peabody Mann, Horace Mann's wife, was instrumental to Sarmiento's visit with her husband in Newton, Massachusetts. Since Sarmiento spoke limited English, she acted as an interpreter from French. Years later, Mary Mann introduced Sarmiento to leading United States intellectuals as well as helped him select female schoolteachers to send to Argentina. She also translated, edited, wrote a lengthy preface, and modified the title for the first English language version of *Facundo ò civilización i barbarie en las pampas argentinas*. In 1868, *Life in the Argentine Republic in the Days of the Tyrants, or Civilization or Barbarism* was published in New York. For his part, Sarmiento translated her work, *The Life of Horace Mann*, for a Hispanic audience (Garrels lxii-lxiv).

<sup>42</sup>Sarmiento saw the past in Europe, a past that included monarchies that could not guide the republican vision he desired for his country. Although his visit predeceased the unsuccessful European revolutions of 1848, Sarmiento expressed his disillusionment with the Old Continent throughout this account, as when he declared that "Francia tiene un rei, cuatrocientos mil soldados, fortificaciones que costado dos mil millones de francos, i un pueblo que se muere de hambre" (314).

*por Europa, Africa, i América, 1845-1847*. This text was first released as a book in Santiago by Julio Belín's press followed by serial publication in several Chilean and Uruguayan newspapers. Written in an epistolary format and dedicated to his friend and fellow liberal, Valentín Alsina, the first section of this two-volume publication resembled social science essays. The second, shorter portion, entitled "incidentes de viaje," recorded Sarmiento's travel impressions.<sup>43</sup> An appendix, *Diario de Gastos*, perhaps a nod to Benjamin Franklin who famously dispensed advice on managing money, provided a detailed account of the author's travel expenses.

Reflecting on the genre of travel writing in his preface, Sarmiento lamented that "el viaje escrito . . . es material mui manoseada ya" (3). Not only was travel writing a hackneyed practice, but the positionality of an author influenced one's ability to produce accurate and meaningful insights. Following this logic, Sarmiento avowed that a sightseer from "las sociedades ménos adelantados" was disadvantaged by his "incapacidad de observar," a situation that led him to conclude that it would be better if "el libro lo hacen para nosotros los europeos" (4). This viewpoint represented the Argentine traveler as less culturally equipped to thoughtfully evaluate other societies and create worthwhile accounts as opposed to more illustrious European counterparts, such as François-René de Chateaubriand, whom Sarmiento had read. As we have seen in Zavala's text, this claim appeared to locate Sarmiento and his countrymen at a less advanced stage on an imagined timeline of civilized progress, though such gestures of modesty did not preclude his expression of strong opinions.

Given that his spoken English language skills were limited, Sarmiento compensated by quoting liberally from at times uncited or inaccurately cited printed sources. His text also

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<sup>43</sup>None of the original letters or corrected galleys of this text have been located in archives or private collections (Fernández xviii-xx). The exceptional length of the entries and the lack of archival evidence leads one to the question if these letters existed; perhaps this format was merely a technique adopted by Sarmiento to express himself freely within the epistolary genre.



included lengthy statistics to bolster the credibility of the authorial voice. As a generic practice, “statistical landscapes” had the purpose of validating the truth value of a narration and invoking a Romantic “greatness by way of numbers” (Mulvey 244). In effect, with its detailed study of key aspects of the United States, this account resembled Tocqueville’s work, though with a less discerning tone.<sup>44</sup>

Overall, *Viajes por Europa, Africa, i América, 1845-1847* was informed by an overriding message and purpose – that of evaluating outstanding elements of foreign societies for implementation on home territory. This top-down mission of nationbuilding was not unique to Sarmiento. As a matter of course, this task was “la tarea explicita de . . . la autodenominada ‘nueva generación’” of Argentine *letrados*, and one that could envision national construction as contributing to the greater task of the evolution of humanity as a whole (Villavicencio 180-184). In his prologue, Sarmiento declared that “vamos en América en mal camino,” an observation that seemed to categorize Latin America as a peripheral region according to the prevailing “myth of modernity” (6).

Because he had arrived after a lengthy stay in Europe, Sarmiento was well positioned to draw comparisons between the Old Continent, Argentina, and the United States. His account largely favored the latter. This perspective was evidenced when, after describing the colossal dimensions of a steamboat, he questioned “si Europa está a la cabeza de la civilizacion del mundo” given the grandeur of northern republican innovations (302). Some scholars have taken issue with Sarmiento’s full-blown admiration and hyperbolic descriptions of the United States, though a few have noted his criticisms.<sup>45</sup> A closer inspection reveals a more complex portrait

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<sup>44</sup>Sarmiento referenced *Democracy in America* in his 1845 novel, *Facundo ò civilización i barbarie en las pampas argentinas*, when he stated that “Tocqueville nos revela, por la primera vez, el secreto de Norteamérica” (111).

<sup>45</sup>For a thorough discussion of the scholarly reception of Sarmiento’s literary production, see Alonso, Chapter 2. Körner points out that Sarmiento’s viewpoints were, in fact, unusual among Argentine *letrados* (11).

than is commonly accepted, and one that can be detected through his depiction of the domestic man as a set type.

Sarmiento offered a metonymy of the individual man as an accurate representation of national manhood when he proclaimed that “en los Estados-Unidos, todos los hombres son a la vista un solo hombre, el norte-americano” (339). This was a puzzling characterization given that the United States was an increasingly diverse immigrant nation during this period. On the other hand, making sweeping generalizations about foreign societies based on limited experiences typifies the genre of travel writing. With an observation that belied his later immigration policies, Sarmiento formulated that in the host country, rather than uplifting the population, “la inmigracion europea es elemento de barbarie” (342). Nevertheless, referencing the overarching national dichotomy he had established in his 1845 novel, *Facundo ò civilizacion i barbarie en las pampas argentinas*, Sarmiento clarified that the two sources of “barbarism” in the northern republic – European immigrants and isolated pioneers – were eventually assimilated into the country’s civilization, by the descendants of Puritans and Pilgrims. He accordingly declared that “estos emigrantes del norte disciplinan las poblaciones nuevas,” an act that incorporated these ostensibly barbarious elements and provided “homogeneidad al todo” through their “instrumentos de pulimiento i purificacion nacional” (347). His use of the words “disciplinan,” “pulimiento,” and “purificacion” were not random, but a logical outgrowth of nineteenth-century pseudoscience’s racialized thinking combined with Latin American positivism.<sup>46</sup> On home ground, in fact, European immigration was the cornerstone of Sarmiento’s presidential policies to “purify” Argentina through eliminating indigenous groups and racially homogenizing the

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<sup>46</sup>Nineteenth-century positivism was most influential in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Chile. In alignment with this ideology, Sarmiento upheld that independence was not sufficient for progress; rather, “only by introduction of the proper geographic and ethnic influences could real social progress occur in Latin America” (Gilson 14).

nation.<sup>47</sup>

If Sarmiento viewed Argentina as chaotic and violent under the Rosas regime, he aimed to eventually correct this situation. Mid-nineteenth-century liberal ideology conceptualized national progress as an evolutionary concept, and this guiding principle implied assimilation (Hobsbawm 39). In addition, “the utopian injects images of a total and rational social order, of uniformity instead of diversity, of impersonal, neutrally functioning bureaucracy and of the comprehensive, the total state” (Davis 9). Imagining a homogeneous social body was common in utopian thinking since uniformity was thought to promote social unity. As a consequence, utopian blueprints often entailed conformity and state control over the individual will (Jendrysik 30). We can conclude from Sarmiento’s comments regarding racial assimilation, his later executive policies intended to whiten Argentina, and the discourse of utopianism, that his concept of an idealized male figure was, like the United States man that he celebrated, of European origin. What other attributes distinguished this monolithic masculine type?

The northern republican man emerged in this account as a national type whose personal qualities included frugality, industriousness, practicality, commercial acumen, and inventiveness – traits that coincided with the trope of the Self-Made Man. Like Zavala, Sarmiento credited universal schooling as the primary institution that formed the Self-Made Man, a logical claim given that improving education has long been accepted as a key intervention for uplifting a society (Tyack 1). He therefore observed a literate nation by maintaining that in the host country

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<sup>47</sup>Susana Rotker has argued that “Argentina is the only country in Latin America that has determinedly and successfully erased the mestizo, Indian, and black minorities from its history and reality” (*Captive* 20). Euphemisms described government policies for eradicating indigenous groups. The twenty-year Chilean program, which ended in 1883, was called the “Pacification of Arucania,” while Argentina titled its 1878-1885 campaign the “Conquest of the Desert.” After his adventures in California, Vicente Pérez Rosales similarly played a key role in encouraging European immigration to Chile’s southern region. Paradoxically, literary works, including Sarmiento’s *Facundo o civilización i barbarie en las pampas argentinas*, nostalgically celebrated elements of the indigenous culture that was being systematically destroyed.

even “el obrero, el maquinista son hombres educados” (389).

In addition to education, Sarmiento concluded that republican freedoms enabled men to actively participate in the public sphere from an early age, a situation that influenced their character development. In essence, a man was the product of his environment. Comparing the Old to the New World, he claimed that “el niño yankee espanta al europeo por su desenvoltura, su prudencia cautelosa, su conocimiento de la vida a los diez años” (318). In sum, European rigid social hierarchies constrained the individual man’s opportunities as well as his character development.

Character traits alone did not mark the northern republican man; everyday practices, such as typical dress, offered another measure of this figure. Like Zavala, Sarmiento read outward appearance as a semiotic marker of civilized manhood. Again underscoring cultural distinctions transatlantically, Sarmiento characterized the United States man as the metonymy of an advanced nation. He reported that the host country’s citizens “en masa visten fraque i los otros vestidos complementarios, aseados i de buena calidad,” while the majority of French men dressed in loose nankeen blouses, an image that did not denote a modern appearance. (313).<sup>48</sup> In a century obsessed with hygiene, the word “aseados” could also be interpreted as signaling a superior national morality. Sarmiento additionally noted that men in the United States universally carried watches, while in France “no lo usa un décimo de la nacion” (313). The widespread availability and adoption of modern male apparel in the host country pointed to democratic social leveling in contrast to an aristocratic Europe that restricted dress according to rank. If one accepts the premise that “accepted and legitimate clothing” truly “induces the

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<sup>48</sup>These suits were likely black. The widespread adoption of somber colors in nineteenth-century menswear had an ideological underpinning. This color palette “reaffirmed the concepts of modesty, effort, propriety, reserve, and ‘self-control,’ which were the basis of bourgeois ‘respectability’” for the business or professional man (Perrot 32).

individual to . . . share the groups' norms and values, properly occupy his or her position, and correctly act his or her role," well-dressed United States men were outwardly prepared for participating in a modern nation, modeling a utopian future through their sartorial choices (Perrot 13).

Such effusive testimony could lead a reader to believe that Sarmiento firmly predetermined to produce a panegyric about the alleged model republic. A closer reading, nevertheless, reveals ambiguities and faultlines in his narrative. When he lauded United States male attire, he simultaneously expressed boredom with this "decencia uniforme" that "cansa al fin la vista por su monótona uniformidad" (305). In a rare instance of praise for Europe, he recognized that regional dress in the Old Continent at the very least "entretiene al viajero" (305). In another ambiguous stance, although Sarmiento evaluated the host country's government to be "irreprochable," he admitted that "los individuos que lo [el gobierno] forman adolescen de vicios repugnantes" (337). This author attributed the origin of these moral defects – greed and corruption – to the same liberties he otherwise celebrated.

Sarmiento likewise addressed the contested area of national male comportment. Clearly, dressing well by itself could not fully define an individual's level of breeding. Proper attention to refined behavioral codes, particularly in quickly changing urban environments, provided one way of discerning a stranger's true background. A consideration of Norbert Elias' foundational study of manners can assist us in considering this debated issue. Elias theorized that human behavior became compartmentalized over time into public versus private conduct, and the individual has been increasingly socialized to employ self-control over his public behavior (160). Applying Elias' theorization to this context, then, bodily and verbal self-control in public offered an easily observable marker of a cultivated man.

Many foreign visitors to the country maintained that decorum, consideration for others, and refined manners were clearly lacking in the male body of the democratic republic. In his 1842 travelogue, *American Notes for General Circulation*, British author Charles Dickens parodied United States men at the dinner table whom he claimed “thrust the broad-bladed knives and the two-pronged forks further down their throats than I ever saw . . . except in the hands of a skillful juggler” (723). Sarmiento participated in similar depictions. During his stay at the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans, this writer observed quotidian masculine behavior in the public rooms and generalized what he witnessed in this microcosm to the level of national culture. Sarmiento emphasized shared character traits in the national male body when he observed that “todos los hombres son iguales al último individuo de la sociedad” (310). Gentile behavior was amiss when Sarmiento added that “el norte-americano tiene destinados dos minutos para almorzar, cinco para comer, diez para fumar o mascar tabaco, I todos los momentos desocupados para echar una ojeada sobre el diario que V. está leyendo (311). We should keep in mind that this traveler’s account recorded few conversations; Sarmiento based his conclusions largely on visual observations or from printed sources due to his limited English speaking skills.

As was the case for Dickens, the domestic man’s eating habits conveyed greater significance for Sarmiento than bodily nourishment alone. The hotel dining room offered him ample evidence for formulating deducements about this national type as measured against Argentine and European referents. Sarmiento recounted with surprise that a man from the Far West started his meal with “salsa de tomates frescos, tomada en cantidad enorme, sola i con la punta del cuchillo!” (311)<sup>49</sup> This manner of eating was not an innacuate observation. During

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<sup>49</sup>Over time, with the industrial manufacture of curved forks with more than two tines, eating from the knife tip came to be seen as rustic. The practice was eventually disavowed in domestic etiquette books (Kasson, *Rudeness* 191-192).

this period, dinner knives in the United States had a curved tip to enable eating from the end, a practice that European visitors deplored as a sign of cultural barbarism (S. Williams 40). In response to another alimentary faux pas, Sarmiento and his traveling companion, Arcos, were positively “helados de horror” to witness that “el yankee *pur sang* se sirve en un mismo plato . . . todas las viandas,” including unseemly food combinations such as “patas dulces con vinagre” (311).<sup>50</sup> This male dining comportment filled Sarmiento with “gastronómica indignacion al ver estas obominaciones” and led him to exclaim that “los pecados de Sodoma i Gomorra debieron ser menos que los que cometen a cada paso estos puritanos!” (311).

Still, Elias has theorized that norms of polite behavior should be rightly examined in their sociohistorical context. The adoption of what Elias labeled “implements of civilization,” such as the three-prong fork, took time to be adopted in the United States where the two-pronged fork had been the traditional eating implement of choice. Moreover, unlike the practice in Europe and in alignment with the “American sensibility of being a republic,” the accepted standard for 1840s cooking was simplicity of food preparation and service (W. Schollander and W. Schollander 7). Sarmiento likely took his social cues from France, where eating solely from a fork and serving a meal ceremoniously as individual courses signaled proper refinement (W. Schollander and W. Schollander 197). By expressing his shock at northern republican male alimentary practices, Sarmiento privileged a European cultural code, revealing discrepancies in his text’s primary message.

Sarmiento continued to note other examples of unrefined male behavior in the hotel public rooms. He represented the male guests as having uncouth habits and a childlike lack of sophistication. In the gentleman’s parlor, Sarmiento reported that domestic men placed their

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<sup>50</sup>Mixing food on a plate was not only seen as unrefined, but as unhealthy for the digestive system according to some medical experts of the period (W. Schollander and W. Schollander 197).

shoes on the furniture and took cigars out of each other's mouths to light their own. He claimed that one could not read the newspaper without "cuatro o cinco moscones [que] se le apoyarán pesadamente en los hombros para leer el mismo trozo de letra menudísima que está Ud. Leyendo" (311). This visitor further observed that fancy jacket buttons attracted the attention of these men who, like children, "vendrán a recorrelos uno a uno, haciendo jirar la persona de Ud. de derecha a izquierda, de izquierda a derecha," attracted by this "museo ambulante" (311). What's more, Sarmiento claimed, for the Yankee a full beard "indica que es Ud. frances o polaco," in which case a circle of curious domestic men "lo contemplan [a uno] con curiosidad infantil, llamando a sus amigos o conocidos" to view "su novedosa curiosidad" (311). These affirmations suggested that this national male type might have been astute in business, but had little sophistication or worldly knowledge. As a result, these descriptions indirectly elevated the Argentine man, with his closer ties to European culture, as a refined male type and contradicted this narrative's main message

In a related issue, foreign visitors often accused United States men of lacking in aesthetic appreciation. We can read this criticism when Sarmiento visited the country's iconic nineteenth-century tourist site, Niagara Falls. What the nation may have lacked in historical sites or great art, it offered the tourist in unique natural attractions, advanced technology, and reformist institutions. For nineteenth-century foreign visitors, an excursion to Niagara Falls, a site that had no equivalent in the Old World, was a must. Beginning in the late eighteenth century in Europe, and in the 1820s and 1830s in the United States with improved transportation, tourists sought out natural sites of sublime and picturesque scenery.<sup>51</sup> Edmund Burke's 1757 *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* has been credited with

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<sup>51</sup>The American version of the European Grand Tour "encompassed the Hudson River, the Catskills, Lake George, the Erie Canal, Niagara Falls, the White Mountains, and the Connecticut Valley" (Sears 4).



initiating the idea of the sublime, the psychological state of “pleasurable terror” caused by encounters with majestic nature. Burke’s paradigm “placed a heavy burden on the spectator. For this reason, educated people knew what they ought to feel in the presence of the [Niagara] Falls” (Sears 14). This was unquestionably the case for Sarmiento

Romantic tropes informed Sarmiento’s visit to Niagara Falls and validated him as a cultured Argentine man as measured against a pragmatic United States counterpart. Upon viewing the falls, Sarmiento felt overcome by intense emotion and was unable to accurately describe the sight. He recalled that “las piernas me temblaban,” and the blood drained from his face (377). Conversely, a domestic man alongside Sarmiento viewed the same sight with “la placida frialdad que distingue a este tipo de hombre,” a description that underscored the cultural trope of Anglo-Saxon reserve versus Latin emotivity (379). Unable to be moved spiritually, the U.S. American man evaluated Niagara Falls solely as an untapped economic opportunity when he remarked to Sarmiento that “esta cascada vale millones!” (379). This encounter underscored the national type’s utilitarian character, one that privileged material gain over aesthetic experience, and a less-evolved male figure in comparison with his Argentine counterpart.

In the end, Sarmiento excused United States male shortcomings. He rationalized that “Miro con veneracion esos mismos defectos . . . deben, pues, ser los de la raza humana en un período dado de desenvolvimiento” (314). Sarmiento meant that any defects in the country’s male population were indicative of a natural stage of cultural development, one that was bound to improve over time. Ultimately, for this traveler, the hegemonic northern republican man’s remarkable achievements trumped his defects. Sarmiento revealed this viewpoint when he proclaimed that “los norte-americanos son el único pueblo culto que existe en la tierra, el último resultado de la civilizacion moderna” (313). His compatriot, Arcos, concurred with this

pronouncement. After viewing the luxurious public rooms in the St. Charles Hotel, Arco exclaimed with enthusiasm that “perdono a los puritanos” (for their eating habits) and “ahora creo en la república, creo en la democracia” (308). In the end, the civilization implicit in material luxury, modern inventions, and universal education outweighed any perceived deficits in the areas of comportment and aesthetics.

Sarmiento situated his largely positive impression of the Self-Made Man in greater hemispheric context. Although this author did not condone the country’s territorial annexations, his enthusiasm for the Self-Made Man led him to project a future of increased transamerican republican connections. As a foil to a Europe that had disillusioned him, this *literato* envisioned an unfolding PanAmerican supernation which he described as a “union de los hombres libres [que] principiará en el Polo del Norte, para venir a terminar por falta de tierra en el Istmo de Panamá” (295). This prediction can be understood in the context of the period’s liberal thinking in which national development was considered to be an evolutionary stage with the potential to lead to a utopian, unified world (Hobsbawm 38). In this instance, the locus of advanced civilization would originate in the New rather than the Old World.

Sarmiento was a larger-than-life figure that represented a larger-than-life country for his home readers. As such, hyperbole was a positive strategy for representing the Self-Made Man as the vital motor behind the country’s economic powerhouse. If Sarmiento erred on the side of exaggeration, a careful reading reveals that he did not entirely accept the notion of wholesale imitation. This hegemonic masculine type had many admirable qualities, including his level of education, his modern appearance, and his informed participation in the political process, though he also had shortcomings, particularly in public behavior, cultural sophistication, and aesthetics.

## Conclusion:

*Letrados* could easily admire the United States Genteel Patriarch. This type, like Latin American founding fathers, embodied strong, universal pro-social qualities that clearly contributed to the nation. However, this type encompassed a few, stellar individuals; most of the country's population adhered to other categories. What's more, images of male figures shifted over time. As the century progressed "the idealism associated with the United States was eroded by the urge to 'go ahead' and to 'make money,' terms that were left untranslated as clear markers of the aggressive, materialistic Yankee" (Miller 104-105). Indeed, Spanish American visitors, by and large, conceptualized cultural differences as racialized, essentializing character traits through an Anglo-Saxon versus Latinity binary.<sup>52</sup>

Foreign visitors often referenced industriousness and inventiveness, purported Anglo American character traits, to explain the country's economic success. Conversely, this same "manly spirit" also had a detrimental side, as evidenced by aggressive, materialistic, uncultured, and self-interested behavior. These character defects became more apparent when the country failed as a "manly nation" to live up to its promise to defend the Western Hemisphere against foreign intervention as outlined in the Monroe Doctrine.<sup>53</sup> In the minds of some Latin American intellectuals, this aggressive male type fueled United States imperialism, as evidenced by the Mexican-American and the Spanish-American-Cuban-Philippine Wars, among other

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<sup>52</sup>The first iteration of this dualistic mentality of *Latinidad* emerged in France in the 1830s and "because of the international prestige of French culture . . . had ramifications for . . . Latin American countries" (Thier 162). "Latin America" originally related less to geography than to politics. The term is a holdover from post-colonial identity construction as stated by Walter Mignolo who theorized that Latin America "came to refer to a Spanish and Portuguese government and an educated civil society in America that turned its face to France" (*Idea* 59). Mignolo has clarified that this concept did not include non-white populations.

<sup>53</sup>In 1823, President James Monroe famously avowed that any further European colonization would be considered a threat to the region, "a statement perceived by many Latin American leaders as a *promise* to defend republicanism in the New World" (Thier 166). Thier lists the British seizure of the Malvinas Islands from Argentina in 1833 as one such example of United States omission.

hemispheric interventions throughout the century.

Zavala crafted a positive account of the domestic male that aligned with his strongly liberal political agenda and the time period in which he visited the country. His flattering depictions were informed by his desire to uplift Mexican citizenry while at the same time find fault with his political opponents. Zavala imagined that a new male type would emerge in the Texas territory, one that would combine the positive masculine traits of the two neighboring nations.

For his part, Pérez Rosales considered the United States man in the California Gold Rush as completely lacking in civilized behavior. He contested nativism by portraying Chilean men as culturally superior. Still, he conceded that it was most likely the unusual context of the Gold Rush that had altered this otherwise admirable domestic male type.

Sarmiento, like Zavala, celebrated the host country's male population in line with standard tropes – as the metonymy of a prosperous, educated utopian republic – and a model for Argentina to follow, although he detected certain shortcomings. Sarmiento's laudatory interpretations of this hegemonic type can be best understood in the context of his political maneuvers to combat the Rosas regime in Argentina.

Despite the historical record, images of the male population were less censorious than one would expect. Turning away from constructs of masculinity, our next set of visitors interrogated the intersection of modernity and womanhood.

## CHAPTER 2: WOMEN AS A TRANSNATIONAL MARKER OF MODERNITY

Gender itself is a complex and constantly evolving situation that cannot be divorced from its political and cultural setting.  
– Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*

The idea of gender as an evolving situation impels the scholar to examine the political, cultural, and social contexts underpinning this “constantly evolving situation” – and that is the aim of this chapter. While foreign visitors could easily admire industrial progress or philanthropic institutions in the United States, they were at times less effusive regarding the social and moral implications of modernity, particularly as they applied to women. These changes, such as the women’s suffrage movement, did not necessarily align with travelers’ cultural values or political goals, as this chapter will reveal. In effect, gender became a significant focal point in a period plagued with deepening anxieties regarding social change.

One situation that most intrigued foreign observers were those gender freedoms still being debated in their own countries that appeared to have already been granted to women in the United States. This was the case for Eduarda Mansilla, who marveled in her travelogue that “La mujer americana practica la libertad individual como ninguna otra en el mundo” (111).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>In the literature, most scholars refer to Eduarda Mansilla de García as merely Mansilla, and I have followed this practice.

Mansilla was not alone in her astonishment. Those individual liberties that attracted visitors' attention included women in the workforce, their unchaperoned movement in public, and their access to higher education, all of which made the gender more noticeably visible in the public sphere.<sup>55</sup> Many travelers commented on the beauty of the nation's women, lauded their entry into the workforce as reporters, store clerks, typists, and factory workers, and noticed the deferential treatment they received in public.<sup>56</sup> Others argued that excessive liberty caused masculinization and encouraged libertine behavior, destabilizing women's traditional role of domestic guardian and even bringing into question national morality. Despite these impressions, United States women were not as emancipated as they appeared to foreign observers, but restrained by gendered social controls.

United States women, particularly those in East Coast cities, were still subject to the parameters of the "Cult of True Womanhood" or "Angel of the House" value system that prevailed in the United States and the United Kingdom. These idealized social constructs properly applied to middle and upper class, Protestant, Anglo-American womanhood, yet they were incorporated into the larger culture. In keeping with this separate sphere ideology, the idealized woman's role was to provide a moral haven to which the husband returned from a day's work in the competitive business world, the public sphere. The woman's sphere was the private space of the home where she was entrusted to assume her gendered responsibilities guided by the virtues of piety, purity, submission, and domesticity. Paradoxically, rapid

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<sup>55</sup>Argentina, it should be noted, introduced female education in the 1820s, ten years before the United States. Female education was considered to be an important nation-building tool since women were the future citizenry's first teachers in the home. Nevertheless, the country remained conservative in other areas of female emancipation. Social conventions did not permit Argentine upper class women to work outside the home. As a temporary measure, Sarmiento and Mary Mann carefully selected the female United States schoolteachers invited to work in Argentina. The purpose of this move was to provide positive, conservative models that would encourage Argentine upper class women to enter the teaching profession (Miller, "Liberty" 88).

<sup>56</sup>By 1870 women comprised one third of New York City's labor force (Ryan, *Women* 63).

industrialization had much to do with the creation of separate spheres ideology while at the same time initiating the conditions for change. These changes consisted of paid employment opportunities outside the home, technological innovations (such as indoor plumbing) and the invention of domestic laborsaving devices (including carpet sweepers and the first canned foods) (Calhoun 113).

In post-independence Latin America, the Angel of the House trope was additionally invested with an imperative nation-building task. The Ibero-American press often represented women's bodies as "vessels of national morality," tasked with the vital role of guiding the moral and religious upbringing of the next generation of future citizens (LaGreca 11). These imperatives likely influenced how our *letrado* visitors evaluated changing gender situations abroad. Without doubt, for some, the emancipated woman represented an ambiguous and even troubling marker of a modernizing nation.

Alongside constructs of the imagined typical man, certain stereotypes regarding the host country's women widely circulated in foreign publications that relied on travel accounts. The authors included in this chapter were not immune from repeating these established images of the nation's women, particularly when doing so validated the superiority of home gender norms. As a consequence, affirming or challenging these constructs contributed to validating the authority of these writers as intellectual equals in ongoing transnational debates regarding women and modernity.

Accurate or not, visitors often produced sweeping generalizations regarding northern republican women. This was the case for Justo Sierra Méndez and Eduarda Mansilla, who addressed the situations of middle and upper class Anglo-American women. Based on this limited focus, they applied their pronouncements to national womanhood as a whole. One

explanation for this strategy could be that elite tourists generally confined their itineraries to class-restricted sites, such as palace hotels in New York City. No different from today, there were sections of cities, such as the Five Points neighborhood in lower Manhattan, that were neither attractive nor safe for tourists to visit. On the West Coast, ethnic neighborhoods such as San Francisco's Chinatown were only appropriate for male visitors to tour, and then only in the company of a hired policeman. As a result, many international tourists did not have the opportunity to encounter and interact with a comprehensive sampling of domestic womanhood. A more realistic sampling should have included frontier women in the West or recent immigrants living in New York City's tenements since these were distinct, growing segments of the population. In sum, when interrogating the host country's womanhood, these writers largely sustained a horizontal class and racial (European) identification.

Stereotypes about the imagined typical domestic female were widespread. Two of the most engrained stereotypes regarding United States women were opposites: "the philanthropic woman," a strong, self-sacrificing figure, and the "cosmetic woman," a female motivated by materialism. These two typologies solely referenced upper and middle class urban white women, but these were the very groups that these individuals interacted with socially and wrote about in their accounts (Miller, "Liberty" 84). The selfless philanthropic woman coincided with the Angel of the House ideology, while the cosmetic woman provoked widespread criticism by international visitors.

Justo Sierra Méndez, Eduarda Mansilla, and José Arnaldo Márquez, the three authors covered in this chapter, offered a continuum of viewpoints regarding the changing situation of women in the modern world. In addition to reinforcing established gender stereotypes, their individual home cultures and political contexts played significant roles in their written



representations. By and large, these writers highlighted those aspects of womanhood that most closely aligned with their personal viewpoints regarding female emancipation and its relation to nation.

Sierra Méndez, the most critical of the group, portrayed the effect of modernity on women as an undesirable outcome of excessive freedom and materialism. This situation upset gender role stability and the trope of woman as a symbol of the national home. Mansilla occupied a middle ground; in her view, North American women lacked high cultural refinement although they gained in certain gender freedoms not yet widely available in Argentina.<sup>57</sup> In contrast, Márquez viewed this same modernity as an idyllic expression of unparalleled progress for the gender. Through the mirroring gaze typical of travel writing, these individuals also revealed how they envisioned the future role of women in their own societies.

### **Part I: Justo Sierra Méndez**

Dubbed the “Maestro de América” because of his tireless promotion of national education, forty-seven-year-old Justo Sierra Méndez visited the United States for thirty-seven days in 1895 on a group excursion at the invitation of his uncle, Pedro Méndez, to whom he dedicated his narrative. Journalist, poet, magistrate in the Mexican Supreme Court, and member of the intellectual circle that included Guillermo Prieto and Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, Sierra Méndez served as one of President Porfirio Díaz’ “positivist oriented government officials” who “combined the historical philosophy of law with the new ‘scientific doctrines’ to support national goals of economic progress and political stability” (Hale 377).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Positivism as a philosophy “claimed to explain the enormous changes that industry, powered by capital, and directed by science, had effected on the social character, economic power, and political bases of nineteenth-century

His travelogue, *En tierra yankee (notas a todo vapor)*, was published as a series of chronicles in Mexico City's *El Mundo* newspaper from 1895-1896, followed by a book version in 1898 prepared by the government press, Tipografía de la Oficina Impresora del Timbre. The subtitle referenced modernity, speed, and nineteenth-century technology, in particular the steam engine trains that took the party on their whirlwind excursion from Texas, across the South, up the Eastern Seaboard, and then back home via the Midwest.

This author's father, Justo Sierra O'Reilly, had written an 1851 travel account about his unsuccessful diplomatic mission to Washington D.C. during the Mexican American War. Sierra O'Reilly had traveled north tasked by his father-in-law, Yucatán governor Santiago Méndez Ibarra, with the task of negotiating United States military intervention during Yucatán's *Guerra de castas* in exchange for possible annexation of the peninsula.

Sierra Méndez' intertextual references to his father's as well as to Zavala's travelogues in his own trip narrative can be interpreted as an act of "invented tradition." Invented tradition, as it has been theorized by Eric Hobsbawm, "seek(s) to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (*Invention* 1). This author's intertextual references, then, both validated the eyewitness truth-value of the narrative while at the same time located him in a growing continuum of Mexican-authored travel writing directed to a domestic readership (Pitman, *Mexican* 49-50). I link this term with Anderson's concept of imagined communities given that the invention of a national tradition, as expressed through travel writing, implies that an author is addressing an imagined national community with shared values, beliefs, and cultural practices.

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Europe. In Latin America, many intellectuals were convinced that positivism offered not only an explanation for the many pressing social, economic, and political problems of the region, but pointed to new and more effective solutions" (O. Martí 154).

Not uncommon for authorial practice of the period, Sierra Méndez prefaced his work with a self-deprecating critique, disavowing his ability to formulate meaningful insights or craft a literary text. Due to the speedy pace of his visit and his limited conversational English skills, he proposed to merely “entrever” the host country (7). Like Sarmiento, who struggled with speaking English, Sierra Méndez’ impressions of the northern republic may have been largely predicated on visual cues and available printed sources, particularly newspapers. Sierra Méndez insisted that his text offered mere impressions of the host country when he disavowed that “no me meteré en honduras” (87). Nevertheless, this author still expressed clear opinions about a country that he had dreamed of visiting since childhood.

Not uncommon for Ibero-American authors of the period, Sierra Méndez constructed his authorial persona by referencing the European and the United States literary archive. He cited foreign authors and included untranslated phrases in other languages throughout the text. This rhetorical strategy had two purposes: it reminded home readers of Sierra Méndez’ more prestigious vocation as a poet while at the same time reinforced his connection with an elite public adept at decoding erudite references. We can read a prime example of this strategy when he rhetorically asked home readers: “Cómo se traduce en castellano el verbo francés *flânear*?” (76).<sup>59</sup> The figure of the *flâneur* originated in Parisian journalism in the 1840s as a cosmopolitan male type that read urban practices, types, and fashion as complex semiotic signs.<sup>60</sup> In essence, the invention of a literary tradition, for the nineteenth-century *littérateur*, still drew from the prestige of foreign, particularly European, sources.

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<sup>59</sup>Elizabeth Wilson, theorizing the visual spectacle of the city, emphasized “the importance of *looking* in capitalist societies” (153).

<sup>60</sup>The autonomous *flâneur*, one of “the key symbols of the modern in the nineteenth century,” was masculine gendered; a woman idling on the pavement would likely have been taken for a streetwalker (Felski 16).

The urban chronicle, where *letrados* regularly published, offered information as well as entertainment. Consequently, writers employing this journalistic form often adopted a conversational, light-hearted tone. Since his girth and age prevented Sierra Méndez from credibly performing the role of a sophisticated dandy, he instead constructed the persona of a humorous version of the *flâneur*. This version involved a less-than-elegant masculinity that required “la mínima dosis de actividad corporal que me permiten mis copiosos kilogramos de peso” (75). Despite these alleged limitations, Sierra Méndez assumed the role of an observant pedestrian during his time abroad, interpreting what he offered as typical urban scenes for home readers. More than entertainment, his account transformed “the threatening signs of progress and modernity into a picturesque and aestheticized spectacle,” imparting meaning to an unruly metropolis (Ramos 114).

Notwithstanding, this traveler was no casual *flâneur*. As a government official and a member of Mexico’s intellectual elite, Sierra Méndez’ perspective was influenced by his country’s at times uneasy relationship with its northern neighbor, a relationship strongly affected by geographic proximity. Pausing to observe the hustle and bustle of Fifth Avenue in New York City, he perceived a national difference in how one occupied urban public space, commenting that “pararse, cosa muy mexicana, aquí nadie se para” (84). What’s more, this writer engaged with a Latin versus Anglo-Saxon dichotomy by referencing the fable of “The Grasshopper and the Ant” to exemplify the radical cultural differences between the two countries, arguing that as Mexicans “hemos preferido cantar al sol como las cigarras de la fábula” (216). In this construct, Latins, enjoyed the simple pleasures of life, such as stopping to contemplate city scenes. Conversely, busy New York shoppers worked ceaselessly, like ants, to accumulate possessions.

While foreign visitors might admire industriousness, they also censured a culture that conferred primacy to material – including territorial – acquisition.

United States territorial expansionism was considered a real danger to Mexican national sovereignty that contributed toward creating a disturbing rift between the country's rhetoric and its imperialist actions. For this reason, the neighboring nation has "repeatedly figured as an alternative cultural and political system that might be a model to follow or a threat to the survival of a distinctive Mexico" (Valdés Ugalde 569). During the nineteenth century, Mexican identification with its neighbor was tempered by the memory of northern aggressions in the region that included the 1836 Texas secession, the 1846-1848 Mexican American War in which Mexico lost a significant portion of its territory, and the "All Mexico" annexation debate in Congress at the end of that war, among other events. Considered in this context, we can interpret this text as a move towards rehabilitating a defeated Mexico by patriotically underscoring the superiority of home cultural values, thus challenging the myth of United States exceptionalism. While he acknowledged the material progress of the host country, this author took issue with the accompanying societal transformations. Sierra Méndez revealed this perspective when he summed up his sojourn with the exclamation: "¡Qué vida tan hermosa y tan terrible esta vida yankee, Dios mio!" (201).

One way to throw light on this traveler's expressed attraction and repulsion toward the United States lifestyle is by examining how he depicted domestic women compared to their Mexican counterparts. If gender served as a symbolic marker in the metaphor of nation-as-home, Mexican womanhood and country could be upheld as fundamentally exceptional. The period ideology of separate spheres entrusted women with the vital roles of reproducing the national citizenry and guiding its moral formation. The essential question became: Did feminine

emancipation, in the ways it was manifesting in the United States, have negative consequences for the fulfillment of this sacralized gender task? For Sierra Méndez, the answer was yes. His portrayal of United States females as cosmetic women revealed what he interpreted as the disquieting ramifications of the country's modernity.<sup>61</sup> The prototypical Angel of the House construct involved a strong element of personal sacrifice and dedication to the domestic sphere, elements that did not mesh with the typology of the cosmetic women.<sup>62</sup> According to this logic, unbridled consumer capitalism combined with an assumption of masculine activities abroad had upturned the gender's traditional, vital role as the angelic guardian of the home/nation.

Although not officially a *Modernista* writer, Sierra Méndez translated his impressions of women in the northern republic in part through the tenets and crafted language of this late-nineteenth-century Spanish American literary movement. This move appropriated the popular press to highlight his authorial persona as a well-known national poet and public intellectual cognizant of period literary trends. The *Modernista* aimed to produce autonomous art in an age of increased commodification of culture; he critiqued the fin-de-siècle bourgeoisie capitalist society that “se enriquecía en progreso, técnicas y bienes materiales en la misma medida en que espiritual y estéticamente se empobrecía” (Jiménez 23). Although *Modernistas* blamed journalism for commercializing and devaluing writing-as-art, they often made a living from the medium. In fact, these *littérateurs* availed themselves of the utilitarian genre of journalism to

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<sup>61</sup>Critics of United States women depicted them as frivolous, self-indulgent, overly flirtatious, and obsessed with extravagant adornment, among other negative attributes (Miller, “Liberty” 92-93).

<sup>62</sup>The Angel of the House was a pervasive nineteenth-century trope of the ideal woman popularized in the United States, Europe, and Latin America. This model was characterized by extreme abnegation, personal sacrifice, Christian religiosity, and modesty. This construct had racial implications given that “the emphasis on the seclusion and ‘protection’ of women [was] to ensure chastity and the selection of appropriately white reproductive partners” (LaGreca 6).

promote writing-as-art by employing “a highly decorative style crammed with vivid metaphors and a superabundance of literary and cultural allusions” (González-Pérez 18).

*Modernismo* involved more than a literary style; it included a Hispanic-American identification in response to imperialism from what José Martí famously labeled “el vecino poderoso” in his 1891 essay, “Nuestra América.”<sup>63</sup> In essence, as a Latin American and a cosmopolitan literary genre, *Modernismo* was “located within the transnational field of power” which made “the act of writing . . . always an act with political implications” (Mejías-López 75). During his visit to Washington D.C., Sierra Méndez performed one such political gesture when he declared, upon viewing a military statute of the Mexican American War, that “Pertenezco á un pueblo debil . . . que no debe olvidar la espantosa injusticia cometida con él hace medio siglo . . . mi cabeza se inclina, pero no permanece inclinada” (132). By choosing to stand erect, Sierra Méndez articulated national pride in the face of a powerful neighbor, rehabilitating Mexico after the shame of territorial loss. All in all, although he employed a humorous tone, this traveler took a critical stance against the trope of United States exceptionalism, a position evidenced in his representation of the country’s womanhood. Through highlighting contrasts between females on both sides of the border, Sierra Méndez’ sense of patriotism underpinned his stated preference for idealized constructs of Mexican women.

We can read the rich, crafted style of *Modernismo* in Sierra Méndez’s depiction of the cosmetic woman in New York City which then, and even today, “was understood to resemble a vast exhibition hall, a spectacle, a panorama,” eminently suitable for providing visual material for the *flâneur* (Brand 76). Typically, when the *flâneur* viewed fashion, “los cuerpos refinados . . . han sido sancionados positivamente por la mirada del paseante” (Ruiz Rubio 171). In this

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<sup>63</sup>Mexican liberals identified with Martí’s cause. Sierra Méndez and Martí became friends during the latter’s residence in Mexico in 1875 (Dumas 358).

instance, nonetheless, the evaluating gaze highlighted excess or poor taste, a move that criticized rather than approved. At the theater, Sierra Méndez noted “el lujo ostentoso” of the women in the box seats (96). Employing hyperbole and exclamation along with astronomical terms, he detailed their voluminous dresses as “una nebulosa de encajes y de gasas” and their jewelry akin to “verdaderas constelaciones de gemas fulgurantes” (96). He summed up his impression by ironically uttering “¡Qué diademas, que nimbos, que petos, que collares!” (96). He was not alone in his impressions. The domestic popular press also widely ridiculed the excesses of the late nineteenth-century new moneyed elite, though parodying the *nouveau riche* avoided the issue of income disparity and “sidestepped serious analysis of America’s deepening class cleavages” (A. Siegel 74).

Sierra Méndez’s descriptions of cosmetic women exemplified the theory of conspicuous consumption that sociologist Thorstein Veblen developed regarding what he termed the “leisure class” during the Gilded Age.<sup>64</sup> Veblen linked individual honor and legitimization of one’s class membership with ostensible leisure when he affirmed that the “conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability to the gentleman of leisure” (75). The term the “Gilded Age” was coined during a period in which five percent of the country’s population owned about fifty percent of the national wealth (A. Siegel 61) Similarly, the Mexican economic elite, two percent of the population, sought distinction in the urban setting through portable and visible markers of status, importing nearly all of these items from Europe (Bauer 154-155). By parodying United States women’s conspicuous consumption without criticizing similar elements at home, Sierra Méndez vindicated Mexican honor by linking it to a more virtuous national

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<sup>64</sup>Veblen conceptualized the leisure class as a privileged social group sheltered from economic exigencies. According to Veblen, “the leisure of the master class is . . . an indulgence of a proclivity for the avoidance of labour and is assumed to enhance the master’s well-being and fulness of life” (59).



womanhood. In keeping with this perspective, if emancipated women in the United States abandoned the domestic sphere in pursuit of idle luxury, Mexican females continued to serve as symbols of feminine virtue through their commitment to the home/nation. These depictions were not unproblematic. The number of women in privileged positions in both nations was extremely limited, while the whole of Mexican womanhood was not likely to have been completely restricted to homebound, traditional roles.

The department store provided another prime site from which to view the spectacle of the cosmetic woman.<sup>65</sup> This nineteenth-century innovation, “assisted the freeing of middle-class from the shackles of the home” by offering a safe and respectable virtually same sex public space for women to visit without male chaperonage (Wilson 150). Many domestic reformers appraised the department store as a democratizing institution.<sup>66</sup> In reality, this institution arose not in the spirit of reform or emancipation. Rather, the department store came about in conjunction with the development of modern commercial retailing and advertising from businessmen keen on promoting spending by the female market (Ryan, *Women* 76). Fittingly, the department store show window has been theorized as a metaphor for the role the newspaper chronicle played in mediating between the individual and the urban experience (Ramos 128).

Gazing into electrified windows in the New York City’s Broadway shopping district, Sierra Méndez constructed verbal pictures in the decorative language of *Modernismo* when he listed the merchandise as “pirámides de pieles ricas, de sedas, de peluches, de encajes en una decoración multiplicadora de espejos” (84). Showy display of merchandise in plate glass

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<sup>65</sup>Universal fairs, beginning with the London 1851 Universal Exposition housed in the Crystal Palace, played a vital role in creating the new consumer of spectacle as well as the fetishism of merchandise as spectacle. Advances in iron and glass manufacture were key to the construction of great exhibit halls (Marinas 42).

<sup>12</sup>In *Looking Backward* (1888) and its sequel, *Equality* (1896), Edward Bellamy imagined centralized department store showrooms where products would be available to all consumers in rural and urban areas, thus equalizing access to consumption. See also Bradford Peck, *The World A Department Store. A Story of Life under a Cooperative System* (1900).

windows, a late nineteenth-century marketing innovation, combined with a multiplicity of mirrored surfaces inside, dazzled the shopper with the “thrilling gluttony of the eye” (Wilson 153).<sup>67</sup> He detailed the spectacle of passing female shoppers wearing plumed hats as “un relampagueo de raso y terciopelo . . . un vuelo de pájaros en el agua” (84). Mirroring and water images typified *Modernista* symbolism since reflections were thought to inspire poetic musings on the visible world (LoDato 41). Appealing to more than the visual pleasure of the stroll, these female shoppers were “crujientes” (the sound made by the moving fabric of their skirts) and “perfumadas” (84). These descriptions of luxury items – velvets, silks, laces, and furs – contributed to a fetishism of merchandise in a literary genre typified by an “aesthetic of excess” (Ramos 116). If the department store came to substitute the museum as an “institution of beauty” in a utilitarian machine age, logically the images associated with this institution constructed greater meaning regarding capitalist society (Ramos 116).

The dark side of modernity, notwithstanding, was associated with decadence. The luxurious merchandise and the well-dressed female shoppers presented Sierra Méndez with an “inapagable espectáculo . . . un codeo voluptuoso con la civilizacion vertida con el arlequinesco traje de la moda y sacudiéndose sus cascabeles de oro, ebria de lujo y de placer” (85). In effect, this author constructed an image of the cosmetic woman as an emblem of a society intoxicated by material consumption. Similar to Émile Zola’s novel, *The Ladies’ Paradise*, women – widely considered to be the more easily influenced and weaker sex – were seduced by shopping with their “ojos encendidos como gemas vivas y las bocas entreabiertas” and “semi-enloquecidas por

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<sup>67</sup>In 1846, A.T. Stewart opened the first department store with imported plate glass windows in New York City. The success of his store inspired imitators and led to the creation of a twenty block shopping area dubbed the “Ladies Mile” on Broadway (Ryan, *Women* 76-77).

el aspecto de los artículos de lujo” (84).<sup>68</sup> These frenzied, even sexualized images of women shoppers, with their open mouths and flashing eyes, coincided with binary fin-de-siècle imagery of the female as either virgin or whore, saint or vampire (Dijkstra 334).

Concerns about the corrupting enticements of the modern city and the dangerous nature of some of its residents, were not unique to Sierra Méndez. Crowds, for instance, were seen by some experts as dangerous, feminized threats to the social order. Beginning in the 1870s, historians and social psychologists “did much to disseminate the idea of crowds as womanish hordes: impulsive, delirious, and prone to violence” (Ross xvii). Similar preoccupations were echoed in post-Civil War pulp fiction, literature, and advice manuals. Many of the most successful and influential United States authors during this period, including Upton Sinclair, Theodore Dreiser, and Steven Crane, wrote extensively in the highly popular city novel genre as a source of steady income. Sinclair, for one, wrote scores of dime novels under pseudonyms using formulaic plots that concentrated on urban perils (Denning 19-22). Still, there were other changing gender situations to consider when assessing domestic womanhood; one of them was the contested arena of gender and exercise.

Sierra Méndez linked decadent female behavior not only to crass materialism, but also to the ostensible negative consequences of women’s participation in the period’s health craze.<sup>69</sup> The debate around “able-bodied womanhood” entailed defining socially acceptable norms for improving the gender’s physical health. The conservative side of this debate emphasized social limitations associated with the cult of domesticity. In line with this thinking, vigorous exercise would masculinize the sex, promote neglect of the home, and even jeopardize women’s physical

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<sup>68</sup>Émile Zola’s 1883 novel *The Ladies’ Delight* (*Au bonheur des dames*) depicted the new urban institution of the department store as a dangerous site with the erotic potential to “seduce” the female shopper (Felski 66-74).

<sup>69</sup>Personal health, an issue of wide public interest and debate in the late nineteenth century, was considered by some experts to be grounded in “commonsense realism, Christian moralism, and natural science” (Verbrugge 28).

health. It was, in fact, commonly believed during this period that women were “too delicate and incapable of such activity” (LaGreca 30). Sierra Méndez sided with this conservative opinion regarding female physical health when he decried that, “á fuerza de *lawn-tennis* y de *croquet* . . . las hembras quieren ser músculos . . . ser hombres sin dejar de ser mujeres . . . conseguirán ser hombres” (102). The logical outcome of desiring to “be a muscle” and “be men” ultimately stripped the gentler sex of her nurturing attributes, replacing them with characteristic traits of the country’s manhood, such as competitiveness, independence, and self-assertion.

Sierra Méndez likewise concluded that diet was another determinant in female physical development. He noted that the Anglo-American woman was not anemic, but sanguine, nourished with a masculine diet of “jugo de carne de Chicago” (102) and “saturada de caldo rojo de roastbeef” (84). This diet and lifestyle produced women whom Sierra Méndez labeled as “más varonil” (102) and “amazonas” (101). Images of masculinized women as dangerous viragos or bloodthirsty vampires were common in a period of dualistic mentalities and pseudoscientific classifications (Dykstra 158). This emerging situation left no clear social role for men. Addressing his male readers directly, he lamented that “¿Y los hombres qué haremos? Qué haráis” (102). While this author predicted that this issue “se resolverá solo” in the future, he comforted himself that his generation would not live to witness the solution, comforting himself that “no nos tocará ver eso!” (102). In sum, for this traveler, female participation in sport and her consumption of unfeminine foods, both of which he witnessed in the United States, played a role in masculinizing the gentle sex, threatening male supremacy, and disrupting the social construction of gender.

Additionally, foreign visitors regularly denounced the high rate of divorce in the country. Female emancipation was commonly thought to weaken the institution of marriage. The foreign

and the national press circulated tabloid stories of United States women marrying multiple times, “a perfect illustration of the way in which anxiety about technological modernity was projected onto gender relations” (Miller, “Liberty” 95). Sierra Méndez depicted domestic females as hedonistic and opportunistic participants in the “race” of life. He related this situation as “las mujeres deseando ser hombres para luchar también por la vida . . . por el lujo y el comfort, y corriendo al través del matrimonio y del divorcio como en un steeple-chase, para conseguir una felicidad sin reposo, sin hogar, sin alma” (215). His description of an aggressive, materialistic female mirrored the negative aspects of the Self-Made Man, while “luchar por la vida” referenced Social Darwinism. The words “sin alma” made this traveler’s position clear – living outside of the domestic sphere led to female spiritual degeneration. In the northern republic, extreme individualism had perverted the Angel of the House.

Rather than accepting the perceived negative consequences of female modernity, Sierra Méndez proposed Mexican womanhood as a more desirable option. As a foil to the crass cosmetic woman, he declared that “la muchacha mexicana suele ser más interesante” (102). Neither a modern woman nor a threat, Sierra Méndez favorably represented a homogenized home type as possessing a more attractive physique and a spiritual character when he described her as having “las extremidades más finas, la boca más dulce, los ojos mejor comunicandose con esa sombra interior que se llama el alma, y aunque mucho más pequeña, anda mejor” (102). Emphasizing the *muchacha*’s feminine characteristics – her diminutive stature, sweet mouth, spiritual gaze, and delicate hands and feet – implied her sexual reproductive purity in a period when the issue of emancipation raised concerns regarding the dangers to the gender’s virtue in dangerous urban environments. As a mirror to United States female degeneration, the *muchacha* was the truly civilized type and as thus contributed to the recuperation of national honor.

Sierra Méndez chronicled, in part through the the language of *Modernismo*, United States women's conspicuous consumption and their appropriation of masculine practices, two modern developments that had brought women squarely into the public sphere. He concluded his book with the pessimistic reflection that in the northern republic “el hombre es el esclavo de la mujer, la mujer los es de la joya; aquí el becerro de oro es femenino” (96). Like the wayward Israelites in the Bible, the female domestic population had been led astray by their allegiance to Mammon. This depiction was not uncommon on the part of foreign observers who interpreted the United States' national culture as fundamentally centered on “acquisition and consumption as the means of achieving happiness . . . and money value as the predominant measure of all value in society” (Leech 3). Given his personal situation as well as his political affiliations, this individual's point of view regarding United States women and modernity had a strong connection to Mexico's history with its northern neighbor. The concept of “domesticity,” correlated with the ideology of separate spheres, signified the importance of the family to the nation as well as the affirmation of the nation “in opposition to everything outside the geographic and conceptual border of the home” (Kaplan 183).

Sierra Méndez expressed this sentiment when, crossing back over the border, he remarked that “Esa tierra á donde voy me gusta más; pobres, pequeños é inactivos, los pueblos á que pertenezco se han apropiado un lote mejor en la batalla de la vida” (216). The words “batalla de la vida” drew from concepts central to Social Darwinism. With this observation, Sierra Méndez reworked the racial logic of this archive – one that had favored Anglo-Saxon Americans and Europeans as the apex of civilization – to elevate Latin American cultural characteristics. Mexicans, like the Grasshopper, may be “poor” and “inactive,” yet these attributes led to greater overall happiness.

Just before his conclusion, Sierra Méndez absolved himself of responsibility for his observations by clarifying that his “pesimismos” were not just his own, but were influenced by the opinions of other authors. Contradicting his earlier statements, he professed that, ultimately, “entreví un gran pueblo” whose “libertad es un aire respirable” (215). Overall, nonetheless, Sierra Méndez privileged an autochthonous cultural field of gender identification in which the situation of womanhood did not undergo radical change. The idealized Mexican woman continued to serve as an angelic symbol of the nation-as-home. Importantly, by opposing the excesses of female emancipation, this traveler revitalized masculine national honor in the wake of United States imperialism. Our next traveler expressed a distinct position regarding women and modernity.

## **Part II: Eduarda Mansilla**

Eduarda Mansilla was the niece of Argentine dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas, the wife of liberal politician Manuel Rafael García Aguirre, and an established author. As a seasoned traveler and a member of the elite class, Mansilla was exceptionally positioned to report on United States women for her compatriots. In 1882, *Recuerdos de viaje*, the first published travel narrative by an Argentine woman, was released as the first book in an uncompleted two volume series. Her account, printed by Juan D. Alsina Press, reestablished Mansilla’s presence within the national literary circle after an eighteen-year residence abroad. Although presented as a travelogue, this text was also a memoir since Mansilla resided in the United States from 1861-1863 and from 1868-1873 to accompany her husband during his diplomatic assignments.

Two key factors contributed to the dearth of female-authored Spanish American nineteenth-century travelogues.<sup>70</sup> First, fewer women than men had the opportunity to travel nationally or abroad, let alone publish their trip accounts. Next, certain genres of writing, such as sentimental poetry, private letters, and diaries, were considered more gender-appropriate during this era because they offered socially sanctioned outlets for what was thought to be women's naturally emotional state. In contrast, travel writing allowed female authors to trouble gender privileges. Since freedom of movement and the opportunity to publish have historically been male prerogatives, a female travel writer confronted gender limitations by assuming the protagonist privilege of "producing the rest of the world" for the public eye (Pratt, *Imperial* 4). Furthermore, it was widely accepted that women should not be knowledgeable of worldly, public affairs; in fact, the sex was thought incapable of true intellectual production (LaGreca 4).

In spite of these issues, Mansilla did not hesitate to write in this genre, and she did not confine her narrative to sanctioned "women's topics" such as fashion or sentimental poetry. This author discussed politics and history, warning her implied readers at the beginning of one chapter that "Aquellos lectores que de la Historia no gusten, pueden saltarlo" (43).<sup>71</sup> She justified the inclusion of masculine topics in her account by clarifying that "No es posible hablar de los Estados Unidos, sin penetrar un tanto en su vida política" (26). Perhaps Mansilla's class status made her literary production appear as an innocuous, genteel pastime, thereby granting her greater freedom to transgress gender norms regarding literary content. Yet while this author formed part of the national vanguard in terms of her publishing career, Mansilla remained

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<sup>70</sup>One reason that there were few travelogues written by Argentine women is that nineteenth-century upper class females tended to visit Europe more than the United States. This means that writing about European tours – a familiar experience for upper class Argentines – would likely not be of great interest to home readers given that the genre centers on differences and comparisons (Szurmuk, *Miradas* 19).

<sup>71</sup>Wolfgang Iser theorized the concept of "implied reader." In this construct, a literary text implies an ideal reader, and the meaning of a text is the result of collaboration between author and reader (274).



conservative regarding other forms of female emancipation, such as demanding for suffrage rights. In fact, the manner in which she linked themes of gender and civility related closely to her Argentine elite identification.

Mansilla positioned herself as an expert cultural arbiter. The essence of her self-construction was based on her familiarity with French high culture in a time when “appropriation of French ideas and tastes stemmed from a homegrown desire on the part of Argentine elites to adopt cultural forms . . . that were internationally associated with ‘civilization’ and modernity” (Daughton 836). The weight of French cultural prestige was such that “for a small group of elite Latin American women, time in Paris offered freedom and opportunities to develop an intellectual persona,” a situation that applied to Mansilla who, in 1869, published a well received serialized novel in French entitled *Pablo ou la vie dans les Pampas* (Fey 89). The Francophile Argentine upper class read French literature in the original language, visited Europe as a matter of course, and remodeled Buenos Aires in the image of Paris. The publication of Mansilla’s travelogue as a book implied an orientation towards this limited, elite readership in a restricted national literary market.

In terms of style, Mansilla employed the *causerie*, the narrative voice typical of the urban chronicle, to directly address her implied home readers with “nosotros” and “nuestras costumbres.” This rhetorical strategy connected Mansilla with her reading public by assuming a united community with shared values and practices. The *causerie*, popular among Argentine intellectuals of the period, was characterized by a free flow of impressions that mimicked an intimate conversation. Like Sierra Méndez, Mansilla fashioned a cosmopolitan authorial persona by peppering her account with foreign literary references and phrases in various languages, a strategy that strengthened her authority while at the same time created a sense of *entre-nous*

exclusive identity with those home readers equipped to decode high cultural intertextual references.

Despite her elite background and her adherence to a cosmopolitan literary style, the very act of writing situated Mansilla outside of Argentine gender norms. In her study of nineteenth-century Spanish gendering of writing (and we can extend this claim to Latin American culture), Maryellen Bieder asserted that “since masculine cultural forms constitute the norm, the work of a *literata* or *poetisa* represents that-which-is-not-the norm, the otherness of non-male writing” (98). In truth, the terms *literata* and *poetisa* for female writers carried derogatory undertones. Unlike their male counterparts, *literatas* found themselves obliged to balance writing authoritatively with respecting gendered codes of behavior, knowing that their literary production would be judged first and foremost by the fact that it was female authored. Mansilla’s brother, Lucio, also an established author and world traveler, expressed the typical national depreciative male attitude toward female writers when he deplored in a newspaper article that “Cuándo se convencerán, nuestras familias, que en América es precario el porvenir de las literatas, y que es mucho más conducente al logro de ciertas aspiraciones que escribir con suma gracia, saber coser, planchar ó cocinar?” (*Entre* 35). Thus, the *literata*’s rhetorical juggling involved creating a socially acceptable authorial persona while strategically inserting herself into the *res publica*, a feat that Josefina Ludmer has labeled “las tretas del débil” (47).

One rhetorical strategy to deflect criticism was to insist that a work was not intended for publication and was only released publicly at another person’s request. Mansilla appeared to employ this strategy in the text’s dedication, addressed to her friend Dr. Barbosa, when she avowed that “Ud. es uno de aquellos que más me ha impulsado á escribir Mis Recuerdos De Viaje” (xxx). Another common move by *literatas*, and one that Mansilla adopted early in her

literary career, was to publish under a pseudonym.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps her established authorial status made continued use of a pseudonym unnecessary for her later travelogue given that “el desafío de colocar el verdadero nombre sólo lo pueden aceptar exitosamente quienes poseen adquiridos méritos indiscutidos o sólidos títulos acreditados al precio de una dura batalla” (Auza 41). Above all, the growing field of journalism created new opportunities for women to publish, even if anonymously.

By the mid-nineteenth century, there were two kinds of women’s periodicals: ladies fashion magazines, typically edited by men, and liberal republican journals that addressed female emancipation, usually edited by women (Bergmann 174). In Argentine journals “women appealed to the most cherished belief of the Generation of 1880: that they were living in an age of material and moral progress” to frame their petitions to liberal politicians for reform (Frederick 11). Ultimately, at least for the first category of publications, appealing to female readers was strategically intended to boost newspaper and advertising sales. In other words, “women’s entry into the field had less to do with newspapers’ interest in their position in society than with their position as consumers” (Fahs 66).

Journalism enabled Mansilla to develop her literary style and highlight her public persona while reminding readers of her more prestigious career as a novelist. In support of this aspect of female emancipation, she praised the field of journalism in the United States for offering women writers a respectable profession that freed them from “la servidumbre de la aguja” (115).<sup>73</sup> For

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<sup>72</sup>Although Mansilla used *Álvar* and her son's name, Daniel, as pseudonyms for some of her publications, her true identity was widely known. This move “was a polite sham that communicated to her audience the appropriate feminine modesty expected from a woman of her class . . . Mansilla could project the *appearance* of genteel reticence while enjoying the *reality* of being known as a writer” (Frederick 52-53).

<sup>73</sup>Women's struggle for acceptance as published writers has been conceptualized as the “needle vs. the pen” debate. The needle represented the iconic tool of the nineteenth-century woman, passively seated over sewing. As the century progressed, the pen symbolized a more active female role in education and paid employment (Frederick 67-73).

female writers, publishing opportunities in journalism became available later in Argentina, in large part as a result of Mansilla's endeavors. This issue was evidenced by her friend Sarmiento's recollection in 1885 that "Eduarda ha pugnado diez años por abrirse las puertas cerradas á la mujer, para entrar como cualquiera cronista ó *reporter* en el cielo reservado a los escogidos (machos), hasta que al fin ha obtenido un boleto de entrada" (*Obras* 276).

Francine Masiello has proposed the concept of a "third space" to interrogate early female journalism in Argentina. Masiello has defined the third space as a site where women expressed their voices outside of the established boundaries of separate sphere ideology. By publicly engaging with the fields of culture and politics, women's journals actively broadened the concept of the nation – the third space – as distinct from the Argentine classic binary of civilization versus barbarism (Masiello, *La mujer* 8). Mansilla contributed to creating this third space on home territory, yet she strategically upheld the supremacy of women's traditional domestic roles.

Contradicting the opinion expressed in her travelogue, she wrote in favor of needlework and against extended female rights in an 1883 article for *La Nación*, concluding that "no soy partidaria de la emancipación de la mujer en el sentido que ésta podrá luchar con el hombre en el terreno de las ciencias y en su aplicación profesional" (*Escritos* 623). In consonance with this viewpoint, writing a Sunday column on fashion or social events (the type of "soft" news typical of the women's pages of a newspaper that could be completed from home) constituted an acceptable, edifying influence on society. Accordingly, women's participation in "soft" journalism could be seen an extension of the gender's civilizing role, even if Mansilla herself at times transgressed these boundaries. The concept of heterotopicality reminds us that ambivalences such as these present the starting point of any analysis, and Mansilla's negotiation – her *tretas del débil* – regarding the place of women and emancipation was no different.

By choosing to overlook the United States female suffrage movement and the significant numbers of women workers in the domestic labor force in her travel account, Mansilla's text raises a question about the degree to which travel literature is a performative genre that has been utilized to support one's personal agenda. In opposition to greater gender freedoms, Mansilla expressed the idea that United States women influenced men sufficiently from the domestic sphere when she stated that "La mujer en la Union Americana, es soberana absoluta; el hombre, vive, trabaja y se eleva por ella y para ella. Es ahí que debe buscarse y estudiarse la influencia femenina y no en sueños de emancipacion política" (72). She saw no advantage in demanding increased gender freedoms when she rhetorically asked her readers "Qué ganaría las Americanas con emanciparse? Más bien perderian y bien lo saben. Las mujeres influyen en la cosa pública por medios que llamaré psicológicos é indirectos" (72). These contentions regarding the folly of demanding for greater gender freedoms did not confront, but rather complemented, male privilege. Stridently insisting on increased female emancipation would likely have alienated a significant portion of this author's home readership in a country that remained largely conservative regarding this issue.

Despite Buenos Aires' reputation as the "Paris of America," women from the elite class continued to live highly circumscribed lives centered on the domestic sphere. This apparent contradiction is what Michael Johns has called "the provincialism of gender" in Argentina (85). Legally, the 1870 national civil code classified women in the same category as minors and the insane; they could not divorce or enter into any contracts without their husbands' approval (Carlson 40). As a reflection of conventional home culture, Mansilla's observations regarding female emancipation were non-threatening. By not opposing the restrictions on Argentine womanhood, this *literata* did not challenge established social and legal gender constructs. On the

other hand, considered within the context of home society, this move could be considered an astute *trata del débil* that allowed this author to continue to express her voice from the public forum of journalism.

Moreover, Mansilla's travelogue forged connections with her readers by validating the supremacy of home culture and practices. She maintained that Latin culture was superior to that of the Anglo-Saxon United States; that is, by linking Argentina to France, Mansilla was able to imbue home territory with the superior characteristics she believed were derived from *latinidad*. For this reason, she characterized "el Norte americano" as essentially still "el Inglés" (32). In contrast, in Argentina, "entre nosotros, la fusion de las diversas razas europeas . . . se ha efectuado más por completo; y el cosmopolitismo ha ido borrando las costumbres, los gustos, de la madre patria" (32). To wit, Argentina's experience of mass immigration from the Old World produced a sophisticated Europhile culture that had erased any residual backward Spanish legacy, unlike the results evident in the northern republic. Mansilla clearly expressed her preferred cultural identification when, en route from France to the United States, she considered the merits of English versus French transatlantic steamships. She concluded this debate by asserting that "yo prefiero hasta naufragar con los Franceses" (12).

This racializing of ethnicities typified nineteenth-century pseudoscientific discourse that, although originating from Darwinian biology, was intended to emphasize cultural rather than racial differences. Similarly, Mansilla sympathized with the United States South after the Civil War, a region she interpreted as possessing an "esencia aristocrática," an attribute she likely linked to the area's French heritage (64).<sup>74</sup> This Latin versus Anglo-Saxon construct dovetailed

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<sup>74</sup>Linking Latinity with the United States South was not an uncommon perspective outside of the country. During the Civil War, the *Revue des Races Latines* interpreted the conflict in racialized terms. In consonance with this logic, "Southerners were, and had always been, part of the transnational Latin community. Historically and culturally, they belonged to the Latin race; they were closer to France or Spain than to the Union states"(Thier 637).

with the foundational Argentine dichotomy inaugurated in Sarmiento's 1845 novel, *Facundo: civilización i barbarie*.

In his literary critique of the Rosas regime, Sarmiento established a national dichotomy in which the barbarous countryside threatened urban civilization. The gender implications of this paradigm tasked white middle and upper class urban woman, who represented urban civilization, as “creators and guardians of civilized and civilizing spaces such as private homes, schools, and hospitals” (Szurmuk, *Women* 3). Mansilla presented herself in her travelogue as one such beacon of civilization when she declared that “Pocas cosas hay más susceptibles de crecer y educarse que la admirabilidad” (12). With this affirmation, she clarified her position; only select individuals with a cultivated background had the capacity – the “legitimate taste” in the words of Pierre Bourdieu – to formulate credible aesthetic judgments (*Distinction* 16). Bourdieu located this “pure gaze” in the privileged class when he maintained that “the aesthetic disposition . . . can only be constituted within an experience of the world freed from urgency and through the practice of activities which are an end in themselves” (*Distinction* 54). Mansilla expressed a similar viewpoint when she declared that “El salvaje no se da cuenta de los edificios que ve por vez primera; los ve mal, los juzga con su criterio estrecho de salvaje. Para comprender lo bello es forzoso tener en nosotros un ideal de belleza” (12). This author did not use the word “salvaje” accidentally; in stressing her capacity to pronounce accurate aesthetic judgments, Mansilla aligned herself and her family – labeled as barbarous in Sarmiento's work – with civilization, troubling the national dichotomy.

Mansilla's self-confident positioning contrasted sharply with Sarmiento's position in his narrative that an Ibero-American was unable to produce an incisive travel account. Mansilla identified strongly with Europe; she, like her class, considered herself akin to a European living

in the Americas. Consequently, as a self-appointed spokesperson for the Argentine elite, she failed to recognize and allow for large portions of the home population. Rather, she promulgated a metropolitan style in the sense that Rotker has theorized regarding the *letrado* creation of imagined communities. Perhaps more importantly, Mansilla applied the national dichotomy abroad. As a result, by depicting Europhile Argentines at the apex of civilization, the United States emerged in this text as comparatively culturally barbarous and, consequently, inferior.

As we have already seen in Zavala and Sarmiento's accounts, in spite of the host country's material growth through industrialization or even its advances in establishing republican institutions, national culture was another matter – particularly in the areas of manners and civility. Display of proper manners in public held vital importance to the Argentine upper class as a visible way of demonstrating one's legitimate membership in the privileged social stratum (Needell 559). When foreign visitors such as Mansilla, compared the United States to Europe or Latin America the “lack of established social traditions and aggressive assertions of social equality” signaled the impossibility of the former ever attaining true refinement (Kasson, *Rudeness* 58).

This was the case when female decorum appeared absent upon arrival by ship to the New York harbor. The United States girls who had entertained the ship passengers with their “charla incesante é inofensiva coquetería,” greeted their male family members on the dock with kisses “estampados en plena boca acompañados de un vigoroso *shake hands* muy prosáico,” actions which Mansilla recalled “me movieron á la risa” (9-10). Referencing a more genteel Hispanic culture, she affirmed that discreet kisses on the cheek or forehead and a tender embrace “como en nuestra raza se estila” would have been more appropriate (and, by implication, more genteel) gestures (10).



Some scholars have noted that Mansilla was uniquely positioned to depict interiors or female spaces that would not otherwise appear in a male-authored travel account. Be that as it may, Mansilla employed her access to a hostess' bedroom to offer further critique of national practices. It was customary at that time for female guests to a home to "freshen up" in a hostess' bedroom from the dust of travel before proceeding downstairs to the public rooms. Mansilla used this access to chide domestic women for indiscreetly displaying "almohadones con fundas blancas, cubiertas de bordados y con la sábana lisa bien doblada sobre la colcha . . . sin que le ocurra siquiera, fuera más elegante y más púdico, velar esos misterioso de la alcoba, con una sobrecama de oscuro raso" (17). Such observations underscored a clear cultural disparity between the United States female and her Argentine counterpart, in favor of the latter.

Indeed, like a positivist scientist who gathered knowledge through observable experience, Mansilla proposed that "voy estudiando al pueblo americano con cierto detalle, hasta en sus alimentos" (38). When domestic etiquette books focused on manners, they redirected attention away from the disconcerting issue of growing income inequality by providing "another way to avoid talking openly about the dirty secret of class in America" (Kasson, *Rudeness* 67). In contrast, for Mansilla, a focus on manners and civility allowed her to contest the myth of the country's exceptionalism. What's more, since Europe was akin to home territory for this author, studying United States culture implied noting an otherness that would have been less familiar and more engaging for her home readers.

One aspect of otherness was Mansilla's careful analysis of domestic female dining comportment. For the refined individual, how one dined signaled one's class membership; the focus was on form rather than on the primal necessity of eating. Mansilla quoted epicurean Jean Anthelme Brillant-Savarin who proposed a direct correlation between food and identity with the

adage: “Dime lo que comes y te diré lo que eres” (39). The art of fine dining demanded mastery of complex etiquette rules given that “in the nineteenth century, every one of the countless glasses, knives, forks, and plates perfectly arranged on the dinner table had its specific use, which only initiates knew” (Higonnet 309). Ready knowledge of this exacting form made dining “a social ceremony, an affirmation of ethical tone and aesthetic refinement” that served to validate one’s place in the social stratum (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 196). Bodily regulation was an essential component of fine dining. For the cosmopolite, “the censorship of all bodily manifestations of the act or pleasure of eating (such as noise or haste), the very refinement of the things consumed . . . this whole commitment to stylization tends to shift the emphasis from substance and function to form and manner” (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 196). Indeed, period etiquette manuals established clear divisions in public and private behavior when dining (S. Williams 48).

Refined dining etiquette appeared absent, nonetheless, when Mansilla masculinized domestic women as feasting ravenously like “héroes de Homero” (40). Her reference to Homer both subtly reaffirmed Mansilla’s and her readers’ shared familiarity with classical literature and highlighted her authority to formulate cross-cultural appraisals, an act that underscores David Spurr’s theorization regarding the central premise of the travel writing genre – that of building authority through comparative demarcations (7). During her first meal at a New York City hotel, Mansilla recalled witnessing “devorar á una elegante muchacha de dieciocho años, la mitad de una langosta, chupando hasta las antenas, con una delicia, que con elocuente expresion se transparentaba en su bellissimo semblante” (39). The descriptors “devorar,” “chupar,” and “elocuente expresion” indicated an uncontrolled act of sensual public consumption – and an absence of highbred manners.

Proper clothing or a lovely face could not compensate for unrefined deportment. Mansilla's depictions of the Anglo-American woman revealed a slippage between this type's presentable appearance and her public behavior, a shortcoming that Sarmiento had likewise noted in the male population. At a house party Mansilla appeared pained to witness elegantly dressed ladies consuming soup in an unfeminine manner while seated on the stairway "sentadas prosáicamente en esa actitud femenina que permite apoyar un gran plato sopero sobre las rodillas, un tanto separados" (40). The words "prosáicamente" and "un tanto separados" implied that these women behaved without the proper bodily control expected of their class. Referencing the European canon familiar to her cosmopolitan readers, Mansilla deplored that "Solo el realismo de Zola, puede dar acabada idea del espectáculo, del olor, del ambiente, que rodea á esas bellas mujeres" who "devoran por cucharadas el líquido negrusco en el cual flotan grandes pedazas de carne resistente, ajitando á la par sus dorados rizos, sus activas mandíbulas" (40). In other words, the sight of these golden-haired beauties contrasted unflatteringly with their vigorous, animal-like chewing on unappetizing chunks of meat. Mansilla's reference to French Naturalist *littérateur* Emile Zola, who explored unsavory aspects of city life in his novels, was not casual. Rather, this reference positioned this *literata*, and by inference, her implied readers, as the embodiment of refined aesthetic taste. This assessment elevated the cultural status of Argentine women in contrast to Anglo-American females who appeared unaware of the most basic alimentary social codes.

What mattered was not just how one ate, but what one ate. Speaking of his North American female friend who preferred masculine foods, such as turtle and oysters, over more delicate, ladylike dishes, such as cream and ladyfingers, the Secretary of the Argentine Embassy lamented to Mansilla that "Estoy desesperado" (40). This observation underscored that for the

sophisticate, negating the primal necessity of consumption by eating with proper form – a combination of order, restraint, propriety, and genteel food choices – affirmed one’s elevated standing in society, an issue that did not seem to disturb these North American women. When Mansilla faulted masculinized table manners and food choices, this move could be linked to nation, since women were tasked with embodying the model of decorous comportment. While for men eating with gusto signaled vigorous masculinity, for women this behavior clashed with period ideals of self-controlled femininity. Voracious eating could additionally be interpreted as a national metonymy – as a paucity of restraint inherent in the citizenry of an aggressive, imperialist nation.

Mansilla’s rendering of United States female behaviors aggrandized herself as a fitting judge of aesthetics abroad. She portrayed the country and its women, with its emphasis on utilitarianism over aesthetics, as culturally less advanced in contrast to a more refined Euro-Argentine sensibility. In effect, the aesthetic of taste was based on distinction, a reality ostensibly absent in the democratic culture of the model republic. This characterization was not novel given that the Argentine elite class, never more than two to four percent of the population, was characterized by “extraordinary wealth, exaggerated European pretensions, [and] disdain for everything Latin American” (Johns 93). This group sought “to equal or surpass their regional and European counterparts in every area possible as a way of legitimating their privileged social status within their own country and abroad,” a move evident in this account (Johns 93). Although Mansilla emphasized the refinement of her own society through its close alignment with France, this move paradoxically reinforced the master tropes of European cultural hegemony by referencing a superior aesthetic code that had originated outside of Latin America. In all,

Mansilla's depiction of woman in the northern republic proved largely censorious; her *tretas del débil* were in pragmatic conformity with women's restricted gender roles on home territory.

Mansilla, like Sierra Méndez, held deep reservations about the changing situation of women and modernity. On one hand, she applauded opportunities for women to participate in journalism in the United States, a practice she had pioneered in her own country. Mansilla rationalized opening up journalism for working women who had few other respectable income earning options, as well as for privileged women who could contribute to the nation through uplifting articles, an extension of their traditional domestic roles. On the other hand, when evaluated from the context of her social class, material progress failed to result in cultural advancement, as evidenced by her observations of the country's female population. Our next author held a more positive view regarding United States women and modernity.

### **Part III: José Arnaldo Márquez**

Romantic poet, inventor of an unsuccessful linotype machine, translator of Shakespeare, journalist, soldier, and pedagogue, José Arnaldo Márquez lived a life of up and downs in tune with his country's post-independence struggles.<sup>75</sup> A member of the intellectual circle that flourished during the prosperous period of the Peruvian guano age (1848-1860), a group that included Ricardo Palma and Luis Benjamin Cisneros, Marquez' generation faced the task of "reconstruir una esfera pública y una sociedad civil seriamente dañada por la guerra [civil]" (McEvoy 19). To that end, *Recuerdos de viaje a los Estados Unidos de América del Norte* (1857-

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<sup>75</sup>Like North American author Mark Twain, Márquez invested a large amount of time and money into linotype technology. Twain, unlike Márquez, was able to recoup his losses with remunerative publications. John Kasson, interrogating the link between republicanism and technology, and has posited that in the nineteenth century "men glorified machines not simply as functional objects but as signs and symbols of the future of America" (*Civilizing* 41).

1861) aimed to fulfill this civic duty by focusing less on trip experiences than on recording and interpreting key aspects of the northern republic for home readers. Although presented as a travelogue, Márquez lived in the United States as a Peruvian diplomatic consul in San Francisco and other cities during the beginning of the Civil War. His book was published upon his return by Lima's Imprenta del Comercio in 1862.

In contrast to our previous two travelers, Márquez appeared to ascribe to an identity discourse that classified his home country as trailing on an imagined timeline of modernity. He revealed this perspective in the dedication, directed to independence leader and former provisional president Coronel Luis José de Orbegoso, by deploring the backwardness of Peru. To remedy this situation, this author proposed to record useful information regarding foreign modernity in order to guide “los hombres influyentes del Perú” regarding “algunas de las mejoras que tanto necesita [el país] para su progreso . . . una exigencia imperiosa de la civilización” (viii). If this author, in a typical nineteenth-century self-deprecating gesture, discounted the value of his text by citing to “lo poco que valen sus páginas,” Márquez still expressed his opinions regarding Peru's future path (viii). Employing intertextuality, he quoted liberally from a variety of sources – newspapers, government studies, previous travelers, and more – to bolster both credibility and an overriding message: that the United States had much to offer Peru as a national model. In fact, Márquez exhibited an enthusiasm for the host country perhaps equal to Sarmiento; both individuals idealized the United States and by and large overlooked its shortcomings.

Like Lorenzo de Zavala, who produced a detailed study of United States society and culture, Márquez also examined the host country closely with the mission of offering an informative blueprint for home development. Rather than consider similarities, he proposed to

study the differences between Peru and the United States. This rhetorical choice was intended to produce concrete suggestions for national advancement through highlighting superior models. Márquez clarified this aim in his prologue when he attested that “he procurado indicar las mejoras que á mi juicio el Perú es susceptible de realizar en este momento” (viii). In effect, this traveler’s idealization of the United States’ political, economic, and social institutions left little room for criticism.

In an effort to present the northern republic as the best model for his own country, Márquez assumed a radically different position from Sierra Méndez regarding United States interventions in Latin America. Sierra Méndez had expressed an ever-present awareness of his country’s uneasy relationship with its immediate geographic neighbor. He was not the only *letrado* who noted instances of the northern republic’s lack of commitment to its foundational ideals combined with its concerted pursuit of territorial expansion and hemispheric domination. Nonetheless, with a lack of Latin American solidarity, Márquez downplayed United States imperialistic actions which had had no direct repercussions on Peru and interfered with the positive image he wished to portray of the country. He revealed this strategy by urging home readers not to judge the northern republic by the filibusters in Nicaragua or the Mexican American War (viii). Instead, he congratulated the United States for not appropriating the entire country of Mexico after the war when he declared that “cualquiera nacion europea lo habria hecho” (108).<sup>76</sup> This remark established a comparative binary of European versus United States models that underlied Márquez’ overriding vision.

This vision highlighted United States exceptionalism and constructed an image of the country as the future-under-construction – one that would eventually, perhaps naturally, surpass

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<sup>76</sup>The domestic periodical press, as well as the Congress, did consider the possible annexation of the entire country, the All Mexico Debate. The arrival of a negotiated treaty brought an end to this proposal (Pinheiro 85).

European civilization. In his last chapter, Márquez reflected on his trip impressions and imagined a transhemispheric future in which the United States and Latin America – united in republicanism – would eventually triumph over a decadent Europe. Márquez consequently highlighted rapid United States industrial advancement when he affirmed that “la colonia independizada hace menos de cien años rivaliza, en fin, con los mas antiguos y poderosos imperios” (60). He linked the future of the two hemispheres by referencing American independence heroes or Genteel Patriarchs, predicting that “la libertad salvada en el mundo de Washington y de Bolívar” would “dictar leyes á la Europa, sentada sobre los escombros de sus tronos” (134). Written before the Spanish-American-Cuban-Philippine War of 1898, an event that subsequently provoked greater anti-Americanism, Márquez appeared to ascribe to the idea of “American republican modernity” as articulated by Sanders. That is, the viewpoint that the enunciative locus of the modern future would originate in the Americas rather than in Europe. How, then, did Márquez’s representation of the country’s women serve this sustained vision?

Márquez’ evaluation of the United States woman was meant as a glimpse at a social future that would eventually unfold in more “peripheral” countries. Like Mansilla and other foreign visitors, Márquez was amazed by the freedoms enjoyed by Anglo-American women, which he expressed with: “El extranjero se queda atónito en los Estados-Unidos cuando contempla esa multitud de mujeres de cualquiera edad, sin que se le ocurra concebir el menor recelo por su seguridad” (114). This initial astonished reaction could, perhaps, be linked to a patriarchal vision of womanhood that clashed with what he witnessed on New York City streets. Still, he ameliorated this possibly dangerous or morally dubious situation by stressing that the gender received respectful treatment in public.

Linking the idea of advanced civilization with that of advanced morality, Márquez



likened public respect toward women to a national religion that revealed “el verdadero fondo de moral encerrado en el caracter de ese pueblo y lo que promete á la civilizacion del mundo” (114). The use of the words “promete,” “moral,” and “civilizacion del mundo” categorized the United States as having already achieved an advanced stage of civilization that other countries could, with time, also achieve. In effect, female emancipation as represented in this text was an integral part of a package of civilization. Other items in this package that he covered in detail included freedom of religion, universal education, and the country’s legal system.

Márquez interpreted social custom in the United States as the explanation for the deferential treatment he observed toward women in public. Linking progressive social customs and republicanism, he declared that for the domestic woman “su mejor garantía está en las costumbres de la sociedad en que vive” (116). Although the ideological construct of separate spheres afforded only men the unquestioned freedom of movement in public spaces, women were still present on city streets “forcing constant renegotiation of modern identity in the urban context” (Nead 176). Despite Márquez’ interpretation, the reality was that public deference toward women related more to period male identity than with female advancement.

During the nineteenth century, hegemonic constructs of United States male identity emphasized the masculine ideal of a chivalric, honorable man (Bederman 11). As part of the separate spheres ideology, true manhood involved protecting and guiding the weakest members of society (women, children, employees) “with paternalistic solicitude,” a situation that did not uphold gender role change but “enshrined men’s public authority and women’s domesticity” (Hoganson 24). The reality was that those gender freedoms that had astonished Márquez and Mansilla constrained domestic women into performing the role of the weaker, dependent member of society that must be protected from harm in public.

The context of rapidly developing United States cities can shed further light on the public courtesy toward women that Márquez observed. This explanation lies at the intersection of urbanization and gender. Popular literature of the time, including urban sketches and advice manuals, depicted the metropole as a dangerous, corrupting space “of unregulated sociospatial interactions inhabited by schemers and villains of both sexes” (A. Siegel 13-14). In the sprawling metropolitan milieu, women could experience greater freedoms and less social control than in small towns or rural communities. However, these liberties were not without risk, and popular literature sensationalized the dangers to women inherent in the urban environment.<sup>77</sup> Contrary to Márquez’ declaration regarding universal respect, women on city streets *were* objectified by gender stereotypes. Significantly, not all women received the same level of respect, a situation that this author either failed to recognize or choose to overlook. Rather, his idealization of emancipated women and the society that protected them prevailed throughout this account.

In line with the nineteenth century’s dualistic gender typologies, urban women became popularly classified as either “dangerous” (prostitutes, con artists) or “endangered” (ladies). Márquez prudently did not mention dangerous women in his narrative. Instead, he focused on endangered women, stressing that the general public had “la costumbre” of “esa protección siempre pronta à acudir en auxilio de la mujer” (115). Protection also entailed social control, especially for single woman since “the reputation of young ladies was particularly vulnerable” (Kasson, *Rudeness* 132). In other words, social codes and sex-segregated spaces closely regulated the endangered woman’s spatial practices. For this reason, Márquez attested with confidence that a young woman in public was safe because she “está bajo el amparo de sí misma, de la sociedad entera, y de la ley del Estado, que todos respetan y obedecen” (115). Use of the

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<sup>77</sup>See Denning, chapter 9.

word “todos” confirmed this author’s rosy vision of the United States as a model republic in which law and custom protected its weakest citizens.

The lived reality was another matter. Erving Goffman’s theorization of the self in everyday life can illuminate our understanding of this situation. In Goffman’s paradigm, “everyday social performances in our own Anglo-American society must often pass a strict test of aptness, fitness, propriety, and decorum” (36). The endangered woman had to carefully perform the appropriate social role in public in order to ensure social approbation and avoid censure. This was the reason that nineteenth-century North American etiquette books advised endangered females to always be properly chaperoned on city streets after dark. During the daytime, the endangered female could visit respectable urban entertainments, such as an ice cream parlor, but only in the company of another lady or an appropriate male chaperone. Women were additionally advised to dress discreetly and behave with decorum in public. Social transgressions, such as speaking loudly, were considered the woman’s fault and could occasion gossip, rudeness, loss of reputation, or even being mistaken for a dangerous female.

Making the city safe for respectable women was an ongoing social issue in rapidly changing nineteenth-century urban environments. One practical (and regulatory) solution was the designation of single sex semi-public spaces, such as ladies’ lunchrooms and separate hotel entrances, designed to shelter genteel females from untoward contact.<sup>78</sup> Márquez praised this recent innovation, noting that steamships offered gendered salons (“un salon destinado exclusivamente á su sexo servido por mujeres”), hotels provided ladies’ parlors (“lo mismo

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<sup>78</sup>Hotels implemented sex segregation throughout their establishments. Catherine Cocks clarifies that “By the 1850s ‘ladies’ were expected to enter by a separate, less ornate, entrance on a side street that led not to the lobby, but upstairs to the parlor. In doing so respectable women avoided one of the least exclusive semipublic spaces in the hotel and moved immediately into one designated domestic . . . once in residence, men and women continued to occupy distinct spaces outside of their bedrooms” (77).

sucede en cualquier hotel”), and trains had same sex railway cars (“hay carros en que duermen las señoras”) (116). He concluded that United States women were able to travel freely because these reserved separate spaces shielded them from inappropriate contact. In effect, “una jóven de 18 años que viaja sola puede estar rodeada de señoras desde el principio hasta el fin de su viaje, sin hablar con un solo hombre” (116). Notwithstanding, these innovations were restricted by race and class; gender segregated spaces were intended only for white women with the means to afford them.

Despite Márquez’ enthusiasm, gender segregated spaces did not evolve from custom, legislation or national morality, but from “commercial entrepreneurs [who] were the most energetic providers of urban public space especially for women” (Ryan, *Women* 76). As the century progressed, women came to play a vital role in the consumer economy. Savvy businesses such as department stores, theaters, and ferryboats courted these new customers by providing designated spaces that catered to women’s amusement alongside their sense of propriety and respectability. The public sector followed this trend, providing special ladies sections in post offices, city halls, and new urban parks. Moreover, the presence of ladies was thought to sanitize public and semipublic spaces, thus diminishing the improprieties and dangers inherent in the urban environment (Ryan, *Women* 79).

In contrast to Sierra Méndez, Márquez represented the philanthropic woman as the typical domestic female type, a positive gendering of modernity that coincided with his favorable disposition toward the country. Consequently, this author praised Harriet Beecher Stowe and offered her as an exemplary female type when he declared that “el autor de ‘*la cabaña de Tio Tom*’ es una señora. He ahí de qué modo la civilizacion enaltece á la mujer” (118). As an internationally acclaimed abolitionist author, Stowe certainly offered a prime example of the

philanthropic woman – strong, moral, educated, and dedicated to social reform causes. Reformist work through church groups or women’s clubs was considered to be a natural extension of separate sphere ideology, and the number of female charitable associations increased substantially in concert with the growth of cities (Calhoun 113). Urban reform projects were thought to counterbalance the turbulence of city life. Charitable work constituted what Márquez termed as the philanthropic woman’s “mision de amor y bondad” (118). Notably, philanthropic work was one of the few socially acceptable non-domestic activities available to endangered women, and one that, incidentally, granted them more freedom of movement in urban spaces than would otherwise be possible.

Unlikely attractions today, new reformist institutions, such as The Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, regularly attracted tourists and foreign observers, such as Alexis de Tocqueville. Progressively designed prisons, asylums, cemeteries and parks symbolized a hopeful future in a rapidly changing industrializing world (Sears 87-88). What the United States lacked in history or high culture in comparison to Europe, it recuperated in prestige through its humanitarian institutions with which the philanthropic woman was deeply involved (Cocks 29). Márquez applauded philanthropic women as guiding lights on the country’s path of civilized progress proclaiming that “su solicitud escrudina todos los rincones de la sociedad para descubrir desgracias que socorrer, males que combatir, esperanzas que sostenter” (118). In sum, for this public intellectual, a nation that respected and educated women produced admirable females who, in turn, benefited society through their charitable deeds.

Márquez, like Sarmiento, engaged in nineteenth-century transatlantic debates regarding educational reform. The United States was widely considered a world leader in female education,

and “observers often highlighted the difference between the social acceptance of educated women in the United States and the stigmatizing of them elsewhere” (Miller, “Liberty” 86). The country had “became associated above all with women in education, both as pupils and teachers” (Miller, “Liberty” 86). Nursing or public school instruction, as female professions, were a logical extension of separate sphere ideology given the gender’s traditional role as caretakers and teachers in the home. Positive images of Anglo-American schoolteachers aligned well with those of the philanthropic women – strong, capable, resourceful females dedicated to uplifting and guiding the nation’s youngest citizens.

Female education appeared to be an essential part of the modern utopia that Márquez envisioned for his own country.<sup>79</sup> He devoted an entire chapter to considering the host country’s educational system and urging for its adoption in Peru. Márquez noted a difference in social attitudes toward female education in the northern republic when he remarked that “no se considera ridículo que una señorita de diez y ocho años concurra á las escuelas y academias” (118). The use of the word “ridículo” leads one to assume a lower level of acceptance for women’s education in Peru at that time. Márquez confronted critics of female education by declaring that literate women were better positioned to “aceptar la responsabilidad de su conducta” while still respecting “el decoro y las conveniencias sociales,” an observation that supported female education without challenging established social codes for women (115). Following this logic, universal education enabled women to participate in the public sphere through charitable deeds – as a philanthropist, nurse or educator – without modifying or

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<sup>79</sup>Márquez labored, like Sarmiento, to help organize and improve public instruction in his country. He returned to New York to patent his linotype machine in 1873. During this stay, he wrote instructional and pedagogical material for use in Peru. This author also founded and directed, with the support of Peruvian President Manuel Pardo, *El educador popular*, to be used as a secular national teaching aid. During this period Márquez enjoyed the patronage of United States entrepreneur Enrique Meiggs who built Peru’s railway system. (McEvoy, *Recuerdos* 22-23).

endangering her essential domestic roles.

Unlike the other authors covered in this study, who focused solely on middle and upper class women, Márquez recorded the situation of working class women.<sup>80</sup> He focused a portion of his narrative on the female workforce in the touted model mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts. Márquez pointed out that employers preferred to hire a female instead of a male in a variety of industries given “todo lo que ella puede hacer” (117). He commended the generous wages paid to female operatives and noted that Lowell “proporciona á las jóvenes que viven de su trabajo una posicion mucho mas cómoda” than they could enjoy working piecemeal from home (117). Márquez stressed that this benevolent employer paternalism included “ademas una cantidad en dinero para sus gastos de vestidos, calzado” (117).

In addition to generous wages, Márquez wrote of the mills, the worker’s living quarters, and the communal dining hall, describing them as “edificios espaciosos, perfectamente alumbrados y ventilados,” descriptions which diverged substantially from widespread negative stereotypes regarding Great Britain’s industrialization (117).<sup>81</sup> Reaffirming the northern republic as the locus of advanced modernity, Márquez stressed that its industrial system “ahora empiezan á copiar los fabricantes de Europa” (117). Admiring Lowell signified lauding a society that treated its female workforce with benevolence, generosity, and care to protect the employees’ moral character, acts that supplied more evidence for his glowing opinions regarding the host country.

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<sup>80</sup>Márquez directed and contributed articles to *El Trabajo* (founded in 1874), a national periodical that supported progressive causes including women’s right to work (McEvoy, *Recuerdos* 24).

<sup>81</sup>English author Charles Dickens exposed the human suffering produced by the British Industrial Revolution. In his co-contemporary 1854 fictional work, *Hard Times*, Dickens depicted a British manufacturing town as “of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage . . . [with] a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill smelling dye” (19).

In reality, employers preferred to hire young, unmarried, unskilled female factory workers because they were considered easier to control, worked only for a short time before marriage, and routinely received much lower wages than men, which lowered production costs. Despite the often repeated statements by observers that employee welfare was of paramount concern in Lowell, the truth was that nineteenth-century industry had no government regulations regarding working conditions or employee safety. In the end, Lowell (mistaken for Boston by Márquez) quickly proved far less than visionary; its shortcomings included strict employer regulation of operative behavior, crowded living conditions, reduced wages, sped-up production lines, and harsh management responses to worker petitions for reform (Dublin 132). In response to female operatives' persistent demands for reform, the mills replaced these vociferous employees with newly arrived immigrant families who were entirely dependent on the employer for all of their material needs.

Nonetheless, "most early visitors, including foreigners, accepted Lowell's claims at face value" (Feller 121). The reality of this mill town would not have been easily perceived in casual visits. In order to elicit positive impressions, tours of model institutions, including Lowell, were carefully prepared and controlled by the management. It is not clear whether Márquez actually visited Lowell or just gathered his information from his readings. In any case, his idealized portrait of female factory workers' lives supported this individual's thesis that northern republican modernity provided an ideal model of progressive industrialization that his own country should emulate.

Remembering Holland and Huggan's concept of "textual zones" assists in unpacking the ideological foundation of this text. Márquez constructed a textual zone of repetition by highlighting positive aspects regarding the northern republic in order to support his central



message and purpose. Praising the country's womanhood and society as laudable was fundamental to Márquez' enthusiastic portrayal of the model republic. His focus on the typology of the philanthropic woman, who extended her positive influence outward from the home, validated his outlook that modernity had the potential for greater social good. Márquez' positive if inaccurate depiction of female factory operatives' working conditions reinforced the idea that the United States offered an ideal international model of industrial development. His contribution to the discourse of Latin American identity politics located Peru in an inferior position in relation to a country that he portrayed as an inspirational social and economic land of opportunity. For this reason, his travelogue provided detailed information for use on home territory to remedy national shortcomings.

### **Conclusion:**

For Eduarda Mansilla, Justo Sierra Méndez, and José Arnaldo Márquez, representations of the host country's female population took on greater significance than mere touristic descriptions. Sierra Méndez and Márquez identified politically as liberals, a group that tended to uphold the myth of United States exceptionalism (Körner 29). Notwithstanding, these two individuals' impressions differed substantially. Sierra Méndez criticized the country's women, while Márquez celebrated them. The professional and personal agendas of these authors had much to do with the images of women they chose to portray.

For Sierra Méndez, Anglo-American women – when linked to the concept of domesticity and national home – clearly problematized new women's roles. He interrogated changing gender roles as a means of displaying pride in home territory, responding to past political grievances, and exposing the faultlines in the myth of United States exceptionalism. His emphasis on cosmetic women parodied the perceived negative effects of female emancipation. Both Sierra

Méndez and Mansilla highlighted the negative results of modernity and excessive liberty on the female gender abroad. Their characterizations thus valorized the women and cultural values of their own countries.

For Mansilla, resettled in her country after a long absence abroad, her trip memoirs reestablished her presence in national literary circles. She engaged in journalism for the remainder of her life, signing subsequent articles as merely “Eduarda.” Despite the fact that this author supported female journalism, her depiction of United States women as lacking in true breeding upheld a Francophile Argentina as a “rival modernizer” when compared to a culturally barbaric northern republic (Körner 126).

Márquez primarily focused on providing appropriate foreign models of progress to guide his country’s future, and this focus aligned with his lifelong obsession with the latest printing technology. He recognized women as crucial players in the realization of an overarching utopian modernity, a vision that also meshed well with his Romantic poetry. This author privileged positive stereotypes of Anglo-American women, linking female liberties with national social progress in accordance with his stated political agenda. Márquez’ perspective reminds us that formulating generalizations about foreign territory based on one’s values has always been a fundamental characteristic of this genre.

For each of these authors, gender functioned as a transnational marker of modernity, either as warning or guide that related to their individual perspectives regarding woman’s vital role in reproducing and molding future generations. What’s more, engaging in international debates about female emancipation and models of modernity validated their authority as cosmopolitan national writers. In contrast to gender constructions, the subject of race in the United States elicited a different set of reactions, as we will see in the next chapter.

### CHAPTER 3: THE UNITED STATES AS A MULTIETHNIC COUNTRY

The liberal creole project involved founding an independent, decolonized American society and culture, while retaining European values and white supremacy.  
–Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*

Today’s promoters of evolutionary theory often contend that the idea of “social Darwinism” is misguided – perhaps even a clumsy, inarticulate misuse of Darwin’s theory of natural selection. Racism, this narrative insists, was never an intrinsic dimension of the theory of human evolution that we follow today. But by relying on archival sources, including Darwin’s unpublished letters and notebooks, historians of science Adrian Desmond and James Moore contest this popular interpretation and maintain that Darwin’s “notebooks make plain that competition, free trade, imperialism, racial extermination, and sexual inequality were written into the equation from the start – ‘Darwinism’ was always intended to explain human society” (xxi).

While *On the Origin of Species* only vaguely mentioned the evolution of man at all, (Darwin would later claim this explicitly in *Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*) in his notebooks he declared that “the varieties of man seem to act on each other; in the same way as different species of animals – the stronger always extirpating the weaker” (Desmond and Moore 149). Desmond and Moore conclude that Darwin clearly meant that evolution was “predicated on the weaker being extinguished” and that “individuals, races even, had to perish for progress to occur” (149).

This is the same progress that Pratt calls “the liberal creole project,” and it was scientific Darwinism – inextricable from its social repercussions – that drove this project. Its outcome was to validate the elite *criollo* traveler’s belief that he was, at the very least, equal to the Anglo-American with whom he shared European heritage. Drawing from this logic, then, this individual was best suited to determine the future of his country. In the United States, Anglo-Americans were at the apex of a racial pyramid that clearly defined the nature of man, and this pyramid was thoroughly reflected in the multiethnic makeup of the country that even casual visitors could easily observe.

Racial hierarchies typified the period’s transnational discourse. In Ibero-America, the religious and administrative legacy of the *sistema de castas* underpinned such thinking. One should keep in mind that by and large Latin American *letrados* during this period largely identified as secular and of European, rather than *mestizo*, descent (Graham 1). Positivism, based on the work of philosopher Auguste Comte, dominated Latin American liberal political thought as a “filosofía del order” that offered the greatest possibility of national progress (Weinberg 55). This theory promoted the idea that human society experienced fixed stages of development. Positivism came to be supported by the natural sciences when influential rational scholars

Herbert Spencer and Hippolyte Taine contributed to the spread and popularization of Darwinism and its offshoots. In effect, Positivism, as a philosophy of social utopianism, transformed “into a bio-logistic social technology that would fashion a new man, a new human, utilizing the laws of natural evolution” (Mendieta 4). If during the colonial period *casta* paintings visually illustrated the dangers of degeneration caused by racial mixing, during the post-independence period science became the epistemological reference for upholding racial hierarchies.<sup>82</sup>

The very development of the scientific disciplines during the nineteenth century went hand in hand with ranking humans racially on a statial timeline of development. According to this paradigm, humans were thought to progress through predetermined, ordered stages of development, and these different stages coexisted. Racialized thinking served to justify the status quo in which certain groups, because of their imagined superiority, dominated others. The apparent progress brought by European colonialism, along with the rapid growth of the United States from mid-century on, were examples that could be used to validate racial theories that classified European countries and the United States as the most advanced nations. These examples illustrated that societies, like biological organisms, were subject to evolutionary forces. In essence, the domination of certain human groups over others, as illustrated by Great Britain’s wide-ranging empire, was merely a manifestation of the “natural order.” What’s more, race pseudoscience could and was applied to wider social and political debates, such as which groups deserved the full rights of citizenship (Stein 13).

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<sup>82</sup>In *The Inequality of Human Races* (1853-1855) Arthur de Gobineau theorized that “The word *degenerate*, when applied to a people, means (as it ought to mean) that the people has no longer the same intrinsic value as it had before, because it has no longer the same blood in its veins, continual adulterations having gradually affected the quality of that blood” (25).

Notwithstanding the accepted precepts of racial pseudoscience, foreign visitors universally condemned the host country's institution of slavery. Except for Cuba and Brazil, Latin America had ended slavery earlier than the United States. Critics pointed to slavery and its legacy as a clear mismatch between the northern republic's stated equalitarian principles and its social reality. Many international travelers observed that the mistreatment of African Americans continued after Emancipation when they wrote about lynchings, or when they described the conditions of sharecroppers in the South. Foreign visitors also voiced their opinions regarding other subaltern groups, as when Eduarda Mansilla deplored the situation of Native Americans. In any case, expressing sympathy for subaltern groups did not necessarily signify advocating for their social and political equality.

Guillermo Prieto, Paul Groussac, and Salvador Camacho Roldán provided diverse viewpoints regarding the United States' multiethnic makeup. As members of intellectual elites, each of them, to varying degrees, interpreted the role of race in society in alignment with prevailing Social Darwinistic theories. Examining authors from three distinct countries illuminates the ways in which ruling class Latin Americans negotiated or negated the participation of racial groups on home territory after independence. As Susana Rotker has argued, "the very concept of citizenship (participation and equality) is, in and of itself, the negation of its existence: false homogeneity and the subordination of second-class citizens" (*Captive* 177).

Prieto offered us a perspective on race largely influenced by Social Darwinism, although he allowed for racial uplift through public education. Significantly, Prieto contested the place that United States Americans assigned Mexicans in racial hierarchies, a response influenced by his country's history with its northern neighbor. Groussac's observations also largely conformed

to existing racial preconceptions. Drawing from the *oikos* of his French heritage, Groussac challenged the notion of United States exceptionalism by highlighting the racial faultlines in the host country's makeup. In contrast, for his part, Camacho Roldán, radically reconceptualized racial admixture as a favorable outcome that strengthened a country's national body, a move that presaged the late-nineteenth-century ideology of *mestizaje*. When this traveler recognized Latin American *mestizos* as biologically superior to inbred Europeans or Anglo-Americans, this move served to validate Colombia as a model nation in terms of racial progress.

### **Part I: Guillermo Prieto**

Prolific journalist, long-serving liberal politician, popular poet and more, Guillermo Prieto's life story had a strong connection with Mexico's post-independence governmental instability. His 1,700-page three-volume 1877 travelogue, *Viaje á los Estados-Unidos por Fidel (Guillermo Prieto)*, printed first serially and later in book form by Imprenta del Comercio de Dublán y Chávez, was just one of seven travelogues he penned. Although Prieto journeyed north as a political exile with the itinerant government of President José María Iglesias, he represented this journey more akin to a pleasure excursion by passing lightly over the true motives for the trip.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Prieto's traveling companion, José María Iglesias, addressed the true motives for their journey in his travelogue, written in New York, entitled *La cuestión presidencial en 1877*. Prieto was exiled more than once for his politics. He wrote *Viajes de orden suprema (1853-1855)* during two internal exiles from the Santa Anna regime. Prieto also traveled into exile to the United States two more times, once to accompany President Juárez in 1858, and once in protest against him in 1866 (Martínez Andrade 68).

Given his substantive literary credentials, Prieto's companions named him the official recorder for this six-month odyssey via ship from Mexico to San Francisco and on by train through twenty-three cities. Despite his established authorial status and in a gesture similar to Sarmiento, Prieto warned in the preface that his work was not a learned study, but a collection of fleeting impressions. For this reason, he likened his account to a "caja de vidrios," cautioning his readers that "buen chasco se lleva quien busque en este libro observaciones profundas . . . es decir, se trata de charla" (vol. I, ix). A chatty, humorous conversational style characterized this writer's persona in his popular urban chronicle column for the leading liberal Mexican newspaper, *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, entitled "San lunes de Fidel." Accordingly, Prieto's stated goal was to produce an engaging rather than a didactic narrative by finding "una forma para popularizar mi libro entre la gente que se moriría de fastidio con los números y las disertaciones gravedosas" (vol. III, 297). Conforming to this purpose, his heterogeneous text included information from guidebooks and newspapers, original poetry, anecdotes, songs, transcriptions of long conversations, lithographs, letters, and copies of dedications he wrote in ladies' signature albums. These rhetorical choices were intended to create an entertaining narrative, an understandable aim for a leading journalist.

One way to evaluate this account is to consider it as an attempt to apply the practice of *costumbrismo* to travel literature. By offering entertaining sketches of national popular types and daily activities, *costumbrismo* can be conceived of as unifying national culture via the popular press in the way that Anderson has conceptualized.<sup>84</sup> Prieto proposed to inform picturesque Mexican national types – "el mandadero y el carnicero, la polluela parlanchina y el vejete

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<sup>84</sup>The *cuadro de costumbres*, popular throughout Latin America, emerged in Europe as a journalistic effort to depict the nature of the modern world. Guillermo Prieto recognized the influence of French writers Louis-Sébastien Mercier and Victor-Joseph Etienne de Jouy on his practice (Moriuchi 63).



recalcitrante” – regarding their northern neighbor by providing them with “ideas exactas de este pueblo, de que se suele hablar en mi país como de los habitantes de la luna” (vol. III, 297). The words “habitantes de la luna” revealed that many Mexicans did not have access to accurate information regarding their close neighbors, a situation that this author aimed to correct as a reliable eyewitness – in spite of his modest disclaimer. In fact, Prieto advocated for transcultural relativism when formulating cultural comparisons when he offered that “es necesario tener en cuenta que nosotros lo juzgamos todo desde el punto de vista de nuestros hábitos y de nuestra educacion,” what he labeled “un principio realmente ilógico y fallible” (vol. I, 172).

Despite his appeal to cultural relativism, Prieto clearly expressed definite opinions regarding the multiethnic demography of the host country.<sup>85</sup> His assessment of non-Anglo-Americans was typical of mainstream ideas that ranked races at various levels in an imagined hierarchy of human civilization. By mid-century, biological pseudoscience had determined that “certain races were assumed to be in and of themselves ‘degenerate types,’” a conclusion that underscored the danger of racial admixture (Stepan, “Biological” 97). This thinking explains why some liberal Mexican politicians, such as Justo Sierra O’Reilly, “were convinced of the superiority of the white European and vainly sought to attract [those] immigrants to Mexico” (Graham 79). This immigration policy was pursued in Argentina and Chile with more success. Without doubt, the nineteenth century was the “heyday of European racist thought . . . and Porfirian thinkers were profoundly influenced by social Darwinism. Spenser’s evolutionism, with its denigration of human hybrids, exercised a strong appeal” (Knight 78). Although Prieto was not a *científico*, one of President Porfirio Díaz Positivist minded advisors, neither was he immune from reproducing prevailing racial ideas.

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<sup>85</sup>Despite Prieto’s disclaimer, nineteenth-century Mexican journalists were “muy conscientes de su papel en la vida pública . . . [para ellos] el periodismo no es un oficio sino una misión política y patriótica” (Monsiváis 24).

Prieto initiated his account and his observations about racial groups aboard the United States flagged vessel, the *Granada*, while voyaging up the Pacific coast from Mexico. His traveling party noted with interest that all the service workers aboard were Chinese men, a situation that “no dejó de excitar nuestra curiosidad el conocimiento con estos bípedos que están metiendo tanto ruido” (vol. I, 6). Prieto’s unfamiliarity with Chinese individuals did not prevent him from expressing humorous judgments about them; in fact, judging other cultures as not only different, but inferior has typified the genre of travel writing.<sup>86</sup> He agreed with popular beliefs when he described the Chinese workers as homogeneous “alfabetos de imprenta; el que conoce una b minúscula, conoce todas las b b.,” adding that “el chino se produce por moldes, sus poblaciones son como paquetes de afileres” (vol. I, 6). By homogenizing and comparing Chinese men to machine manufactured items, Prieto failed to recognize this racial group’s individuality – and their humanity. Extending this thinking, Prieto stressed that “El chino no es un hombre, es un ejemplar de una obra inmensa” (vol. I, 6). Categorizing Chinese people as not as human, but mass-produced products of a patriarchal state that demanded obedience over individual will, was not an original idea to Prieto; this perspective has been foundational to Western philosophical thinking. Hegel formed the base for this stereotype when he characterized the Chinese race as without an individualized sense of honor, only capable of changing its behavior – like children – in response to corrective punishment rather than through reason (145).

Keeping with the *costumbrista* practice of accurately depicting local types, Prieto recorded the Chinese workers’ physical appearance in detail for his home readers. Such analysis

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<sup>86</sup>Prieto was unlikely to have encountered this ethnic group before his trip except through the national press and official reports that debated the issue of allowing Chinese workers to enter Mexico. Beginning in the 1860s and intensifying in the 1880s and 1890s, Chinese workers came to be seen as necessary for national modernization and industrialization. They arrived as inexpensive agricultural and industrial laborers from the United States and from their homeland to Baja California and the states of Chihuahua, Sonora, Sinaloa, and Yucatán (Gómez Izquierdo 45-53, 55-64).

was not casual; it drew from prevailing pseudoscientific practices that linked the physical body with perceived racialized characteristics. We see this strategy at work when Prieto described Chinese individuals as having a “cabeza obtusa” (vol. I, 6). Mentioning a racial group’s head shape can be interpreted as referencing the new period pseudoscience of craniology or phrenology. Craniologists maintained that differences in intelligence and character could be determined by variations in human cranium size and shape. Perhaps not surprising, individuals of European origin were believed to have larger cranial capacity and therefore increased brain size and greater intelligence (Stein 36).

Continuing his corporeal descriptions, Prieto maintained that the Chinese workers possessed “tez de amarillo deslavazado, ojos oblicuos, nariz chata, boca grande” (vol. I, 6). His choice of unflattering adjectives harkened to another period pseudoscience, physiognomy.<sup>87</sup> Physiognomists specialized in studying visible bodily features – particularly the face – as a way of evaluating intelligence and personality. These methods of racial ascription created greater significance for society by excluding those groups who did not properly conform to the larger domestic body; that is, those who physically embodied the ideal citizen – and those who did not (Pearl 4). Extending this logic, the physical makeup of a racial group had a direct relation to its current position in society, a viewpoint that could be supported by period science.

Applying biological principles to human social development supported the idea that certain races, because of their differing abilities, naturally dominated others. Herbert Spencer, one of the most prominent scientists to apply Darwinism to humans, first employed the terms “evolution” and “survival of the fittest” to the theory of natural selection (Graham 2). Given that “differentiation” caused “the mass of the community [to become] segregated into distinct classes

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<sup>87</sup>Johannes Caspar Lavater’s 1775-1778 illustrated four-volume *Essays on Physiognomy* was one of the major early works that claimed the validity of this practice to the sciences (Collins 253).

and orders of workers,” certain human groups were thought best suited to perform the type of labor that closely corresponded to their current stage of development (Spencer 22). In essence, by denying the Chinese individuation and by pointing out their allegedly defective corporeal features, Prieto contributed to racialized discourse that assigned purported less advanced races as best suited to carry out menial occupations.

As an increasingly multiethnic country, the United States offered visitors a singular opportunity to engage in the new touristist practice of visiting ethnic neighborhoods. In fact, the northern republic’s ethnic neighborhoods presented a unique commercial opportunity for journalism and early urban tourism by offering visitors what were marketed as authentic exotic experiences. Prieto engaged in this new form of tourism when he visited San Francisco’s Chinatown – both an ethnic and a red light district – in the protective company of a hired police officer. Underscoring the dangers of the city, with its potential for contagion and violation of gender norms and morality, he reported that Chinese women in San Francisco were prostitutes “de la peor ralea” and “el sér más atrevido, más desvergonzado y repugnante de cuanto se puede imaginar” (vol. I, 93).<sup>88</sup>

During this period, the concept of racial degeneration, linked to Darwinistic determinism, “became a code for other social groups whose behavior and appearance seemed sufficiently different from accepted norms as to threaten traditional social relations and the promise of ‘progress’” (Stepan, “Biological” 98). Following this line of thinking, the Chinese woman was doubly degenerate and dangerous due to her ethnicity and her occupation. She was a member of

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<sup>88</sup>Because most Chinese immigrants were men, “the tongs or secret societies, quickly began to import girls” to Chinatown for the lucrative business of prostitution, though the clientele proved racially varied. As part of the separate sphere ideology, the prostitute was generally tolerated by law enforcement if she confined herself to designated districts. What was unusual about United States red light districts of the period is that they were located in central, visible locations (Shumsky 666-667).

what was commonly considered to be a dangerous social category, one that included criminals, prostitutes, and the insane (Stepan, “Biological” 98). Anti-Chinese sentiment and stereotypes were not unique to Prieto, but have had a long history in Western thought; China has historically been represented by Westerners as “una civilización degenerada, visiosa y atrasada” (Gómez Izquierdo 8).

In California, the Chinese, like Latin Americans, were targets of nativist groups who resented them as competition in the gold fields and as low wage labor in other industries, such as railway construction. Furthermore, “culturalist perceptions of the Chinese’s ‘unexplainable’ or ‘bizarre’ religious, ethical, and oral attributes and practices reinforced a dominant and largely shared, racial ideology in which Africans, Chinese, and Native Americans occupied the lowest echelon of racial acceptance” (Rénique 216). Prieto posited that this issue arose from the fact that “el chino se incrusta en un pueblo sin asimilarse jamás . . . eso lo produce la persecucion” (vol. I, 433). This observation faulted Chinese immigrants for causing their own mistreatment given that they were broadly conceived of as incapable of assimilation. As explored in Chapter 1, utopian thinking privileged homogeneity as a vital unifying factor of society; those groups who failed to culturally assimilate were thought to provoke social unrest.

Nevertheless, Prieto’s observations regarding Chinese men were not completely dismissive. He recognized this group’s suitability as dependable workers to perform menial tasks when he remarked that in California they served as “excelentes cocineros, buenos y dedicados jardineros, peones del campo” and “grandes obreros de los caminos de fierro” (vol. I, 304). Interestingly, this traveler evaluated the Chinese positively when weighed against Mexican indigenous peoples. He accordingly commented that “ya quisiéramos que el indio de México estuviera en la posición del chino” since Chinese men were literate, held multiple jobs, and saved

their money, among other markers of “civilization” (vol. I, 203-204). Notwithstanding, Prieto cautioned his home readers regarding the Chinese man’s essential character which he outlined as “astuto, siempre que puede engaña á las personas con quienes trata y espía el medio de descargar sobre otro su responsabilidad” (vol. I, 305). The Chinese immigrant was not the only ethnic group that Prieto encountered during his journey abroad; he also offered opinions on African Americans.

Prieto’s experience of urban tourism included attending the most popular form of entertainment during the nineteenth century, blackface minstrelsy shows. This theatrical practice, which emerged in the late 1820s, consisted of white male actors in blackface and outlandish clothing caricaturing African Americans in comic skits, dancing, and music with a variety of instruments such as the banjo and bones. The vulgarity of these sexualized, violent skits – ones that would otherwise be taboo in the theater – reinforced pejorative racial stereotypes about African Americans as well as united white, working class audiences with feelings of racial superiority. In essence, the minstrelsy show was “a socially approved context of institutional control . . . [that] absorbed black culture even while defending white America against it” (Lott 40).

During his time in San Francisco, Prieto accidentally stumbled into a subterranean theater offering a variety show that included a minstrelsy act. He expressed surprise at the sight and popularity of the actors (“negros y negras, falsificados con perfeccion [que] son el alma de function”), the ribald jokes, the wild dancing, and the slapstick violence of the show (vol. I, 38). Prieto even appeared shocked by the “extravagantes contorsiones . . . con puñetazos y patadas tan soeces, que nuestros payasos más desastrados se ruborizarian de semejantes émulos” (vol. I, 38). If this author expressed astonishment at the vulgarity of the performance and the

unrestrained enthusiasm of the white audience, minstrelsy constructed powerful social meaning in a deeply racially divided country.

After Emancipation, the proper place of freedmen became an issue of imperative social significance in the United States. Parodying African Americans furnished one means of social control that underscored the perspective that this ethnic group belonged to an intellectually inferior and emotional race (Lott 32). In accordance with this view, African American men could never become civilized members of the nation since they were governed by womanly emotion instead of manly self-restraint. Fear of miscegenation and racial degeneration in the post-Civil War era fueled social insistence on strict racial boundaries. In fact, “Racial biology . . . was a science of boundaries between groups and the degenerations that threatened when these boundaries were transgressed” (Stepan, “Biological” 98). Minstrelsy did much to emphasize to its audience the necessity of maintaining racial boundaries.

During his later stay in New Orleans, Prieto articulated broad generalizations about African Americans that coincided with prevailing biases. Unlike the Chinese worker to whom he assigned value as a menial laborer, he dismissed African Americans as akin to semi-domesticated animals. Prieto recorded that the African American waiters in the City Hotel performed their tasks clumsily and carelessly, noisily knocking over glasses, trays, and chairs. Reinforcing racial stereotypes, he concluded that the African American “es semi-civilizado . . . como el burro” and “tose como si aullase, se ríe como quien relincha” (vol. II, 16). The words “burro,” “aullase,” and “relincha” constructed an image of the African American as possessing subhuman character traits.

These images prevailed outside of the hotel as well when Prieto reported observing “manojos de negros, que ruborizan por su fealdad al cerdo, á la tortuga y á la largartija” on the

streets of New Orleans (vol. II, 93). Such dismissive characterizations were not unique to Prieto; they typified mid-nineteenth century thinking in which “the ‘humanness’ of the Negro had not been established by Western science” (Graves 55). By emphasizing the unattractiveness and animalistic qualities of this racial group, Prieto echoed prevalent biases regarding the appearance and inherent corporal inadequacy of African Americans. In effect, “aesthetic judgments about black ‘ugliness’ were an important aspect of scientific rationales for polygenesis and offered proof of this racial group’s ‘natural’ inferiority” (Hooker 75).<sup>89</sup>

Beginning in the 1840s, the United States school of ethnology ascribed to the idea of polygenesis (rather than monogenesis), the theory that human groups had separate origins, in order to explain racial differences. This school of thought also influenced racial theorizations in Latin America (Hooker 7). Polygenesis theory offered a way to understand alleged racial differences as well to justified and maintained socially constructed human boundaries. This theorization worked well for Argentina or Chile, countries with comparatively small indigenous populations that engaged in explicit government programs of extermination of “less-desireable” populations and replacement through European immigration.

In the case of Mexico, with its large indigenous population, liberal leaders considered that education could assist in culturally assimilating subaltern groups. Following this logic, Prieto did not appear to view racial character traits as completely immutable. He posited that it was the institution of slavery that had degraded African Americans when he detailed that freedmen in the South “han quedado como heces, como residuos . . . que se revuelven como gusanos” (vol. II, 17). The Freedmen’s Bureau was combating this issue through education, or

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<sup>89</sup>Before Darwin, Latin American and United States intellectuals drew from Harvard professor Louis Agassiz’ polygenesis theorization of human differences, part of the national school of ethnology. The outcome of this school of thought was that it “offered a scientific rationale for white supremacy, the subjugation of non-whites (even after the legal abolition of slavery), and racial segregation” (Hooker 73-74).



what Prieto labeled as its “movimiento civilizador” (vol. II, 18).<sup>90</sup> Aboard a train going north, Prieto appealed to the concept of racial uplift when he applauded the work ethic of African American Pullman porters whom he depicted as “negros muy elegantes y bien vestidos . . . siendo en general útiles y honrados” (vol. I, 508).

Beyond a doubt, the experience of train travel had improved with the addition of dining cars and Pullman luxury coaches beginning in the 1860s, and service workers played a key role in this development. Hiring inexpensive freedmen to perform service work made good economic sense for the railway companies. African Americans in railway service positions (from which they were not allowed to advance) provided passengers with a sense of luxury. Additionally, this situation reinforced racial hierarchies because “in the white public imagination . . . blacks were expected to be servants” (Arnesen 14). Train passengers expected servility from the African American porter. The Pullman Company guaranteed this behavior by underpaying its service workers, making them dependent on earning tips for obsequious service to white passengers (Arnesen 18).

In essence, Prieto’s positive assessment of freedmen in the North (as exemplified by Pullman porters) drew from principles formulated by French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. One of Lamarck’s key principles held that individual improvements could be inherited by own’s descendants; in other words, racial defects need not be completely immutable. In contrast, Mendelian hereditary theories, which predominated in the United States, held that no outside interventions could influence heredity.

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<sup>90</sup>The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, established in 1865 by the United States Congress, had as one of its key agenda items the establishment of schools for freed people in the South. Opposition to the Bureau in Congress made the organization dependent on working closely with private charities to carry out its mission (Cimbala and Miller xv-xvi).

Neo-Lamarckian eugenics, then popular in France and Mexico, posited that the nature of the national body (because it was an accumulation of changeable individuals) could be improved permanently through interventions, such as public health programs (Stern, “Eugenics” 159-160). The idea of racial uplift made sense for Mexican social reformers studying the urban poor or the country’s indigenous population. This “soft” evolutionary theory appeared to underpin Prieto’s observation that the freedman could be trained to occupy certain professions for which he was thought to be eminently suited. As an additional corollary, an individual’s education was thought to positively influence his descendants.

Still, advocating for racial uplift did not signify supporting complete social equality. Despite his positive assessment regarding Pullman porters, Prieto did not enjoy journeying alongside African Americans. When touring the Mount Vernon area, he lamented that the wagon in which he was traveling “comenzó a pardear (á contener negros), más de lo que yo hubiera querido” (vol. III, 406). In any case, if this author felt free to stereotype Chinese or African Americans, he resented the denigration of Latin Americans in United States culture.

Prieto directly contested the place that United States Americans assigned Mexicans in the racial hierarchy, one that pigeonholed his countrymen alongside other subaltern groups. He rejected categorization of Mexicans as inferior, and he recorded with indignation that “el yankee . . . ve al mexicano como á un mono que pudiera explotar” (vol. II, 132). Prieto elaborated by describing “el desden que en general nos miran y el concepto que tienen de nuestra indolencia y orgullo” (vol. I, 390). The problem, he reasoned, was that the northern republic’s populace based erroneous impressions of Mexicans on a small group of “revolucionarios que acuden á Orleans” (vol. II, 132). Unfortunately, the absence of Mexican newspapers in English prevented any possibility of correcting this misinformation. As a result, Prieto concluded that “el mexicano sea

para el vulgo de los Estados-Unidos sinónimo de turbulento, de holgazan y de incapaz para gobernarse por sí” (vol. II, 132). In sum, if Prieto freely expressed his own biases regarding African Americans and the Chinese, he vindicated Mexicans and national honor by insisting that his countrymen had been wrongly stereotyped abroad.

As seen in Chapters 1 and 2, perceived differences between Latin Americans and Anglo-Saxons could be used to explain national cultural distinctions. On one hand, by underscoring his Latin heritage, the upper class *criollo* linked himself directly to European heritage and an assumed racial superiority over subaltern groups. In effect, “scientific racism . . . provided a convenient explanation for the region’s post-independence turmoil (which could be attributed to Latin American racial deficiencies), and because it justified the dominance of a white Europeanized elite over a large nonwhite or mixed-race population” (Hooker 9). On the other hand, the trope of Anglo-Saxon supremacy in the face of Latin American racial inferiority could be used politically by the United States as an excuse for imperialist expansion into the region.

Throughout his narrative, Prieto bemoaned his inability to master English, and he linked this frustration to his racial prejudices. To that end, he declared that “mientras más brutos sean los individuos aprenden mejor el inglés” (vol. I, 575). Repeating a variety of racial stereotypes, Prieto elaborated that the category of “brutish” individuals included “negros que merecen un bozal . . . arpías que vomita la Italia y que expele la Francia” and “estos chinos que parecen de masa cruda” (vol. I, 575). Ultimately, through his criticisms of the host country’s ethnic groups, Prieto revealed faultlines in the image of the United States as an unquestioned model of civilization. Overall, he assessed the northern republic as a patchwork of modernity in which “los estados de barbarie y de civilizacion no son sucesivos sino simultáneos” due to the fact that “en la república-modelo coexisten la libertad y la lucha de razas” (vol. I, 563). For Prieto, the

multiethnic makeup, interracial tensions, and threat of racial degeneration made the country more akin to a turbulent “vorágine” than a utopian society (vol. I, 563). When evaluating racial groups, our next visitor also contested the trope of United States exceptionalism, though he did so by reiterating the superiority of European culture.

## II. Paul Groussac

On May 11, 1893, the *Phillipsberg Herald* reported that Director-General Colonel George R. Davis inaugurated the World’s Columbian Exposition, also called the Chicago World’s Fair, by expressing “the hope that the Exposition may inaugurate a new era of normal and material progress” (6). The choice of the word “progress” in Davis’ speech was an overarching theme for an event that both commemorated the four-hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus’ 1492 arrival in the Americas and constructed a narrative regarding world achievements.<sup>91</sup> After the ceremony, continued the article, President Cleveland, the Duke of Veragua (a descendent of Christopher Columbus), and a select group of dignitaries proceeded to the Manufactures Building restaurant where “forty-four colored waiters, representing the number of States in the Union, served the luncheon” (6). The African American waiters serving the meal represented the union corporally while the most prominent African American of the nineteenth century, Frederick Douglass, could only articulate his viewpoints as a delegate of Haiti because he was not invited to represent his home country. In effect, racial issues were built into the design of the World’s Fair from the outset.

One of the 27.5 million visitors that visited the six-month Fair was Paul Groussac. Groussac, like Davis, also engaged with the themes of race, progress, and nation in his

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<sup>91</sup>The Exposition was originally to open in 1892, but this deadline proved impossible to meet. The gates were officially opened on May 1, 1893, although the dedication had taken place the previous fall (Bolotin and Laing 8).

travelogue, *Del Plata al Niágara* (1897). As a young man, Groussac emigrated from France to Argentina where he worked as a journalist, editor, historian, National Inspector of Public Education, and Director of the National Library for forty-four years. Though he was never a politician, we can situate Groussac alongside the post-Rosas *generación del ochenta*, an intellectual circle that included Eduardo Wilde and Manuel Láinez. These *letrados* had the task of transforming and modernizing the country “en torno de los ideales del progreso, la paz y el orden” (Bruno, “Paul” 12). Their ideas of progress, similar to those of the Porfirian *científicos*, were deeply influenced by Positivism, “an intellectual current which sought to replace the scholasticism of the colonial period with facts and a methodology based on experimental sciences” (Chabran 68). Groussac made a living from his pen early in his career, though he continued to practice journalism after his appointment to the library. He published in French in the Argentine newspapers *Le Courrier Français* and later in *Le Courrier de la Plata* using the pseudonym of Cándide (Vermeren and González 104).

Groussac’s circuitous itinerary took him to Chile, Peru, Panama, Mexico, and across the continental United States. Portions of his travelogue first appeared serially in *La Nación*, *La Biblioteca*, and *Le Courrier de la Plata* followed by a book version published by the national library press. Groussac’s motive for this odyssey was to represent his adopted country at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition. On July 14, he delivered a speech in English (with apologies for his limited language proficiency) originally entitled “El gaucho. Costumbres y creencias populares de las provincias argentinas” at the Fair’s World Folklore Congress. Groussac’s speech was printed as a brochure by Chicago-based Donohue Publishers with the title of “Popular customs and beliefs of the Argentines provinces by Paul Groussac, Librarian of the

Biblioteca Nacional at Buenos Aires, commissioner of the Argentine Republic” (Páez de la Torre 169).

The Exposition had been conceived of as a four-hundred-year celebration of the discovery of the Americas and an international exhibition of modern progress. The vast exhibit area, the White City, named for the color of its monumental buildings, contained a multitude of domestic and international displays illustrating the advances of civilization. At a deeper level the White City could also be interpreted as a valorization of white, male progress since the Exposition was carefully organized according to racialized thinking. In effect, “World’s fairs performed a hegemonic function precisely because they propagated the ideas and values of the country’s political, financial, corporate, and intellectual leaders and offered these ideas as the proper interpretation of social and political reality” (Rydell 3). Alongside the White City, the entertainment attractions on the adjacent Midway Plaisance were laid out hierarchically informed by prevailing ideas of human evolutionary progress, with the European attractions placed closest to the White City and those of the North American Indian and the African Dahomey located the furthest away. In essence, the Midway “provided visitors with ethnological, scientific sanction for the American view of the nonwhite world as barbaric and childlike” (Rydell 40).

Rather than admire the Exposition, Groussac read the event as a manifestation of United States mediocrity. He complained about “lo . . . grosero de esta civilización mecánica” and the large crowd that “exaspera mis nervios latinos” (294). This dichotomy of Anglo-Saxon grossness versus Latin refinement permeated this account. Although he criticized the Exposition, Groussac’s interpretation of the host country’s subaltern groups conformed closely with the racial hierarchies implicit in the physical layout of the Exposition.

This text was organized in twenty chapters in the conventional first-person chronological travelogue format. In his preface, dedicated to his friend and former president Carlos Pellegrini, Groussac excused the quality of his book, professing that “No siendo estas notas personales el meditado estudio que correspondería á un encargo oficial, ni un homenaje digno del alto magistrado que tanto contribuyó á que yo las escribiese” (v). As we have seen in other authors, self-effacing prologues were a typical nineteenth-century writing convention that did not negate other authorial aims.

In spite of his gesture to modesty, Groussac justified that his “impresion instantánea y sincera” could “logra adquirir un valor inapreciable, si es analizada inmediata y escupulosamente por un espíritu reflexivo” (9). With this statement, Groussac, like Mansilla, positioned himself as an exceptional individual capable of thoughtfully recording and analyzing trip experiences for intended home readers. This author authorized the veracity and objectivity of his narrative when he contended that his notes were “fielmente consignados por el observador imparcial” (295). Similar to other *letrado* travelers, Groussac declared an overarching didactic purpose for his narrative when he stated that “He esperado que esta obra sería útil,” both for Argentina and for “otras comarcas americanas, que . . . se sentirán lastimadas por mi franqueza” (xii). In the end, only Argentina and Chile emerged unscathed from this writer’s pen. Groussac’s claims of honesty (“este es un libro de buena fe”), together with his erudite intertextual references, were rhetorical strategies intended to uphold his credibility and forge connections with his home readership (xiii). Ultimately, this traveler’s interpretations of the host country were deeply influenced not only by his Francocentric vision of the world, but also by the context of nineteenth-century racial pseudoscience.

In sharp contrast to Sarmiento, Groussac recognized few positive aspects of the United States as a potential model for Argentina. Appearing to apply Herbert Spencer's theories regarding human development, this visitor surmised that "la absoluta democracia nos lleva fatalmente á la universal mediocridad" (320). Groussac's use of the word "fatalmente" coincided with period theories of natural science that categorized perceived racial differences as innate. In other words, the country was on a path of devolution, a situation precipitated by the democratic inclusion of what he labeled the "razas inferiores" (90). Indeed, period concepts of a civilized nation and its ideal male citizenry, influenced by popular Darwinism, had strong racial implications (Bederman 25).

Nineteenth-century political theorist and diplomat, Juan Bautista Alberdi, perhaps best summed up the prevailing Argentine *letrado* attitude toward non-European races when he posited that "En América, todo lo que no es europeo es bárbaro" (92). Similarly, Groussac's discourse of civilization invoked European superiority when he projected an ideal future only in Chile and Argentina as nations that "tienen en su mano un porvenir divisible de independencia y grandeza" (xxii). Significantly, these were the only two Latin American countries that systematically implemented targeted government-sponsored eugenics programs to whiten the domestic population by exterminating indigenous peoples and promoting northern and western European immigration.

Groussac linked civility, democracy, and race in his assessment of the northern republic. Conventional nineteenth-century codes of politeness – observed more closely in Europe than in the United States – dictated strict social boundaries between superiors and inferiors. For this reason, when visiting the United States, "European travelers in particular frequently complained about the coarse familiarity and egalitarianism they experienced, which confounded all



traditional notions of rank and deference” (Kasson, *Rudeness* 138). In Groussac’s view, the concept of social deference applied not only to class, but also to race. He expressed the opinion that excessive democracy permitted disturbingly close, unregulated social interaction between unequal racial and socioeconomic groups.

It was not surprising, then, that this *littérateur* had a different reaction than Prieto when he traveled across the country in a Pullman car. Instead of observing what social reformers categorized as racial uplift, Groussac recoiled from the level of intimate familiarity that was thrust upon him by the presence of an African American train porter. He recorded with shock that “el sirviente negro bebe en nuestros vasos, se zabelle en nuestro lavado y concluye su horripilante *toilette* á nuestra vista y paciencia, siento en mi epidermis el roce brutal de tanta democracia” (251). This alarmed reaction was consistent with social concerns that linked “lower races” with disease and contagion. This perspective also informed domestic policy. Rather than developing improving African American health, public health studies concentrated on measures to protect whites from diseases seen as endemic to that community (Graves 175).

Deploring the sight and the smell of African American porter, Groussac noted that the other passengers displayed “su indiferencia ante las maniobras del negro” (251). He reasoned that Anglo-Americans lacked refinement even in their olfactory senses, (“sus membranas sensitivas son diferentes de las nuestras”) an observation that implied superior senses and sensitivity in Latin Americans (251). His consistent references to “our ways” were not unproblematic given that Argentina was not completely uniform in its own racial makeup. United States followers of Scientific Darwinism held the same racial biases, yet this writer seemed to find fault with the fact that there was no concerted social or governmental policy to better contain or even expell this racial “contaminant” from the national body. Tolerating close

contact between different racial groups offered Groussac more proof that the host country was on the path of degeneration.

Moreover, Groussac appealed to upper class cultural capital when he emphasized the proper use of language as a marker of a civilized individual. He reported that “El odioso negro que se aprende á detester en razón directa de su insolencia – no quiere entender, salvo en caso de propina, más que su *slang* gangueado con el acento del terruño y cortado por ellipsis ó formulas locales” (223). This observation appeared to affirm that African Americans were both congenitally unable to master English and willfully refused to respectfully address their superiors. Groussac further expressed his indignation by directly addressing his intended well-to-do readers by asserting that “Imagináos á nuestros cocheros parisienses ó á nuestros aldeanos de provincia dirigiéndose á nosotros en su argot callejero ó rural,” a situation that he implied would be intolerable on home territory (224). Emphasizing his own superior linguistic abilities, Groussac observed that “Me acostumbraré bastante pronto al inglés culto pronunciado correctamente, pero mucho me temo que abandone los Estados Unidos sin comprender á los negros” (224). In this traveler’s opinion, we can conclude that standard use of language supplied one measure of a superior (or inferior) race.

Overall, Groussac described individuals with African ancestry as members of a primitive human race. In the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago, he categorized the uniformed African American waiters as “chimpancés maldomesticados” who were occupied by “bullendo en el gran comedor . . . agitando sus cuatro aspas de ébano en una desordenada coreografía de *minstrals*, tropezando en las sillas, rompiendo vajilla” (294). He punctuated this unflattering description by exclaiming in English: “Oh! my!” (294). In other words, this remark affirmed that *mistrals* routines accurately represented African Americans.

Additionally, Groussac appeared to reference popular pseudoscience when he alleged that the African American had a “jeta simiesca” and “lengua tartajosa, estorbada por el bezo” (130). Prognathism or a projecting jaw was one “sign” used by race science to determine a group’s closer relationship to apes. He conjectured that at very least the African American could provide comic entertainment for more advanced races given that “participa del niño y del cachorro” which “nos divierte . . . como á una criatura inferior, grotesca y jovial” (130). By exaggerating physical features – the lips, the tongue, the skin, and the jaw – in addition to making references to apes, children, and puppies, Groussac repeated a variety of negative stereotypes about individuals of African ancestry. These caricatures were likely intended to be humorous, but neither were they unproblematic.

Such pseudoanthropological conclusions were hardly original to Groussac given that “for a century preceding World War II, the dominant worldview in Europe and the United States divided people into racial groups, each with defined physical and mental traits that were viewed as biologically determined” (Tennenbaum and Davidman 435). What was new in the nineteenth century was the use of empiricism to support prejudices. Leading racial theorist Frederick Hoffman employed statistics to assert that African Americans were members of an inferior race prone to disease and degeneration, while Harvard University’s preeminent comparative zoologist, Louis Agassiz, produced distorted photographic studies of African Americans with the intended purpose of upholding white supremacy (Stein 152). In response, Fredrick Douglass objected to Agassiz’ work because it displayed the subjects with their “features distorted, lips exaggerated, forehead depressed – and the whole expression of the countenance made to harmonize with the popular idea of negro imbecility and degradation” (20). Employing humor to justify his biases, Groussac clarified that “no soy ‘esclavista,’ pero no puedo dejar de repetir que

el negro liberto y ciudadano es la mancha (negra, naturalmente)” on the United States (249). His reference to a “black stain” dovetailed with the period’s widespread preoccupation with disease, contagion, and racial purity.

For these reasons, Groussac linked his adverse portrayals of African Americans to a dubious national future. He spent the longest portion of his sojourn in Chicago, and offered this city as a microcosm of the country. In Chicago, he alleged, one could contemplate “el resultado de la amalgama” of the “elementos heterogéneos” in the northern republic as well as “predecir su naturaleza futura” (320). His conclusions were not favorable. Categorizing the African American as “pretencioso, insolente ¡ciudadano!” underscored Groussac’s belief that the freedman had trespassed on racial boundaries by insisting on a position of social equality, thus corrupting the body politic (130). During this period, in both the United States and Latin America, the extension of full rights of citizenship, such as suffrage, to subaltern groups was an important issue of social debate. Voting implied a definition of acceptable manhood, and this definition blurred the formerly distinct categories of gender, race, and class. Since Groussac did not accept African Americans as fully human, granting full citizenship rights to freedmen signified the northern republic’s descent into mediocrity.

For her part, leading suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton deplored the fact that freedmen’s electoral rights had been granted over those of women. In Stanton’s view, freed slaves’ “incoming pauperism, ignorance, and degradation” could not be equated with what she labeled “the wealth, education, and refinement of the women of the republic” (2). This was not an uncommon perspective within the Women’s Suffrage Movement, and it divided what should have been a natural alliance between African Americans and women.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Frederick Douglass had been an ally of female suffrage. Nevertheless, this alliance fell apart at the 1869 meeting of the Equal Rights Association, an organization dedicated to African American and female suffrage. The meeting

Voting rights was one area where Groussac concurred with Sarmiento – who opposed African American suffrage – based on the Argentine experience with uneducated voters supporting *caudillos* (Hooker 99). The Argentine voting franchise remained limited to five percent of the population until 1912, which illustrates the aristocracy’s stronghold on the electoral process (Johns 76).

Rather than support freedmen’s full participation in society, Groussac applauded the idea of their removal to Liberia as “un pensamiento genial” (249). Nevertheless, he noted that African Americans did not choose to repatriate despite “los ‘lynchamientos’ con que se procura convencerlos [que] son argumentos de poca eficacia” (249).<sup>93</sup> In reality, Groussac misread the purpose of lynching – those brutal acts were designed to maintain the antebellum status quo in the South rather than to encourage freedmen to emigrate. While this author’s opposition to extended voting rights and his support for violent control of subaltern groups coincided with Argentine government policy, these prejudices were not uncommon even among United States liberals, political radicals, or abolitionists. Being anti-slavery did not necessarily or logically equate to envisioning peaceable, close coexistence between freedmen and Anglo-Americans on equal terms.<sup>94</sup>

This visitor did not confine his racial biases to African Americans, but extended them to Chinese immigrants in the United States. Groussac visited San Francisco’s Chinatown with a hired policeman to protect him from what he labeled “la celeste leprería” (244). Similar to his

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ended in discord after Frederick Douglass urged support for a constitutional amendment granting African Americans (and not women) voting rights (Foner 448).

<sup>93</sup>The idea of freedmen’s immigration to Liberia or their mass migration from the South to other areas of the United States bore little results. Poverty and intimidation by landowners who wished to retain their sharecroppers largely confined the movement of freedmen during this period (R.White 420-421).

<sup>94</sup>Despite his support of emancipation, Abraham Lincoln doubted the possibility of peaceable coexistence between freedmen and Anglo-Americans. He supported freedmen’s relocation from the South to the Caribbean or Central America, less costly in transportation and climatically similar, rather than to Liberia (Fredrickson 103-107).

descriptions of African Americans, this writer's use of the word "leprosería" connected the idea of contagion and disease with non-Anglo ethnicities. Linking race, culture, and biology, Groussac described Chinese men as sexless types with "rostros lampiños" and "obesidad hermafrodita" (244). By depicting Chinese men as physically unmanly, the implication was that they were also less civilized. Period scientific theories, combined with Victorian notions of separate sphere gender specialization, highlighted the idea that "the most advanced races were the ones who had evolved the most perfect manliness" (Bederman 27). Drawing unflattering parallels between Chinese and Jewish peoples, Groussac read in the Chinese man's countenance an "odio encubierto de una raza de Shylocks, refractorios á la civilización en que prosperan, y que se creen superiores á los que les dominan" (244). By referencing the character of Shylock, the ruthless Jewish moneylender from William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Groussac's characterized the Chinese as maleficent, arrogant individuals while at the same time appealed to the cultural capital of an educated home reader familiar with foreign literary works.

When he interpreted signs in faces, this author likely referenced the Victorian semiotic practice of physiognomy. Physiognomy arose in the context of rapidly growing late-nineteenth century cities and was designed to address widespread concerns about unregulated, physically close social interactions. This period "urban survival technique" enabled an astute individual to make quick visual judgments about strangers in random encounters (Pearl 55). The practice was designed for classifying people who were not visually distinct from Anglo-Americans, such as Jewish or Irish individuals. In this case, however, Groussac did not have to resort to this pseudoscientific technique to evaluate racial groups since the appearance of Chinese individuals was strikingly different to his eyes. Interpreting Chinese immigrants in the United States as visibly aberrant and resistant to assimilation ("refractories") painted a picture of an intrinsically

degenerate race that could not mesh with the nation, thus posing the potential to threaten social unity and civilized progress.

Turning to another racial group, Groussac's opinion regarding United States indigenous peoples coincided closely with Argentine government policies. Crossing into Yuma, Arizona, he encountered Apaches whom he labeled in English – referencing James Fenimore Cooper's popular 1826 novel – “[T]he last of the Mohicans!” (228). Significantly, in Cooper's novel, Tamenund, the sage of the Delaware tribe, came to acknowledge that now “the pale-faces are masters of the earth” (385). Groussac's reference to Cooper's text inferred that the American Indian was an outdated racial group that had lost the Darwinistic “survival of the fittest.” In the same vein, he maintained that Los Angeles under Mexican rule “no era sino una pobre aldea de dos mil indios y mestizos, tan atrasados ó indolentes que no se cuidaban de explotar los conocidos placeres auríferos de sus arroyos” (234). By categorizing *Californios* and indigenous groups as lethargic and uninterested in progress, this *letrado* reiterated racial biases based on the idea of *terra nullius*. This viewpoint, that land and resources properly belonged to the group best suited to extract their potential, has been foundational in Western thought, and a key ideological justification for colonialism (Fitzmaurice 7).

The concept of *terra nullius* underpinned Argentine government policy to subdue, relocate, and even eliminate its indigenous peoples.<sup>95</sup> Groussac pointed out that Chile and Argentina, the only two American countries that had not negotiated treaties, had “lo [el indígena] han barrido al desierto donde se extingue lentamente” (209). The word “barrido” constructed an image of American Indians as dust that, by necessity, should be properly swept out of the

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<sup>95</sup>After liberal leaders came to power in the 1860s, the government initiated the Conquest of the Desert, “the Argentine equivalent of the United States' ‘Winning of the West’ which displaced or killed thousands of Indians and gauchos” and made their lands available for settlement and speculation (Shumway 144).

national home. This statement underscored Groussac's belief that indigenous peoples were inherently unworthy of inclusion in the definition of nation. By not opposing the idea of a slow extinction, we can surmise that this traveler viewed the Argentine indigenous peoples as part of a primitive past and an obstacle to future national progress.<sup>96</sup> Deliberately excluding purportedly inferior groups from the citizenry typified nineteenth-century Argentine government policies; these racial policies were intended to achieve the goal of racial replacement with European immigrants, or what this author applauded as "el trasplante de la civilización europea en América" (209).

Other Argentine literary works during this period were ambiguous with regard to indigenous peoples. In his 1872 text, *El gaucho Martín Fierro*, José Hernández deplored the mistreatment of the mixed-race *gaucho*. He modified this position in his second volume, *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* (1879) when he labeled indigenous peoples as "salvajes por completo" and "los mas rudos" who "ni su conveniencia entienden" (14). Another period work, Lucio V. Mansilla's 1870 travelogue, *Una excursion a los indios ranqueles*, recorded a not unsympathetic ethnographic glimpse at the very culture that was being systematically destroyed. In accordance with prevailing racial theorizations, combined with his home cultural context, Groussac stressed that mixed race and indigenous peoples did not possess the intrinsic temperament necessary for effectuating progress in peripheral lands. The implication for the United States was that American Indians, as an undesirable subaltern group, represented a hindrance that should be swept away.

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<sup>96</sup>Commenting on the indigenous peoples of Tierra del Fuego, Darwin upheld that "I could not have believed how wide was the difference between savage and civilized man: it is greater than between a wild and a domesticated animal (*Journal* 205).



One could argue that irony typified this author's journalistic style, and that his dismissive pronouncements regarding the purported model republic were just intended for entertainment. But the format of a travelogue rather than a formal essay afforded Groussac the opportunity to make sweeping generalizations about race bolstered by his claim of providing an accurate eyewitness account. His understanding of race went well beyond individual or even group bias. Instead, Groussac summarized his overall impression of the United States as a Darwinistic struggle between "la democracia vulgarizadora y la verdadera civilización," with the first category clearly winning (252).

Like to period political theorists, Groussac imagined that the state was a type of biological organism and, as such, was subject to the diseases and cures that could be observed in organic life. When evaluating the concept of nation as part of a medical discourse, intrinsically diseased, degenerate groups embodied the threat of social infection (Winter 20). Since the Argentine state had taken explicit steps to eradicate "aberrant" racial groups and whiten its population, that nation emerged in this account as the more civilized of the two republics. Published just before the 1898 Spanish-American-Cuban-Philippine War, Groussac's response to the trope of United States exceptionalism can be considered as a manifestation of Latin American anti-imperialistic and anti-American discourses. A radically distinct style regarding race and nation prevailed in our next narrative.

### **Part III. Salvador Camacho Roldán**

Established in 1882, the *Librería Colombiana* was one of the most important book importers and printers in Bogotá at the end of the nineteenth century. More than a source of income, this business allowed its co-founder, Salvador Camacho Roldán, to promote his political

agenda through the titles he chose to import. This agenda included promoting industrial modernization, improved means of communication, tariff-free foreign trade agreements, and the use of economic statistics to inform government policy (López 21, 219, 236) As a businessman, government official, lawyer, newspaper founder, and economist, Camacho Roldán directly participated in liberal reforms aimed at modernizing Colombia in the face of ongoing economic and political instability. These reforms, enacted between 1850-1886, included manumission, confiscation of Church property, and promotion of public education (Mondragón Castañeda 8-12). The book company's motto, "Luz, más luz," epitomized this author's personal and political viewpoints, while the store itself quickly became the leading literary salon for Colombian intellectuals.

The 1887 account of Camacho Roldán's book-purchasing excursion to the United States, *Notas de viaje (Colombia y Estados Unidos de América)*, was published in Bogotá by Talleres Gráficos del Banco de la República three years after his return. His itinerary included Colombia, Panama, and the United States, where he journeyed from New Orleans up the Mississippi and on to various cities including Chicago, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Washington D.C. In his preface, Camacho Roldán disavowed any preconceived intention to produce a travelogue, stating that he wrote merely "por complacer á mis hijos que han deseado tener más noticias de esos lugares distantes" (v). Proffering not to have had enough time to "observar las costumbres ni estudiar el estado social é industrial" while abroad, he included lengthy economic statistics, likely from his imported printed sources, to bolster the usefulness and credibility of his account (v). Despite his disclaimer, this author posited that the traveler had the moral and didactic obligation to share with one's homeland "las impresiones recibidas en países más adelantados," a remark that categorized Colombia as less advanced in relation to other countries (vi). One central theme of

this work was a comparison between Colombia's Magdalena and the United States' Mississippi regions, and this theme held implications for race.

Initially, Camacho Roldán, like Sarmiento, had professed that increasing domestic population through European immigration was key to a country's rapid economic progress. With this goal in mind, Colombian leaders, "querriamos inmigracion europea, moralizada y provista de elementos de trabajo" that had produced "asombrosos resultados" in the United States, South Africa, Australia, and Argentina (161). European immigrants provided physical capital ("brazos necesarios") along with vital intellectual capital ("industrias mas adelantadas y hábitos de disciplina social de paises más antiguos") (161). Camacho Roldán's reasoning conformed to prevailing theorizations that human groups coexisted at different stages of linear development, and that European "stock" was inherently more advanced, and therefore a valuable human import.

An extreme version of racial development theory can be read in the work of influential French polymath Charles-Marie Gustav Le Bon who classified Spanish America as existing at "the lowest level of the scale of Latin civilization" (145). Implying the ideology of *terra nullius*, the concept that land can be legally designated as unoccupied, Le Bon posited that the region was "peopled by exhausted races, without energy, without initiative, without morality, without strength of will, although situated in the richest countries of the earth, are incapable of making use of their immense resources" (145). Furthermore, Le Bon held that Ibero-America could only advance by returning to a colonial state or "by being conquered by a nation strong enough to rule it" (145). In this theorist's view, the "degenerate" countries of Latin America would have long ago returned to a state of pure barbarism had it not been for a few foreigners settled in the capital cities (145). While not as harsh as Le Bon's perspective, this type of racial bias underpinned

Camacho Roldán's lament that his country had been unable to attract large numbers of European immigrants to support Colombia's modernization.

The crux of the issue was that Latin America had little to attract European immigrants. Rather, the United States, due to its advanced state of modernity, was “la mansión en la actualidad quizás más favorecida para la raza humana en toda la tierra” (163). Immigrants chose a country based on similarities, or what Camacho Roldán described as “relaciones de lengua, climas, costumbres y estado de civilización no inferiores en mucho á las de su país nativo” (162). Since “el inmigrante civilizado . . . no puede prescindir del teatro, de los refinamientos culinarios ni del comercio intelectual,” this author surmised that “los pueblos tropicales tenemos que renunciar por algunos años á la esperanza de grandes corrientes de inmigración europea” (163).<sup>97</sup> In the meantime, he posited, “sólo podremos tener dos clases de importaciones humanas: las de raza amarilla (los chinos) y las de raza Africana” (163). Overall, these observations regarding immigration reified established racial hierarchies.

As a result, Camacho Roldán reconsidered non-European immigration to Colombia with hopeful pragmatism. He labeled these two possible sources of immigration “una posibilidad feliz,” and he concluded that “las tierras tropicales no han podido nunca ser ocupadas por la raza blanca sin el auxilio de otra raza mejor dotada para resistir las influencias físicas del clima” (165). This reflection coincided with the period's “race out of place” theory of biology. This theory, based on drawing analogies between humans and animals, held that species were especially adapted to their original geography. Following this logic, Caucasians were accepted as

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<sup>97</sup>Camacho Roldán saw population growth as key to economic progress when he theorized that “para producir el doble de hoy producimos, se necesitaría un 50 por 100 más de población” (*Escritos*, vol. III, 65). In 1871, as the *Secretario de Hacienda y Fomento*, he issued a governmental decree to promote and protect foreign immigrants. One item of this decree proposed studying “los alicientes é incentivos que ofrecen diversos países de América, Asia y Australia para atraer los emigrantes” (*Escritos*, vol. II, 462).

best adapted to northern, temperate climates, while Africans were associated with the tropics. A crucial aspect of this theorization was that human groups were thought to degenerate when relocated to different climatic zones. In the United States, this theorization supported engrained social prejudices and policies of racial separation in order to prevent any possibility of future assimilation (Stepan, “Biological” 98-101). In Colombia, in contrast, with its tropical climate and relatively underpopulated lands, it made sense to welcome what were thought of as uniquely adapted racial groups as immigrants.

Race-out-of-place theories went hand in hand with the trope of racial degeneracy. Degeneracy, in this context, signified “a pervasive, subtle decay of the individual or group, a deviation from the standard of normality” (Stepan, “Biological” 112). Certain races, as well as mixed-race individuals, were thought to be inherently corporally degenerate, offering an example of how science came to support deeply ingrained social prejudices and even influenced government policy.<sup>98</sup> In the United States, the idea of degeneracy underpinned the “one drop rule.” This “rule of hypodescent” alleged that any amount of African blood categorized the individual as of African origin, irrevocably “tainted” by one’s genetics and subject to segregation and discrimination (Graves 31).<sup>99</sup> Tocqueville recognized this United States social reality when he recorded in his travelogue that “those who hope that one day the Europeans will blend with the Negroes seems to me to entertain a chimera. My reason does not lead me to believe it, and I see nothing in the facts that indicate it” (553). Likewise, Camacho Roldán commented that in the

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<sup>98</sup>Scholar Melissa Nobles identified the 1850 census as inaugurating “the inextricable and enduring link between census categorization, racial scientific thought, and public policy in the United States” (42). Additionally, Nobles upheld that “better theoretical understanding of race gave credence to the development of segregationist public policy” (43).

<sup>99</sup>The term “miscegenation” first appeared in the United States in a polemic 1863 pamphlet entitled *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro*. Appealing to deep-seated social aversion to interracial marriage, this pamphlet aimed to garner support for Democrats by claiming that miscegenation was a goal of the Republican Party (Von Vacano 4).

northern republic “la [raza] blanca no admite nada en común” with African Americans (423). He found this stance inexplicable years after the Civil War, musing that “suponía yo que este sentimiento pasaría . . . pero no es así” (423). Still, miscegenation was a social issue in Latin American culture as well.

The link between degeneration and mixed-race parentage has had a long history in Latin America stemming from the Iberian preoccupation with blood purity. Colonial era *casta* paintings labeled “undesirable” racial pairings with atavistic terms such as “return backwards” and “I don't get you” (Martínez 228-238). As in the United States, a mixed bloodline with Africans or Afrolatinos was considered a condition that could not be fully absorbed by future generations (Deans-Smith and Katzew 3). The linkage between race and purity persisted after independence, as evidenced by Argentine and Chilean explicit government policies to eliminate indigenous peoples while at the same time whiten the population through European immigration. Camacho Roldán had originally promoted European immigration as a government official, but because of his deep commitment to Colombia's economic growth, he ultimately reframed miscegenation as a positive outcome.

Interestingly, Camacho Roldán reworked the concept of degeneration to support miscegenation while still adhering to the ideology of European superiority. Referring to examples of animal breeding to validate his formulations, he affirmed that hybridity or “el cruzamiento de las razas como medio de mejorar una y otra, es un hecho demostrado en la biología” (169). Applied to humans, the addition of European bloodlines through admixture could “mejorar la raza nativa por el cruzamiento con otra mas fuerte y en un estado superior de evolución” (161). Following this logic, racial mixing had the potential to fulfill the vital task of uplifting the national “body” by passing on what were popularly thought of as civilized,

inheritable character traits. Where Camacho Roldán differed with the norm was his positive interpretation of the contribution of indigenous and African bloodlines. By opposing the predominating linkage between degeneration and miscegenation, the mixed-race Latin American emerged in this account as superior to individuals of entirely European origin.

Camacho Roldán offered the unconventional counterclaim to mainstream racial science when he hypothesized that inbreeding within the same racial group caused degeneration. This perspective underpinned his pronouncement that “la reproducción repetida en un mismo tronco, produce degeneración en la especie, debilidad física, esterilidad, enfermedades hereditarias” (169). In his view, hybridity strengthened humans, as it did for plants and animals, invigorating instead of devolving a racial group. Extending this analogy, European racial stock offered superior intellect, while non-European bloodlines contributed a healthy constitution. Proposing Colombia as an example, this author noted that “empieza á ser elemento dominante el de las familias de raza mixta” (170). Furthermore, national leading families’ physical and moral decline had been arrested by “algún cruzamiento oculto con el negro o con el indio” which had “restituido a la sangre del blanco el vigor físico . . . si bien no todavía . . . superioridad intelectual” (170). This ideology made sense for countries with a large racially diverse population, such as Mexico and Colombia, and contravened the mentality, then popular with Argentine and Chilean leaders, that “la nacionalidad tenga que ser homogénea en términos de raza” (Pérez Salazar 5).<sup>100</sup>

Camacho Roldán applied this argument regarding miscegenation to the United States and Europe. Citing newspaper articles and travelogues as intertextual evidence of Anglo-American

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<sup>100</sup>Similarly, nineteenth-century Mexican historian Antonio García Cubas rethought prevailing discourses on *mestizaje* when he characterized mixed race individuals positively as “vigorous,” with a “lively and ardent temperament,” and a “tenacious and strenuous resistance to submit themselves to force” (20). His work was translated to English with the aim of reaching an Anglophone audience (Stern, “Eugenics” 155).

racial decline, he surmised that “la raza blanca . . . ha ganado en distincion y finura en los rasgos de la fisonomía, todo lo que ha perdido en robustez física” (170). In stark contrast to Sierra Méndez, who read robustness as characteristic of the United States woman, Camacho Roldán saw her as the product of excessive inbreeding to the point that “parece debil y enfermiza . . . esterilidad . . . no es maternal” (171). Looking across the Atlantic, he also assessed Europe as an inbred, devolving racial body, positing that “la idea del lujo llevada al extremo . . . el desarrollo de enfermedades infectivas” could be partly attributed to “síntomas de la degeneración de la raza, que pide el cruzamiento con otra más vigorosa y más sana bajo el aspecto moral” (171). Moreover, Camacho Roldán radically concluded that “el cruzamiento de la raza europea con la Africana” was a biological imperative for both tropical and temperate America (170).

Overall, Camacho Roldán articulated an antiracist philosophy. He contested widespread prejudices against African Americans, expressing the opinion that the race was “suseptible de tanta elevación y nobleza como la raza blanca” (166). It was the institution of slavery – not inherent character defects – that caused the current state of that race, what this *letrado* described as “no efecto de inferioridad de su organismo ni siquiera de su ignorancia y falta de cultivo moral” (166). In terms of Chinese workers, he assessed them positively as “sobrios, laboriosos, buenos agricultores” and highly skilled in the manual arts (173). Addressing popular negative stereotypes against the Chinese race’s character, this visitor recognized that “por el lado moral no es el mejor posible el concepto de que gozan” (173). However, he dismissed this bias as unfounded by offering the example of the first Spanish explorers to Latin America and arguing that “no se puede juzgar de una comunidad inmensa por unas pocas individualidades, generalmente las menos tranquilas, como son los primeros exploradores”



(173). In all, Camacho Roldán performed more than the task of contesting racism; he offered the idea that *mestizaje* was part of Latin America's unique destiny.

In its celebration of miscegenation, this work can be read as an important precursor to the ideology of *mestizaje*. José Martí formulated a similar counterdiscursive argument in his 1891 "Nuestra America" when he insisted that "No hay odio de razas porque no hay razas" (67). This outlook, one that celebrated Latin American racial admixture, emerged more strongly in the aftermath of the Spanish-American-Cuban-Philippine War of 1898 and the 1910 Mexican Revolution. José Vasconcelos' 1925 work, *La raza cósmica*, offered one iconic example of a positive reappraisal of racial mixture.<sup>101</sup> At its core, this ideology confronted the hegemonic discourse of set racial boundaries by offering what one scholar has labeled "the synthetic paradigm of race in Latin American intellectual history" (Von Vacano 4). Above all, this position was highly unusual for a nineteenth-century *letrado*.

Colombia emerged in this account as the more advanced country in terms of racial relations. An ardent abolitionist, Camacho Roldán reminded his readers that Colombia was at the forefront of social progress since slavery had been abolished there earlier than in the United States. To that end, he declared that "Colombia ofrece un ejemplo no desmentido en los cuarenta años corridos desde la abolición de la esclavitud" from which other countries could learn (173). This traveler viewed slavery as both immoral and counterproductive to economic progress because a slave had no motivation to work due to "la falta de compensación a sus trabajos injustamente expropiados por una institución inicua" (167). The Colombian Liberal party's mid-nineteenth century reforms, unlike the reality in the United States, had granted universal

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<sup>101</sup>Vasconcelos envisioned America's destiny as that of carrying out the "misión divina" of racial synthesis when he declared that "su predestinación, obedece al designio de constituir la cuna de una raza quinta en la que se fundirán todos los pueblos, para reemplazar a las cuatro que aisladamente han venido forjando la Historia" (16).

male suffrage rights without racial or income qualifications (Sanders, “Atlantic” 136).

Although these reforms were ultimately modified in the 1880s, Camacho Roldán continued to promote the liberal agenda. During an interview with a New Orleans newspaper, he roundly criticized Anglo-Americans for their continued unbridled “desprecio” and spatial segregation of African Americans after Emancipation (596). He informed the reporter that Colombia offered an exemplar of racial coexistence since “no se hace diferencia política entre las dos razas y muy poca en las relaciones sociales” (596). Beyond doubt, the United States continued to experience deep racial divisions and inequities.

Nevertheless, Colombia could profit from the host country’s racial biases. Given the failure of Reconstruction, Camacho Roldán stated that freedmen in the South “no tienen muchos motivos para estar del todo contentos desde el gobierno federal cesó de darles esa protección . . . contra el desprecio de sus antiguos amos” (164). Therefore, he proposed an original (although never executed) strategy of attracting African American immigration to Colombia by offering “algún pequeño auxilio para su pasaje y tierras baldías” (165). As for Chinese immigrants, overpopulation would continue to motivate their movement abroad because “la raza mongólica parece ya estrecha dentro del límite de su gran muralla” (163). Since the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act had banned this ethnic group from further entry to the United States, Colombia could also receive this ethnic group.<sup>102</sup> Disputing the prejudices inherent in the United States law, he noted that in Panama (part of Columbia at the time) Chinese canal workers had “dado menores ó ningunos motivos de queja” (164).

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<sup>102</sup>Early in the century, Chinese workers were welcomed, primarily in the West, as inexpensive laborers. After completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 and in the face of economic recessions, this racial group came to be seen as competition. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the first United States immigration law that barred a particular racial group, was passed “on the assumption that the Chinese were a distinct race with a biologically determined nature that was reflected in moral behavior, cultural preferences, and physiological traits” (Calavita 11).

Given that these guest workers were likely to eventually settle outside of Panama after completing their labors, Camacho Roldán advocated formulating government policy regarding this ethnic group when he pointed out that “la inmigración de mongoles está, pues, á nuestras puertas, y es bueno pensar de antemano en la manera como deberemos tratarlos” (164). In effect, although not European, African American and Chinese immigrants could contribute to the vital task of developing Colombia. These detailed proposals for government action make clear that Camacho Roldán’s text, produced several years after his trip, had less to do with an itinerary than with promoting his own explicit reformist political and economic proposals for his country.

In point of fact, the most important Colombian booksellers during the nineteenth century also belonged to the lettered ruling class. For this reason, bookselling signified more than a commercial endeavor, but “contribuyó a la legitimidad del letrado como agente rector reafirmando el fuerte engancho entre poder y trabajo intelectual en Colombia” (Murillo Sandoval 66). Printing, bookselling, and the literary salon were key components of the domestic intellectual network, one that kept the *letrado* reader abreast of current worldwide debates and literary trends. They were also an important way that this author could forward his liberal political agenda.

Though he valorized European culture, Camacho Roldán revealed this agenda when he evaluated non-Europeans and mixed-race individuals with unusually positive appraisal, offering an important nineteenth-century antecedent to the Latin American ideology of *mestizaje*. Furthermore, confronting aspects of the “model republic” through the act of writing can be viewed as an important political maneuver that validated Spanish American sociocultural capital. Although Camacho Roldán shared lengthy statistics regarding North American economic progress as a service to his country, in terms of racial progress his account ultimately positioned

Colombia as a racially utopian future under construction, a dialectical inversion and political stance that directly contravened the myth of United States exceptionalism. In a period of increasing North American interventionism in the region, this author disrupted those pseudoscientific discourses that represented Latin Americans as a less civilized “race” in a peripheral geographic region.

### **Conclusion:**

The ideological basis of racial discourses had deep roots in both Latin America and the United States. As seen in Chapters 1 and 2, our travelers could appraise Anglo-American men and women either as models or as warnings when imagining their own national citizenry. On the other hand, the issue of race largely offered source material for criticism and even humor. When considering slavery, the multiethnic makeup of the country, government policies or engrained prejudices, nearly all Latin Americans argued that their own nations were more enlightened than the northern republic. During the nineteenth century, *letrado* viewpoints regarding race were deeply enmeshed in prevailing biological discourses that privileged European heritage, although differences in their expressed viewpoints was related to the needs of their individual nations.

For his part, Prieto largely adhered to dominant racial hierarchies, although he allowed for racial uplift through education, one of the fundamental precepts of nineteenth-century Mexican liberals. Like Sierra Méndez, Prieto’s travel experience was tainted by his country’s ambivalent relationship with its northern neighbor. Consequently, rather than accepting the United States as an unquestioned model, he argued that the country’s multiracial makeup had created conditions for social disintegration. In addition, by opposing the mistreatment and misevaluation of Mexicans’ place in United States racial hierarchies, Prieto upheld his own

countrymen as a civilized equal to their northern counterparts, an act of patriotism in the face of an aggressive neighbor.

Interpreting close familiarity between racial groups as an anathema, Groussac utilized the issue of race to contest the solidity of the United States as a model republic. Instead, he offered Argentina and Chile, with their emphasis on racial uniformity and encouraging European immigration, as sites of a civilized American future. This viewpoint justified the position and policies of a ruling *criollo* class with close cultural ties to Europe. By linking racial inclusion with period concepts of decadence and contamination, Groussac concluded that a democracy that included subaltern groups on an equal basis equated to a country on the road to mediocrity. His views conformed to “hard” biological theory that positioned subaltern racial groups as threats to civilized progress.

Camacho Roldán also criticized race relations in the United States, not for inclusion of subaltern groups, but for their exclusion. In his view, Colombia, offered a true progressive model regarding race and society. This traveler radically reformulated dominant scientific theorizations to advocate for racial hybridity as the best outcome for all countries. Indeed, it is generally not until the twentieth century that the hegemonic discourse of racial identity began to shift in Latin America toward one that valorized *mestizaje*.

For these visitors, race, nation, and civilization were closely interrelated concepts and “arenas of negotiation, dispute, and conflict” that revealed slippages rather than solidity (Rosaldo 243). These authors employed race as either a building or a stumbling block of an ideal national citizenry. These visions had direct implication for government policy by defining who should be included in the definition of nation with full rights of participation, and who should be excluded.

## CONCLUSION

Intellectual histories . . . are ways of locating claims within traditions that seek to establish them as authoritative and legitimate, and also . . . in opposition to other traditions.

– Derek Gregory,  
*Geographical Imaginations*

“Northern Sights: Gender and Race in Latin American Nineteenth-Century Travel Narratives of the United States” has closely analyzed a selection of published travel accounts from preeminent *letrados* from five different countries. My overarching goal has been to shed light on how prominent Spanish American public intellectuals negotiated their country’s place in conversation with ongoing transnational discourses and in the face of the touted United States republican model. I have also aimed to make a unique contribution to the field of travel writing studies by focusing on the understudied area of Ibero-American production and by reversing the hegemony of the current North to South hemispheric focus in the discipline. The fact that these nine narratives did at times converge in their criticisms of the host country contests traditional periphery versus core theorizations that have conceptualized Latin America as a less advanced region in the position of perpetually “catching up” to the rapidly modernizing and industrializing United States.

It was, on the one hand, logical for leading public figures in the comparatively younger independent countries of Latin America to visit another sister republic in the hemisphere on metaphorical quests for useful knowledge. Significantly, all of these authors had distinct motives for setting off on their journeys. In other words, the trip provided the material for the text; the primary reason to travel, except for the case of Sarmiento, was never just to study the United States model, despite what these writers may have asserted in their narratives. Notwithstanding this fact, these accounts still have revealed that Latin American intellectuals were not passive receptors of ongoing period debates and theorizations; rather, they actively engaged in interrogating transatlantic intellectual discourses. The differences we read across these works had much to do with individual national histories and necessities.

This dissertation's focus on the rich contributions of nineteenth-century Latin America travelogues about the United States has revealed strong linkages with transnational intellectual debates regarding nation, modernity, gender, and race. The study of non-canonical works is important because it deepens our understanding of the mentality of the period. This focus also sheds light on how canons are constructed, and how canons reveal much about how national narratives are constructed. For his part, Pierre Rosanvallon has contended that conceptual history should not limit itself to analysis of canonical works alone. Instead, the historian (and I would add, the literary scholar) can benefit from interrogating a wider range of texts including "el modo de lectura de las grandes obras teóricas, las obras literarias, la prensa y los movimientos de opinión, los panfletos y los discursos de circunstancia, los emblemas y los signos" (129). It is in the spirit of Rosanvallon's claims that I have endorsed the intrinsic value of nineteenth century Latin American travel writing – a literature that contributes to the field of intellectual history – to the academy.

Travel writing has long enjoyed widespread popularity with readers. In terms of scholarship, Latin American iterations of this genre continue to be largely underexamined and perhaps undervalued as significant contributors to the literary canon. When these texts have received academic interest, the focus has tended to be at an individual or national level rather than in conversation across the borderless constructs of geographic imaginaries. We can see this trend in contemporary Argentine scholarship on Eduarda Mansilla, which in general has focused more on her literary career as an exemplar of early Argentine feminism and less on placing her in the larger context of international discourses on modernity. Part of the issue of scholarly neglect may lie with the hybrid nature of a genre that is difficult to neatly categorize in specialized academic disciplines, neither wholly literature, history, cultural studies, political science nor



anthropology. Similar to the field of journalism, where many of these works were originally published, travel writing has still not received the fully accepted status of other forms of literary production.

With the exception of Sarmiento and Zavala's texts, nineteenth and contemporary Latin American travelogues have largely remained untranslated and only occasionally reprinted. Given that the majority of scholarship is English-language dominated, this situation has likely limited research by the wider academy. Fortunately, the availability of digitized originals in Spanish from a variety of archival sources has made this particular synchronic study possible.<sup>103</sup> This issue does not intimate, however, that these works meet Deleuze and Guattari's definition of minor literature. On the contrary, these accounts were produced by metropolitan, privileged individuals in the dominant language; their perspectives largely aligned with those of the ruling elite that shaped nineteenth-century Latin America, and are, therefore, of significant scholarly importance.

There may be those who criticize the intrinsic value of class-restricted authorial viewpoints. Clearly, pleasure travel abroad implies free time and disposable income. Even Sarmiento and Prieto, who were ostensibly in exile, penned narratives that appeared more like tourist accounts than ones of tribulations. Notwithstanding these concerns, this group of writers, as integral members of the *ciudad letrada*, had significant leverage in their individual country's politics, literary canon, and society, and their travelogues testify to this reality. Consequently, this literary corpus contributes meaningfully toward deepening understanding of a time and place that canonical literature alone cannot provide.

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<sup>103</sup>Although not included in this study, Isabel Pesado de Mier's self-published travelogue, *Apuntes de viaje de México á Europa en los años de 1870-1871 y 1872*, is available digitally because she donated a copy in 1910 to the National Library of France while she was living abroad.

Nineteenth-century texts offer particular challenges to the contemporary scholar. Prieto's 1,700 narrative was not meant for a single reading, but serialized over time in order to generate income. In addition to length, these narratives can be tedious reading. In an effort to be useful to home readers, most of these authors included lengthy lists of statistics and extracts of documents, such statistics on agricultural production or state constitutions. The period writing style favored long, convoluted sentences and hyperbolic language. One scholar has theorized that while emotive descriptions served to confirm the narrator's presence during a trip, this choice, paradoxically, can also undermine his credibility as a reliable source (Crapanzano 58). Yet these works were, of course, products of their time; remembering period literary styles in addition to cultural, social, and historical contexts can temper presentist criticisms.

One overriding purpose of this research has been to make available to the academy a panoramic study of nineteenth-century Latin America travel literature. I have, consequently, aimed to unpack these texts in broader transnational contexts. Unfortunately, due to the primary focus on gender and race during the Latin American post-independence period, a number of interesting works have, of necessity, been excluded. This list includes *Viaje a varias partes de Europa por Enriqueta y Ernestina Larraínzar con un Apéndice sobre Italia, Suiza y los bordes de Rhin por su hermana Elena L. Gálvez* (1881), Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna's *Páginas de mi diario durante tres años de viajes. 1853-1854-1855. California, México, Estados Unidos, Islas Británicas, Francia, Italia, Alemania, Países Bajos, costas del Brasil, Provincias del Plata*, and Alberto G. Bianchi's *Los Estados Unidos: Descripciones de viaje* (1884), among others.<sup>104</sup> There are also likely unpublished accounts still to be recuperated from diaries, newspaper

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<sup>104</sup>The Larraínzar sisters' unusual text, written from memories and guidebooks fifteen years after they traveled abroad as children with their diplomat father, consists of alternating chapters of a travel account and a romantic novel.

articles, and private letters.

These writers were privileged individuals who were uniquely positioned to share information about the northern republic with their home readership since a limited number of individuals across the Americas had the means to travel abroad during this historical period. Nevertheless, even beginning in the first half of the nineteenth century, international tourism was transitioning from an activity in which only the wealthy participated to a more democratic practice. In Europe, improved transportation in the form of extended railway lines, and increased commercialization, as evidenced by the new Baedeker guides and Cook's package tours, made the long-established Grand Tour more accessible to a greater public. This democratization subsequently prompted some well-to-do travelers to distinguish themselves from mere tourists through their "moral superiority and greater discrimination in taste," an aspect clearly present in Mansilla's account (C. Thompson, *Travel* 50). (It is perhaps not unusual that, in reaction to the flood of tourists, some upper class travelers chose to visit alternate destinations.)

This democratization of travel applied to the United States as well, particularly following the completion of canals and the transcontinental railroad line. The northern republic did not offer the visitor sublime ancient ruins or masterpieces of art, although it did present its own version of the Grand Tour. The American Grand Tour was certainly unique because it encompassed such disparate sites as majestic natural wonders (Niagara Falls), technological advances (the Erie Canal), and unique, reformist institutions (the Pennsylvania Deaf and Dumb Asylum).

Today, foreign pleasure travel is no longer limited to a small fraction of wealthy individuals. The World Tourism Organization predicted an astounding one billion international tourists in 2012, or one seventh of the entire population (Rifai 2). Moreover, with the Internet

and the multiethnic diversity of many cities, one does not need to leave home to experience foreign sites. Perhaps as a result of its comparative accessibility and affordability, pleasure travel does not appear to be imbued with the same meaning as in the past; essentially, “in the twentieth century, tourism became an expression of the mass consumer culture . . . rather than a cultural activity in which the educated elite led the way” (Sears 209).

What is more pressing nowadays are the ethical issues related to travel representations and the practice of travel. Postcolonial scholarship has revived academic interest in the genre and its broader implications. As a result, today “while it is still possible to give the word ‘travel’ and all-encompassing meaning, it is no longer possible to do so in a naïve or uncontroversial fashion,” an issue which postcolonial scholarship has brought to the fore (Polezzi, “Translation” 171). Similar to anthropology’s self-examination, scholars have problematized the ethics of representation associated with the genre’s questionable legacy or what James Clifford has labeled its “historic taintedness” (*Routes* 38).

Drawing from Foucault’s theorizations regarding the linkages between discourse and power, political scientist Debbie Lisle echoed Clifford’s evaluation when she maintained that “the hegemonic discourses of difference that arose during colonial rule continue to anchor contemporary narratives about travel” (277). Still, in spite of ongoing academic interest in migration and border studies, the voices of non-pleasure travelers or countertravelers, such as refugees, are virtually absent in travel books. In a period of diminishing resources as well as high numbers of displaced people – the number of international migrants has just reached an all-time high of 258 million – some question the moral implications of traveling for pleasure alone (United Nations v).

Although travel writing studies experienced increased scholarly interest, particularly in the 1990s with Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*, Latin American-authored travel narratives from all periods continue to receive marginal scholarly inquiry. Examples of little studied contemporary texts include Andrés Ruggeri's *América en bicicleta, del Plata a la Habana* (2001) and Orlando Ortiz' *Crónicas de las Huastecas: en la tierra del caimán y la sirena* (1995). In effect, despite theoretical work by postcolonial scholars (Bhabha, Said, and others) that challenged imperialist power relations, an asymmetrical hemispheric orientation continues to dominate the discipline, with the vast majority of the scholarship originating in Great Britain and the United States and focusing on English language texts.

In terms of authorship, the definition of Latin American travelogues, for some, automatically refers to travel texts produced by foreign visitors to the region rather than works penned by Latin Americans. Pratt has famously labeled European travel writers to the region “the capitalist vanguard,” individuals who wrote of foreign territory in terms of available resources for foreign exploitation (60). Even Mexican author José Emilio Pacheco ascribed to this perspective when he stated that “El libro de viajes es sobre todo un género del Norte: la mirada sobre las tierras conquistadas o por conquistar” (qtd. in Pitman, *Mexican* 24). Admittedly, European and United States authored travelogues easily outnumber those produced by Latin Americans.

*Alianza Editorial Mexicana* attempted to adjust this textual imbalance in the 1990s when it commissioned established national writers (still the intellectual, urban elite), including Silva Molina and Juan Villoro, to produce travel narratives focused on Mexican regions (Pitman, *Mexican*, 25-29). As a whole, nonetheless, contemporary travel writers continue to be “predominantly Anglophone; and still primarily white, male, heterosexual, middle class”

(Huggin and Holland x). In the end, the legacy of colonialism persists, a situation that elevates the literary value of Latin American authored travel accounts.

As I have argued, through their narratives focused the United States as a comparative mirror, nineteenth-century Latin American *letrados* affirmed their authority to write their country's ideal future and national literary canon into existence. These individuals participated in deep networks of transnational and intertextual discourses triangulated between three geographic spaces – Latin America, the United States, and Europe. For this reason, Skukla and Tinsman's concept of an "Americas paradigm" provides a useful analytical lens to guide scholars who examine these works.

These visions regularly contained contradictions and ambiguities. They have oscillated between forthright recognition of the country as a model of modernity and scathing criticism of its shortcomings. Optimists could view the Americas as forging a shared, republican identity in contrast to a decadent Europe with hierarchical, outdated institutions. In contrast, admiration of United States achievements could be interpreted as ascribing to the idea of a timeline of civilized progress, one in which Latin America was perpetually trailing in a future that was being realized outside the region. In imagining their country's futures, some travelers linked home territory to its European roots which, paradoxically, validated the status of the Old World. Others proposed seeking modern, practical answers in a prosperous hemispheric sister republic. Despite commitment to establishing a national literary canon, these writers often constructed their personas based on intertextual references to foreign literary and scientific archives.

Disparate perspectives could even prevail in an individual as enthusiastic as Sarmiento. This range of opinions challenge the idea that personal and political agendas are always clear-cut. In any case, as the century progressed, the United States' faults as an imperialistic nation

became undeniably apparent. From whichever their positions, these *letrados* legitimized their authority to speak for the nation in the way that Gregory has theorized, and it is important to keep in mind that their visions were strongly class and racially restricted.

These travelers' visions failed to include the entire imagined home community. Instead, they upheld a utopian blueprint that largely sought national progress guided by the continued dominance of the class to which they belonged. Their pronouncements regarding ideal citizenry emphasized the superiority of European heritage, an act which perpetuated engrained colonial power relations and negated power sharing or wealth redistribution. Therefore, their ideas of progress did not necessarily imply social equality. As a group their gaze was horizontal and transnational, focusing on white, upper and middle class educated individuals across geographic boundaries. If today we stress the interconnectedness of the world, I argue that the educated elite of Latin America, the United States, and Europe was closely horizontally connected in ways that may not be immediately apparent. This privileged group read some of the same canonical literature and leading scientific studies (often in the original language), visited many of the same tourist sites in Europe and the United States, interacted socially (when proper introductions had been made), and debated many of the same social issues.

Weighing in on the socially constructed categories of gender and race reminds us that cultural encounters may have more impact than visits to sacralized tourist sights. Drawing from the work of Erving Goffman, Dean MacCannell has offered the idea that public behavior itself can be considered a type of tourist attraction ("Sightseeing" 13). As these texts revealed, our travelers read the signs of United States modernity through the lens of public behavior. If the signs they read were at times inaccurate, generalized, or homogenized is less important than how

they constructed meaning from observed public behavior in the northern republic and applied these conclusions to their own social realities.

Looking northward for didactic information did not entail wholesale acceptance of the purported model republic, even for individuals as approving as Sarmiento and Márquez. That is, given the horizontal class and racial identification of these public intellectuals, critiques of the northern republic did not represent a case of “the Empire writes back.” Postcolonial scholars have coined this term to describe a situation in which inhabitants of the periphery subsumed local identity and adopted a foreign culture in its entirety (Ashcroft et al. 4). None of these travelers advocated for wholesale adoption of United States cultural and social practices. Instead, the geographic placement and cultural histories of individual countries played a significant role on a traveler’s stated recommendations.

Mexican intellectuals, with the exception of Zavala, tended to assume a more nationalistic stance in reaction to a dominating neighbor, while those from the Southern Cone could express more detachment, perhaps due in part to geographic distance. Without doubt, the home anchor of *oikos* informed these travelers’ perspectives as they formulated national comparisons. By evaluating and choosing the useful aspects of the northern republic, they affirmed an identity discourse that upheld home society and challenged the solidity of the myth of United States exceptionalism. Culture and civility were unquestionably areas where these visitors, in part through their identification with the concept of *latinidad*, freely disparaged United States society.

It was, in the final analysis, expressed thoroughly by José Enrique Rodó in his 1900 essay, *Ariel*, when he claimed that “en el estudio desapasionado de esa civilización [EE.UU.] que algunos nos ofrecen como único y absoluto modelo, hay razones no menos poderosas que las que



se fundan en la indignidad y la inconveniencia de una renuncia a todo propósito de originalidad, para templar los entusiasmos de los que nos exigen su consagración idolátrica” (28). Imagining our utopian futures as expressed in literary genres comes down to this: We defend our visions with the written word.

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