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Narratives of Identity: The Literature of Nineteenth-Century Latin American Political Thought

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The nineteenth century represents a crucial period in the development of Latin American political thought. When invoking this time frame and region, however, one might naturally gravitate toward the more familiar period of its revolutions against the Spanish Empire.[1] The Spanish American wars of independence (1808–1826) rightfully occupy a central place in global history for their implications for the legacies of empire, colonialism, republicanism, revolution, and liberalism—to name just a few popular themes. The postindependence period and its corresponding political thought, however, is mostly reserved as a topic of interest for scholars of the region. Yet, the postindependence period in Latin America is equally significant for the study of political thought and its continuation of the themes present in its revolutions, adding to them the important—and connected—advent of nation-building and identity formation in the region. It is in this period that several Latin American thinkers assess and assert their roles as active agents in the production of culture and knowledge in their new societies, using the themes and ideas that form part of our common conceptual language in the history of political thought and adapting them for their unique contexts.

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It is also during this period that some of the best-known works of Latin American literature emerge. Many prominent statesmen, intellectuals, and political actors from Latin America in the nineteenth century were men of letters who expressed their thoughts through literature (story and poetry), and their literary writings emerged during a postrevolutionary period that was still struggling with civil wars, social unrest, and commercial and governmental development amid newfound political independence. The myriad ways to interrogate these challenges overlapped with profound questions about national and broader cultural identities, whose origins and inspirations could not be sufficiently addressed through historical or political analysis. Literature offered a mode through which to think through the ongoing political and social challenges of the region while also cultivating an ongoing inquiry about "American" identity and its meaning.[2] Latin America's history—which includes its political thought—should therefore be read "as a discourse elaborated by literature itself."[3]

One area where literature and politics coalesced was the River Plate region, whose social and political context served as the essential backdrop for the literature—and the political thinking within it—produced by its leading analysts. While the literature produced in nineteenth-century Latin America spans the American continent, this article focuses on thinkers from the River Plate region.[4] This choice is not arbitrary; rather, it can largely be explained by the region's important historical and intellectual role during the nineteenth century. Until the 1870s, Argentina and Chile were cultural centers for literary production. The numerous writers who hailed from the region, as well as those who lived there for some time, produced works that engaged in social topics and ongoing political debates that displayed an "unbroken dialogue, a continuity, even in its conflictiveness, typical of western European literatures."[5]

As a result of this shared engagement with the social reality of the River Plate—and of America more broadly—"a number of enduring themes in Latin American cultural history emerged most emphatically."[6] Among these themes, we can highlight *nationhood*, *desire for progress*, and *the challenges of modernity*.[7] These themes,

moreover, speak to a wider concern during this period with understanding *the sources and meaning of an "American" identity*, for which literature served as a prominent platform. Although establishing a national identity might be perceived as a myopic political ambition, the question of national identity could not be separated from the condition of Latin America as a whole in the nineteenth century. For this reason, the interest in literature was indicative of political thinkers' desire not only for the intellectual development of their nations but also for creating the lasting references of a common culture and its thought in all of Latin America.

This article discusses the use of literature by four leading Latin American intellectuals from the River Plate—Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811–1888), Esteban Echeverría (1805–1851), Rubén Darío (1867–1916), and José Enrique Rodó (1871–1917)—and its connection with their respective political thought. Apart from their role in the nation-building efforts of elites during this period, these figures helped to establish a common "American" intellectual tradition and national identity through their literary writing. These writers, moreover, mark the passage in Latin American literature from Romanticism to modernism (*modernismo*), two schools of thought and writing whose literary and philosophical analyses emerged from their sociopolitical concerns. Literature thus played an active role in shaping the character of Latin American political thought during this period by conveying the visions for not only a national but also a broader "American" identity. Sarmiento and Echeverría, both figures in the Romantic movement, conceived of an American identity in nature, whereas Darío and Rodó, figures in the *modernismo* movement, conceived of an American identity in spirit. The following pages elaborate on the dynamics between these two forms of identity, themselves shaped by the observations of these thinkers on the social and political realities of their day.

"The Borderland between Barbarous and Civilized Life": The Postindependence Condition and Role of Literature

A prevalent theme in nineteenth-century Latin American thought and literature was concisely and perhaps most famously expressed

by Sarmiento as the tension of living between *civilization* and *barbarism*. This condition he viewed as an inherent feature of the Americas as a whole, for people living in North and South America shared the challenge of developing their societies in places that in the postrevolutionary nineteenth century demanded exploring and expanding "outside the sphere occupied by the settlers," out into "the borderland between barbarous and civilized life."[8] This spatial limbo encapsulated the social and political condition of the region that shaped the minds of Sarmiento, Echeverría, Darío, and Rodó alike. To understand their use of literature, then, it is essential to understand this landscape.

Latin America was "firmly inserted" in the major world events of the eighteenth century, including the revolutions of 1776 and 1789, the spread of liberalism after the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution in Europe.[9] All these events influenced the Spanish American wars of independence of the early nineteenth century and, naturally, the political thought of its leading proponents, many of whom were avid students and direct disciples of the Enlightenment—namely, of the French philosophes.[10] These events and influences helped to cultivate a desire for progress that shaped intellectuals' works from the wars of independence until the twentieth century. Progress, moreover, was understood as material and intellectual improvement. Regarding material improvement, a number of critical events from the first part of the century significantly influenced the development of the subsequent years, including the initial efforts of local hegemonic groups "to participate in the international capitalist market," the "long military process that placed large amounts of territory under armies," and "the imposition of the liberal project of the formation of strong and independent nation-states"—all in an effort to obtain "some measure of material progress."[11] Three political challenges, therefore, emerge as lingering features of nineteenth-century political and social life: interest in commercial development, power and ownership over the land, and nation building. All these challenges, moreover, convey the need for change that was prevalent during the period.

The intellectual climate of Latin America was certainly shaped by these early concerns with domesticating the natural, "barbarous" landscape through political and commercial means; but it cannot be solely explained by them. Thinkers like Sarmiento, Echeverría, Darío, and Rodó convey in their writings that the shift (or change) that needed to take place was a mental one, not only a physical one, to consolidate the identity of the nation. A study of their literature, then, reveals the role of ideas and the imagination in cultivating a national and broader American identity. First, however, it is helpful to explain why ideas and the imagination, not strictly political and commercial accounts of nineteenth-century Latin American history, help us to better understand the region's political thought.[12] This point is connected to the themes and concepts that shaped their writings.

Issues of culture, society, and politics coalesced in the postindependence period in Latin America.[13] The foreign threat of Spain during the wars of independence was no longer important; instead, the new domestic challenges of nation-building took its place. While the wars of independence left behind some parameters of social and cultural organization, such as the legal framework for the new republics and the role of liberalism in political culture, many matters remained unresolved.[14] Thus, after independence, civil war, political factions, and social instability were pressing issues as subjects were gradually converted into citizens of ambiguous nations during a time when the idea of the nation was still consolidating, with over a dozen incipient republican governments taking shape against their formerly colonial administrations.[15] The question of federalism versus political unitarianism (or centralism) that was common in the region was one not only of governance and constitutional forms but also of cultural and social customs, since within these new nations the differences between peoples, ideologies, and ways of life often stood at odds.

Between the 1820s and the 1870s, violent struggles to reconfigure Latin American societies from their colonial structures demonstrated the political and cultural incompatibility between the interests of a rural sector with local oligarchs and a process of development that was outwardly urban and bourgeois in its economic,

political, and intellectual aspirations.[16] Social hierarchies did not change after the revolutionary wars: many creoles took over the roles that Spaniards previously held as large landowners hiring laborers to work their fields for a pittance.[17] This tension factored into Sarmiento's and Echeverría's descriptions of *barbarism* and *civilization* in their writings. The main writers of the nineteenth century were, then, "men of action" who wanted to play a role in their region's cultural production, but they "found themselves in a vast, barbarous continent which was less welcoming than they imagined," since it was "overwhelmingly rural and agricultural."[18] The literal vastness of the landscape was mirrored in the cultural challenge of "writing America" in a way that would help to fill the space, physically and intellectually.[19] In this context, culture and political thought could not be easily separated. The literature produced in Latin America from the late eighteenth century through the nineteenth century, which included not only the colonial, prerevolutionary period and wars of independence but also "the period of social upheaval and readjustment" of the nineteenth century, demonstrates the writers' concerns with their political conditions, such that Latin American literature during this time "tended to be identified closely with the social reality of the area."[20] Latin American writers, moreover, were often "integrated into partisan struggles."[21]

The production of literature and political thought during this time was, put simply, tangled in the lingering problems of the previous revolutionary struggles and inchoate independence of Latin American republics. Yet, the formation of new nations in the nineteenth century was hardly a strictly material or political endeavor: it needed to possess an ideational dimension to understand the "connections between history, politics, and fiction in the process of nation building."[22] Here, the role of men of letters (*letrados*) and literary writers stood out. These individuals were deeply involved in the political issues of their nations, acting as statesmen for whom "there could be no clear epistemological distinction between science and art, narrative and fact, and consequently between ideal history and real events."[23] During a time when the idea of science was still being debated, moreover, writers

and philosophers understood the opportunity that literary narrative presented for achieving the ends they envisioned for Latin America. Responding to the sociopolitical conditions of their time, they attempted to fill in the history of their fledgling nations with narratives that would "increase the legitimacy of the emerging nation," where literature was "an opportunity to direct that history towards a future ideal."[24]

The importance of cultivating an identity through literature emerged as a fundamentally political and social need during this period. Although the rest of the arts waned in the early nineteenth century because of the lack of wealth to sponsor their production, literature continued to carry the social function of relaying to readers the challenges of nation-building while also contributing to the production of culture in Latin America.[25] Economic limitations to the production of culture were not the only issue, however; there were also intellectual limitations that writers needed to overcome. The widespread Latin American rejection of most Spanish intellectual and cultural vestiges in the region meant that the artistic inspiration for their literary works needed new sources.[26] In literary history, though, the colonial influence did not immediately vanish; rather, "it was displaced via the substitution of the Hispanic by other cultural centers, particularly Paris and London."[27] Nineteenth-century men of letters and writers often spent time in Europe, where they became acquainted with the literary trends of Romanticism, realism, and naturalism. They brought back these movements to Latin America with "a particular and specific inflexion" that relied on "local nature and social history" to flourish.[28] How that inflexion was conveyed in literature as a form of national and American identity formation is the topic of the subsequent sections.

An American Identity in Nature: Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Esteban Echeverría

Latin American Romanticism was similar to, and indeed influenced by, European Romanticism. This connection, moreover, extended to the question of national identity. It espoused, for example, the "importance of folk traditions in national identity" and expressed

apprehension or outright disapproval of the "socioeconomic conditions" of the period.[29] This disapproval showed an occasion in which the traditional alliance between political elites and intellectuals that marked much of the region's history was disjointed. Latin American elites' desire for progress, defined by commercial and industrial development, not only "impoverish[ed]" people but also "decultured" them through the loss of folk cultures.[30] Literature became a medium through which writers could express this cultural loss and "was constituted," hence, "as an autonomous field of knowledge" for the preservation of culture and, with it, the consolidation of identity.[31]

It is important to remember that during this period the idea of an "Argentine culture" had not been consolidated, much less so a Latin American culture. It needed to be found in the visible surroundings of the national landscape; in nature, to wit. The natural landscape would become a meaningful source of identity through which notions of nationhood could emerge. This nature, moreover, contained a duality that is conveyed in the literary writings of both Sarmiento and Echeverría, again encapsulated by the themes of civilization and barbarism that portray the wildness of a nature that must be tamed or developed, including the ways of life of its inhabitants.

Consider, first, *Facundo* (1845). Sarmiento, a writer, statesman, liberal, and Unitarian—who would be president of Argentina from 1868 to 1874—was a critic of Juan Manuel de Rosas (1793–1877) and his regime in Argentina and as a result was exiled to Chile in 1840, where he wrote *Facundo*, first publishing it as a series of journal articles. Chile was important for Sarmiento's literary formation, but he also contributed to the literary development of Chile. While living in Santiago, for example, Sarmiento influenced the development of the Literary Society of Santiago.[32] Sarmiento's interest in the overlap between literature and social events begins to hint at his method in his famous novel.

Although *Facundo* was originally published as a series of editorials, the work's literary quality is undisputed for its narrative form that aims to capture and convey the world and historical period that it treats.[33] Sarmiento's analysis of historic characters like Rosas and

Facundo Quiroga is, therefore, a "reflection" of the figure of the dictator in Latin American history, not a "copy of reproduction, much less scientific analysis" of this figure.[34] For this reason, we must consider *Facundo* as "a dialectical process of imitation and distortion."[35] It is, then, the work's narrative form that organizes its events and its relaying of "facts," thereby evolving from history, but without fully abandoning its historical context and details.

This literary approach is most evident in the emphasis on nature that opens the work and frames most of its analyses. The Romantic influences in *Facundo* are evident in passages where Sarmiento describes Argentine nature for its sublime qualities: as an aesthetic combination of terror and beauty. Not coincidentally, for example, chapter 2 of the work, "Argentine Originality and Characters," uses Echeverría's poetry to emphasize the impact the region's landscape has on the literary imagination and connects it to the identity of the nation. Describing Echeverría's prose, Sarmiento writes,

> There in the immensity without limit, in the solitudes where the savage roams, in the far-off zone of fire that the traveler sees coming toward him when the fields burn, he [i.e., Echeverría] found the inspiration that the spectacle of a solemn, grand, incommensurate, silent nature provides to the imagination; and then the echo of his verse could make itself heard, applauded even in the Spanish peninsula. In passing, a fact must be noted that explains many of the social phenomena of nations. *The features of nature produce customs and ways peculiar to those features, so that where those features reappear, the same means of controlling them are found again, invented by different peoples*.[36]

In his description of the impact of the natural landscape on Argentine poetry, Sarmiento makes an important observation: nature influences people's customs, and commonalities in nature result in commonalities in peoples from around the world. This point helps Sarmiento make an initial connection between the "savages" of North America and those of South America in the

sentences that follow this excerpt. The "barbaric" qualities of the people whom Sarmiento observes in the Argentine pampas throughout *Facundo*, such as its protagonist Facundo Quiroga, are, then, a product of Argentine nature—a "character."

The political implications of this statement should not be lost on us. The duality between civilization and barbarism that Sarmiento believes haunts Argentine development constitutes a dialectic inherent in the Latin American condition because the sources of "civilization," foreign and European, cannot easily overcome the sources of "barbarism," which are products of nature in the region. Sarmiento is not only describing this problem but also demonstrating the hold it has on his society. The outlook for Sarmiento, however, is not bleak; it is precisely this dynamic in nature that gives rise to a literary reflection on the "originality and characters" of Argentine life:

> There exists, then, an underlying poetry, born of the natural features of the country and the unique customs it engenders. Poetry, in order to awaken (for poetry is like religious feeling, a faculty of the human spirit), needs the spectacle of beauty, of terrible power, of immensity, of expanse, of vagueness, of incomprehensibility, because only where the palpable and vulgar ends, can the lies of the imagination, the ideal world, begin.[37]

The entire passage merits emphasis. Notice, for example, the sequence that Sarmiento describes. Poetry is a result of the natural landscape and the customs it engenders in people. But, he adds, poetry emerges only from a series of features in nature that he believes are interconnected: beauty, terrible power, immensity, expanse, vagueness, incomprehensibility. These things he calls "palpable and vulgar." Sarmiento's concept of nature, then, is anything but beautiful in its raw form, but it has the potential to become beautiful through human expression, which cannot help but describe this nature. Sarmiento then proceeds to quote a poem by Echeverría to summarize his point in verse.

"The result is that the Argentine people are poets by character, by nature," Sarmiento concludes.[38] This statement might seem to be a rhetorical exaggeration or Romantic observation but, if taken seriously, actually reveals an important remark about the relationship between literature and political thought during this period. If it is a natural feature of the region to express its thoughts through verse or literature, then this point would extend to political observations and would imply that poets are also sources of political thought. Such a claim, furthermore, would explain Sarmiento's medium (a series of literary journal articles that became a novel) to criticize his political enemy. It would explain, moreover, the transition in *Facundo*, where Sarmiento begins with observations about Argentine nature and its effect on its "characters" and only then develops his political observations about Facundo Quiroga and Rosas. It is as though Sarmiento himself begins with an observation of beauty in order to transition to an observation of "terrible power." We must ask ourselves, after all, about the author's narrative sequence in the novel: if all that Sarmiento wanted to accomplish with *Facundo* was to criticize the politics of Rosas and his regime, why delve into these observations and comments about nature? What's more, why open with an analysis of the landscape that leads him to comment on the music, poetry, and clothing from the region, all before getting into its political strife?

Seeing nature as a source of identity, it seems, entails for Sarmiento more than reflecting on the beauty of the region; it provides a truly profound reckoning with the volatility of nature, which can produce dictators *and* poets. This reckoning, moreover, needed to be recorded and spread throughout the region. One purpose of the work was to transform the country through a critique of its current system. To do so, Sarmiento's method in *Facundo* required a form of pseudoscientific analysis that would help to explain the "peculiar cultural configuration" of Argentina that showed a "lack of cohesion in the state."[39] This interest in cohesion, political and cultural unity, was largely influenced by Sarmiento's own struggles to incorporate European culture into Argentine life while also deciphering the unique Argentine identity

that appealed to so many followers of Rosas. In this sense, Sarmiento was no Eurocentric assimilationist, for in *Facundo* there is a sense of internal complexity, even struggle, that he is attempting to articulate. Sarmiento's narrative demonstrates how a "radical mimetic ideology coexists with a critique of the unmediated importation of European knowledge."[40]

The desire for cultural cohesion evident in *Facundo*, in other words, is not a simplistic call for cultural and political unification under the banner of a consolidated identity. A close reading of *Facundo*, thus, transmits the message that the consolidation of a national identity is not a facile concept to understand, much less to achieve: it is political insofar as it requires a close analysis and study of a society, its people, their ways of life, and the inevitable struggles between them. What is "barbaric" in the caudillos and gauchos Sarmiento criticizes is hardly a quality that can be removed from Argentine life, hence the dialectical nature of the civilization-barbarism themes he understood all too well.

On one level, *Facundo* represents a broader sentiment in Latin American thought during a period that was attempting to establish a cultural identity for the new nation.[41] Sarmiento's involvement in the Generation of 1837, an intellectual movement influenced by Romanticism and liberalism, saw the May Revolution in Argentina in 1810 as a unique opportunity to decipher the identity of the nation.[42] Yet, a series of civil wars in Argentina demonstrated to Sarmiento that national independence was not enough to consolidate the nation, especially when he saw it fall prey to dictatorship under Rosas; but nor was politics a sufficient means to understand the nation. Literature filled this gap by complementing the poetic "nature" of the Argentine people and communicating with them, as it were, through the medium they understood best while also connecting literature and nature to the present reality of his time. Literature and nature, in other words, could not be divorced from sociopolitical reality; nature, Sarmiento believed, gave shape to sociopolitical reality, and it was the task of literature to elucidate these links. The intention of *Facundo* was therefore political from the outset, since his sociopolitical reality—as he conveyed it in his work—was a struggle for civilization, progress, and liberty amid

two hostile and "barbaric" extremes: the regime of Juan Manuel de Rosas and the lawlessness and tyranny of the caudillos in the interior of Argentina.[43] Civilization for Sarmiento stood as the only recourse to save his country from political dissolution, which in *Facundo* entails a defense of European customs, economic development, and politics, but, alongside these observations, an admiration for the wild Argentine landscape and its people.

Sarmiento's respect for Esteban Echeverría cannot go unnoticed. The two figures contributed to the development of literature in the region. Sarmiento founded a literary society in Argentina as a branch of the Asociación de Mayo (May Association), which was established in Buenos Aires by Echeverría and gave rise to the Generation of 1837.[44] Along with Sarmiento, Echeverría was a part of the "Romantic generation" in Latin America. Both figures, moreover, brought Romanticism to Argentina and Chile. Echeverría was the first to arrive in Paris in 1826, where he lived until 1830.[45] He returned to Buenos Aires during the height of the Rosas regime and consequently turned his French influences into political action by writing and circulating what he called "social philosophy" in Buenos Aires's French magazines.[46] In 1835, with other young intellectuals he founded a literary salon that quickly evolved from "literary novelty to political subversion."[47] This salon later turned into a secret society and became the Sociedad de la Joven Argentina (Society of Young Argentina).[48]

Although Echeverría was a gifted poet, his poetry is not analyzed in this article. Instead, here the focus is on his 1871 short story "El Matadero" (The Slaughter Yard), considered a sister-story of *Facundo*.[49] "The Slaughter Yard" concisely conveys the hatred and violence between the Argentine political factions of Federalistas (who supported Rosas) and Unitarios (who wanted a united nation, like Sarmiento and Echeverría), doing so in the form of a political allegory about the ritualistic butchering of cattle.[50] Like *Facundo*, "The Slaughter Yard" is classified as a work of Latin American Romanticism in its writing style and form.[51] Like Sarmiento's, moreover, Echeverría's criticism of Argentine society in his story evokes a political lesson through its narrative and connection to nature.

"El Matadero" portrays "a primordial vision of a society within the framework of Christian symbology turned inside out," where a deformed republic with a penchant for ceremonial violence reveals the ugliness of a near-theocratic autocracy.[52] Here, again, the narrative of the short story heightens our reading. Echeverría's choice of narrative as a work of fiction—unlike Sarmiento's *Facundo*, which is based on historic figures in Argentina—seemingly problematizes its connection to the sociopolitical reality of the nineteenth century. Yet, this is hardly the case: the details of Echeverría's story demonstrate his intentional inclusion of key features of Argentine life during the Rosas regime (kangaroo courts, factional violence, the misplaced role of the Church) that render his story less fictional than first meets the eye. Echeverría also implements the role of nature, albeit turned inside out, to convey the state of disarray in which the Argentina of Rosas found itself. Not coincidentally, he uses the symbol of the region's economy—cattle—to convey this fact:

> The view of the slaughter yard in the distance was grotesque, full of animation. Forty-nine cattle were lying on their hides and [there were] nearly two hundred people who were treading that muddy ground spilled with the blood of their arteries . . . in the air, a swarm of blue-white seagulls who had returned from their emigration to the smell of meat were flitting around covering with their dissonant squawking all the noises and voices of the slaughter yard and projecting a clear shadow over that field of horrible carnage.[53]

The vivid description of the slaughter of cattle is a metaphor as well as a direct comment on social reality. These cattle were being slaughtered to feed the hungry masses, a detail to emphasize the improper rule of the Rosas regime that left its people hungry; their slaughter, moreover, serves as a symbol for the regime's violence, consequently described in the short story through the sacrifice of one of the spectators in the novel, whose fate is similar to—if not worse than—that of the cattle. The popularity of "El Matadero" served as "public platform" that raised the issue of political faction

against the question of national identity years after the Rosas regime came to an end in 1852.[54] Unlike Sarmiento, for whom the natural landscape shapes the character of its people, Echeverría uses nature in his short story as the innocent victim of tyranny. The question of identity in "The Slaughter Yard" is broached from a different angle, not as the result of nature and its reflection in literature, but as the necessary solution to the mutilation of nature against itself. The violence and carnage depicted in "The Slaughter Yard" contrasts to the bucolic poetry that Sarmiento admired in Echeverría's verses, but together they demonstrate the Janus-face of nature that influenced Sarmiento's and Echeverría's conceptions of national identity. For Echeverría, literature is the way to portray these dynamics between nature and political society.

Together, Sarmiento's and Echeverría's works demonstrate that Latin American literature in the nineteenth century was more than a form of "propaganda" for the nation-building project; it conveyed the difficulties of consolidating a national identity, given ongoing political strife.[55] It is important to recognize that their interest in Argentine nationhood was hardly a rigid form of nationalism, moreover, for the idea of the nation was (and is) itself unstable and "always in deficit, among other reasons because the concept of nationality is constantly manipulated by a country's ideologizing factions and is, therefore, in continuous disequilibrium."[56] Echeverría's and Sarmiento's political commentaries may have been overt criticisms of the Argentina of Rosas, who favored a unitarian system, but these respective visions of nationhood were not stable in the stories in which they were told. Readers are placed inside the narrative "reality" of a certain regime, witnessing the barbarism that pervades it, but there is no direct, systematic account of a remedy for this political disorder. The political thought that stems from their works, then, is in the very way they struggle with the impreciseness of the idea of the nation and its respective identity while simultaneously offering an analysis of their society's transgressions through support of a tyrant and his violent regime. Nature, for both Sarmiento and Echeverría, offered an explanation—but also a possible alternative—for their social and political reality.

An American Identity in Spirit: Rubén Darío and José Enrique Rodó

The eventual fall of the Rosas regime did not mark the end of political problems in the region; it instead marked the beginning of another period of revolution in the River Plate, from 1837 to 1852, influenced by the revolutions in France in 1848 and defined by the region's growing concern with social inequality. During this period, Latin America entered the global market, which gave rise to a new concern regarding the question of national identity within a modern, globalizing world.[57] Two writers from the second half of the nineteenth century expanded on this topic through their literary efforts to better understand the weighty concept of modernity: Rubén Darío and José Enrique Rodó.

Darío, commonly referred to as the father of Latin American *modernismo* for his work *Azul* (1888), was once criticized for his alleged detachment from politics—a view that has been helpfully corrected through a closer reading of his works and their connection with his social and political endeavors.[58] Interested in the topic of Latin American identity, his movement of literary *modernismo* became the mode of expression for the search for a proper course of identity for Latin America that stood in contrast to Europe or the United States.[59] With its novel form and critical adoption of European culture, Darío's poetry engaged with the political concept of modernity in a way that transmitted the tensions between the themes of nationhood and progress, continuing the conversation Sarmiento and Echeverría began in the previous years. At this point in history, however, it was no longer the desire for material progress and commerce that defined political debates. Instead, the entry into the global market and the widening political interests of the United States in Latin America demonstrated to Darío and Rodó that materialism and utilitarianism were the new philosophical challenges to overcome.

The "poetic environment" of the modernist poet in the second half of the nineteenth century changed its "referential" attitude toward Europe as a beacon of civilization and placed its qualities, instead, into "an artificial system"; this system reinforced "a sense of wealth and accumulation," reflecting "the relationship that

Modernist poets had with the materialism of bourgeois society."[60] Nature, in other words, was no longer the connecting source of identity but was replaced, rather, by the objects that demonstrated luxury and wealth.[61] Consider, for example, Darío's short story "El Rey Burgués" (The Bourgeois King). Darío opens his story telling us explicitly that it is a "happy story" and proceeds to describe the extravagances in the king's rooms, which are cabinets of curiosities from all over the world. One day the king is presented with a man and told he is a poet. Despite his countless objects and animals, the king had not come across a poet and so decides to keep him. The poet says to the king, "Sir, I have not eaten," to which the king responds by assuring him that if he speaks, he will eat. The poet proceeds to explain how he "abandoned the inspiration of the unhealthy city . . . the muse of the flesh that fills the soul with smallness and the face with rice powder," going instead to the jungle, where he could find "the warmth of the ideal."[62] The poet then tells the king his most important message:

> Sir, art is not in cold marble columns, nor in laminated paintings. . . . Art does not wear pants, nor does it speak bourgeois, nor does it dot all the *i*'s . . . [but] he is august, he has cloaks of gold or flames, or walks naked, and he kneads clay with fervor, and he paints with light. . . . Sir, between an Apollo and a goose, prefer the Apollo, even if one is made of baked earth and the other is made of ivory.[63]

The king interrupts the poet before he finishes his speech and offers him a chance to operate a music box outside his castle if he wishes to eat, so long as he never speaks of ideals again. The poet accepts, and he humiliates himself by operating the box until eventually dying of cold. The irony of the story becomes clear once the king encounters the poet, for the tale is happy only for those for whom the "spiritual emptiness" of the king's world goes unperceived.[64] This story echoes a theme present in most of Darío's work that is carried forth by his modernist narrative, in which the relationship between the poet and the poem is "strongly ambivalent" in the sense that it transmits the values of dominant classes of his

society while criticizing that society for its inability to achieve "transcendental beauty and universal harmony."[65]

Darío's engagement with modernity's key features—materialism, utilitarianism, capitalism, secularism—demonstrates his awareness of the sociopolitical context of the nineteenth century.[66] His narrative, furthermore, criticizes these features obliquely by portraying the absence of harmony and the need for spiritual revival. Harmony and spirit for Darío are not religious features, to be sure, but moral and philosophical features that drive society toward a more humanistic progress. Darío's astute portrayal of this reality does not render his stories directly "political," but it does demonstrate how they "can be read as reflections of socio-political concerns" in Latin America as a "spiritual and aesthetic vacuum," with his response being the aspiration "to reorder dominant values."[67]

The reordering of values was also a concern for José Enrique Rodó. His novel *Ariel* (1900) "seemed to be the last message from the nineteenth century," in which the protagonist of the story, Prospero—who is Rodó's alter ego—addresses "the youth of America."[68] The novel was born out of a "spiritual revolt" against America's imitation of the Anglo-Saxon world, including its religious atheism, philosophic pragmatism and utilitarianism, and economic capitalism.[69] Rodó's desire for a moral deepening of life became, during the height of globalization, connected to the desire to separate America's identity from that of the United States and reunite it with its "Latin" roots as an "integral component of a new self-understanding of the southern American states."[70] The story is a passing of the torch, so to speak, in which the philosophical masters of the nineteenth century express their wishes for the next generation of thinkers. Yet, this passing of the torch requires, first, a warning about the current state of affairs in Latin American society and the problems to which it may lead if left unattended. Rodó criticizes European industrialization and materialism and names them after Shakespeare's Caliban in *The Tempest* as a barbaric and rude figure without deeper intellectual and spiritual aspirations. Ariel, in contrast, is the "spirit" of Latin America that should prioritize aesthetics and morality.

In *Ariel*, Rodó argues how "the mind is diminished by continual commerce within a single category of ideas or by the single exercise of a single mode of activity," which, referencing Comte, he considers "comparable to the miserable fate of the worker who is obliged by the division of labor in his workplace to consume his life's energies in the unvarying routine of one mechanical chore."[71] This point is connected to the topic of national identity, for Rodó believes that such a change in social life "is as damaging to the *aesthetic* of the social structure as it is to its solidarity."[72] Similar to Darío's "The Bourgeois King," which ridicules the poet who speaks about ideals, Rodó believed that "when a sense of materialism and comfort dominates a society," the result is "the narrow mind and the single-faceted culture" that renders it "particularly calamitous for the diffusion of ideals."[73]

Many parts of *Ariel* could be quoted to emphasize the close connection he sees between the importance of spirit and the continuation of an intellectually healthy and distinct American identity. Something that is unique to this story compared with the works analyzed so far, however, is the overtly dialogical narrative of the text, which is itself indicative of the task Rodó is setting out for himself and, didactically, for his readers. *Ariel*'s treatment of identity as a form of spirit is evident in Rodó's choice to assume the voice of a university professor, Prospero, and telling the youth of Uruguay how to reform their society for their moral, intellectual, and spiritual sake. *Ariel* allows Rodó to implement "the figure of the maestro," who speaks to all of Latin America as "the possessor and transmitter of knowledge about culture."[74]

It is important to remember that Rodó's compelling narrative strategy can be conveyed only through literature. As he strove to raise spiritualism over North American pragmatism and utilitarianism, Rodó found recourse in the dialogic tradition, where Rodó does not speak directly to the reader; instead, it is his professor-character, Prospero, who is expressing the spiritual features that Latin American society requires and seemingly inviting conversation over the future. The result is that Rodó cultivates a classroom that exists permanently in the story of the literary narrative.

Yet, the narrative that Rodó adopts presents a challenge to his concept of identity because of its deliberate dishonesty over the dialogic nature of his story: "the founding fiction of *Ariel* is that it is a dialogue, not a speech; a seminar, not a lecture."[75] Indeed, in the story Prospero is the master whose wisdom cannot be questioned. Because the only speaker in the novel is Prospero (save Enjolras, a student who makes a few remarks), the reader is always "*in statu pupilari* and, though situationally in dialogue, is necessarily mute."[76]

To seek an identity in spirit requires from the poet a role similar to what Sarmiento observed in *Facundo*. It is the task of the poet—who is any literary writer—to find the sources of identity and elaborate on them; to make them intelligible to others. This act reflects on the relationship between literature and power, of course, but is also indicative of the role these figures envisioned for themselves as social and political analysts: to illustrate, clarify, and explain their societies to others—including its problems and its virtues—especially during the threat of commercial and political expansion from without. In a sense, this is what Darío and Rodó understood as the role of spirit: to insist on the constant and essential role that moral and intellectual development need to play in any political society.

Conclusion: Literature and Its Narrative as Critical Political Thought

Whether an identity in nature or in spirit, what the use of literature in the political thought of these figures reveals is that their desire for a national and broader American identity needed to be rooted in something more than political characteristics. This task, therefore, required understanding the "character" of a culture, as Sarmiento and Echeverría expressed it in their stories and verses, and also showing how the contemporary political climate of their nation was a corruption of that character through the unbridled power and ensuing violence of a dictatorship. Similarly, Darío and Rodó saw the advent of economic globalization and the philosophical and political theories on which it rested as a threat to the American identity and used literature to question its assumptions about luxury and wealth, raising, instead, the role of intellectual and

moral development—that is, spirit—as the true source of identity that would lead their region in a more humane direction than the rest of the Western world.

The sociopolitical context of the nineteenth century was integral for the development of these literary narratives that interrogated and developed the meaning of a national and regional identity. This was a method that helped these writers to cope with the continued challenges of disparate modernizing efforts and their pushbacks. In the Latin American literary tradition, then, the nineteenth-century stories and poetry that explored the question of identity, rooted in either nature or spirit, convey how the desire for identity was the result of an "inevitable demand," one that critically accepted the inherent problems of nationhood and modernization as "contingencies of the imaginary and unforeseeable . . . for the sake of fending off the danger of social dissolution."[77] For this reason, the question of identity in the literary writings of these thinkers cannot be divorced from their political concerns about fragmentation, civil war, faction, and dissolution. What's more, their desire for progress and modernization continued to play a role in their writings, but their respective definitions of progress indicate that the question of national identity could never be separated from the act of modernizing. Instead, their literature demonstrates how the "confluence of both desires"—for national identity and for modernity—were "expressed within the same proposition" and "within one discourse."[78] These thinkers' literary treatment of the question of national and regional identity, in other words, was careful and complex, and it elucidates the relationship between nationhood and pan-Americanism prevalent during this period in Latin America.

The literary mode of nineteenth-century Latin American political thought, which emphasized ideas and the imagination, is not separate from the political history of its region and period, much less from its political thought. Moreover, the critical role of literature as a vessel for generating a sense of national identity and critiques of current political and social problems merits inclusion in the region's tradition of political thought. After all, these thinkers and writers accomplished two things at once in their works: they

adequately grasped the lived social and political reality of their societies and, perhaps more important, communicated these qualities in a way that transcended their locality, thereby becoming a part of an intellectual and literary tradition that shaped later thinkers and writers. In this sense, the literary mode is a process and inquiry, not a result with rigid conclusions, of the same questions that shape political theory. The form this process and inquiry takes may be different, but the messages are similar.

The political thought that can be gleaned in these works of literature from nineteenth-century Latin America is thus of a *critical* nature, not ideological, even if it borrowed and emulated certain European traditions and was still invested in the nation-building project that was undoubtedly orchestrated by elites.[79] As the scholar of Latin American literature Roberto Gonzáles Echevarría has observed, the region's literature should be understood as "the equivalent of critical thought in Latin America, and critical thought most certainly includes politics. To speak of *lo literario* as an independent category is as banal as it is perverse to try to turn literature into propaganda for any political doctrine."[80]

The literary works of Sarmiento, Echeverría, Darío, and Rodó should not be considered solely or explicitly a transmission of political ideologies. Instead, what makes them a form of political thought is precisely the critical nature with which they engaged their societies' pressing questions. Their stories and verses, arguably, achieved a continued conversation through their open-endedness and ability for varied interpretations, which allowed them to cultivate narratives of identity that no other genre could have accomplished. Narrative is itself a political intervention that serves as "an origin of independent and local expression."[81] To say that there is a literature of political thought, Latin American or other, is to say, then, that there are other genres of political thinking beyond speeches, treatises, discourses, or letters, genres through which it is possible to ascertain the themes and questions that shape sociopolitical reality. One could go even further to posit that the overt role that narrative plays in these works of literature leads readers to question the places of power and authority in the

texts more directly. For this reason, the stories or verses of these four thinkers are never closed, but left open for continued conversation and interrogation.

In this article, the focus on literature has been an intentional effort to broaden the landscape of what we understand to be nineteenth-century Latin American political thought by elucidating the social and intellectual background against which some of its best-known literature was framed. This background was imbued with the political commentary of its authors, and the products—their literary works—serve as valuable sources for understanding the intellectual history of the time and place more deeply because the authors required incisive awareness of their environments to properly capture them on paper and consequently analyze them in a way that had currency for a vast reading audience. The ability of these thinkers to communicate temporal and local sociopolitical issues using language that affirmed the common, human experiences and desires that permeate all lasting works of literature provides a convincing reason to incorporate them in any serious inquiry about political thought.

Notes

1. For helpful summaries and analyses of the wars of independence and Spanish American revolutions, see Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Roberto Breña, *El primer liberalismo español y los procesos de emancipación de América, 1808–1824: Una revisión historiográfica del liberalismo hispánico*, 1st ed (Mexico, DF: Centro de Estudios Internacionales, Colegio de México, 2006); François-Xavier Guerra, *Modernidad e independencias: Ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas*, Ensayos 386 (Madrid: Encuentro, 2009); Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History*, new ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2018); Lester D. Langley, *The Americas in the Age of the Revolution, 1750–1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996); John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions, 1808–1826*, 2nd ed, Revolutions in the Modern World (New York: Norton, 1986); Joshua Simon, *The Ideology of Creole Revolution: Imperialism and Independence in American and Latin American Political Thought*, Problems of International Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

2. The term *Latin America* was not widely used during this period; instead, most thinkers from the region refer to what we consider today to be Latin America as "America" or "Our America." To avoid anachronism, this article uses "America" in this same manner.
3. Roberto González Echevarría, *The Voice of the Masters: Writing and Authority in Modern Latin American Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 9.
4. This region roughly encompasses modern-day Argentina, Uruguay, and parts of Chile. Rubén Darío, although Nicaraguan, composed *Azul* in Chile.
5. Leslie Bethell, ed., *A Cultural History of Latin America: Literature, Music, and the Visual Arts in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 27–28. "[S]uch was the importance of Argentine literature up to the 1870s that, perceived through the standard histories, Spanish American literature as a whole can often seem to be almost reducible to the history of literature in that one republic . . . [and] there appears to be an unbroken dialogue, a continuity, even in its conflictiveness, typical of western European literatures." Although the author of this article goes on to say that "it is arguable that Argentine and River Plate literature (with close ties to Chilean literature up to 1850) is one history, and that of all the other Spanish American republics another during this period," it is possible to attribute the preeminence of River Plate literature to its geographic location as a place "with less of the heritage of Spanish colonialism and with its political and literary elites most strongly influenced by England and France."
6. Bethell, *A Cultural History of Latin America*, 27–28.
7. Here, I roughly follow the themes of "nationness" and "modernness" described by Antonio Benitez-Rojo in his essay "The Nineteenth-Century Spanish American Novel," in Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker, eds., *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 417–555.
8. "[*F*]*uera del círculo ocupado por los plantadores . . . al límite entre la vida bárbara y la civilizada.*" Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Kathleen Ross, *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism: The First Complete English Translation*, Latin American Literature and Culture 12 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 59. Original Spanish from Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1993), 39.
9. Bethell, *A Cultural History of Latin America*, 3.

10. The literature on the influence of the Enlightenment—namely, the French Enlightenment—in Spanish America is vast and well established by now within Latin American intellectual history, although recent scholarship has critically questioned the monolithic nature of what we mean by Enlightenment thought and suggested the influence of the Spanish Enlightenment as equally influential in the Spanish American colonies leading up to the wars of independence. Cf. Brian R. Hamnett, *The Enlightenment in Iberia and Ibero-America*, Iberian and Latin American Studies (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017).
11. David William Foster and Daniel Altamiranda, eds., *From Romanticism to Modernismo in Latin America*, Spanish American Literature: A Collection of Essays (New York: Garland, 1997), xi–xii.
12. Cf. Ulrich Mücke, "Political Modernity in Latin America: The Nineteenth Century," ed. Erik Ching et al., *Latin American Research Review* 52, no. 4 (2017): 697–702. Ulrich describes "the new political history" of Latin America as one that detracts from "patriotic histories" and "structuralism," in which the "focus on ideas and imagination has replaced power and interest from the center of the political" to understand the ways that "people imagined and described their struggles." Ulrich focuses on methods of historical research, however, not on literature. Literature, arguably, features the same lens of analysis as that proposed by "new political history."
13. Cf. Janet Burke and Ted Humphrey, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Nation Building and the Latin American Intellectual Tradition: A Reader* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2007), x–xi. Some of the main issues that Latin Americans faced during the nineteenth century included topics that span culture, society, and politics. Burke and Humphrey list, for example, the colonial past, federalism versus political unitarianism, Catholicism and the religious tradition, sociability, indigenous peoples, the role of women, foreign relations, economic development, the uses of history, and education for citizenship.
14. William G. Acree and Juan Carlos González Espitia, *Building Nineteenth-Century Latin America: Re-Rooted Cultures, Identities and Nations* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009), 1–2.
15. Acree and Espitia, *Building Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, 2–3. The factions and civil wars were often between liberals and conservatives, federalists and centrists, and political leaders (mostly creole males) and the popular classes comprising "Africans, Afro-descendants, indigenous groups, poor creoles, women, and mestizos."
16. Bethell, *A Cultural History of Latin America*, 10.

17. Acree and Espitia, *Building Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, 2. Latin American political thinkers in the nineteenth century like the Chilean Francisco Bilbao were particularly vocal about the social problems of these continued hierarchical relationships in postindependence society.
18. Bethell, *A Cultural History of Latin America*, 10–11. According to Bethell's book, in 1850 the total population in the continent was "only thirty million scattered among twenty countries."
19. Doris Sommer, "Foundational Fictions: When History Was Romance in Latin America," *Salmagundi*, no. 82/83 (1989): 118. "When the job of writing America seemed most urgent, the question of ultimate authority was bracketed in favor of the local authority. They didn't necessarily worry about writing being a supplement; that is, a consciously produced and necessarily violent filler for a world full of gaps. Empty spaces were part of America's demographic and discursive nature."
20. Gerard Aching, *The Politics of Spanish American Modernismo: By Exquisite Design*, Cambridge Studies in Latin American and Iberian Literature 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3.
21. Sommer, "Foundational Fictions," 112. Sommer contrasts North American writers to Latin Americans, noting "North American writers who were establishing a national literature generally assumed a posture of marginality allowing for an apparently unfettered critique of society that was rare for the South. Latin Americans seemed more integrated into partisan struggles than given to some transcendent criticism of social evils."
22. Sommer, "Foundational Fictions," 11. Sommer's article outlines the role of literature in nineteenth-century Latin America, focusing on the political role that novels were meant to serve during the nation-building period. Quoting the Argentine writer, general, and president Bartolome Mitre, Sommer discusses how the novel was meant to improve Latin American life, as the production of good novels would be "a loyal mirror in which man contemplates himself as he is with all his vices and virtues, and which generally wakens profound meditation and healthy citizens," thereby teaching people about their histories, customs, ideas, and feelings.
23. Sommer, "Foundational Fictions," 113.
24. Sommer, "Foundational Fictions," 114.
25. Cf. Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker, eds., *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1. It must be noted, however, that there was widespread illiteracy in Latin America until the 1870s. Cf.

Acree and Espitia, *Building Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, 2. For a helpful account of "the problem of the reading public" during the period, see Julio Ramos, *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in 19th Century Latin America*, Post-Contemporary Interventions (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

26. Anti-Spanishness was a prominent feature of the nineteenth century in Spanish America, but it was certainly not ubiquitous: figures like Lucas Alaman in Mexico and Andres Bello in Chile (and Venezuela) articulated in their speeches and writings the need for including the Spanish past—its cultural and intellectual features—in their ongoing nation-building efforts.
27. Foster and Altamiranda, *From Romanticism to Modernismo*, xi.
28. Foster and Altamiranda, *From Romanticism to Modernismo*, xi
29. Angel Rama, *The Lettered City*, trans. John Charles Chasteen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 65.
30. Rama, *The Lettered City*, 66.
31. Rama, *The Lettered City*, 65.
32. Pierre-Luc Abramson, *Las utopías sociales en América Latina en el siglo XIX* (Mexico, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), 85–86.
33. Cf. Miguel Alvarado Borgoño, "La estrategia narrativa de una utopia abierta en *Facundo*, de Domingo Faustino Sarmiento," *Literatura y Lingüística*, no. 12 (2000): 103–18.
34. González Echevarría, *The Voice of the Masters*, 65.
35. Roberto González Echevarría, *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative*, Cambridge Studies in Latin American and Iberian Literature 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 97.
36. Sarmiento, *Facundo*, 60. Emphasis mine.
37. Sarmiento, *Facundo*, 60–61.
38. Sarmiento, *Facundo*, 61.
39. Pedro Henríquez Ureña, Rafael Gutiérrez Girardot, and Ángel Rama, *La utopia de América*, Biblioteca Ayacucho 37 (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1989), 28.
40. Ramos, *Divergent Modernities*, 9.
41. See González Echevarría's introduction in Sarmiento, *Facundo*, 15–17.
42. Considered the birth of modern Argentina, this week-long series of revolutionary events started the Argentine War of Independence. For Sarmiento's involvement in these events, see Ricardo Cicerchia, "Journey to the Centre of the Earth: Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, a Man of Letters in Algeria," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 36, no. 4 (November 2004): 665–86.

43. Buenos Aires being a port city, it was Sarmiento's conception that Buenos Aires had all the potential to represent a "civilized" city as a center of trade, commerce, development, wealth, etc. The "interior" of Argentina in Sarmiento's writings refers to the central regions of the country that during his time were largely undeveloped, rural, and anarchic in his view.
44. Ana María Stuven, *La seducción de un orden: Las elites y la construcción de Chile en las polémicas culturales y políticas del siglo XIX* (Santiago: Ediciones de la Universidad Católica de Chile, 2000), 81–82.
45. Abramson, *Las utopías sociales en América Latina*, 107.
46. Abramson, *Las utopías sociales en América Latina*, 107.
47. Abramson, *Las utopías sociales en América Latina*, 108.
48. Abramson, *Las utopías sociales en América Latina*, 108–9; 112. The society continued until 1843. It was later revived by Echeverría in 1846 as a new project, the *Dogma socialista de la Asociación de Mayo* (Socialist Dogma of the May Association), which was "but an actualization of the *Creencia Social*."
49. Although published in 1871, the story was written between 1838 and 1840, during his exile in Montevideo, Uruguay.
50. Foster and Altamiranda, *From Romanticism to Modernismo*, 16.
51. Echeverría was a leader of the rebel intellectual generation in postindependence Argentina, founding the Generación Joven and the Asociación de Mayo in 1837 and 1838. Echeverría is credited with writing the first Romantic poems in Spanish. He spent time in Europe reading the German Romantics (Schiller, Goethe) and British Romantics (Byron), and he considered his literary efforts in Latin America as much spiritual as political. To his dismay, Echeverría found Buenos Aires in civil war (between Unitarians and Federalists). When the liberal revolution of 1839 failed, Echeverría and others fled to Montevideo. Cf. Bethell, *A Cultural History of Latin America*, 29.
52. Foster and Altamiranda, *From Romanticism to Modernismo*, 21.
53. Esteban Echeverría, "El matadero [1871]," Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes. Translation mine.
54. González Echevarría and Pupo-Walker, *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, 420.
55. Cf. Sommer, "Foundational Fictions,"115. My point runs contrary to Sommer's claim.
56. González Echevarría and Pupo-Walker, *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, 420.
57. Hans Schelkshorn, "José Enrique Rodó: The Birth of Latin America out of Spiritual Revolt," *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* 5, no. 1 (December 18, 2019): 186.

58. Cf. Cathy L. Jrade, "Socio-Political Concerns in the Poetry of Ruben Dario," *Latin American Literary Review* 18, no. 36 (1990): 36–49.
59. Foster and Altamiranda, *From Romanticism to Modernismo in Latin America*, 302.
60. Jrade, "Socio-Political Concerns in the Poetry of Rubén Dario," 39–40.
61. Jrade, "Socio-Political Concerns in the Poetry of Rubén Dario," 39–40. "Nature is filtered through any number of aesthetic landscapes from any number of cultures, periods, or artistic media. Modernist art is filled with Versaillesque palaces, Oriental gardens and interiors, gods and nymphs, gold and pearls, folding screens (*biombos*), divans, lacquered pieces, urns, and tapestries."
62. Rubén Darío, *Azul* (Cordóba: El Cid Editor, 2003), 60–61.
63. Darío, *Azul*, 61.
64. Brenda Segall, "The Function of Irony in 'El Rey Burgués,'" *Hispania* 49, no. 2 (1966): 224.
65. Jrade, "Socio-Political Concerns in the Poetry of Rubén Dario," 39–40.
66. Foster and Altamiranda, *From Romanticism to Modernismo in Latin America*, 304–5.
67. Jrade, "Socio-Political Concerns in the Poetry of Ruben Dario," 39–40.
68. German Arciniegas, *Latin America: A Cultural History*, trans. Joan MacLean (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 487.
69. Schelkshorn, "José Enrique Rodó," 183.
70. Schelkshorn, "José Enrique Rodó," 183.
71. José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 43.
72. Rodó, *Ariel*, 43. Emphasis in original.
73. Rodó, *Ariel*, 44.
74. González Echevarría, *The Voice of the Masters*, 10.
75. González Echevarría, *The Voice of the Masters*, 20.
76. González Echevarría, *The Voice of the Masters*, 21.
77. González Echevarría and Pupo-Walker, *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, 423.
78. González Echevarría and Pupo-Walker, *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature*, 423.
79. Cf. Aching, *The Politics of Spanish American Modernismo*, 20. Paraphrasing Aching's comment, "the literary imagination is not a locus of political activism."
80. González Echevarría, *The Voice of the Masters*, 3. *Lo literario*; i.e., *the literary.*
81. Sommer, "Foundational Fictions," 115.