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INTRODUCTION

ENEMIES WITHIN:

BEWARE OF THE NEIGHBOUR

MARÍA SIERRA-ALONSO

“He was the Other, the one who, because he is different, is always alien to us, and is attractive to us, if only because of his repulsion” (La fugitiva, Sergio Ramírez)

In his story about the Costa Rican writer, Yolanda Oreamuno, the novelist Sergio Ramírez has recourse to the myth of the “wild child” to summarize the fate of a woman who lived outside the cultural norms of the various communities she passed through and so was treated as stateless. His words sum up very well the paradox of identity, with its diverse and overlapping interplay of alterity, strangeness and hybridity.1 This book is concerned with political readings of this paradox, and even though its general historical framework is that of Hispanic liberalism during the greater part of the nineteenth century, its basic premise is that the civic imaginaries that were constructed at that time can be found even today in political conceptions in the Western world, especially in majority views of what is normal and desirable and in the ways of thinking of those who occupy positions of responsibility in the public sphere.

Our interest, therefore, lies in the intersectionality between figures of citizenship and the historical concepts of gender, class, race and territory, 

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as they were expressed and re-signified following the liberal revolutions that formally brought the Ancien Régime to an end in Europe and marked the independence of the new Latin American republics. Modern national identities on both sides of the Atlantic were based on a set of actions designed to shape the model figures of the “good citizen” and the “good ruler,” which were largely defined by holding up a mirror to “the Other,” who ontologically speaking could not be either. This book is the fruit of a research project that has examined the inner workings of these virtuous figures in relation to their opposites, with the aim of revealing the cultural complexity of these enduring political images. It provides a mosaic of figures of civic alterity that will be both recognizable and surprising to the reader; recognizable to the extent that they refer to model representations that have seeped into the common sense of our Western societies, and surprising, in so far as the various authors put forward interpretations that understand and explain the interconnectedness and performativity of these identities.

We address the Euro-American Atlantic world in its Hispanic dimension, which, in the nineteenth century, was a major space of political invention, a place that constructed and legitimized a new system of government—representative government—which, even as it promised a future of citizen inclusion, also harboured within it multiple processes of exclusion. By reformulating the notions of “rationality” and “effectiveness,” the liberal concept of “political capacity” was defined in negative terms and became the focus for a set of ideas, values and prejudices about citizenship. It was a precarious balancing act that carried forward many deep-seated problems from earlier times; indeed, modern politics in the liberal mould generated models of inclusion/exclusion that were more resilient and more difficult to challenge than the old ones, due to their apparent moderation, their promise of openness, rationalist utilitarian language and ultimately their scientific line of reasoning.

This book is a study of the political and cultural frameworks of the discourse that succeeded in presenting the paradox of exclusionary inclusion so persuasively. The study will carefully examine some of the various intertwining pathways that led to the construction of political inclusion and exclusion, since the categories of gender, race, class and territory, as they were understood then, all reinforced each other in their explanatory power when it came to shaping a “naturally” qualified citizenry. In order to penetrate the liberal matrix formed by these various civic vectors in different parts of the Hispanic world, we have singled out six cases for detailed analysis that focus specifically on the way in which cultural representations were articulated for political purposes: the native
Indian in liberal Peru; the immigrant in turn-of-the-century Argentina; the woman writer in Central America; the “coloured race” in independent Cuba; the Latino worker arriving in the United States; and the Gypsy who became a national symbol of Spain. As will be seen, these figures are neither exceptional nor typical in the traditional sense, but provide points of entry to social problems that go well beyond the case analysis.

As its title indicates, the book is organized around the notion of the “enemy within.” The most complete intellectual expression of this figure—which became dramatically familiar to many through its political and military resonance in the American arena during the second half of the twentieth century—came in fact from European criminology at the end of the nineteenth century, with its conception of the criminal as a pathogen inherent in the social body, attacking it from within and requiring an organized response to combat it.2 The research project that led to this book started from the hypothesis that, in spite of the qualitative leap implied by the appearance of this new discipline when it came to explaining internal threats to the social order, political liberalism had already contributed cultural materials and resources to make solid figures of those “Others,” those social subjects who were internal threats to the survival of the community and its system of rights. The discourse of criminal anthropology on social defence was so resoundingly successful in the decades that followed, partly because it fell on such fertile cultural ground.3

Retracing the steps on this road is a worthwhile endeavour and one that eight researchers embarked upon to produce the six chapters that comprise this book. In the first of these, María Antonia Peña and Rafael Zurita study the different forms of exclusion encountered by the native Peruvian communities during the nineteenth century, taking into account the purview of the bills proposed and the laws passed that precluded these groups from becoming citizens in the name of “civilizing” progress. The arguments made in the course of political debate demonstrate that, before the impact of Social Darwinism and biological racism, nineteenth century liberalism equated racial and cultural diversity with underdevelopment and

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2 For a synthesis of the different versions of the discourse of social defence, see Frédéric Gros: “Punir, c’est défendre la société,” in *Et ce sera justice. Punir en démocratie*, Antoine Garapon, Frédéric Gros and Thierry Puech (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2001), 63–89.

3 A more detailed version of this proposal can be found in María Sierra, “Enemigos internos: Inclusión y exclusión en la cultura política liberal,” in *Desde la Historia. Homenaje a Marta Bonaudo*, ed. María Sierra, Juan Pro and Diego Mauro (Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2014), 73–90.
consequently proposed various reforms to promote ethnic homogeneity along with national cohesion. The chapter ends with a reflection on early indigenism and the political use made of the figure of the native. In the second chapter, Marta Bonaudo and Diego Mauro examine changes in perceptions of the foreigner promoted by the Argentinian ruling class in the period between 1850 and 1910. The authors show that there is a thread that runs through the entire process, namely the gradual erosion of the civilizing myth originally associated with the immigrant from Europe. This same immigrant, initially projected as having a “civilizing” influence on Argentina and guaranteeing progress, was converted, in the context of the growing social unrest that characterized the country at the turn of the century and then under the “social defence” paradigm, into the “enemy within” who could not be assimilated into the body of the nation.

In the third chapter, Cristina Ramos focuses on the figure of the woman who dares to break into liberal public space, which is defined as exclusively male for reasons of political logic and physical nature. The author sets out to recover the voices of various nineteenth-century Central American female writers, whose works have often been studied by literary critics although rarely using a historical approach, in order to work out how they managed to make their mark in the public sphere. In most cases, without openly going against the social conventions of their time, these women writers gave impetus to new weak forms of resistance that can be traced in the way they were received critically and through their own writings. In the fourth chapter, Pilar Pérez-Fuentes considers the association movement of the “coloured race” in late nineteenth-century Cuba, examining both the notion and its progressive integration into Cuban nationalism. The response of the Creole ruling class as well as the leaders of the associations was racial whitening, although based on cultural and moral criteria, rather than mixed marriages. Given this framework, her chapter shows that citizenship was deeply rooted in naturalized identities of masculinity and whiteness.

Susana Sueiro, in the fifth chapter, deals with the Latino worker forced to seek economic or political refuge in North America, analysing the different forms of discrimination (racial, cultural, linguistic) that Spanish (and Italian) immigrants in the United States experienced during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Adopting a transnational approach, the chapter reconstructs the migratory flows, as well as the perceptions that the Latino immigrant and the ruling classes had of each other, the latter influenced by the twin paradigms of Social Darwinism and biological racism and increasingly fearful of the spread of anarchism. Finally, in chapter six, María Sierra explores the figure of the Gypsy.
Taking as her starting point the fact that many of the vectors of civic exclusion that characterize modern politics are concentrated particularly densely on the Gypsy, the chapter examines how Spanish Gypsies came to be a symbol of national identity, even while they were disregarded as real citizens or subjects with rights. In this case, the colonizing effect of Romantic discourse is seen in relation to the need to revise the social and historical categories used by history specialists and so avoid passing on stereotypes and naturalizing the judgements of others.

Along the way, we grapple with a discourse that was (and still is) powerful and persuasive; this discourse, because it presented its categories as rational and even scientific, favoured the social and political success of the conflicting stereotypes of the responsible citizen versus the socially dangerous maladjusted subject. With this as its foundation, the new post-revolutionary order drew a clear dividing line between the citizen with full rights and his “Others”: women, natives, labourers, immigrants, the poor and so on, all inhabitants of the country who had to be taken into account, but without the political capacity or independence to represent themselves. According to the most optimistic (progressive) liberal views, some of these groups would be incorporated into citizenship at some future date when “civilization” reached them; others, however, would be disqualified as potential citizens on anthropological grounds.

The obvious intention of demonstrating the artificiality of these constructs that were held to be natural is to seek to know more about the genealogies of conflicts that started in the past but continue to be obstacles to peaceful coexistence even today; we also however wish to make a contribution, through our work as historians, to the urgent debate on forms of government and political legitimacy in societies that claim to be democratic. Reinventing democracies involves understanding the contingency—the historicity—of inherited formulae of governance and considering them, in consequence, as amenable to improvement. The readiness to do so is not a threat to democracy but a commitment to go in search of it.
CHAPTER ONE
THE PERUVIAN NATIVE AND THE CONCEPTION OF LIBERAL CITIZENSHIP IN THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT

MARÍA ANTONIA PEÑA AND RAFAEL ZURITA

Concerning inclusion and exclusion in liberalism

Of all the dimensions that the phenomenon of citizenship presents to the historian’s gaze, the contradictory yet complementary questions of inclusion and exclusion are among those that arouse the most interest; interest and at the same time, puzzlement. Some of the inclusion policies that liberalism implemented, which historiography has traditionally applauded as mechanisms for broadening political representation and recognizing individual rights, are presented today, with the benefit of hindsight, as evidence of other explicit or latent forms of exclusion that coexisted with them, or even made them possible. Defining who was going to be within the new socio-political system necessarily involved explaining why others were going to be left out. Accordingly, if we want to know how inclusion was articulated, we need to examine in greater depth the arguments and justifications put forward for excluding certain groups—women, the illiterate and the poor—who were considered to lack the capacity and sufficient independence to uphold the order and progress that was aspired to. Many of these justifications were born of conscious convictions inherited from philosophical and cultural paradigms of the Enlightenment; others were expressly developed during the nineteenth century in response to the new circumstances posed by a rapidly changing world and to the fears and anxieties stirred up by the construction of a

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political system that, in spite of any possible resistance, was obviously drifting towards democratic formulas. So, the process of inclusion had to be achieved by means of exclusion and carried out by projecting an image of the excluded “Other” as the enemy within, who would then be discreetly removed from the system.¹

In this context, the forms of exclusion multiplied. The excluded subject was increasingly consigned to social invisibility, those features considered to be negative were accentuated or exaggerated, and a model of morality critical of customs or behaviour was circulated; alternatively the subject was removed, interned or eliminated outright. We can analyse all these variables using as a case study the exclusion of the indigenous communities of Latin America on the grounds of race. An in-depth examination of the various forms that racial exclusion took and the discourses that were developed to legitimize it enables us furthermore to penetrate the formidable complexity of these processes, since we not only find the opposition between inclusion and exclusion, but also the reality of self-exclusion, as well as the tense relationship between policies of integration and the preservation of the cultural and anthropological identities of the original peoples. Inevitably, the nineteenth century was the scenario for all these tensions. It was a laboratory used to test launch a liberal system based on the theory of the liberty, fraternity and natural equality of all human beings and in which, at the same time, the native peoples were looked upon as the “enemy within,” a destabilizing element and an obstacle that had to be either eliminated directly or integrated by being subjected to a civilizing process based on biological miscegenation and cultural uprooting.² Because of the sheer numbers of the indigenous populations and the intensity of the political debate that was generated, the case of Peru allows us to analyse the specifics of a theory and praxis that oscillated between granting and not granting citizenship to the Indians, denouncing the fact that they were marginalized and exploited and calling for them to be civilized, all in the spirit of the religious beliefs and Romantic humanitarianism of the nineteenth century.

Indigenous citizens in liberal Latin America

After the triumph of the independence movements and the legal and constitutional establishment of the new Latin American republics, the policies of inclusion or exclusion of the pre-existing indigenous communities were basically structured around three action strategies. In quite a few cases, the new liberal states made some indigenous peoples who were considered to be warlike and impossible to subdue—and had remained on the margins of the Spanish occupation retaining economic and political control over their territories—the targets of military policies that were mainly designed to exterminate them. In the Chilean constitution of 1822, for example, the Araucanian territory, which the Spanish had never managed to occupy, was incorporated into the State, and Congress was granted powers to “civilize” the indigenous communities that lived there. Shortly afterwards, in January 1825, the Parliament of Tapihue was convened to agree the border between Chile and Araucania and draw up a format for peaceful coexistence; towards the middle of the century, however, this initial mood mutated into an attitude that was bent on extermination and subjugation, so unleashing a long and bloody offensive war.3 While it serves as a reference, the Chilean case is not unique. Similar attitudes combined with policies of assimilation and territorial integration also appear in Argentina.4 The total extermination of the Charrúas in Uruguay, the campaigns against the Guarani in Brazil and the attack on the Nahuas in El Salvador are further notable examples.5

In other cases, the chief interest lay in absorbing certain territories occupied by indigenous communities into the nation and this provided the motivation for policies that purported to be inclusive but basically distorted the paradigm of constructing an equal citizenship. In general

3 José Bengoa, Historia del pueblo mapuche, siglos XIX y XX (Santiago: Lom, 2000).
5 Eduardo F. Acosta y Lara, La guerra de los charrúas en la Banda oriental (facsimile edition; Montevideo: Cruz del Sur, 2010); Cláudio Alves de Vasconcelos, A questão indígena na província de Mato Grosso (Campo Grande: Editora UFMS, 1999); Ricardo Martínez Martínez, El genocidio cultural de 1932. Narrativas y memorias de la represión (Master’s thesis UCA El Salvador, 2011).
terms, the indigenous population in these annexed territories would not enjoy the same rights as those that lived in areas with a white or mestizo majority; they would live under differentiated legal and political statutes, and their traditional ways of life would be subject to severe interference from the state authorities. In the case of Mexico, the indigenous territories were annexed from 1824 but never received the same treatment as those with predominantly white populations. While the latter had the possibility of becoming federal states, the former depended directly on other states or on the central powers in order to be subjected to settlement policies that pursued economic modernization and increased agricultural yields, as well as the racial whitening of those spaces. Within the framework of this process of occupation, moreover, ancestral forms of communal ownership of property were replaced by a new model of individual property ownership associated with the idea of progress and economic modernization, in which the native was no longer considered to be the effective owner of the land but became simply the poseedor (holder) or rather, the usufructuador (usufructuary) of the land. Over time, as we shall see in the case of Peru, this new legal ownership statute was accompanied by the establishment of new taxes that were justified in public debate as an improvement on the tribute paid by the indigenous population typical of the colonial period, but which in fact marked the natives as members of “another” social class. Tensions and conflict were not long in coming.

Given this background, the closest thing to a policy of inclusion in independent nineteenth-century Latin American republics was the practice of a civilizing paternalism, one that distanced itself from any possible paradigm of tolerance or interracial respect and attached itself to an integrationist mentality behind which it was not difficult to find exclusionary racist conceptions that formed part of a deeply-rooted ideology. Given this perspective, which took precedence over claiming citizenship for the indigenous population, integrating the natives into the nation and into a civil society structured around natural and political rights involved a process of cultural assimilation that required them to renounce their own religious convictions, convert completely to Roman Catholicism, abandon their native languages and discard their indigenous customs and.

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traditions, which were generally considered to be an expression of savagery and barbarism. Even today, it remains a burning issue in many states to find a balance between processes involving social and political integration and the strengthening of original identities, which run the risk of being lost or diluted precisely as a consequence of integrationist policies not being well understood.

The 1811 political constitution of Venezuela contemplated early on the segregation—and even the dissolution—of the indigenous communities, by removing any possible form of communal or corporative government and offering the natives in exchange equality before the law, as well as individual rights that released them from certain fiscal burdens and obligations to work for landowners. Furthermore, exchanging self-government for individual rights rested on the basic idea that the natives had to be civilized and that the first step towards gaining entry into that civilization should be their conversion to Roman Catholicism. The enduring nature of these conceptions that placed religion as the central concern of the problem of the Venezuelan natives can be demonstrated by the fact that it was still in the 1858 Constitution and remained there until well into the twentieth century. Using a more moderate tone, also notable for its civilizing paternalism, the Constitution of the Republic of New Granada of the same year set out a very similar model for segregating the natives and justified it by appealing to the need to recover territories in order to attract foreign settlers and to establish and defend the frontiers.

Using these arguments, and in the interests of constructing a nation of a monist character based on the racial, cultural and religious homogenization of the new liberal society, legislation advocated denying the indigenous autochthonous cultures and recommended instead defending a single language, culture and religion. It seems clear that behind these measures lay the conviction that these peoples all represented a threat to white societies. This way of looking at the situation was set out by intellectuals and politicians alike, who regarded the natives as inferior beings and a nuisance. The Venezuelan, Andrés Bello, for example, had stated quite emphatically in the first chapter of part two of his work, *Principios de Derecho Internacional* (Principles of International Law) that “a barbaric people, which does not know the duties of humanity and the laws of war, should be looked upon as an enemy of humankind” (Un pueblo bárbaro,

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9 Clavero, “Presencias humanas,” 645.
que desconoce los deberes de la humanidad y las leyes de la guerra, debe mirarse como enemigo del género humano.). The liberators themselves also lapsed into similar kinds of appraisals, shifting from an attitude of some benevolence towards the natives to a combative stance when they realized that they were violent peoples, resistant to the liberal state. Simón Bolívar illustrates this shift in opinion quite well. In his early writings, he seems to hold a Rousseau-esque, anthropological view of the native, putting him on the same level as the noble savage, although when he is later obliged to contain various indigenous rebellions, he comes to conceive of the Indian as an unconquerable enemy who, at best, would only be able to fit into the liberal political system under the supervision of the white classes and by being blatantly deprived of his rights. Even constitutional texts, like the one drawn up in Ecuador in 1830, did not hesitate to make similar observations: “This constituent Congress appoints the venerable parish priests as tutors and natural fathers of the Indians, urging their ministry of charity in favour of this innocent, abject, wretched class” (Este Congreso constituyente nombra a los venerables curas parrocos por tutores y padres naturales de los indios, excitando su ministerio de caridad a favor de esta clase inocente, abyecta y miserable.). The clear obsession with the barbarism of the native and “civilizing” him, frequently entrusted to the care of religious institutions or administrative powers, was a constant in most of the pioneering constitutions of Latin American liberalism, even in some at the end of the century: the 1823 and 1828 Constitutions of Peru, the 1830 Constitution of Ecuador, the 1853 Constitution of Argentina and the 1870 Constitution of Paraguay, among others.

In the long list of such testimonies, and regardless of whether or not they formed part of legal discourse, there was always an underlying cultural contempt that viewed the natives as biologically inferior beings, as well as derogatory references to their “innocence” as a kind of “natural ingenuousness” that excused them from being blamed for their own barbarism. Nonetheless, it is also true that, in those cases where the exclusion policies became increasingly aggressive, so the tone of the discourse similarly hardened. Van Dijk, for example, quotes comments published in the Chilean newspaper, *El Mercurio*, in 1859, as part of the build-up to the outbreak of war against the Mapuches:

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Los hombres no nacieron para vivir inútilmente y como los animales selváticos, sin provecho del género humano; y una asociación de bárbaros tan bárbaros como los pampas o como los araucanos no es más que una horda de fieras, que es urgente encadenar o destruir en el interés de la humanidad y en el bien de la civilización.

[Men were not born to live uselessly nor to live like wild animals, without taking advantage of being one of the human species; And an association of barbarians as barbaric as those in the Pampas or the Araucanians is no more than a horde of wild animals gathered together that must be chained or destroyed in the interest of humanity and for the good of all civilization.]\(^{11}\)

Generally speaking, the native was considered only in his individual dimension, not as an integral part of a group with its own specific characteristics, culture and rights. The commonest practice right from the beginning of the independence process was to deny him his cultural identity, to such an extent, in fact, that San Martín avoided the term \textit{indio} (Indian) and replaced it with \textit{ciudadano} (citizen), while Juan Velazco Alvarado used the term \textit{campesino} (peasant).\(^{12}\) In neither case was the adoption of the new politically correct terms an expression of concern for the dramatic plight of the indigenous communities, nor was it in any way a show of respect for the history and culture of those peoples; both terms concealed the dubious idea that equality between human beings could simply be decreed and inequality be attenuated by means of a terminologically egalitarian discourse. Added to this was the difficulty of finding an unambiguous definition of “indigenous,” since some areas made a distinction between the native that had been integrated into the “republic” from the earliest times and the one living on the geographical borders of each state, as well as on the frontiers of lawfulness, who was referred to as “barbarian” (bárbaro), “wild” (bravo) or “savage” (salvaje).\(^{13}\)

To take one example, as we shall see in the Peruvian case, a distinction was made between the native from the Sierra and the one from Amazonia, demonstrating that, even when it came to exclusion, they used natural and biological taxonomies of their own. When it came to explaining and justifying this hierarchy of the excluded, these descriptions of the customs, clothing and basic habits of each people supplied the theory and pretext for


\(^{12}\) Juan M. Ossio, \textit{Los indios del Perú} (Madrid: Mapfre, 1992), 201.

violent intervention. In this respect, the war against the Uruguayan Charrúas and Minuanes in the nineteenth century was preceded by a substantial collection of comments, reports and any number of writings—earlier even than the founding of Montevideo—that emphasized the aggressive, resistant nature of the peoples, the lack of decorum in their dress and their repulsive customs. So, in his “Noticia sobre los minuanes” (“Information on the Minuanes”) of 1764, the Benedictine, Antonio J. Pernetty, mentions the stench of these Indians, who daubed their bodies with a greasy substance to protect themselves from insects, and criticizes their nakedness and tendency to drunkenness. When the war started in the 1830s, this was the image of the Minuanes and Charrúas that prevailed, one that was exacerbated at the time by the fact that the natives openly showed their resistance to the army and became a major obstacle to the process of occupying the land and defining state frontiers. During General Fructuoso Rivera’s relentlessly bloody campaign, most of the adult males were annihilated, while the women, old men and children were distributed among the officers and inhabitants of Montevideo, so that they could have them at their service and “tame” them. It is plain to see in the documentary evidence of these events, gathered by Acosta, that the natives were reduced to a state of virtual slavery and that, even though the obligation to “treat them well, educate them and convert them to Christianity” was established, they were in practice assimilated as if they were animals.

In this respect, the use of the term domesticar (to tame) to indicate how the Charrúas were to be treated cannot be reduced to a mere terminological anecdote. Indeed, on numerous occasions, individuals from these indigenous communities were also exhibited in Europe as if they were exotic animals, being placed in fake settings that attempted to simulate their natural environment and accentuate their physical characteristics and cultural habits in order to attract an audience that was more morbidly curious than interested in anthropology. Exhibitions of live indigenous “specimens” at fairs and in other public venues appeared in villages and cities alike all over Europe and were frequently reported in the nineteenth-century newspapers, opening up moral and even theological, debates about the appropriateness of such behaviours. One of the best-known cases of the time was precisely the exhibition of the last four representatives of the Charrúa ethnic group in a “human zoo” in Paris in 1833, although the examples do not end there. In 1881, eleven Fuegians were also taken to

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14 Acosta y Lara, *La guerra de los charriás*, 244–247.
15 Ibid., 51–52, and 60.
Paris for the same purpose, and were publicly exhibited later in Berlin, Leipzig and other German and Swiss cities. In 1883, a group of Mapuches was put on show in the Jardin d’Acclimatation in Paris, while, in 1889, the Universal Exposition of the same city was responsible for showing several Selknam Indians from Tierra del Fuego. The appearance in Europe of the concept of the human zoo and the notion of the native as an object for public display—conceived of as halfway between an animal and a thing—is particularly illuminating for understanding the exclusionary mentality of both the Latin American elites and their European counterparts, all imbued with a discriminatory, racist way of thinking that made it very difficult for them to understand the indigenous “Other” as a citizen.

Naturally, nobody consulted the indigenous peoples to find out whether they wanted to be civilized or generously “included” in the prevailing model of liberal citizenship. It was generally not considered necessary to obtain their consent to these changes, because, apart from the fact that the liberal elites were contemptuous of the capacity of natives for rational thought, it was felt that their brand new status as citizens was already a reward in itself. As might be expected, this inclusion by means of exclusion eventually gave rise to the appearance of different types of social and political self-exclusion, namely, disaffection for the new norms that were imposed on them and a certain lack of interest in participating in the political game, so that it was not long before protest revolts took place. In this respect, from a historical standpoint, the study of exclusion is inseparable from the study of resistance to inclusion, or what might be referred to more generally as self-exclusion.

In any event, the different action strategies that the liberal states implemented with regard to the indigenous communities should not be seen as alternative options. In most cases, the policies were the result of a complex balancing act, in which the desire to exterminate them, limited inclusion and civilizing paternalism all coexisted at the same time or were subject to planned modifications that varied to suit the times and the circumstances. Furthermore, in a context in which the central themes of political speeches revolved around the equality, freedom and independence of the oppressed, sustaining these actions placed the liberal elites under the pressure of a permanent contradiction, which could only be withstood by means of a process of constructing the “Other”—in this case, the native—as “the enemy within.” So, the complex but limited conversion of the

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native into a citizen by stripping him of his cultural identity required his figure to be completely redefined; this oscillated between the image of the inferior Indian, innocent and unprotected, who needed a guardian to protect, educate and guide him, and that of the savage, aggressive Indian who resisted integration. We should not however labour under any misapprehensions; both extremes were based on the conviction that racial and phenotypic heterogeneity among individuals was the result of a biological and social hierarchization, which also included their capacities, and which translated into their being more or less civilized and served to define their unequal relationship with political life. There was no need to wait for the theories of Social Darwinism towards the end of the century in order to propose the natural superiority of some individuals over others; the whole of the nineteenth century was permeated with a series of linked ideas that identified the cultural and racial diversity of the native with backwardness, barbarism and misrule, ideas that were surreptitiously reinforced in parallel with processes that led to the socio-economic impoverishment of the native brought about by the same liberal laws. In contrast to this, many saw ethnic homogeneity as synonymous with political strength, economic progress and national cohesion. Nonetheless, this apparently simplistic reflection on the categories of humanity was capable of placing some societies under great strain, societies which, as we shall see in the case of Peru, were also aware of the sheer quantitative and qualitative weight that the indigenous cultures represented in their demographic, historical and identitarian composition.

In addition to this, political legacies weighed heavily and certain conquests could not easily be undone, since the Indian was not just a passive subject. The 1812 Constitution of Cadiz, and all those that took their inspiration from it, had granted the natives rights of citizenship as well as the concomitant political rights, provided that they were settled as residents in a country; according to Quijada, these rights were discursively grasped and effectively exercised by the indigenous communities very rapidly. This could be regarded as a training stage for progressively abandoning age-old practices and becoming familiar with the new ones, attempting to adapt to “a homogenizing system of citizenship that tended increasingly to prioritize the individual principle over the corporative, private property over communal ownership and social inequality over ethnic differentiation.”

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liberal period, the participation of the natives as active political subjects was expressed at the local level, but it also involved them being included in inter-ethnic political factions fighting in battles and civil wars. In the case of Peru, for example, when some progressive liberal sectors adopted an indigenist discourse around the middle of the century, it made it easy for some Quechua and Aymara communities to become involved in the defence of certain military caudillos. Equally, it should be pointed out that the natives soon became aware of the need to defend and enforce their rights, particularly in the sphere of local power, by claiming their right to vote and to be appointed to public office and by refusing to work as personal servants as they had done in the past. Because the indigenous populations were deprived of civil spaces in which to make their demands heard, their claims frequently took a violent turn, which helped amplify the conception of these groups as uncivilized savages who might constitute a serious threat to the well-being of the white elites and the prosperity of the new nation.

The Peruvian case: taxes and votes

The position of the indigenous Peruvians in the historical context after decolonization was the result of the intersection of three basic dimensions. The first was the predominance of rural society in the early development of the republican State and the second was the significant Indian participation in the armies of the caudillos during the foreign and civil conflicts of the 1830s and 1840s, a situation that was not always forced on them, but was expressly negotiated by different communities willing to form part of the guerrilla militias and which, as Cecilia Méndez points out, enabled them, in practice, to exercise a form of citizenship. The third dimension was their fiscal contribution via the contribución de indígenas, a tax levied on the indigenous population, a republican adaptation of the colonial head tax that was in force between 1826 and 1854.

20 Ibid., 631.
23 Ibid., 125–153.
In spite of all this, most of the Peruvian elites shared the idea that the Indian was a potentially dangerous inferior being; on the one hand, because they had embraced the message of the Enlightenment that spoke in these terms, and on the other, because of the strong impact that the bloody revolts of Tomás Catari and Tupac Amaru II had made at the end of the eighteenth century. Both these rebellions, which formed part of the context of the struggle by the Quechua leaders of the Cuzco region against the Bourbon reforms imposed by Charles III, took place at the beginning of the 1780s, generating a climate of growing fear of the indigenous communities.\(^24\) Equally, and not unconnected to these considerations, was the influence of some revolutionary leaders who—as has been pointed out already—came to see the Indians as potentially dangerous and destabilizing, despite having been initially well disposed towards them.

Given these basic premises, relations between the liberal Peruvian State and the original native peoples were formed from the start in a climate of tension that was determined by two fundamental interconnected areas of conflict that were directly linked to the status of the Indians as citizens. The first was undoubtedly the fiscal situation. The liberal elites were able to present the recuperation of the former colonial indigenous head tax as a way of turning the Indians into political citizens since the Indians had obtained the right to vote on the basis of it; nevertheless figures supplied by Van den Berghe and Primov, as well as by Basadre, demonstrate that the tax’s main purpose was to raise revenue and, indeed, in the middle of the nineteenth century it represented 26 per cent of the national budget and 80 per cent of direct taxation. The indigenous head tax was maintained until 1854, the date when it was eliminated by President Ramón Castilla, to be restored in 1867 by Mariano Ignacio Prado.\(^25\)

The second area of conflict in the relationship between the Peruvian political rulers and the indigenous communities was, precisely, the one that concerned their electoral rights. The 1828 Peruvian Constitution established universal male suffrage; however, against a background of border disputes, internecine wars and the consolidation of the clientelist power of the caudillos, the electoral law of 1834 laid the foundation for a change aimed at limiting the vote to four groups through indirect suffrage: the secular clergy; civil servants; taxpayers (including natives and

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and those who exercised a “scientific profession.” Given all of this, the 1834 electoral law produced a heterogeneous citizenry that did not attain universal male suffrage but did help give the new republic legitimacy. The law defined the elector as any (male) citizen who satisfied certain census and capacity requirements, with the expectation that being a taxpayer would make the citizen co-responsible for maintaining the public sphere.

Except for the 1855 electoral law and the 1867 Constitution that established universal male suffrage—each in force for barely a year—other Peruvian regulations, as we mentioned above, made a distinction between active and passive citizenship. So, unmarried men under the age of twenty-five, for example, were excluded from exercising citizenship, although in 1856, the age was reduced to twenty-one. Consequently, since married civil status was given priority, political rights were established as being clearly dependent on being a paterfamilias, and highlighted the fact that the voter who belonged to a family unit was regarded as guaranteeing the attendant features of maturity, economic independence and representing a broad sector of the population, in other words, the family.

In addition, the illiterate were excluded from exercising active citizenship, although, significantly, an exception was made for those natives who could not read or write (in towns without a primary school), who provisionally retained full citizenship until 1854. Finally, an economic exclusion filter was put in place by denying the right to vote to those who did not pay taxes, did not own property or were not heads of workshops.

Except for the period between 1855 and 1860, the established voting system was an indirect one, a vestige of the Constitution of Cadiz that was also explicit in the maintenance of such significant ritual elements as


27 These mechanisms are very similar to the ones applied in Colombia and Mexico, see María Antonia Peña Guerrero, “Sufragio y representación en la Colombia liberal: una mirada comparada a los marcos electorales de Europa y América en el siglo XIX,” Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research 20, no. 1 (2014): 5–18, esp. 8; María Sierra and María Antonia Peña, “La construcción de la representación política liberal: una mirada comparada entre España y México,” in Emprunts et transferts culturels: Mexique, ed. Nicole Fourtané and Michèle Guiraud (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 2011), 177–198.

celebrating mass prior to voting. Voting that took place in two stages at parish and province level was introduced as a way of allowing the voters time for reflection and it vested a certain amount of confidence in the ability of the parish elector to select good delegates. At the same time it gave the elites an advantage in controlling the process, since it reproduced the vertical hierarchy of the social pyramid. For nineteenth-century theorists, the function of two-tier elections was to counteract the electoral strength of the poorer sectors of the populace—the “tyranny of numbers”—and, simultaneously, to create a selection mechanism that would favour “government by the best.”  

So much so that, when the direct vote was combined with universal suffrage after the abolition of slavery in 1855, its detractors declared that the Nation had been “debased” (envilecida), which was explained as follows:

Se ha querido igualar al negro esclavo, marcado en el alma y en el cuerpo con una profunda ignorancia, con sus instintos de robo y de asesinato, y con las cicatrices del látigo. Siendo imposible hacerlo subir hasta la altura del gran número de peruanos que conocemos nuestros derechos y podemos ejercerlos y defenderlos. [They have set out to give equality to the negro slave, marked in body and soul by profound ignorance, with his instincts for stealing and murdering, and with the scars of the lash, it being impossible to raise him to the level of the great number of Peruvians who know our rights and are able to exercise and defend them.]

Political citizenship in Peru, then, was principally defined on the basis of culture, economic independence and social recognition, and was basically equivalent to the constitutionalism that was established in Europe during the same years and in the United States before the 1830s. Furthermore, the regulations adopted the Cadiz model of the resident-voter, above all because control of the requirements and physical

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29 Juan Oviedo, vol. 3 of Colección de leyes, decretos y órdenes publicadas en el Perú desde el año 1821 hasta 31 de diciembre de 1859 (Lima: Felipe Bailly, 1861–1872), 14.
development of the electoral processes was the responsibility of the local authorities.

If the indigenous Peruvians were able to vote, it was because, as fiscal subjects, they were considered to be property owners and so were exempted from complying with the cultural and social criteria demanded of other groups; Chiaramonti points out that the right to vote was given to a large number of illiterate natives because they were landowners or taxpayers. Nonetheless, this generous concession of political rights was not unaccompanied by an intense controversy that turned the debate on the political inclusion or exclusion of the natives into a characteristic feature of Peru’s political development throughout the nineteenth century.

In 1826, two kinds of direct taxation were established: the native (Indian) head tax, renamed “the contribution,” and a tax on castes. The second type of tax applied to “non-Indians” aged between eighteen and fifty-five, with the exception of soldiers, civil servants and the regular clergy, but it was considered by some to be a disadvantage in comparison with the natives’ situation, since it meant having to pay a personal tax, even without being a landowner. In 1844, which was the deadline for allowing illiterate natives and mestizos to vote as established by the 1839 Constitution, a lengthy debate started about indigenous citizenship. Initially, the Indian vote was extended and in 1849 it was proposed that this moratorium be further extended until 1860.

**The debate in Peru about the exclusion of the natives**

The majority of those involved in this debate advocated giving the vote to the illiterate and so retaining the electoral clout of the Andean Indians as a mechanism for defining and strengthening the territorial boundaries of the nation. In this respect, liberal thinkers considered that it was fundamental for the indigenous population to take part in elections in order to move forward with the process of legitimizing the young republic, a viewpoint that was reflected in the electoral laws of 1847, 1849 and 1851. Nevertheless, the ultraconservative tendency, exemplified by Bishop Bartolomé Herrera, among others, maintained its defence of the “aristocracy of knowledge, created by nature” (la aristocracia del saber, creada por la naturaleza). Herrera, born in 1808, and a Doctor of Law

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33 Fernando de Trazegnies Granda, *La idea del Derecho en el Perú republicano del siglo XIX* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1979), 99–100
and Theology, represented Lima and, as Minister of Justice, promulgated the first Peruvian civil code. In 1860, as a member of the Constituent Assembly, he presented a draft constitution that was not approved, in which he proposed restoring tithes and ecclesiastical links (Church privileges had been abolished in 1856), as well as executive powers with the right of veto and authority to dissolve Congress. His political position was based on the idea that God had created men unequal, so that some were more capable than others. In his opinion, the monarchy had been replaced by an aristocracy of knowledge, and therefore had the exclusive right to govern. According to Herrera, the “people” should confine themselves to consenting; furthermore “consenting is not delegating, because consenting is a condition, whereas delegating is the origin of sovereignty” (Consentir no es delegar, porque el consentimiento es condición, mientras que la delegación es origen de la soberanía.).³⁴ The consequence of Herrera’s reasoning was that he relativized the validity of elections, considering them to be just one of the possible procedures for testing the consent of the people. Influenced by the doctrinaire positions of François Guizot and Pierre Royer Collard, and especially of the Spaniard, Juan Donoso Cortés, Herrera’s understanding was that depriving the illiterate—including the natives—of the right to vote did not imply penalizing them, since they were unable in practice to exercise their function as citizens because of their lack of intellectual capacity. It was a question therefore of reconciling order and freedom in accordance with the most conservative theories of liberalism.³⁵

It is, at any rate, paradoxical that, during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the indigenous population at the very heart of the debates about the scope of political exclusion—even as their capacities were challenged and they were repudiated as barbarians and savages—should nonetheless be regarded as a fundamental asset in the process of constructing the idea of the Peruvian nation. In fact, laying claim to the historical and cultural heritage of the Inca Empire was a means of distinguishing the Peruvian nation from the neighbouring republics, of endowing it with an identity of its own and dignifying it with historical legitimacy. At the same time, by establishing a line of continuity between emancipation from the Spaniards and the traditions of the ancient indigenous peoples dispossessed by the conquest, it was possible to break the links between the origin of the new republic and its past of colonial

³⁴ Ibid.
domination and to legitimize independence as an act of righteous rebellion. This approach, though, was not based on a thoroughgoing knowledge of the indigenous world nor was any attempt made to acquire it, but was regarded by Creole republicanism as merely a means to an end. The phenomenon brings us, without a doubt, face to face with the highly complex, never unambiguous, nature of the processes of political exclusion and serves to demonstrate the performative capacity of discourses that presented the image of the “Other”—the Andean Indian—as a construct capable, at one and the same time, of symbolizing the historical, cultural and anthropological essence of the nation and representing the worst of it. Of course, the terminology that was used was largely responsible for producing these opposing images, which were the focus of a surfeit of unfiltered emotions; suddenly, the existence of the colonial “Indian” was denied and the talk instead was of the republican “indigene,” as if the new State had adopted and recycled the Indian and grammatically transmuted him into a citizen.  

Even so, it seems that the affected parties failed to notice the semantic difference and, especially, the different meaning that the political elite tried to give it. This can be seen in two letters sent to El Nacional, the Lima daily, by “los indios desgraciados,” the unfortunate Indians of the districts of Samán and Taraco during the Huancané rebellion. The context was the indigenous rebellion on the Andean Plateau between 1866 and 1868—in which the figure of Juan Bustamante stood out as the leading defender of the Indian cause—that was triggered by the imposition of the tribute tax and the exploitation of the communities by the authorities and landowners. The Indians who signed the letters first of all made their strong religious convictions clear; so, they referred to General Baltasar Caravedo—who came to an agreement with Bustamante about the withdrawal of the government troops—as “a new Messiah” ready to liberate them, and appealed to “the Christian faith” when they saw themselves “persecuted by the tyrants” who put their property and persons at risk; they refer to Juan Bustamante as “a benefactor, who loves his neighbours, who has complied with one of the great precepts of divine legislation in the tenth commandment.”

For their part, “the Indians”—as they still referred to themselves—rejected the restoration of the tax on the

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36 Chiaramonti, Ciudadanía y representación, 253.
38 El Nacional, May 23, 1867, quoted in Emilio Vásquez, La rebelión de Juan Bustamante (Lima: Juan Mejía Baca, 1976), 196.
grounds of their economic hardship, as well as conscription, which meant, as they put it, that “we disappear from our families.” They also appealed, as Peruvians, to the three “humanitarian principles enshrined in the Constitution: liberty, equality and fraternity.”

In parallel with this, from the 1860s onwards, politicians, intellectuals and publicists started to ask questions about the dearth of properly educated citizens in the republic. José Antonio Lavalle, for example, considered it a mistake to grant political rights to “an ignorant mob” as the 1856 Constitution had done. For Lavalle, sovereignty should only reside in men who had the capacity to be “true citizens.” At the same time, the separation between active and passive citizens meant that the term soberanía (sovereignty) ceased to be associated with the nation, which itself came to be understood in ethnic and cultural terms. Miguel Antonio de la Lama, an outstanding jurist, referred to the nation as a set of people with the same origin, physical make-up, language, religion and customs, albeit from a conception of society as marked by “inevitable and necessary inequalities.”

This shift in language enabled the natives of Peru to be conceptualized as a different nation, or rather, a body foreign to the true nation. In this spirit, Juan Espinosa noted that the natives had made “little progress in the field of civilization” and had even become “a degraded race.”

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39 Ibid.
40 Lavalle (1833–1893) was an ambassador in Washington, Rome and Madrid and Minister Plenipotentiary in Germany, Russia and Brazil. He founded and became editor of the Revista de Lima (1859–1863) and was elected to represent Lima (1860–1864); Jorge Basadre Grohmann, vol. 8 of Historia de la República del Perú (Lima: El Comercio, 2005).
41 For De la Lama (1836–1912), see De Trazegnies Granda, La idea del Derecho, 124–130.
42 Juan Espinosa, Mi república: justicia y verdad (New York: n.p., 1854). Juan Espinosa, Diccionario republicano (1855), ed. Carmen McEvoy (Lima: PUCP, Instituto Riva-Agüero and University of the South-Sewanee, 2001). Espinosa (1804–1871) was a veteran of the struggles for Independence, occupied various positions of responsibility in the state administration and the Army. His career was characterized as “reconciling the power of the sword with that of the pen” in defence of a Republican project. With links to education as head of the Colegio San Carlos de Puno, he began his work as a journalist and essayist in the 1850s with works such as La herencia española de los americanos: seis cartas críticas a Isabel II (1852), Comentarios a la Constitución Anónima de la Sociedad Orden Electoral (1853), Mi República (1854) and the Diccionario republicano (1855). He was a contributor to La América, the newspaper of the Sociedad Liberal Central [Central Liberal Society.] In opposition to Castilla’s policy, he defended the liberal
The Peruvian Native and the Conception of Liberal Citizenship

approach was shared in the columns of the newspaper, *El Progreso*, which sought to explain the Huancané uprising in 1867 by pointing to:

la ignorancia de esas turbas de derechos y deberes y por la aversión a la raza superior, que juzgan dominadora. . . . Sin nociones propias de sociabilidad y religión, por el rechazo que se ha hecho del habla castellana, ello mantiene la incomunicación del indio con el resto de los ciudadanos. [the ignorance of these mobs about rights and duties and their aversion to the superior race, which they judge to be domineering. . . . Without any notions of sociability and religion of their own, through refusing, as they have done, to speak Spanish, this prevents the Indian from communicating with the rest of the citizens.]

In practice, therefore, the natives were “tantamount to a nationality with a language, special habits, ideas and practices, firmly embedded within the true civilized nationality” (casi una nacionalidad con idioma, hábitos, ideas y prácticas especiales, incrustada con fuerza en la verdadera nacionalidad civilizada), so that, according to the newspaper, once peace had been restored in the region, the solution was to oblige the Indians to learn Spanish as “essentially obligatory for the exercise of political and civil rights.” Thus, although it was “unjust and inconsistent with freedom” to deny the Indians political rights, it was not advantageous to allow them to have them either, since “the Indians’ absolute lack of knowledge” meant that they had no interest in political rights.

Miguel Zavala and Toribio Pacheco were of the same opinion, although, in 1868, Zavala presented draft legislation, somewhat patronizing in conception, for civilizing the natives. During the Peru-Bolivian Confederation (1836–1839), the Lima elite developed an extremely hostile anti-Confederation discourse that targeted one of its main supporters, Marshal Santa Cruz, defining the essence of the “Peruvian national” on the basis of exclusion and contempt for the Indian, represented symbolically by the Marshal.

renewal championed by José Gálvez, later joining the project of the Sociedad Independencia Electoral [Electoral Independence Society,] the embryonic Partido Civil [Civil Party,] led by Manuel Pardo.


Ibid.

45 Ibid.


In the opinion of Manuel Andrés García, the change in political attitude towards the natives, which was noticeable from the mid-1850s, was bound up with two factors, namely, the need for President Castilla to consolidate his political position by acquiring the political support of the indigenous groups, and the prosperity that the country experienced thanks to its guano exports, which ultimately made it possible to eliminate the indigenous head tax.48 Indeed, all these arguments appeared explicitly in the Castilla Decree of July 5, 1854, which abolished the head tax. As Castilla pointed out, the measure was justified because the tax was the main reason why the majority of the Peruvians were living in the harshest slavery. And according to him, the effect of its abolition would be positive since, as he says, “once the indigenous race is emancipated from the humiliating tax imposed on their heads three and a half centuries ago and raised up by the natural effect of civilization, Peru will gain a numerous, productive population” (emancipada la raza indígena del humillante tributo impuesto sobre su cabeza, hace tres siglos y medio, y elevada por el natural efecto de la civilización, el Perú ganará una población numerosa y productora).49 In the end, it was a matter of carrying out “political regeneration” and so putting into practice the “rights of equality, freedom and property written into the Constitution.”50 At this point, the question was raised and considered as to whether the indigenous majority, grouped together in communities, were landowners, and so fulfilled the electoral requirement, or whether they were mere holders with the right of usufruct. The Peruvian president not only referred to the unjust nature of a tax that degraded the Indian and had been obtained as he put it, “bathed in the tears and blood of the taxpayer,” but also appealed to the fact that this could be the beginning of a stage dedicated to “progress” that would overcome the excesses committed by Echenique’s government.51

The decision to do away with the tax, however, had some rather unexpected negative consequences. In the first place, it meant a sharp drop in agricultural production, since the natives, who now did not have to raise the money with which to pay the head tax, reverted to their traditional model of subsistence farming and stopped supplying the domestic market, which occasioned a wave of shortages and price rises. Secondly, the large landowners took the opportunity to take over the parcels of land that the natives stopped cultivating, with the intention of planting crops for export

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48 Andrés García, La construcción del poder, 110.
49 Vásquez, La rebelión, 256.
50 Ibid.
51 Jacobsen and Domínguez, Juan Bustamante, 87.
and using the Indians as cheap labour. At the same time, the abolition of slavery, another consequence of the 1854 reforms, helped strengthen racism among a broad cross-section of the elite in the capital. In Lima, wealthy families institutionalized the custom of encargar cholitos, hiring semi-civilized Indians as domestic servants for relatives or friends who were travelling to the mountains; the cholitos and cholitas were young Quechuan of peasant origin who had been wrenched from their villages, often with the complicity of the authorities.

**The first indigenist policies**

Despite what has been said, during the second half of the century, the Peruvian political elites did not address the problem of the indigenous communities head on, although they made it plain on numerous occasions that they were convinced that decisive measures were urgently required. Behind a discourse that deployed the humanitarian arguments of the question—denouncing the humiliating and exploitative conditions in which the indigenous communities lived—lurked the concern that a native rebellion would severely destabilize the foundations of the liberal State, which was, at that time, beginning to consolidate itself. In this respect, the indigenous revolts at Huancané (1867) and Atusparia (1885) periodically revived fears of a violent attack on the established powers.

More specifically, the uprising in Huancané turned out to be the first fruits of indigenous opposition when Congress restored the tribute tax in 1867, although their arguments also revealed a variety of other causes, ranging from being required to provide unpaid labour to being forced to pay multiple taxes, and including the scant protection that the despotic authorities afforded the Indian. On this point, Jorge Basadre added that it would have been difficult to expect a consistent attitude from the authorities when the most widespread opinion among them was that the real origin of the problem lay in the idleness and savagery of the indigenous people. At any rate, there was a wide range of opinions in the

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Peruvian Congress. José Casimiro Ulloa, for example, considered that the largest sector of the population should not be exempt from paying their dues:

Es la clase trabajadora, que constituye la mayoría de la Nación, y los indígenas, no por ser indígenas dejan de ser ciudadanos, gozando de los mismos derechos que las clases privilegiadas y que tiene la obligación de practicar las obligaciones de sus derechos.

[It is the working classes that form the majority of the Nation, and the natives do not stop being citizens just because they are natives, enjoying the same rights as the privileged classes and they are obliged to fulfil the obligations that go with their rights.]

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However, the parliamentary representative, Cárdenas, who was a member of the Treasury committee, was in favour of abolishing it since:

El impuesto personal daña más a la mayoría de que a la minoría de la población . . . e imponiendo igual tasa a unos y a otros se comete grave injusticia social. . . . Y, no lo dudéis, el tributo que daña más hondamente los intereses de la mayoría será el motivo para una nueva revolución.

[The head tax harms the majority of the population more than the minority . . . and imposing such a tax on everyone alike is committing a serious social injustice. . . . And, let there be no doubt, the tribute tax that does the most profound damage to the interests of the majority will set off a new revolution.]

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Other parliamentarians, like Elguero, took up an intermediate position, albeit from a paternalistic viewpoint:

Si el hombre, sea pobre o rico, tiene derecho que reclamar del Estado, ¿no tiene, pregunto yo, deberes que cumplir? Yo, señor, resido 25 años en la sierra, y tengo el honor de que mi nombre sea recordado como el de un padre; más de una vez he llorado al ver la carga que pesa sobre los indios.

Por eso creo que debe rebajarse la cuota de contribución, pero no abolirse completamente.

[If a man, whether rich or poor, has the right to claim from the State, I ask you, does he not have duties to fulfil? I, sir, have lived in the Sierra for twenty-five years and I am honoured to be remembered like a father; I have wept more than once to see the burden that weighs down the Indians. That]

57 Vásquez, La rebelión, 260–261
58 Ibid.
is why I think their contribution should be reduced, but not abolished altogether.\textsuperscript{59}

Although the Huancané uprising was not the most violent one at the time, it was significant because it contributed to the emergence of a sector of liberal republicanism that we might call “indigenist,” characterized by an intense flurry of activity denouncing the problems of the native population and looking for solutions to them. This strand of thought and action was formed in the 1860s, in politics and also in the field of literature, with the magazine, the Revista de Lima, becoming a forum for discussing opinions and disseminating literary output that placed the native at the centre of the action in the stories.\textsuperscript{60}

The leader of this indigenist group was Juan Bustamante y Dueñas, an intellectual and politician of mestizo origin, who is credited with being the instigator of the revolt.\textsuperscript{61} In the preface to his work Los indios del Perú (The Indians of Peru), dated August 20, 1867, Bustamante confesses that he had always felt sympathy for the plight of the Peruvian Indians, “who are the owners of the country [los dueños del país] and make up two thirds of the population of Peru” and that he had even managed to make a couple of trips to Europe in an attempt to find solutions there to that “humanitarian problem.”\textsuperscript{62} Bustamante placed his hopes in the possible fruits of the Huancané uprising, which he called “involuntary” and peaceful, and expressed his opposition to the policies undertaken against the Indians, especially the measures of extermination that the parliamentary representatives for the Department of Puno had tried to apply.\textsuperscript{63} These were the principles that led Bustamante, with the support of General José Miguel Medina and Manuel Amunátegui, the editor of El Comercio, to found the Sociedad Amiga de los Indios (Friends of the Indians Society) in Lima. Several generals and prefects who had been responsible for departments in the Sierra were invited to comment on the matter and to join the Society. In the letters they sent to the Lima daily newspaper, we notice a common tone, marked by the writers’ criticism of the way the Government and its administrative representatives had handled affairs and paternalistic confidence in the civilizing mission that religion

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} Jacobsen and Domínguez, Juan Bustamante.
\textsuperscript{62} Juan Bustamante, Los indios del Perú (Lima: J.M. Monterola, 1867), 19.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., Chapters 3 and 4.
and humanitarian morality compelled them to undertake. Medina himself put it like this:

Si hasta hoy es triste la condición de las tres cuartas partes de los peruanos que forman la numerosa casta indígena, es tiempo de sacarla de su abatimiento y su humillación, convirtiéndolos en ciudadanos útiles . . . . ¿Progresará o no el Perú con la civilización de los indios? Es cierto que sí. [If so far, the condition of three-quarters of the Peruvians who make up the populous indigenous caste has been an unhappy one, it is time to take them out of their dejection and humiliation and make useful citizens of them. . . . Will Peru make progress or not with the civilizing of the Indians? Of course she will.]

Ramón Vargas Machuca added the contribution made by the natives during the struggle for independence:

Al pobre indio se le explota de todos modos, se le humilla, se le desprecia y se le trata como a bestia, no como a hombre o ciudadano. La independencia y la libertad que nos han legado con tanta sangre nuestros padres, en los memorables campos de Junín y Ayacucho son para ellos una desgracia lamentable en recompensa de sus sacrificios, . . . tanto que en los cuarenta y tantos años que se dice somos libres nada se ha hecho en su favor; y esto que la ley no conoce privilegios ni distinciones. [The poor Indian is exploited in every way, he is humiliated, despised and treated like a brute animal, not like a man or a citizen. The independence and freedom that our fathers bequeathed to us with so much bloodshed in the memorable fields of Junín and Ayacucho are for them a deplorable misfortune as a reward for their sacrifices, . . . so much so that in the forty-odd years that we have been said to be free, nothing has been done for them; and in spite of the fact that the law recognizes no privileges or distinctions.]

Rudecindo Beltrán, for his part, acknowledged that the natives still did not enjoy the status of de facto citizens:

Estoy pronto a cooperar con todas mis fuerzas a la emancipación y libertad de esos infelices, a fin de convertirlos en ciudadanos útiles a la patria y la sociedad. El día que se civilice al indio, nuestra patria será feliz y poderosa, porque contará en su seno con una gran población de ciudadanos ilustrados, prósperos y trabajadores. [I am ready to cooperate with all my strength in the emancipation and freedom of those unhappy people in order to turn them into citizens useful]
to our nation and to society. The day when the Indian is civilized, our nation will be happy and powerful, because at its heart there will be a large population of enlightened, benevolent, and hardworking citizens to rely on.\textsuperscript{66}

Bustamante himself underlines the fact that the inhabitants of the province of Huancané are “worthy of the fatherly protection [la paternal protección] of the Government.”\textsuperscript{67} Bustamante’s thinking then does not seem to be any different from those who advocated civilizing the Indians in terms of culture and religion so that they could be incorporated, under supervision, into a modern economic political structure:

No es porque el indio se resista a civilizarse, ni porque sea incapaz de convertirse en un ciudadano instruido, laborioso, moral e independiente: el indio es de carácter dócil, suave y apacible. Los que se oponen a la regeneración del indio, y los que frustran todo buen deseo, son los que viven a costa del sudor del pobre, y los que se enriquecen abusando de la ignorancia, humillación y abandono del indio. No quieren que el indio abra los ojos a la luz de la verdad, porque no conozca sus derechos y se emancipe de sus opresores.

[It is not because the Indian is reluctant to be civilized, nor because he is incapable of becoming a well-informed, hard-working, moral, independent citizen; the Indian is docile, gentle and peaceable by nature. Those who oppose the regeneration of the Indian and who frustrate every good intention are the ones who live off the sweat of the poor, and who grow rich by abusing the ignorance, humiliation and neglect of the Indian. They do not want the Indian’s eyes to be opened to the light of the truth, so that he will not know his rights or be emancipated from his oppressors.\textsuperscript{68}]

The Sociedad, in agreement with those ideas in defence of the Indians and in favour of civilizing them, advised the natives:

trabajar siempre y hacer en vuestros gastos todas las economías posibles para vestiros, educar a vuestros hijos y tener algo con qué manteneros en vuestras enfermedades; . . . aprender e instruir a los hijos en el castellano para conocer las leyes y estudiar las artes y las ciencias . . . cuidar del aseo y cumplir con los contratos.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 33.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 19–20.
the children so as to know the laws and to study the arts and sciences . . . to look after your hygiene and fulfil contracts.\textsuperscript{69}

All this was a way of initiating a process of learning to become “men and citizens,” which, according to the Sociedad, “is what we are moving towards.”\textsuperscript{70}

In the most hard-hitting of his writings, Bustamante very often made thinly veiled comparisons between what he called the “semi-barbarian masses” and the “civilized and progressive portion” of the country;\textsuperscript{71} nonetheless his writings and reflections on the problem are a valuable tool for learning about the conditions in which the indigenous populations lived.\textsuperscript{72} In particular, with respect to their political exclusion, Bustamante made it clear that the indigenous communities were treated neither as groups of free men nor as citizens and that, while they were the victims of numerous tax levies and abuses—greater even than those endured in the colonial phase—they never behaved as rulers, but were characterized as populations subject to the power of the whites and with no way of gaining access to public office. To this subjugation and the abuses could also be added the common phenomenon of political manipulation and fraudulent vote gathering. He warned, therefore, that “since suffrage is free in elections, no authority or landowner or boss has the right to oblige you to vote for persons in whom you have no confidence to exercise public office” (siendo libre el sufragio en las elecciones, ninguna autoridad ni hacendado, ni patrón tienen derecho para obligaros a votar por personas en quienes no tengáis confianza para que ejerzan cargos públicos).\textsuperscript{73}

Notwithstanding, a cursory analysis of the internal dynamics of the Sociedad Amiga de los Indios enables us to confirm that even this theoretical mouthpiece of the indigenous cause operated with a taxonomy of racism. As Martín Monsalve Zanatti points out, it was not an accident that the Sociedad never contemplated anything more than defending natives of Inca origin, but not, for example, the indigenous communities of Amazonia, who were regarded as the most obvious expression of barbarism. In this regard, it was considered that the Indians of the Sierra could be integrated into the system at some future date by means of education and other civilizing processes, whereas those of the Amazon Basin were conceived of as uncivilizable, and hence unfit for or

\textsuperscript{69} Vásquez, La rebelión, 295–300.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{71} Ossio, Los indios del Perú, 229–230.
\textsuperscript{72} Andrés García, La construcción del poder, 115–117.
\textsuperscript{73} Bustamante, Los indios del Perú, 83ff.
unproductive in the process of building the Peruvian nation. Now, Monsalve Zanatti’s thesis consists precisely of considering the major contribution of the Sociedad Amiga de los Indios as giving priority to achieving civic and electoral rights rather than redemption through education. While the religious integration and education of the Indian and dropping the use of Quechua were recurrent topics in the debates and journalistic articles that the Sociedad generated, the fact is, though, that recognizing the status of the Indian as a citizen absorbed most of the energies of the association. It even drafted a bill, which it tried to have debated in the Peruvian Congress during the 1868 legislature. The creation of a sort of administrative supervisory structure that would look after the wellbeing of the Indians and also their “education, hygiene and decency” was discussed fruitlessly for three days, and then forgotten about. The same paternalistic, would-be humanitarian posture also appears in the project of the minister, Manuel Pardo, who as Monsalve Zanatti points out, set out “to establish a political order in which the natives—as in colonial times—were considered as minors or wards of the ‘true citizens of the Republic’ organized into civil associations.”

It was precisely Manuel Pardo, president of Peru between 1872 and 1876 and the founder of the Civil Party, who published various essays on the situation of the natives. At the beginning of the 1860s, he thought that the low production in the central Andean region was due to the technological backwardness and indolence of the indigenous population and as a result he was in favour of using pressure tactics in order to force that group to become integrated into the economic system. Nonetheless, Pardo used his 1867 publication, Algunas reflexiones sociales con motivo de los disturbios de Huancané (Some Social Reflections on the Occasion of the Disturbances in Huancané) to analyse the reasons for the social malaise and to study the indigenous tribute tax. Although he realized that “the head tax that falls on one race ended up doubly favouring the white and mestizo races,” his view nonetheless was that the economic consequences of abolishing the tax in 1854 had been detrimental to the development of the provinces: “For the Indians, the tribute was the leasing of land that did not truly belong to them, either before or after the


conquest; for them, the tax was their insurance against being called up . . . a stimulus to work and therefore a moralizing factor” (Para el indio el tributo era el arrendamiento de una tierra que ni antes ni después de la conquista les perteneció en verdadera propiedad; para ellos la contribución era el seguro contra el reclutamiento . . . un estímulo al trabajo y por consiguiente un elemento moralizador.). As a solution, Pardo proposed economic decentralization as a means of promoting the active participation of the population in managing their own affairs, so that each province could rely on its own income without having to wait passively for the central government to attend to them. It is nonetheless very telling that once he became president of the Republic, he did not restore the tribute but legislated in favour of male suffrage linked to literacy, by means of which he ended up taking the right to vote away from the indigenous communities.

The defeat of Peru in the War of the Pacific (1879–1883) called into question the strength of the nation-building process and highlighted the survival of local powers. Some thinkers pointed to the persistence of local corporations, the colonial legacy and the oppressed situation of the natives as the causes of backwardness. Such was the case of the writer Manuel González Prada who, in his poems about the Incas, exposed the environment of wretchedness and servility in the indigenous population. His anti-elitist, anti-clerical and pro-indigenist stance in Nuestros indios (Our Indians) (1904), led him to reject the concept of race, but it had little impact on turn-of-the-century Peruvian society. Most of the intellectuals and politicians, on the other hand, adopted a positivist perspective to analyse the situation and, using a discourse of order, tried to exclude the indigenous majority, who were blamed for the defeat. The cultural climate at the end of the century, characterized by positive faith in progress and the receptiveness of the educated elites to Social Darwinism, also influenced and channelled a debate that had begun in Parliament in the 1870s.

77 Ibid.
80 Gabriela Chiaramonti, “Construir el centro, redefinir al ciudadano: restricción del sufragio y reforma electoral en el Perú de finales del siglo XIX,” in
In practice, the combination of suffrage that was both broad and indirect had strengthened the corporatist way of thinking of the indigenous peoples, as well as municipalism and fragmentation. Faced with this, after 1874, debate centred on the opportuneness of introducing direct suffrage, considered by some parliamentary representatives to be theoretically superior and more effective in preventing fraud, while at the same time excluding the natives: “If the Indian is incapable of casting a vote, let him not cast his vote, either directly or indirectly; do not let such rights be granted to those who have no aptitude for civic life or who do not have sufficient energy to resist coercion.”

However, it was the election of Nicolás de Piérola as President, in 1895, which marked the beginning of a period of reforms aimed at redefining the relations between the centre and the periphery of the political system. One of these reforms was the Electoral Law of 1896, whose most important novelties included introducing the direct vote and restricting the right to vote to the literate. Those who spoke in favour of the law argued that “the man who cannot read and write is not and cannot be a citizen in modern societies. . . . It is not in the nation’s interest for many people to vote, but for them to vote wisely; quality matters more than quantity in an act of such importance” (El hombre que no sabe leer y escribir, no es ni puede ser un ciudadano en las sociedades modernas. . . . No está en el interés de la nación el que elijan muchos, sino el que se elija bien: la calidad en acto de tanta trascendencia está sobre el número.).

Representatives opposed to the reform adduced economic and political reasons. Among the former, the native tax was an important source of revenue for the State, and with regard to the latter, the indigenous population carried a lot of weight in a society with strong traditional characteristics. There was also criticism of the direct vote because it meant “a republic and mass education, and we have neither a republic nor

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Legitimidad, representación y alternancia en España y América Latina: las reformas electorales (1880–1930), comp., Carlos Malamud (Mexico: FCE, 2000), 230–261. Chiaramonti underlines the fact that Peru is a special case, since there was talk in Europe and other Latin American republics of experimenting with a cautious extension of suffrage, while in Peru, they contemplated the opposite: drastically restricting it. According to the census of 1876, the natives represented 57 per cent of the population, the mestizos 25 per cent and whites 14 per cent, so that most of the population would be excluded.

81 Chiaramonti, “Construir el centro.” 236.
education.” According to one member of Congress, the reform contradicted the postulates of the Constitution, which stated that sovereignty rested with the nation and that this was made up of all practising Peruvian citizens over the age of twenty-one years. Racist prejudices, which at that time found support in the doctrine of Social Darwinism, were also present in the debate. Parliamentarians, such as Mariano Cornejo and Luis Carranza, published essays in which they compared and contrasted the white man with the image of the Indian, projected as “rigid, immobile, at a standstill.” Chiaramonti notes that the accent seemed to be placed on claims that the Indian was passive, incapable and indifferent to the electoral process. In short, electoral reform meant redefining the citizen, based on the choice of the cultural criterion of literacy and its multiple implications. Furthermore, introducing literacy as a prerequisite considerably increased the divide between nationality and citizenship.

As we have seen, turning the Peruvian natives into citizens during the nineteenth century was not a linear process and the policies that were directed at them were articulated, as circumstances dictated, as part of a complex balancing act in which limited inclusion and civilizing paternalism were what carried most weight. The never unambiguous nature of the processes of political exclusion is shown in the transformative capacity of discourses designed to present the image of the “Other,” the Andean Indian, as a construct that symbolized the culturally historical and anthropological essences of the nation at the same time as it represented the worst of it. The fact that the political elites were receptive to this shift in language enabled the natives of Peru to be conceptualized as a body that was foreign to the true nation.

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83 Chiaramonti, “Construir el centro,” 236.
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CHAPTER TWO

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH THE FOREIGNER IN ARGENTINA?: FROM “OBJECT OF DESIRE” TO “ENEMY WITHIN”

MARTA BONAUDO AND DIEGO MAURO

This chapter reopens the debate about the problematic issue of foreignness in Argentina by exploring it from the specific dimension of the way in which the conception of “the foreigner” was transformed. After the approval of the 1853 Constitution, the elites regarded this paradigmatic figure as the key constituent of their project to set society on new foundations, a civilizing instrument necessary to bring about the dual transplant of institutions and population that they desired; by the end of the century, however, the foreigner had transmuted into a threat, a disruptive element of the order it had helped develop.

The association between civilization and the European population was initially shared not only by various Latin American societies, but also by the United States. Civilization was identified with the social and political parameters of the new liberal order and the desire to incorporate the attributes of industriousness, civility and sense of civic responsibility—which, as they saw it, characterized the nations of the old continent—was, for that very reason, uppermost in the minds of the liberals. The native societies, represented by indigenous groups and those that were the result of different processes of miscegenation, seemed to be factors of barbarism that posed an obstacle to the future development of the new republics; in many cases, they were even regarded as unassimilable elements, or were situated, as in the case of Argentina, in a “no-place,” the so-called

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“desert,” which had to be thoroughly transformed.\textsuperscript{1} As Juan Bautista Alberdi, one of the architects of the Generation of 1837, pointed out, “to govern was to populate” (gobernar era poblar).\textsuperscript{2}

Although the need to attract European immigrants was constantly repeated by the Latin American elites at that time, the results were disparate and the impact of immigration uneven, both on the American continent as a whole and in the interior of Argentina. In Mexico, for example, the percentage of foreigners in the total population did not exceed 0.78 per cent in 1910, and in the United States it hovered around 14 per cent between 1860 and 1930; in Argentina, on the other hand, the proportion of foreigners—mainly originating from Mediterranean countries such as Italy and Spain—who already constituted 12 per cent of all inhabitants in 1869, represented 25.4 per cent and 29.9 per cent in 1895 and 1914, respectively. They were mainly concentrated in the plains of the Pampas, particularly in cities like Buenos Aires and Rosario. The foreign population in the capital reached 49 per cent of the total in 1914, and, taking only male adults of more than twenty years of age into account, foreigners represented two thirds of them.\textsuperscript{3}

In the initial decades of the republican period (1850–1870), that European immigrant, the supposed bearer of a privileged racial and cultural heritage, emerged as the principal civilizing agent of the republic under construction, as well as the main figure of the mythical “melting pot.” In later stages, though, resistance on both sides, as well as the

\\textsuperscript{1} Hernán Otero “Estadística censal y construcción de la nación. El caso argentino 1869–1914,” Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. Emilio Ravignani,” no. 16–17 (1997–1998): 129–136, has highlighted a cultural operation that took place during the nineteenth century that even affected Argentinian statistics, whereby the presence of Indians and blacks was diluted so as to magnify the impact of foreigners; the result was that the precise numbers of the indigenous population between 1869 and 1895 were very vague.


\textsuperscript{3} Erika Pani, “Hacer propio lo que es ajeno. Políticas de naturalización en América del Norte. Estados Unidos y México, siglo XIX,” Revista de Indias 255 (2012): 350; INDEC-Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos [National Institute of Statistics and Censuses]: 1869 to 2010. In the case of Argentina, the share represented by immigrants from adjacent countries practically disappeared since they did not exceed 3 per cent of all foreigners between 1895 and 1914.
outbreak of the first conflicts, gave way to new scenarios marked by attitudes that were ambivalent and did not exclude open rejection.

Given this background, our intention is to explore the images of the foreigner projected by the ruling elites at different points in a period of just over half a century: those underlying the celebration of the 1853 Constitution, based on the ideas of the Generation of '37; those of the Generation of 1880, a period marked by mass immigration when some of the earlier assumptions came under strain, summed up in the Immigration and Colonization Act of 1876 (Law 817); and finally, those which featured prominently at the turn of the century and in the Centenary festivities. These were decades when uncertainties multiplied, making it necessary to rethink and to modify the generous immigration model established by the national Constitution and the laws approving colonization and citizenship between 1850 and 1877.

In parallel, we shall also approach the question of the perceptions of the foreigners themselves at the overtures made to them from the seat of power or by political parties urging them to be naturalized and become citizens. In this respect, our objective is to examine more closely the appearance and content of positions of self-exclusion and the subsequent rejection of naturalization that opened the door for foreigners to political rights.

Our main argument is that there was a gradual unfolding of different processes that converged on the issue of foreignness and the possible alternatives of inclusion based on consensus, or exclusion or self-exclusion. On the one hand, there was the slow but steady erosion of the civilizing myth associated with open immigration as less naive and less optimistic images of the foreigner began to emerge, principally from the 1880s and 1890s. On the other, there was a steadily advancing process of redefining the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, which affected civic as well as national identity, as a result of the weakening of the model of the nation as a "political" contract—enshrined in the 1853 Constitution—and the subsequent emergence of conceptions of the cultural essence of Argentina based on Herder's notions of cultural nationalism.\textsuperscript{4} Within this framework, notions of what constituted foreignness gradually became detached from their initial political and juridical character and adopted more essentialist criteria involving traditions, as well as religion, race, class and ideology that exceeded even the boundaries of "the nation." Progress was not now perceived in terms of a leap forward, the

\textsuperscript{4} Fernando Devoto, \textit{Nacionalismo, fascismo y tradicionalismo en la Argentina moderna, Siglo XXI} (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2006).
construction of a new society based on immigration and a break with the past—specifically the colonial past and the Hispanic legacy—but rather as looking back in order to find, in that once reviled past, the elements needed to construct a mould from which to define Argentinians in a more essentialist way and make the population more homogeneous.

**The architects of the Republic define the world of foreignness**

Both the French tradition—after the 1789 revolution—as well as the Spanish one after 1812, established the legal separation between man and citizen, by characterizing man as the holder of natural and civil rights, and granting the citizen in addition the use of political rights. The same act in both traditions that defined man as a person by virtue of his rationality and so assigned him his rights, simultaneously excluded women, children and servants, who remained in the private sphere “below the legal age of majority” because they lacked that enlightened reason. The legal separation between man and citizen did not affect male foreigners, since most of the Latin American constitutions recognized their capacity to freely exercise natural and civil rights. It was the link between belonging and rights, however, that determined their access to citizenship.

Most of the Argentinian intellectuals and politicians of the Generation of '37 agreed on the aim of institutionally shaping a political order in which the State played a central role. It was precisely that initial close equivalence between State and Nation that would, in the view of analysts such as Benedict Anderson, be the hallmark of its modernity. It influenced a profile of the citizen-subject as one who would enter into the agreement freely and of his own volition and be constituted as an integral part of sovereign power. While the citizen-subject exercised his civil rights in response to the universal mandate that preceded the agreement, the legislator, on the other hand, left his stamp on political rights.

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7 Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, “Comentarios de la Constitución de la Confederación Argentina,” in Vol. 8 of *Obras Completas*, (Buenos Aires: Imprenta y Litografía Mariano Moreno, 1895), 47
It was the right to vote, the political right par excellence—which, in nineteenth-century terms, was granted with criteria of universality—that helped distinguish the inhabitant from the citizen, the Argentinian, from the foreigner. The debate replicated ones that were taking place elsewhere but acquired a certain specificity in a country that declared that it was still “at the stage of being settled” (en estadio de colonización). The main objective, as mentioned above, was to wipe out “barbarism” by effecting a population transplant in the “desert” that would deliver the cultural endowment necessary to achieve development and modernization. While the early Generation of ’37 set its sights on white European immigrants, it did not consider cultural, or even racial, homogeneity to be central, as their end-of-century counterparts would do.

For some, given the supposedly intrinsic virtues of European immigration, the Alberdian motto that equated governing with populating was enough; for others, like Sarmiento, “to civilize” implied not only establishing a balance between equality and freedom, but creating interests that would anchor the foreigner in the country and make him equivalent to the native-born in the conduct of civil affairs, and Sarmiento therefore became the driving force behind passing citizenship laws that ratified the principles of earlier traditions concerning rights and the link between being native-born and the territory. The parliamentary debate took a generous attitude with respect to naturalization, so that after two years of continuous residence, the foreigner could obtain his citizen card.

Conflicts and alternative views would arise in relation to the children of Argentinian parents born abroad and those of foreigners born in Argentina. Sarmiento and his followers pushed for increasing the power of the attributes of citizenship, so encouraging the naturalized immigrant to

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9 Sarmiento, “Comentarios,” 110. Although Article 25 of the Constitution encouraged European immigration, the proposal continued to be highly inclusive, since children of immigrants who were born in the country were incorporated as native-born. In certain imaginaries however, emphasis was placed on selection criteria. Alberdi stated that “the tree of freedom, in America, is the Englishman, the Swiss, the Belgian or the Dutchman, it is, in short, the free man from countries that are free,” quoted in Terán, Alberdi, 179.

10 Halperín Donghi, “¿Para qué la inmigración?,” 196.

take part in municipal government.\textsuperscript{12} Alberdi and his circle, for their part, insisted on restricting access to political freedom; they identified the foreigner with the inhabitant and offered both of them the broad field of civil liberties and guarantees such as religious tolerance, but not political rights.\textsuperscript{13} At any rate, in terms of the debate about whether children born in the country should be naturalized compulsorily or optionally, those who favoured integrating foreigners as citizens, anticipating problems in the future, succeeded in ensuring that the 1863 and 1869 laws ratified the preeminence of \textit{ius solis} over \textit{ius sanguinis}.\textsuperscript{14}

How did this process unfold? The process of settling groups of immigrants in the territories between 1850 and 1870 was an uneven one, since the urban and rural centres in the Pampas region—which was still being built up—received most of them.\textsuperscript{15} In the rural spaces, the programme met with mixed success, with some attempts barely generating any settlements at all, while others managed to expand and become consolidated. Incorporating immigrant groups into the process of social reorganization—principally because they brought with them cultural and moral values that would guarantee the major objective of helping launch Argentina onto the world market—had the effect of postponing the problem of citizenship and naturalization as central questions of the political controversy to a later date.\textsuperscript{16} This did not prevent these new actors from playing a role in the public arena using a variety of channels, such as opinion, association (ethnic, mutual aid, religious, cultural), making appeals and petitions to the powers, mobilizing in pursuit of their demands and/or exercising their right to vote or to administrate in municipal spaces.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} Natalio Botana, \textit{La tradición republicana} (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1984), 341.
\textsuperscript{13} Pani, “Hacer propio lo que es ajeno,” 352.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Colección completa de Leyes Nacionales}, vol. 3 (Buenos Aires: Librería La Facultad, 1912), 96.
\textsuperscript{15} The Pampas region included the province of Buenos Aires, the centre and south of Entre Ríos, Santa Fe, Córdoba and the centre-north of the national territory of La Pampa. The most important colonization processes developed in the provinces of Santa Fe, Entre Ríos and Cordoba.
\textsuperscript{16} Law 817 of the first Immigration and Colonization Act of 1876 specified the kind of immigrant that was sought: “any foreign day labourer, craftsman, factory owner, farmer or teacher, being under the age of sixty, able to vouch for his morality and skills, may come to the Republic in order to settle here,” \textit{Ley de Inmigración y Colonización} no. 817 (R.N, 1874/1877), chapter V, art. 12.
\textsuperscript{17} Pilar González Bernaldo, \textit{Civilidad y política en los orígenes de la nación argentina} (Buenos Aires: FCE, 2001); Hilda Sábato, \textit{La política en las calles
The 1870s, marked by the end of the War of the Triple Alliance and the European crisis of 1873–1874, gave rise to a debate about the negative aspects of the immigration policy in force at that time, with clear symptoms being detected of “sifting” in the search for new contingents.\textsuperscript{18} During that decade, as demands grew to put the benefits of natives and foreigners on the same footing, the very disparate strands that made up the overall fabric of the immigration strategy became subjected to strong internal stress and splits; however that same strategy also set the stage for episodes of violence whose epicentre was the Pampas, with the 1872 massacre perpetrated by the Tata Dios in Tandil, the storming and burning down of the Colegio de El Salvador, in Buenos Aires, in 1875, and the conflicts that marked the lives of the farming colonies in Santa Fe.\textsuperscript{19}

These experiences were evidence, not only of the imbalances caused by the arrival of the foreigners in everyday life, but of a gradual build-up of fear and resentment towards them among the elites and in subaltern groups. In some imaginaries, that cultural “Other” started to take the form of a social “Other.” To the criollos, or Creoles—the native-born people of confirmed Spanish ancestry who carried out the attacks in Tandil, protected by the figure of Tata Dios—the immigrant appeared to be a privileged competitor, both in the labour market and in gaining access to land, since he enjoyed all the civil rights but did not have to shoulder the burden of the exhausting, recurrent, ongoing obligation of the citizen to defend the nation. To the members of the elites, this “object of desire” not only did not fit the ideal cultural or ethnic profile but also started to operate as a demanding and disruptive factor. The foreign settlers in Santa Fe, for example, competed in and disputed the economic sphere, petitioning authorities, confronting them—often using violence—in the

\textsuperscript{18} Article 2 of the Act mentions protecting honourable, hardworking immigrants and “\textit{recommending measures for stemming any influx of those who were vicious or unfit for work}” (the italics are ours); Chapter 2, Article 5, Paragraph 4 points out that, among the routine duties ascribed to the immigration agents, was “to attest the behaviour and industrial aptitude of every individual that applied to enter the Republic as an immigrant.”

defence of rights that political chiefs, police commissioners and judges in particular constantly violated. The aspect that concerned the elites most, however, was the fact that they were setting themselves up as political actors in both the rural and the urban areas and were attempting to join in the hard struggle for power, in spite of the reticence and opposition of their consular officials.²⁰

In the face of the violence, the image of them that certain officials and journalists presented was increasingly that of active participants in anti-Argentinian plots, members of “sinister” societies, antireligious fanatics, masons, communists, socialists or unscrupulous upstarts.²¹ In this way, the social, religious and political tensions that were sweeping through Argentina at the time were projected onto and embodied in the figure of the foreigner.²² These tensions in turn created new fissures in that already intrinsically heterogeneous foreignness.


²¹ See Gallo, Colonos, 127; Sábat, La política, 229–231; Santos, El Tata, 82–84.

²² These become obvious in the different interpretations of the attack on the Colegio de El Salvador and the violence unleashed against it; the Colegio was an emblematic institution that the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Monsignor Federico Aneiros, intended to return to the Jesuits. Most of the chronicles of the time portrayed the Archbishop, the police and the press as responsible, and the main protagonists of events as being immigrant groups of diverse origin linked to secret societies, the recently created French section of the International Workers Association, “criminal multitudes,” and so on. Sábat, La política, 213, and Roberto Di Stefano, Ovejas Negras. Historia de los anticlericales argentinos (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2012), 238–245 give a detailed analysis.
Immigration as a threat in the crisis of liberalism

The regime of the 1880s confirmed the legal boundaries of citizenship that had been laid down by its predecessors; yet, while employing a discourse of progress and peace to give itself legitimacy, it comprehensively altered the division of powers, the autonomy of the provinces and the very dynamic of suffrage. Natalio Botana points out that President Julio A. Roca and the provincial governors not only subordinated their respective parliaments but also ratified practices that turned the institutions into mere spaces where political machines competed with each other and there was limited electoral participation.23

The dominant elites, caught up in a process of loss of legitimacy, growing social unrest and internal conflict, started to be wary of immigration and, after a short time, even to regard it as a threat. Attitudes critical of immigration were forcefully expressed between 1880 and 1890 and, in the prevailing climate of distrust, even those who had previously appreciated the role played by immigrants began to display similarly critical attitudes. In this respect, Sarmiento probably expressed these anxieties most succinctly when he asked himself in Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América: “Argentinians? Up to what point and since when?” (¿Argentinos? Hasta dónde y desde cuándo).24 Similarly, Estanislao Zeballos, a staunch defender of Italian immigration, began to show his disillusionment at the alleged materialism and licentious lives of immigrants in the cities.25

Around that time, during the debates on Law 1420 of Common Education that established secular education, Nicolás Avellaneda, who opposed Roca’s ideas, argued in favour of teaching religion in the state school system as a way of encouraging “national” cohesion in the face of the challenge posed by “the foreigners.”26 This proposal stirred responses from progressive liberals, such as Onésimo Leguizamón, who considered that Avellaneda’s attitude led to “an impossible law, a law of exclusion, a law of exile” (una ley imposible, una ley de exclusión, una ley de destierro) in the Federal Capital, the colonies and the national territories,

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23 Natalio Botana, El orden Conservador (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica, 1986); Paula Alonso, Jardines secretos, legitimaciones públicas (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2010).
24 Domingo F. Sarmiento, Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América (Buenos Aires: Terramar, 2011).
25 Bertoni, Patriotas, 123–125; Devoto, Inmigración, 255–256.
26 Nicolás Avellaneda, Escuela sin religión (Buenos Aires, 1883).
which were mainly made up of European dissidents. Two strong arguments backed up these statements. First, Leguizamón stressed that passing such a law entailed violating the constitutional principle of the citizens’ freedom of conscience, while secondly, it confirmed his belief that it was a manifestly exclusive piece of legislation that, from his point of view, contradicted the constitutional foundations that had set out to attract men from around the world to the Republic, particularly those nationalities from the north of Europe who mainly held different beliefs. In this respect, the appeal of his speech was to draw attention to the devastating consequence that would follow, namely, that passing such a law would be tantamount to a law of depopulation, perpetuating the desert.

In the mid-1880s, however, in spite of passing Law 1420—as well as other laws that helped consolidate the religious rights of immigrants—the elites began to manifest their unease, in the press and elsewhere, at what they characterized as the “flood of immigrants”: “When thousands of men are seen arriving every day, everyone has an uneasy feeling about the situation, like the threat of suffocation, as if there were not enough air or room for such a crowd” (Cuando se ven llegar millares de hombres al día, todos sienten el malestar de la situación, como una amenaza de sofocación, como si hubiera de faltar el aire y el espacio para tanta muchedumbre.). This feeling of being under siege and suffocating was vividly reflected in the naturalist novels of Eugenio Cambaceres, Julián Martel, Antonio Argerich and Miguel Cané who depicted, from different perspectives, the resentment and bitterness that the foreigner generated. These constituted the first scenes of a more extensive cultural operation, in which the multitude—for others, the immigrant masses with their materialism and irrationality—started to embody the internal threat to the new order. Somewhat paradoxically, these feelings of asphyxia were accompanied by

27 Gregorio Weinberg, Debate parlamentario. Ley 1420 (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1984), 32.
28 Weinberg, Debate, 32–33
29 El Diario, September 10, 1887. The proportion of foreigners in the population of the city of Buenos Aires increased to 52 per cent. In the province of Santa Fe they represented 42 per cent of the total population. See also Bertoni, Patriotas, 17.
30 See Devoto, Inmigración, 258; the most representative novels include: La Bolsa by Julián Martel; En la sangre by Eugenio Cambaceres and Inocentes o culpables by Antonio Argerich.
a conspicuous reluctance on the part of the immigrants to be naturalized or to use that route to integrate into the political community, as had happened in other countries. In this context, the transformations in global dynamics that were being generated—the consequence of what was referred to as “colonial expansion” and the theories that supported it—assumed greater significance. Lilia Ana Bertoni emphasized the fear felt by a large part of the ruling sectors at the debates that were unfolding in Europe, especially Italy, about expansion from the mother country, in which the destinations of large-scale emigration, like Argentina, were seen as a way of initiating the process. Colonization opened up an interesting breach, which a power could then use to execute an act of annexation in simple recognition of a natural right.

The uncertainties grew, and fears that a process of social dissolution would ensue led the ruling class to undertake operations both inside and outside the national territory. At an international level, Bernardo de Irigoyen, the Minister of Foreign Relations, restated at the Panama meeting in 1880 that the territorial definition of the American Republics had been completed in 1810 and there were no spaces that could be considered *res nullius*. At the same time, on the domestic front, it was considered urgent to make progress in modifying the condition of the foreigner.

In 1890, the deteriorating economic situation, high levels of corruption and speculation, together with the exacerbation of the most negative features of the Juárez Celman government, not only exposed its ineffectiveness in resolving the citizens’ problems, but led to both an economic and political crisis, which accelerated the need to regulate naturalization politically. Despite the fact that the qualifying criteria for citizenship were already broad, an attempt was made to reduce processing times, and, in some bills, even to include de facto naturalization, an option

32 Lucas Poy, “Ciudadanía, derechos políticos y conciencia de clase. La cuestión de la naturalización de los extranjeros en los orígenes del Socialismo,” *Diálogos: Revista Electrónica de Historia* 16, no. 2 (2015): 7, highlights this phenomenon using census data. In 1895, only 0.23 per cent of foreign males (1,630 out of about 700,000) had been naturalized. By 1914, the percentage had risen to 2.25 per cent (33,219 out of 1,473,809). For a comparison with the case of Latin America, see, among others Tobias Schwarz, “Políticas de inmigración en América Latina: el extranjero indeseable en las normas nacionales, de la Independencia hasta los años de 1930,” *Procesos. Revista Ecuatoriana de historia* 36 (2012): 39–73. In the United States, by 1900, 56.9 per cent of male adults born outside its borders had become citizens of the United States. Pani, “Hacer propio,” 366–367.


34 Ibidem, 37.
that was highly contentious among the elites and groups of foreigners alike.

From revolutionary times, as Pani has indicated, changing nationality had formed part of the strategic repertoire of those who raised the flags of freedom and crossed the ocean seeking material benefits or political refuge; this posed a real challenge for both the old and the new States, which wanted to consolidate their control over the population and to definitively settle their areas of jurisdiction. About 1890, in Argentina, the thesis of “filiación deliberada,” or volitional allegiance, which vested decisions about political belonging in the will of the individual, started to accommodate the right to expatriation, which the United States Congress had already approved in 1868. The voices of Sarmiento and Mitre recuperated the feasibility of natural law and the *ius gentium*. Mitre’s opinion in particular was that the United States legislation that turned the right of expatriation into natural law could be the answer to the dilemma posed by those who considered that breaking with their country of origin was treason. Although the citizenship bill (1891) and the electoral reform bill (1893) did not go ahead, they reflected a substantive change in the way the political leadership thought about the problem, in so far as it was proposed to separate electoral rights from the political link with the territory, turning the foreigner into a voter by the mere fact of being registered on the electoral roll. Underlying this proposal was the idea of automatic naturalization, somewhat remote from the act of will stipulated by the earlier liberal tradition and based instead on a criterion of selectivity. Potential naturalization did not apply to any foreigner who stepped off a boat, but to the socially, culturally and economically integrated adult. Family and property, those two pillars of liberal order, were cultivating unbreakable bonds that guaranteed the future of every kind of association.

The original conception of territory, understood exclusively in jurisdictional terms, became laden with social and cultural values. It looked in some respects as if what was wanted was to reproduce the old figure of the territorial citizen from the municipality or neighbourhood—now re-signified—at the level of the Republic.

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35 Pani, “Hacer propio lo que es ajeno,” 353.
36 *La Nación*, November 30, 1887.
37 *La Unión*, January 3, 1892. This proposal was backed even by opposition leaders of the recently founded Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), such as Bernardo de Irigoyen: “. . . foreigners with two years residence and who satisfy prudent conditions, should be allowed to exercise political rights, *without the need to formally renounce their former country of origin.*”
38 Bonaudo et al., “Colonos,” 304.
Concomitant with this, the proposal set the debate about the relationship between citizen identity and national identity on new foundations. During the process of giving political shape to the nation—based on the logic of the contract and as part of a still theoretical project of an immigration transplant—an unbreakable bond between nation and immigrant had been postulated; in the course of the final decades of the nineteenth century, that bond would start to come apart when faced with the real immigrants who, as we shall see, disproved, and in many cases challenged, the civilizing myth spread by the elites.

The other side of the coin: the foreigner’s perception of the link

For any individual, whether native-born or a foreigner, becoming a citizen involved forging a link of reciprocity; he was accepting a set of rights but also obligations. As pointed out earlier, the condition of citizen entitled him to enjoy a set of rights guaranteed by the State, but also to fulfil his obligations and to defend the nation when it was in danger. We are faced then with two unanswered questions: to what extent did the conditions in this State under construction effectively guarantee the exercise of civil and political rights? And, in conjunction with this, to what extent were foreigners prepared to accept this basic social contract?

The process of setting up the legal form of the new state and its jurisdiction was slow and complex. Even at the beginning of the 1890s, the Argentinian State had a number of unresolved issues, particularly with respect to what it was doing to guarantee basic civil rights and political freedoms in everyday life. This would partially explain, as we pointed out earlier, the low levels of naturalization by the immigrants who, given the lack of such guarantees in the new society during the inclusion process, constantly appealed to their consular representatives or the governments of the patria ausente, the absent homeland.

This did not prevent them from directly defending—sometimes by force of arms—their own lives and possessions or those of their fellow countrymen, from generating places of representation for questioning officials of the new State or from attempting to impose new public

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30 At a political level, there were debates about public employment for foreigners and even about recognizing naturalized foreigners as representatives that did not always have a positive outcome; see for example, Rafael Calzada, Carta al Dr. Víctor M. Molina sobre nacionalización de estrangeros (Buenos Aires: Tipografía Argentina, 1890).
agendas by exercising their right of petition or mobilization. Nor did they show any particular inclination to take responsibility for or defend the new patria generally or to unquestioningly support the State economically. The first obligation took time and effort away from the dream of fare l’America, particularly in those situations where the State was still extricating itself from the final regional and interregional conflicts and concluding its conquest of the indigenous world. In most cases, it was that dream that had driven them to emigrate and they were not prepared to sacrifice it in pursuit of the obligation to defend the country.

The problem of maintaining the State encompassed other dilemmas. Initially, immigrants were affected by taxation in different ways; while those who settled in rural areas were free of taxes—in most cases for a period of five years—those who chose, or were forced to choose, an urban environment had to pay tax from the start. In spite of the differences between them, neither group lost sight of the need to control taxation, and so became involved in that administrative space that the municipality organized in accordance with liberal discourse. Although the foreigners initially accepted the separation between “administration” and “politics,” as they became settled in their new communities and accumulated wealth, they not only took increasing interest in the way tax was collected, how much and where it went, but also in factors to do with the municipal regime. Consequently, in certain rural and urban areas of the Pampas where there were neighbourhoods with a strong foreign presence, various movements sprang up, some of them armed, calling for improvements in the colonization programmes or the suspension of taxes considered excessive (1878–1893). Some movements even led to a demand for the need to rethink the municipal statute itself, abandoning the concept of it as the place for administration and starting to consider it as the main “political entity . . . where civic rights and duty are born” ([la] entidad política . . . donde nace el derecho y el deber cívico).

Quite a few of those actors came from States that were in the process of being unified (Italy and Germany), reorganized (Switzerland as a federal State) or dealing with revolutionary experiences (France and Spain). Some intellectuals and politicians considered that whereas a minority had escaped from their native lands to go into exile, the majority arrived with very little experience of new ways of doing politics and came

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41 La Unión, January 11, 1894.
in search of better living conditions.\textsuperscript{42} The immigrants themselves, however, quickly realized that they could not remain outside this political dynamic because they needed their civil liberties to be guaranteed if they were to achieve their objectives. The problem therefore had to be resolved on two levels. The State, on the one hand, was still undergoing construction, was conditioned by the human and material resources available to it and was in no position to guarantee these liberties. The immigrants, on the other hand, had made it abundantly clear, by not becoming naturalized, that they were not prepared to cooperate in the two-way relationship that becoming a citizen demanded of them. They did not want to abandon their customs, their languages and their affection for their countries of origin, which would distort their conception of an initial “we.”

Their previous identity contained them and gave them meaning in a world that was different and facing actors that they frequently regarded as their social and cultural “Others.” That “we” fuelled and also gave some momentum to an imaginary in which, after realizing the dream of 

\textit{fare l’America}, there would be the successful return to the \textit{paese}, the locality they regarded as home. For this reason, when they realized that they in fact were the “Others,” socially and culturally different, they increased the distance between themselves and the Creoles—organizing migratory chains to slot their fellow countrymen into their processes of work and into wealth accumulation—and strongly supported both their mutual aid associations and their ethnic schools, key spaces for inducting their children into the social values and experiences of their cultures of origin.

In the early decades, they even insisted on their languages being used in legal and administrative documents and later extended their use in a multiplicity of newspapers.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{42} Letter from D. F. Sarmiento, Estanislao Zeballos Archive, Museo Udaondo, Caja Proyecto Ley de Ciudadanía, hoja 136. "What will the Italians bring us, as their country, like ours, is still being formed, or the Spaniards, who are in a period of military uprisings, ditto; the Austrians, who up until Sadowa, represented the most classic absolutism of the Holy Roman Empire?"

Their recalcitrance, their appeals to power, their involvement in social and political unrest and their growing presence in the most dynamic sectors of the Argentinian economy were undoubtedly the reasons why various social actors intensified the search for answers during the 1880s and 1890s. The leadership of the Partido Autonomista Nacional (PAN), the National Autonomist Party, had also become aware of it, and so it was no coincidence that, in a parliamentary speech in 1887, Estanislao Zeballos, should express his dissatisfaction at the repeated endorsement of those original roots:

Recórrase la ciudad de Buenos Aires, y se verá en todas partes banderas extranjeras, en los edificios; las sociedades, llenas de retratos e insignias extranjeras; las escuelas subvencionadas por gobiernos europeos, enseñando idioma extranjero; en una palabra, en todas partes palpitará el sentimiento de la patria ausente, porque no encendemos en las masas el sentimiento de la patria presente.

[Go round the city of Buenos Aires, and you will see foreign flags everywhere, on the buildings; societies full of foreign symbols and portraits; schools subsidized by European governments teaching a foreign language; in a word, sentiment for the absent homeland beats all around, because we do not inflame the sentiment for the present homeland in the masses.]44

While a few laws were passed that tried to impose new conditions on the groups of settlers with a view to reducing the impact of ethnic diversity—one example being the Law of Common Education—the intention of others was not only to help the State increase its jurisdiction over particular social spaces, but also to make integration into daily life


44 La Tribuna Nacional, October 25, 1887.
What Should be Done with the Foreigner in Argentina?

easier for the foreigners, for example, by introducing civil marriage or making cemeteries secular. Nonetheless, the most intense debate—which used parliament as its sounding board towards the end of the 1880s and beginning of the 1890s—concerned naturalization. Large sectors of the PAN and the UCR sought to reach an agreement about giving access to voting rights without the need for naturalization, while corporations like the Unión Industrial Argentina (UIA), the Argentinian Industrial Union, which had a substantial foreign membership, proposed eliminating citizenship cards altogether. The ethnic press did not take long to become involved. Some newspapers, such as La Patria Italiana, emphasized the reservations of the foreigners, as in:

Abiamo il suffragio universale, ma non abbiamo elettori. . . . Un ‘altra causa del poco ardore col quale gli stranieri desiderano l’esercizio dei diritti politici è la manifesta avversione del figlio del paese a tutto ciò che importi un intervento diretto de volontà estranea in ciò che forma l’elemento della vita dei partiti ed ha tratto col governo della cosa pubblica.

[We have universal suffrage but we do not have voters. . . . Another reason for the lack of eagerness with which the foreigners seek to exercise political rights is the manifest aversion of the sons of the old country to anything that means the direct intervention of the foreign will in anything that forms part of the life of the parties and deals with the governing of public affairs.]

Other newspapers, for example, L’Operaio Italiano, argued that they could only offer moral support, because to aspire to naturalization would be tantamount to openly repudiating the country of origin, the place where they were born.

At that time, new agencies of representation, such as the Centro Político de Extranjeros (CPE) (the Foreigners’ Political Centre), which was concerned about the impact of the economic crisis of 1890, joined forces with the ethnic associations that already existed. Its German, French and Italian managers, described as “humble people from industry, commerce, the sciences and the arts” (modesti elementi dell’industria, del commercio, delle scienze e delle arti) considered it a necessary instrument for harmonizing the opinions of the foreigners in the quest for a

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45 La Prensa, July 28, 1890.
46 La Patria Italiana, October 25, 1887.
47 L’Operaio Italiano, September 14, 1893.
48 L’Operaio Italiano, September 1–2, 1890.
naturalization law.\textsuperscript{49} The CPE, run by a naturalized foreigner, Julio Schelkly, took up the campaign from the Federal Capital. Although he failed as a result of government pressures and the internal tensions that developed in the groups involved, he did leave the organization intact and operating under two guiding principles: automatic naturalization that protected “affection for the country of origin” (el afecto hacia la patria de origen) and the defence of universal male suffrage with no other types of restriction.\textsuperscript{50}

As the CPE was becoming less visible, socialist groups in civil society took up the naturalization campaign again. These groups provided a focal point for a body of foreign workers even before the Socialist Party was founded (1896). The campaign set itself apart from the positions of the dominant sectors and from those of some core constituents of the CPE leadership itself. From the beginning, the socialists tried to link the issues surrounding naturalization to an act of will, or individual awareness. In this way, they reasserted their links with the liberal tradition, even as they were deploying one of the central tenets of the cultural universe of socialism. For them, conscious involvement in the political life of a society was a fundamental link in the class struggle. Obtaining citizenship therefore would become the surest means of influencing the progress of the country and helping to improve the situation of the working class.\textsuperscript{51}

The leaders of the party themselves appealed to the growing mass of foreign workers arriving at the ports in an attempt to steer them away from the “fiction” of patriotism and to urge them to forcefully accept their class condition. The universalism of class would put a strain on “narrow-minded prejudices” (prejuicios de campanario) and lead them to accept that “the earth that we bathe with the sweat of our brows is our homeland by right, and it is, therefore, our duty to defend it from the vampires who suck our blood” (la tierra que bañamos con el sudor de nuestra frente es por derecho la patria nuestra, y es, por consiguiente, deber nuestro defenderla de los

\textsuperscript{49} La Prensa, November 28, 1890.
\textsuperscript{50} La Unión, January 10, 1892. At the beginning of 1892, it had 60,000 associates and 118 centres. In the Santa Fe colonies, in addition to the general demands, there were also specific ones, such as the recovery of the municipal vote for foreigners—a right removed by the constitutional reform of 1890—an independent justice of the peace and the abolition of the agricultural levy. The local CPE branches stimulated debate on “lofty questions about the general interest” with the intention of generating “citizen awareness,” which would, as an editorial in El Argentino of January 9, 1892 pointed out, increase the number of Argentinian citizens among the foreigners.
\textsuperscript{51} Poy, “Ciudadanía,” 10.
vampiros que nos chupan la sangre). The social differences that had become more pronounced with the arrival of the new waves of immigrants at the turn of the century exposed the deep division that separated workers and bourgeoisie in the complex weft of foreignness that already existed.

The socialist party adopted the question of naturalizing foreigners as part of its programme and tried to encourage immigrant workers to become members by appealing to strong international voices. Nonetheless, neither the support received from Spanish socialists like Pablo Iglesias nor the support of Italian socialist parliamentarians like Enrico Ferri, Andrea Costa or Filippo Turati, succeeded in convincing them either to be naturalized or to join the party. It may be that what continued to be uppermost in the minds of those workers, beyond the individual experience of social mobility that the new country could offer them, was the desire to eventually return home without ever completely making the break with their countries of origin.

**Between troublesome cosmopolitanism and the ordered nation: Imagining the “enemy within”**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the ruling elites faced an increasingly complex scenario, marked by the spread of growing social unrest, which was referred to as “creeping cosmopolitanism” in some quarters, and as “civic indifference” in others. Although leaders like Belisario Roldán warned of the dangers of adopting hostile attitudes towards the foreigner, he could not help fearing that the energies of the nation were being sapped by this influx of immigrants. After the attempt to open the doors to regulated participation but nonetheless expanding the boundaries of the political community, with even foreigners as voters, the law passed in 1902 sought precisely to meet

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52 La Vanguardia, September 1897, quoted in Poy “Ciudadanía,” 11.
53 Iglesias’ arguments prepared the ground for the theses of the Argentinian socialists by insisting on the obligation of anyone professing socialist ideas to be naturalized and take part politically to set an example to the other workers. However, the Italian socialists made a clear difference between those who had decided to stay in the new homeland and those who still dreamt of returning home to Italy. While they encouraged the first group to acquire citizenship cards and become involved in the defence of workers’ rights, they warned the second group about Italian laws that blocked Italian citizenship to anyone who had been naturalized in Argentina. Poy, “Ciudadanía,” 14–15.
54 Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados (Buenos Aires: Establecimiento Tipográfico “El Comercio,” 1902), 139.
the challenge that Roldán posed by revitalizing electoral life at the local level. The quest for greater legitimacy and participation also sought to achieve greater stability in the face of the recurrent attacks of revolutionary radicalism and growing social and worker unrest.

Since the 1890s, two other forces—socialism and anarchism—had been establishing themselves in the heterogeneous universe of the workers, which was basically urban and largely foreign. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority socialist core continued strengthening the link between politics and trade unionism, promoting the naturalization of immigrants as well as taking the legislative route to secure economic and social improvements. Anarchism, on the other hand, which continued to postulate imminent social revolution even as it emphasized that it was anti-politics and anti-state, not only rejected the attempts at reform put forward by the elites and the socialist alternatives that were proposed, but also showed that it was open to “the survival of ethnic identity” and internationalism. These approaches, in a situation in which the State left the capital-labour conflict to be fought out in the private sphere and in which foreigners found non-institutionalized ways of participating, were reasons enough to allow anarchism to take a preeminent role.

Both groups tried to lead and channel the social discontent that was unleashed with some force in the early years of the new century. The general strike called by the anarchists in November 1902 interrupted the debate on electoral reform and captured the attention of parliament in a context that was still reverberating following the anarchist attacks that had cost the lives of King Umberto I of Italy and the President of the United States, William McKinley, in 1900 and 1901, respectively.

In a climate in which significant sectors of the government increasingly associated mass immigration with social unrest, the idea of creating an electoral roll of immigrants and turning them into voters ceased to be

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55 Cámara de Diputados, 120. The presentation of the bill contained for the first time a comment on the incorporation of women. However, the topic was dismissed by the president of the nation himself on the grounds that he considered that the social condition of women in the country “still keeps them from functions of this kind,” Cámara de Diputados, 698. For the law, see also Botana, El Orden, 251; Luciano De Privitellio, “Representación política, orden y progreso. La reforma electoral de 1902,” Política y Gestión, 9 (2006); Martín Castro, El ocaso de la República oligárquica (Buenos Aires, Edhasa, 2012), 79.


58 See the chapter by Susana Suéiro Seoane in this volume.
viable, even more so when the political leaders called for new instruments to guarantee security and order in a Republic that felt threatened by the “elements” that Europe “was throwing out of its bosom.”\textsuperscript{59} One of these was a law of compulsory conscription, known as the Ricchieri Act, which was passed in 1901 and mandated compulsory military service for all able-bodied males of legal age. This law, which was not altogether unconnected with the fear of armed conflict with Chile, was looked upon mainly as a mechanism for making the population more homogeneous and for building the nation, as the legislators in parliament explicitly pointed out.\textsuperscript{60} The second instrument, in 1902, marked a turning point in the process of legally shaping citizen identity as well as the relationship between citizenship and foreignness, when parliament sponsored the so-called Residence Law. This granted the Executive the authority to classify which behaviours and characters were “harmful,” at the same time as it was given complete discretion to expel any foreigner considered dangerous and to refuse entry to undesirables as a simple administrative measure and without the need for a court order.\textsuperscript{61} The original draft bill dated from 1899, a time when conflicts were escalating, and some sectors of the dominant class, which included the “good foreigners” in the Unión Industrial Argentina (UIA), asked Senator Miguel Cané to draw up a more forceful legal instrument to deal with them. Class trumped ethnicity when social protest was brought under the remit of the law and criminalized. Based on the international validity of the right of expulsion and in consideration of the fact that this right was inherent in sovereignty—in so far as the sovereign had the powers to accept or reject entry into the territory—Cané prepared a first draft that flagrantly breached Article 14 of the national Constitution, since it violated equality of civil rights between citizens and foreigners.\textsuperscript{62} The foreigner was beginning to be transfigured into a social subject who threatened, from within, the order, and even the survival of the same community that protected his rights.\textsuperscript{63} The influence of positivist criminology and so-called Social Darwinism was, as in Europe and the USA, also beginning to make itself felt at the same time, and this gave the elites new scientific and legal arguments and

\textsuperscript{59} La Tribuna, November 19, 1902. 
\textsuperscript{60} Fernando Devoto, “De nuevo el acontecimiento: Roque Sáenz Peña, la reforma electoral y el momento político de 1912,” Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. Emilio Ravignani” 16 (1996). 
\textsuperscript{61} Law 4144, November 22, 1902, articles 1, 2 and 3.
\textsuperscript{62} Miguel Cané, Expulsión de extranjeros (Buenos Aires: Imprenta J. Sarrailh, 1899).
\textsuperscript{63} Sierra, “Enemigos internos,” 77.
instruments to tackle social unrest and the immigrant question using the framework of the opposition between health and disease. As the debates surrounding the residence law demonstrated, the undesirable foreigner was being transformed on the strength of these coordinates into an antisocial individual, a risk factor, a pathogen that had to be fought with antibodies, which included deportation, pure and simple, as provided for in the new law.

As a result, the two strands of the transformation process became more pronounced. On the one hand, in the perception of the elites, immigrants ceased to be defined as the hardworking, civilizing classes that the sponsors of the transplant had envisaged and started to become potentially dangerous elements, virtual agents of dissolution and conflict even. On the other, at the level of citizenship, it was becoming obvious that the rationale of inclusion tied to the idea of a political contract was losing ground in favour of more essentialist conceptions that prioritized the need to homogenize the nation along cultural lines. In a kind of reversal of the perspective that had informed the Constitutional assemblies of 1853, progress was no longer so clearly identified with the future, with immigration and breaking away from the colonial legacy, but on the contrary, with a certain positive reappraisal of that Hispanic past, which was able to offer what Joaquín V. González, among others, defined as a “national tradition,” a starting point from which to try out different routes to assimilation. The repeated debates at the beginning of the twentieth century about the use of Creole and the possibilities of promoting an Argentinian language—apart from a few outbursts of Hispanophobia—highlighted precisely this reappraisal of everything Spanish and Catholic, now regarded as the fundamental substratum for building a nation defined in more essentialist terms.64

During the second half of the first decade of the twentieth century, the climate of unrest did not abate any more than the anxiety of the ruling elites did. The failed radical revolution of 1905, the wave of strikes, the strengthening of anarchism, as well as repeated calls for a state of siege—a

64 Encouraged by well-established and influential ethnic associations, visits to the country by intellectuals from Spain became more frequent once the government, in a clear sign of rapprochement, suppressed anti-Spanish verses in the National Anthem. The Roman Catholic Church itself also initiated a process of accelerated naturalization, at the same time as links with Rome were being strengthened. See Roberto Di Stefano, “Por una historia de la secularización y la laicidad en la Argentina,” Quinto Sol 15 (2011); Loris Zanatta, Del Estado liberal a la Nación Católica. Iglesia y Ejército en los orígenes del peronismo (Buenos Aires: UNQ, 1996).
measure regarded as insufficient—led to discussions about a variety of reforms and the enactment of repressive new laws. At one level, and as the bill presented by the Executive in 1909 specifically proposed, they sought to limit immigration and to be more selective by introducing new laws with more filters and restrictions. At another level, after fresh episodes of attacks in social and cultural spaces frequented by the elites, new repressive mechanisms were developed, such as those that arose from the Law of Social Defence (1910) or the creation of police and intelligence units that were specifically designed to combat those who were allegedly “unassimilable.”

While the Residence Law stressed preventing the potential external enemy from entering the country and expelling him where necessary, the Social Defence Law, aiming to protect “the peaceful everyday life” of a country supposedly overflowing with plenty, set its sights on defining the figure of the enemy within, which was strongly associated with what was called the anarchist pathogen. As far as Miguel Cané was concerned, it was an “explosion of hatred,” pure and simple, directed at a nation that had generously opened its doors only to find itself vilely betrayed by a “bastard, ignominious, . . . wretched, cowardly foreign mentality” (mente extranjera bastarda, ignominiosa, . . . miserable, cobarde).

In an atmosphere of fanaticism and extreme paranoia, the tone of Cané’s gloomy diagnosis was further darkened by the Member of Congress, Ferrer, who proposed authorizing the outright public lynching of anarchists without trial as an act of legitimate defence. While he considered that more sophisticated laws and legal instruments could be discussed in the future, the imminence and magnitude of the threat did not allow for such parliamentary manoeuvres at that moment. He concluded his speech by saying that every anarchist should know that if he entered the country, he was automatically signing his death sentence.

For Lucas Ayarragaray, who was closer to Cané than to Ferrer in his view of the threats at the time, it was important to understand that, aside from the question of assessing how serious the situation in Argentina was, they were facing a paradigm shift because societies were confronting new forms of criminal activity created by anarchism and revolutionary

67 Cámara de Diputados (1910), 297.
68 Ibid., 313.
socialism that were the fruits of the social and economic transformations associated with the industrial revolution. In that context, governments had to create legislation to meet those threats, as the United States was successfully doing, in his opinion. 69 His diagnosis not only indicated the necessity and the urgency that they felt in the face of the anarchist menace, which Ferrer and Cané had brought to the fore, but also the particular need to create appropriate permanent instruments to contain it. In his opinion, the question could not be confined to establishing new sifting arrangements and selection criteria, which was what the Executive bills about immigration proposed, because however much the controls were adjusted, it was very difficult to know what a man “was bringing inside him” (traía dentro de sí). Therefore, following the guidelines of the Member of Congress, Meyer Pellegrini, Ayarragaray proposed passing a law of expulsion that would enable the inevitable deficiencies of every immigration law to be rectified, explaining that, even if the anarchist “virus” managed to enter, the necessary antibodies would be available to defend the “life,” “honour,” “progress,” and “future stability” of the nation, 70 and all without committing the excesses and unbridled violence of proposals like Ferrer’s. Anarchism was a sickness and a scourge that had to be confronted with the utmost severity, but it had to be done without trampling on the Constitution. 71

The bill, based precisely on the arguments and presentations of Meyer Pellegrini and Ayarragaray, finally passed into law. While it did not go to the extremes of Ferrer’s initiatives, it nonetheless severely violated individual rights. In addition to reinforcing the immigration filters, the law criminalized in the widest sense possible, anyone involved, whether by omission or commission, in bringing anarchists and undesirables into the country, and made them responsible for their subsequent actions. There were increased penalties for ship-owners, shipping companies and boat crews that did not carry out proper checks, while associations, groups and institutions that directly or indirectly propagated anarchist ideas, or used emblems and symbols identified with those principles, were also penalized. Likewise, it became a crime to condone anarchism publicly, as well as to spread information that was considered restricted, such as how to prepare explosives or sabotage machinery. 72

69 Ibid., 325.
70 Ibid., 300 and 325.
71 Ibid., 325.
72 Ibid., 259–361. Here, members of the Argentinian Congress showed they were familiar with experiences in Europe and the United States during Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency; at times they seemed to be following closely the Italian
So, both the debate and the articles of the law captured the two-pronged shift in attitude that had been evolving since the end of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the view of the “enemy without” shifted to the “enemy within.” The debate leading up to the Social Defence Law centred not so much on preventing undesirables from entering the country—as had been the thrust of the debates between 1899 and 1902—but on expelling those threatening foreigners who, like any pathogen, could not, by definition, be assimilated. On the other, in spite of some statements to the contrary, it was obvious, as Ayarragaray put it, that the anarchist “sect” was not completely “foreign to our land or our blood” in so far as it had undeniably managed to penetrate the country and acquire a following. In this respect, the notion of foreignness in the speeches of the elites started to shed its legal nature and came to be used also to designate those native-born or naturalized Argentinians who adopted “foreign ideologies” that threatened the traditions and way of life of the country and, in doing so, raised doubts as to whether they belonged to the political community and the body of the nation. The new Social Defence Law had an impact not only on the exercise of a series of fundamental civil rights, such as those of opinion, assembly and association, but also on the political rights of naturalized Argentinians—who lost their citizenship cards—and of native-born ones.

The harsh penalties provided for in the law for a whole set of actors involved in the immigration process and Argentinian public life (ships’ captains, shippers, civil servants, manufacturers, publishers, journalists, militants), without distinction of sex or origin (except for the death penalty and prison), marked a watershed in the relationship between citizenship and foreignness. By establishing the figure of the enemy within, virtually any threat was attributed to a foreign source. The Social Defence Law therefore signified the point of intersection of two converging processes:

school of criminology and one of its most prominent exponents, Raffaele Garofalo, see Senellart, “L’ennemi,” 266.

Ibid., 301. Lucas Ayarragaray himself highlighted the ground that anarchism had gained, according to him, as a consequence of the “absence of authorities and opposing counterweights,” although, even so he wanted to avoid it spreading further among “the lower classes of society,” so as not to multiply the attacks that, like the one on 26 June, had been made “against the cream of our society.”

Boletín Oficial de la República Argentina, year 18, no. 4969 (Buenos Aires, 1910): chapters II and III, especially articles 7 to 12. With regard to the loss of political rights, article 6 is significant for foreigners, and article 28 for Argentinians.

Cámara de Diputados (1910), 343–352.

Ibid., 351.
on the one hand, the slow but steady erosion of the civilizing myth associated with open immigration, in conjunction with the upsurge of much less favourable images, which, as we have seen, were already circulating in the 1880s; on the other, and in parallel with this, the gradual breakdown of the political model of the nation based on the contract, as reflected in the 1853 Constitution, and the resulting emergence of culturalist conceptions that redefined the criteria of citizen inclusion and exclusion. Within this framework, the notion of the foreigner was modified; he was no longer the figure who was going to positively confront and dismantle the initial anachronistic alterity of the native in a Republic that was heading towards indefinite progress. Both the calling into question of this imaginary and the urgent need for order fuelled an essentialist view of the nation and so opened up horizons that were substantially different from the earlier one. The “essential nation”—which some on the boundaries of Social Darwinism fondly imagined was endowed with a certain biological and racial substratum—sought to build a community tied to a language and a shared past that would neutralize the voices of dissent.

In these terms, on the brink of World War I, the foreigner in Argentina had become quite a different figure from the one projected by the elites in the middle of the nineteenth century. Part of that foreignness continued to reflect the image of the “good foreigner,” the one who exhibited the initial attributes of industriousness, civility and sense of civic responsibility that had made him such an object of desire. In spite of his reluctance to be naturalized, that same good foreigner—together with some sectors of the dominant elites—had looked in vain for formal alternatives that would allow them to participate in the political dynamic. However, over five decades, the presence and resistance of other members of that group had affected everyday social relations and interactions with the State, distancing themselves from those positive attributes that the intellectuals and politicians of the Generation of ’37 had conferred on them.

In turn, the complexity of the foreignness was further increased with the mass arrival of immigrants, most of whom, unlike their nineteenth-century predecessors, swelled the ranks of the expanding workers’ movement. In their confrontations with power and even within their own ethnic communities, these actors laid bare the class tensions that permeated them, sowing doubts and uncertainty when it came to assessing the effects of open immigration and indeed the figure of the foreigner itself. Coinciding with that crisis of the legitimacy of the elites, this figure was transmuted into a threat to social order and a danger to the process of building a homogeneous nation.
The Argentina of the Centenary was facing a paradoxical situation. The actor called upon to defeat a weaker enemy had been incubating another stronger one, the enemy within. The authorities basically identified that enemy—one who challenged the order of the state and threatened the social and cultural foundations of that homogeneous nation—with the militant anarchist. It was the heavy involvement of anarchism in social unrest that spread outside the official channels of political representation—in which native-born and foreign workers alike played a significant part—that exposed the inability of both the dominant groups and the opposition parties (UCR-PS) to resolve the complete civic integration of these subjects in a new key area: social rights. This unresolved issue would play a central role in the twentieth century.

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Vosotros que en el seno de la nada
pasáis la juventud desperdiciada,
despiciando los dones del Eterno
y que ganáis sin mérito el infierno. . . .

Vosotros, que tal vez cuando natura
os despierta la sangre y que os apura
a buscar en la carne algún deleite,
untáis la mano de asqueroso aceite,
y así vuestra lujuria se amortaja
en una triste y desabrida paja.

Y tú, sexo embustero y desaseado,
¿en qué empleas la flor que Dios te ha dado?
Vírgenes tontas, con vosotras hablo,
no sois ni para Dios ni para el Diablo.

Ahora, que inflamado de elocuencia
al predicar la fornicaria ciencia
más que Bossuet y Fenelón me siento,
hermas y machos, escuchad mi acento.

SERMÓN que el cardenal Medés predicó en Roma el día de la Ensartación
de Nuestra Señora de Lorreto. [All you who in the bosom of the void / spend your wasted youth destroyed, / spurning the gifts of the Eternal / and, undeserving gain the infernal. . . . // All you, who perhaps when nature’s / inflamed the blood and enraptures / you to seek in the flesh delight’s release / you smear your hand with disgusting grease / and so you
shroud your lust so rank / in an oh so sorry, insipid wank. // And you, oh sex, grubby with deceit / how d’you use the flower that God has given you? / Foolish virgins, it’s you I’m talking to, / neither God nor the Devil are you fit to meet. // Now, since inflamed by eloquence / preaching fornicating science / more than Bossuet and Fénelon I feel, / males and females, hear my accented zeal. (Excerpt from the) SERMON that Cardinal Medés preached in Rome on the day of the Skewering of Our Lady of Lorreto (sic)]

Undated and with no imprint that enabled its provenance to be traced, the long satirical poem—verses three to six of which open this chapter—began to do the rounds of the salons of Guatemala in the 1830s. It parodied the form of the church sermon: its tone was epigrammatic and sententious, its lines imitated the addresses of clergymen while attacking celibacy and the false morality of the clergy. All in all, it was so obscene and irreverent that it could give rise only to scandal or laughter, depending on the disposition of whoever read it. Since it was also dedicated to Canon José María Castilla, who was a very influential figure in political affairs at that time, it became very difficult to resist reading such a poem, and its racy stanzas livened up Guatemalan social gatherings for months on end.2

The fate of that celebrated “Sermon” would be of little importance to the objective of this chapter were it not for the fact that it was unanimously attributed at the time to the joint authorship of José Batres Montúfar and María Josefa García Granados, the latter better known as la Pepita.3 In spite of the fact that literary criticism has still not determined the truth of this attribution, the fact that it was assumed to be so in her own time demonstrates the subversive capacity of a woman who not only dared to submit her writings to the printer, but did so by quite brazenly appropriating discourses that were historically reserved for men and manipulating them to attack the guiding principles on which nineteenth-century patriarchal society was based.4

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1 The complete poem is in Jorge Luis Villacorta C., María Josefa García Granados: su vida, su obra, su correspondencia, sus papeles, en la leyenda, en el teatro (Guatemala: Editorial José de Pineda Ibarra, 1971), 157–66.
3 Ramón A. Salazar, El tiempo viejo: Recuerdos de mi juventud (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1896), 103.
The extraordinary example of Pepita García Granados invites us therefore to reconsider the exercise of writing as a potentially transgressive social practice through which women were able to find effective formulas for redefining themselves and shaping their own identities. Seen from this point of view, the “Sermon” takes on renewed interest because the point of this chapter is to understand more about practices of resistance that originated on the margins of a liberal system built on a hegemonic discourse of inclusion that concealed the existence of multiple forms of exclusion in its interstices. And if those who have examined the cultural scaffolding of post-revolutionary liberalism agree on anything, it is that it offered very limited prospects of inclusion. On the one hand, it proclaimed freedom and eliminated the practice of reserving key functions for the privileged strata, thereby apparently advocating egalitarianism, while raising on the other, different types of barrier that could exclude broad sectors of the population from decision-making. Class, race and gender, among others, became categories of exclusion, based on some alleged natural incapacity for taking part in citizenship when citizenship, in fact, was simply a construct designed to guarantee the hierarchical organization of society within the new ideological discourse.⁵

Although the idea of unravelling the cultural and political operations that made it possible to naturalize such exclusions is an attractive one, our objective here is to explore the protests and criticisms that contested their formulation by analysing the varied experiences that this system that concealed difference generated on its margins. More specifically, we are interested in the linkages between cultural representations and social practices in constructing female identities differentiated from those stipulated by hegemonic discourse.⁶ To do this, we shall study the lives and works of three Central American women writers who are little known despite their importance within their respective literary traditions: the Guatemalan, Pepita García Granados (1796–1848), the Panamanian, Amelia Denis de Icaza (1836–1911) and the unclassifiable Rafaela Contreras Cañas (1868–1893).

The choice is not in the least arbitrary, quite the contrary; the wealth of variables that intersect in this selection fully justifies our approach.

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⁵ For further insights, see María Sierra, “Enemigos internos: Inclusión y exclusión en la cultura política liberal,” in Desde la historia. Homenaje a Marta Bonaudo, ed. María Sierra, Juan Pro Ruiz, and Diego Mauro (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Imago Mundi, 2014), 73–90.

beginning with the perspective of gender itself, not least because
delegitimizing women as subjects with full rights involved the biggest
exclusion operation of all, one that marginalized half of humanity at a
stroke. This perspective is further reinforced by taking into account that
female identities were constructed first on the basis of sex, then according
to other differentiating categories, such as class, nationality and race,
which gives a fair idea of the potential of gender as a category of analysis
and historical explanation.7

In opting for women of letters, we are joining one of the most recent
and promising currents of Latin American criticism with an interest in
elucidating the origins of feminism through the voices of its protagonists.8
By publishing their works, these women dared to venture beyond the
narrow limits of the space marked out for them, demonstrating better than
anyone the transgressive potential of the weaker sex, appropriating
discourses normally reserved for men so as to examine and re-signify,
from a specifically female viewpoint, the spaces and roles assigned to
women.

By the same token, the experiences of Latin American women writers
are of particular significance in so far as they give us the opportunity to
trace racial undertones in the construction of gender-related identities; this
is something that is much more difficult to discern in the Old World, a
large part of which has undergone intensive racial, cultural and religious
homogenization in recent centuries.9 With this approach, we immerse
ourselves in one of the most fertile lines of research concerning the history
of women in recent decades, one that involves a shift from the abstract
group to the heterogeneity of its component parts and internal differences,

7 Fundamental in this respect is the seminal article by Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A
Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” The American Historical Review 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75; See also Susan Migden Socolow, The Women of Colonial

8 For this, see the collective works compiled and edited by Sara Castro-Klarén,
Latin American Women’s Narrative: Practices and Theoretical Perspectives / 
Narrativa femenina en América Latina: prácticas y perspectivas teóricas (Madrid: 
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siglo XIX” (Ph.D diss., University of South Florida, 2008).

9 See in this volume, María Sierra, “Cannibals Devoured: Gypsies in Romantic
Discourse on the Spanish Nation,” in Enemies Within: Cultural Hierarchies and
Liberal Political Models in the Nineteenth-Century Hispanic World, ed. María
and contrasts gender with other more traditional categories of analysis and interpretation.¹⁰

In this same line of argument, it is worth noting that the choice of three Central American women authors makes it possible to open up a new front of analysis for assessing possible interrelationships in the shaping of national and female identities during the nineteenth century. Indeed, considering that the formation of the small republics after they broke away from Spain and joined the neo-colonialist networks of informal dependence was so slow and difficult, it would have been impossible for this process not to have significantly affected the redefinition of women, and we have selected female writers of different generations for that very reason, with the idea of delving deeper into the nuances that time, changing national aspirations and their own specific historical experiences must have stamped on the identities that their writings helped to re-shape.¹¹

In order to deal properly with such a wealth of variables, we shall have recourse to a methodological approach that integrates the dimensions of sexual identity, social origin and the construction of the public sphere with the overall perspective of gender and social analysis. This chapter is structured therefore in three parts: the first analyses what we know of the life stories of the three selected writers in order to determine whether, apart from engaging in literary activity, they actually subverted the hegemonic discourses on the relationship between the two sexes in their daily lives. In the second part, we analyse their works in search of details that speak of the way in which they interacted with the dominant gender models so as to accept them, transform them or refute them, either consciously or unconsciously. In the third part, by way of conclusion, we shall combine our analysis of the two realities—practices and discourses—in an attempt to go beyond their specific experiences and identify consistent patterns that may lead us to more far-reaching explanations.

¹⁰ To go further into these and other lines of research prompted by the use of gender in the history of women, see Françoise Thébaud, “Género e historia en Francia: los usos de un término y de una categoría de análisis,” Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea 28 (2006): 41–56.
Chapter Three

Life stories: between subversion and the norm

At first sight, Pepita García Granados, Amelia Denis de Icaza and Rafaela Contreras Cañas appear to have little in common, other than that they were female writers and were attached to that more or less clearly defined region that we call Central America. Apart from moving in different times and spaces, they also adopted very different attitudes when it came to relating to the public sphere, and each of them explored their own literary styles and genres, placing their pens at the service of very personal interests, which was perhaps a crucial factor in their variable fate with literary criticism. In reality, groupings are always problematic, even if the writers are from the same country and share the same culture and language, because their ways of life, personal experiences, recurring ideas and ways of expressing themselves vary so much from one to the other, depending on their formative influences, personal tastes and the circumstances in which they developed. This is usually the first difficulty encountered in any critical study that aspires to go beyond the specific narrative of individuals, as we have found both in studies of Latin American women writers and of nineteenth-century Spanish female authors, so that this is not a peculiarity of the Central American area.

All three chosen writers, however, were white and came from well-to-do families that belonged to that privileged class that described itself as Creole in origin and which was effectively distinguished by its affluence and social recognition. We cannot remain indifferent to their race or to their socioeconomic position, since these two factors made it possible for them to enjoy an education superior to that of most women in their respective countries and doubtless conditioned the way in which they understood their female and national identities. Be that as it may, the


overall impression of their lives that we are able to give is fairly incomplete, since hardly any private writings or autobiographical accounts have been preserved, and the documentation that they did generate that has been preserved is insufficient to provide any real detail of the ins and outs of their life experiences. Almost everything that we know about them therefore comes from testimonies left by those who knew them or from the picture that their biographers have pieced together on the basis of newspaper clippings, news obtained from family members and friends or official registers. Even so, sufficient information can be gleaned from these kaleidoscopic images to gain a better understanding of why they decided to take up the pen and break with the social norm that excluded women from the public arena. Let us look at them one by one.

Pepita García Granados (1796–1848): “El ruiseñor de los estudiantes” [The students’ nightingale]

Oddly enough, there is more information available about the life of Pepita García Granados than one might expect, thanks to the Memoirs of her brother, Miguel, who was the provisional president of Guatemala from 1871 to 1873.14 From his memoirs, we know that their father, José García Granados, was one of the many merchants from Cadiz who became wealthy through the Indies Run in the second half of the eighteenth century and that his business in Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción enabled him to establish relationships with the most important families of the Creole elite, even to the extent of contracting marriage in 1793 with the Guatemalan, Gertrudis Zavala, instead of practising the professional endogamy that was common among shippers to the Indies.15 The newlyweds then settled in Puerto de Santa María, José García Granados’ home town, and it was there that most of their eleven children were born; hence we can be sure that Pepita’s childhood and early adolescence were spent comfortably in Spain, where she acquired knowledge of music, Spanish literature and the English language. The French occupation and the war that broke out afterwards led the García Granados family to seek refuge, first in Cadiz and then in Guatemala, where they sailed into port at the beginning of 1811. Moving to the land of her mother’s family meant a

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new life for Pepita in every sense, for it was there that her last two siblings were born and her mother died, in 1816:

Con cuya desgracia puede decirse que quedó mi casa sin gobierno, porque siendo mi padre de un carácter bondadoso y un tanto apático, carecía de la energía suficiente para gobernar una familia en que cuasi todos eran voluntariosos, altaneros y faltos de aquel respeto tan necesario para conservar la paz y armonía entre sí.

[With which misfortune it can be said that my home was left with nobody to guide it, because my father, being a good-natured sort and somewhat apathetic, had insufficient energy to control a family in which almost everyone was headstrong, haughty and lacking in that respect that is so necessary for keeping the peace and harmony with each other.] 16

Thirteen years elapsed from that time about which hardly any information has been preserved, except for the notice of the wedding celebrated in 1818 between Pepita and Ramón Saborío, who was from the town of Nicaragua (now called Rivas), that they had six children and two of them were called Enriqueta and Cristina. And that is practically all that is known about them, since the purpose of Miguel García Granados’ Memoirs was not to clarify the details of his extensive family for posterity. 17

In any case, what is really important is that from 1829 Pepita would distinguish herself, and very much so, in two areas that were not theoretically open to women and which she did not hesitate to combine with unparalleled skill: politics and the printed word. Like her brothers and sisters, Pepita developed a profound antipathy for the radical liberals, or exaltados, who seized power in the Federal Republic of Central America after overthrowing the conservative liberals, or serviles, of the Aycinena Clan, to whom the García Granados family were linked. There was no shortage of reasons, since along with the persecution that her brothers and sisters had suffered after the civil war, there was the ruin inflicted by the Restitution Decree of July 4, 1829, according to which every family that had collaborated with the previous government would have to hand over a third of their possessions to the State. It is not surprising, then, that Pepita should attack those she regarded as her enemies with the weapons she had at her disposal—her sharp tongue and her pen—which turned her into the “woman of independent temperament, carefree, very witty and mischievous, with a great aptitude for versifying

16 García Granados, Memorias del General, 1: 8.
and lots of amusing remarks in her satires” (mujer de genio independiente, despreocupada, de mucho ingenio y travesura, con gran facilidad para versificar y mucho chiste en sus sátiras) that her brother Miguel would describe years later. Her strong desire to ridicule and belittle the exaltados that she so despised led Pepita García Granados to devote herself to composing a series of satirical pen portraits that were so scathing that she finally had to flee Guatemala and go into exile to avoid imprisonment:

Comenzaron estos retratos a correr manuscritos; la gente se los arrebataba, y a poco cuasi no había quien no los supiese de memoria. Algunos de los maltratados pusieron los gritos en el cielo, y la autoridad al fin se vio obligada a proceder contra ella... Cuando llegó a Ciudad Real (hoy San Cristóbal) comenzó a escribir de nuevo contra todos los principales liberales residentes en Guatemala, sin perdonar ni a sus esposas.

These pen portraits began to circulate in manuscript form; people snatched them up, and in no time at all, almost everybody knew them off by heart. Some of those on the receiving end made a huge fuss, and the authorities were finally obliged to take action against her. ... When she reached Ciudad Real (now San Cristóbal) she started to write again targeting all the main liberals resident in Guatemala, not even sparing their wives.

It would not be long before she returned from her semi-voluntary exile because, apparently, she soon began to be affected by violent fits of “hysteria” that were repeated every morning. Added to this was a lung


19 Ibid., 18–19.

20 The formalization of hysteria as a specifically female pathology was another strategy developed in the nineteenth century to redefine the public and private spheres, since, by emphatically maintaining that the female condition involved a greater degree of irritability, it was demonstrated that it was impossible for women to combine tasks outside the home with those of the family; nonetheless, these “hysteric” could also be understood as their way of manifesting externally their resistance to social straitjacketing. For further information on this, see Diane Chauvelot, Historia de la histeria: sexo y violencia en lo inconsciente (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2001), 149–77; Catherine Jagoe, “Sexo y género en la medicina del siglo XIX,” in La mujer en los discursos de género: textos y contextos en el siglo XIX, ed. Catherine Jagoe, Alda Blanco, and Cristina Enríquez de Salamanca (Barcelona: Icaria, 1998), 339–48; Asun Bernárdez, “Espacio expresivo y cuerpo extremo: una experiencia del límite,” in Perdidas en el espacio: formas de ocupar,
disease that caused her to spit blood and left her with after-effects for the rest of her life. Neither her delicate state of health nor the risk of reprisals, however, dampened her enthusiasm for politics once she was back in her country; on the contrary, she straightaway became involved again in the machinations of the opposition against Mariano Gálvez, Guatemala’s Head of State between 1831 and 1838. Indeed, the fall of his government was partly due to Pepita’s pen because, when the cholera epidemic held the country in its grip in 1837, she railed against the doctors commissioned to treat the disease, which reignited the attacks of the conservative families who accused Gálvez of having brought the disease into the country by poisoning the rivers.21

With the fall of the liberal government and the serviles in power, the tables were turned and the exaltados became the opposition, taking the opportunity to set up a newspaper in San Salvador, Diez vez diez (Ten Times Ten) for the sole purpose of denigrating the new leaders in Guatemala. Pepita García Granados and her friend Pepe Batres were not long in coming up with a counterattack, since they immediately set up another newspaper with the title Cien veces una (A Hundred Times One), with which they responded to each and every one of the accusations levelled by the exaltados. As well as reasserting the political commitment of Pepita, her journalistic activity placed her in the vanguard of feminine literature in her country, since no other woman would play a role in publishing a Guatemalan newspaper until El Ideal was founded in 1888 as “the organ of women’s interests.”

What happened in her life after that is almost a mystery, since the next news of her comes from a letter written on April 14, 1841, in which she gives Batres an account of the discomforts she endured on her voyage to Havana. The reasons why she made the crossing and how long she stayed in Cuba are unknown, although we learn of her anger at the insults that she apparently received from her companions, Mr Hasselbriente and the Count of Adhémar.23 After this, the only record we have is the date of her death—mentioned in Uriarte’s anthology on the best Central American

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21 See the “Boletín del cólera morbus,” in María Josefa García Granados: 167–84.
poets—which occurred in the Guatemalan capital on July 28, 1848, “leaving an immense void in her extensive circle of friends.”

We know that this circle comprised intellectuals and politicians that Pepita would meet in lively gatherings in order to discuss everything from literature to society gossip, without, of course, forgetting the political intrigues that she was so fond of, practically from her adolescence; it seems that her house used to be full of the young friends of the García Granados who would secretly read books written by men of the Enlightenment, banned under the Spanish regime, and discuss liberal ideas. The regulars at these meetings included, among others, the poet Batres and his close relatives, including the Montúfar women; Pepita’s younger brother, Miguel the future president of the Republic, affectionately nicknamed Chafandín; Canon Castilla, to whom the famous “Sermon” would be dedicated; and bachilleres, those who had completed secondary education, like José Milla, who would later be considered one of the founders of the Guatemalan costumbrista novel, and it was on account of these meetings that she also came to be known as “the students’ nightingale.”

Considering what her brother had to say about her in his Memoirs, it could not have been common for women to attend such meetings, although she was allowed to do so because “she enjoyed a certain renown because of her wit and unusual personality,” to the extent that she continued attending José María Castilla’s gatherings even after his female relatives had moved out of his home, which flouted every social convention.

Pepita shared her compositions with them; despite the fact that she never stopped attacking the exaltados, these compositions did not draw their inspiration solely from politics, nor could they be associated exclusively with conservative positions. Her vast oeuvre also included poetry and theatre, since she cultivated both verse and prose, and so could be considered the first Guatemalan woman poet, if we exclude the Conceptionist nun, Sister Juana de Maldonado y Paz, who is mentioned in the colonial chronicles of the seventeenth century, although not a single line of hers has survived. Among Pepita’s lyrical compositions, outstanding

26 Mario Alberto Carrera, Biografías de siete grandes escritores guatemaltecos (Guatemala: Artemis Edinter, 1997), 30.
examples are the poems published posthumously between 1858 and 1859 in *El Museo Guatemalteco* (The Guatemalan Museum), such as “A la Esperanza” (To Hope) or “A una hermosa joven desgraciadamente casada con un achacoso Viejo” (To a Beautiful Young Woman Unfortunately Married to an Ailing Old Man), among others.\(^2^8\)

Apart from that, Pepita published various journalistic newsletters in addition to the well-known *Cien veces una*, the most cutting ones under the pseudonym Juan de las Viñas. She translated works from English to Spanish, such as Lord Byron’s song to Medora, and she corresponded on familiar terms with intellectuals and politicians who included, among others, Batres, Milla and Martínez de la Rosa.\(^2^9\) The “Sermon” with which we opened this chapter deserves special mention, because even though she did not explicitly put her name to it, it started a literary tradition, in a popular style, which finds its echo every year in the demonstrations carried out by the students of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala during Lent, characterized by social and political criticism.\(^3^0\)

**Amelia Denis de Icaza (1836–1911): “La alondra del Ancón”**

* [The lark of Ancon Hill]

Amelia Denis de Icaza is, by far, the female author that we have least information about, and not because the basic details of her biography are unknown; quite the reverse. The problem is that those who have ventured to outline her life story have concentrated so much on her and her personality that it is difficult to make out anything except Amelia herself. For example, very little is known about the family she was born into, since her biographers simply repeat the fact that she was born in Panama City on May 1, 1836, to the couple Carmen Durán and Saturnino Denis, the latter regarded indiscriminately as of either French or Panamanian origin, and that she had at least two sisters, Mercedes and Matilde.\(^3^1\) Because of the father’s profession—a newspaper publisher—we may assume that the three girls grew up surrounded by books and newspapers, as well as by intellectuals who would not hesitate to engage in lively discussions in their presence, and it comes as no surprise therefore that at least one of the

\(^2^9\) Ibid., 54–55; 191–93; 221–29.
\(^3^1\) Amelia Denis de Icaza, *Hojas secas* (Leon: Talleres gráficos Robelo, 1927), I–III.
sisters should develop a notable fondness for literature from an early age. Beyond the walls of her home, however, it seems that educational opportunities were mediocre to say the least, since they were limited to the most basic level in the girls’ elementary school in the Santa Ana neighbourhood.

Despite her lack of education, when she was scarcely twenty years old, the young Amelia joined the new writers who made their debut in the columns of “La floresta istmeña” (The Isthmian Florilegium), the poetry section inaugurated in the newspaper, El Panameño, in 1856, making her the first woman in her country to publish poems. From what we can tell from the poet and critic José María Alemán’s introduction to her compositions, there was such melancholy in them that he could not stop himself from urging her to cast aside her sadness and make room for excitement and hope. Were there reasons in her life for that existential pessimism that she poured into her poems or was it some idiosyncrasy of her poetic genius? It is difficult to be sure, and perhaps it makes absolutely no difference. What we do know is that her marriage to Antonio Ramírez, whom she married when she was very young, produced four children called Ernesto, Julia, Florencio and Hebe, and that, in spite of her apparently happy married life, her husband’s death surprised Amelia Denis while she was still young enough not to decline the opportunity to remarry, to José María Icaza, with whom she had a last daughter called Mercedes.

Time and the succession of events during Amelia Denis de Icaza’s life would obviously make the sorrow in her poems meaningful, irrespective of whether or not it inspired her early verses. The loss of her loved ones, her prolonged expatriation, experience of fratricidal wars or of her native land falling victim to foreign predation, among other things, would cause her to rebel and appeal for justice through her poetry. So, fulfilling her obligations as a wife, Amelia followed her second husband to Guatemala, although we do not know what reasons drove him to uproot himself from his native Panama. During the almost two decades that they were in Guatemala, Amelia continued her literary activities, contributing to different newspapers, especially El Bien Público, where she wrote under her own name as well as the pseudonym of Elena.

33 Rodrigo Miró, La literatura panameña, 8th ed. (Panama: Editorial Universitaria, 1996), 152.
34 Ibid.

Mercedes married a man from Nicaragua and she followed her mother’s example by leaving her country to go and live with him, except that, on this occasion, she was accompanied by her father, who died a short time later. In 1894, Amelia, a widow for a second time, left her home and the country that had welcomed her in order to go and live with her daughter and son-in-law in the city of León, where she continued to write. There, in 1905, she met the journalist Aurelio Máximo, one of the many liberals from Great Colombia who must have gone into exile when the War of a Thousand Days ended. He published the following pen portrait of her in the *Heraldo del Istmo*:

La ilustre poetisa es ya una anciana. El cuerpo ha perdido su esbeltez; los miembros están lasos, el pelo cano, las arrugas trazan hondos surcos en su rostro. Se conoce a primera vista que ha sufrido mucho. Pero en medio de su ancianidad conserva algo que vive aún en ella la vida de la juventud. Este algo son sus ojos por los que cruzan entre veces ráfagas luminosas y su voz vibrante que aún sabe recitar sus hermosos versos y los de sus poetas predilectos con un timbre tan armonioso, con tal calor y propiedad tal, que en verdad pudo llegar a connoverme a mí, que me precio de poco sentimental.

The verses that the journalist admired so much, and that inspired his longstanding desire to meet the Panamanian author, are characterized mainly by their depth of feeling. In “El crimen social” (The Social Crime) and “Mi pensamiento” (My Thought) for example, she exposed the inferior position that the women of her country were reduced to. In poems like “A la muerte de Victoriano Lorenzo” (On the Death of Victoriano Lorenzo), she protested against the atrocities of war. The joys and sorrows of family life are depicted in compositions such as “Amor de madre” (A Mother’s Love) or “El llanto de una hija” (A Daughter’s Tears), while “Patria” (Homeland) and the famous “Al cerro Ancón” (To Ancon Hill)—

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which she wrote on the occasion of one of her rare visits to Panama and which gave rise to her nickname of the “alondra del Ancón” (lark of Ancon Hill)—are songs of grief for the country where she was born.

Following the custom of the time, most of these poems were published in different newspapers at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, and did not appear in an anthology until Hojas secas [Dry Leaves] was published in 1927, in spite of the fact that, in 1905, Aurelio Máximo stated that friends of the poet, “intellectuals of note, like Argüello y Barreto, who respect and love her . . . have proposed publishing her poems, and very soon the Maucci Publishing House in Barcelona will publish them in a handsome volume.”37 Amelia Denis de Icaza, nonetheless, never saw the edition that was finally made of her poems because she passed away in Managua on July 16, 1911.

**Rafaela Contreras Cañas (1868–1893): the Stella that the poet asks about**

What differentiates Rafaela Contreras Cañas from the previous writers is that she did not live to enjoy the recognition that should have been her due as a female pioneer of Central American modernist narrative.38 While it is true that her short stories, initially published in the San Salvadorian daily, La Unión, were reproduced soon afterwards in some of the most prestigious newspapers in Latin America, her premature death cut short a literary career that was only just beginning and the author was quickly forgotten, and not even the fact that Clorinda Matto de Turner included her on a list of important Latin American writers in 1895 succeeded in rescuing her from oblivion.39

37 Máximo, “Amelia Denis de Icaza,” 76.
Nonetheless, Rafaela Contreras was saved for posterity thanks to the heart-rending lines that her widower, the great Rubén Darío, dedicated to her in “El poeta pregunta por Stella” (“The Poet Asks About Stella”) which could well be interpreted as a twofold marginalization that inevitably shifted her further towards the edges of the dominant patriarchal system: the first time as a female writer and the second time, reduced to the status of “wife of.” At any rate, were it not for this circumstance, it is unlikely that literary criticism would ever have noticed the nine short stories that she published between March 1890 and April 1891 under the pseudonyms of Emelina, Stella and Rafaela de Darío, or that she would now be appearing in this chapter. A second reflection can be derived from this, which is that since almost everything we know about Rafaela Contreras comes from the autobiographical writings of her famous widower and from what scholars have been unearthing in recent decades, it should perhaps be assumed from the outset that the image of her as shaped by critics probably presents only those aspects that illustrate the history of the Nicaraguan poet in some way, rather than her own.

Nonetheless, if one manages to move out of the long shadow cast by Darío, Rafaela Contreras is revealed to be an independent and cultured woman, apparently of extraordinary beauty and, even so, more brilliant on account of “her intelligence, subtlety and superior gifts” than for her physical attributes, as demonstrated by the fact that she managed to disarm the most outstanding poet of Spanish American letters with her shrewdness and intelligence. The life she led from a tender age probably predisposed her to it. She was born into a family of intellectuals noted for the political commitment of her father, Álvaro Contreras, about whom his son-in-law would write that he was “a lively man full of brilliant attributes, a true master of the spoken word,” who did not hesitate to fight tyranny even at the risk of persecution. Indeed, if Álvaro Contreras and Manuela Cañas met and married in San José in Costa Rica, it was because the journalist never had the slightest qualms about criticizing the most prominent politicians in Honduras and Panama in the press and so had managed to make enemies of them; as a result he moved constantly from place to place like an eternal exile.

This was Rafaela’s life until she was thirteen years old, as both she and her mother and sister followed the head of the family wherever his ideals took him, until he died in 1882: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama and back to El Salvador again. In every country where he settled,  

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40 The last two quotations from Rubén Darío, La vida de Rubén Darío (Buenos Aires: Tecnibook Ediciones, 2011), 19.
Álvaro Contreras resumed his journalistic work, published a daily paper that expounded his political ideas and mixed with the progressive liberal elite, as was the case in the city of León, where he began to frequent the home of the Consul of Costa Rica, married at that time to Rita Darío de Alvarado. This was when Rafaela Contreras coincided for the first time with the man who would later become her husband, but since they were little more than children, they could hardly have imagined what the future held for them both. For a couple of years their families mixed in the same Nicaraguan social circles, such as the salons held by Leticia Menéndez, the daughter of the future president of the Republic of El Salvador, although Contreras’ political commitment soon prompted another exile for the family, and the children no longer saw each other.

Her father’s death in the Salvadorian capital put an end for a while to Rafaela’s constant moving from place to place; from that moment on, she led a modest and much more stable life, in accordance with the family’s new situation. It seems that both she and her sister Julia grew up cultivating their respective artistic interests, and so, while Julia devoted her energies to silk embroidery, Rafaela spent her spare time among books, eventually building up a considerable library. She finished up devoting herself to writing, which bore the imprint of her many readings, especially the works of French modernism, as is suggested by the syntax and subject matter that she developed in her short stories.

Little more is known of her life in those years, since there is scarcely any information prior to 1890, the year when she met Rubén Darío again and decided to publish her stories in La Unión, the very newspaper that he edited in San Salvador. The bold way in which she crossed the boundaries of the private sphere to give her stories visibility corresponds exactly to the pattern that was usual for women writers of her time, for she did not hesitate to conceal her identity behind the pseudonym of Emelina, which made it clear that she was a woman without openly revealing who she was. Even so, there is a certain hint of subversion in the purpose behind this tactical disguise, since everything indicates that she set out to pique Darío’s curiosity and to seduce him with her intellect, with excellent

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results; indeed, when the poet managed to worm out of Tranquilino Chacón the identity of the woman that he had introduced as “a most intelligent lady of this capital, whose talent and shining soul those who read this beautiful essay will be able to judge,” he practically fell in love with her there and then.\(^{44}\)

What follows is very well known through the autobiographical writings of Rubén Darío. After a brief engagement of a few months, Rafaela and the love of her youth married in a civil ceremony on June 20, 1890, although their happiness was to be short-lived, because the following day General Carlos Ezeta, who had attended the ceremony, headed a coup d’état in which President Menéndez was killed, forcing all his followers to hastily flee into exile to save their lives, including the newly-wed Darío. Overnight, Rafaela Contreras’ life returned to what it had been in her childhood, except that she now shared her husband’s fate rather than her father’s, and also with the difference that this time she remained in El Salvador waiting for Rubén to set himself up economically in Guatemala so that she could join him.

While she waited for that day to arrive, Rafaela spent her time writing, although with less dedication than before; whereas, before she married, she had published up to six stories at the rate of one or two a month, afterwards she took only three new works to the printers in the space of almost a year, all of them signed Stella or Rafaela de Darío.\(^{45}\) The coincidence of the dates leaves scarcely any margin for doubt as to the reasons that led our author to interrupt her literary activity indefinitely, since, after joining her exiled husband in Guatemala, there is no further news of her work until April 1891, when, exceptionally, she published the last of the tales that she would ever sign, from which it seems clear that she preferred to give up her literary vocation and give priority to her duties as a wife, and later a mother.\(^{46}\)

To be a writer and at the same time the wife of such an extraordinary poet could not have been an easy task in any event, let alone with the economic hardship that pursued them almost as doggedly as their political enemies. Towards the end of the summer of 1891, the entire Darío Contreras family moved to San José in Costa Rica, where their only son was born, after a labour that left Rafaela weak and ill. It would not be the

\(^{44}\) Darío IV, “Biografía cronológica,” 201.


\(^{46}\) Darío IV, “Biografía cronológica,” 203.
last move, because the inadequacy of Darío’s salary forced him to go back to Guatemala, while his wife, son and mother-in-law accepted the hospitality of Julia Contreras in El Salvador. The weak state in which Rafaela was left after giving birth and the new journey finally broke her health, so that, on January 23, 1893, she had to undergo an operation, which she did not survive. That day the woman died and the writer too was lost forever; in return, the muse that inspired the lines of “El poeta pregunta por Stella” was born.

The power of the written word

If there is anything that those who have devoted themselves to studying the relationships between men and women under the Ancien and liberal regimes have demonstrated, it is that gender discourses are neither static nor ahistorical, but are redefined over time as the balance shifts between integration and resistance, with the latter not necessarily being reduced to the confines of counter-discourse. That women should be so bold as to take up the pen and put their thoughts into writing was itself an intrusion into the space reserved for men, and all the more so when they explored different genres from those that Romanticism considered permissible for female authorship, which is why it should be regarded as a “soft,” often unconscious, form of resistance.

For their part, what women wrote might reproduce or challenge the dominant ideology by reworking hegemonic gender models or openly contesting them. When the writings published by Pepita García Granados, Amelia Denis and Rafaela Contreras are examined, however, the first thing that strikes the reader is that, unlike the exceptional Emilia Pardo Bazán, none of them openly speaks out against the system of relationships between the sexes. Nevertheless, behind what could be interpreted as meek acquiescence, certain signs of rebellion can be

49 Ana Aguado, “La historia de las mujeres como historia social,” in La historia de las mujeres: una revisión historiográfica (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2004), 63.
50 Aresti Esteban, “Juegos de integración y resistencia,” 43–46.
glimpsed, such as when they deal with marriage. So, even though the three authors tackle the subject from completely different points of view, they are all clearly repelled by marriages that are contrary to the dictates of the heart. In “El crimen social,” for example, Amelia Denis de Icaza tried to reflect her contempt for the importance that society gave to wealth when determining whether a person was a success or failure, extending her criticism to the violence that parents inflicted on their daughters by imposing husbands on them in line with their speculative interests:

    Mis padres me lo ordenan, me dice cabizbaja.
    Por más que les suplico no quieren convenir;
    me dicen que renuncie tu amor y mi esperanza
    para casarme pronto con el banquero Luis.
    [My parents order me to, she tells me crestfallen / However much I plead
    with them, they will not agree; / they tell me to renounce your love and my
    hope / the sooner to marry the banker, Luis.]51

    While Amelia Denis vented her criticism on parental authoritarianism, Pepita García Granados went much further because she directly attacked those women who submitted to unnatural marriages instead of rebelling and imposing their will, as in the sonnet “A una hermosa joven, desgraciadamente casada con un achacoso viejo”:

    ¿Por qué abriste tu cáliz, tierna rosa,
    a escarabajo sucio y despreciable,
    que con su fetidez insoportable,
    disipó tu fragancia deliciosa?

    ¿Qué furia emponzoñada y envidiosa
    de tu belleza y néctar agradable,
    te arrebató cruel el inefable
    placer que te brindó la Cipria diosa?

    ¡Ay! Ya nunca tu
    cáliz lastimado
    fecundará el rocío de la aurora
    ni el aliento del céfiro agraciado.

    Tu destino fatal Natura llora;
    pues la flor más brillante se marchita,
    cuando el insecto vil su seno habita.
    [Why did you open your calyx, tender rose, / to a filthy, contemptible
    beetle / whose unbearable stench / dissipated your delightful fragrance? //

51 Denis de Icaza, *Hojas secas*, 5.
What poisoned fury, envious / of your beauty and lovely nectar / cruelly snatched away the ineffable / pleasure that the Cyprian goddess offered you? // Oh! Now your damaged calyx / will never be fertilized by the dew of the dawn / or by the breath of the charming zephyr. // Nature mourns your fatal destiny; // for the brightest flower withers / when the vile insect lives in its bosom.\(^5\)

On the other hand, it cannot be said that there is explicit criticism of this aspect in the work of Rafaela Contreras, although she does give pause for thought in the way in which the protagonist of “Mira la oriental o La mujer de cristal” (“Mira the Oriental Woman or The Woman of Glass”) manipulates Prince Ahmed into falling in love with her and wanting to marry her, by pretending to be the victim of a spell that had turned her into a glass statue as a punishment for her cold heart.\(^5\) This short story is a clear example of subversion, recognizing the ability of women to decide their own destiny by letting men believe that the choice is theirs, via the formula of denying them something tempting so that it turns into what they most desire. The biggest irony of all is that this was the first tale that Rafaela published under a pseudonym and precisely the one that succeeded in awakening the interest of Rubén Darío, intrigued by the literary gifts of the woman hiding behind the name Emelina, which is why it was not just a question of a hypothetical proposal but a genuine act of subversion.

In spite of everything we have said so far, it is difficult to find other examples of opposition to the prevailing gender discourse, which placed women in situations of feigned inferiority by naturalizing different roles according to sex. Nonetheless, there were other ways of slipping in critical opinions that slowly but steadily undermined the normative foundations of gender discrimination, such as when it came to dealing with education. Bearing in mind that women belonged to the sphere of the family and the home, their education would have been as defined by Pilar Simués in El ángel del hogar (The Angel of the House), more moral than intellectual, since their social function was not expressed through professional activity, but through the family.\(^5\) If this was the case, then the lament expressed by Amelia Denis in “Mi pensamiento” can be interpreted as a criticism of the intellectual infantilism to which a woman was condemned by being

\(^{52}\) Villacorta C., María Josefa García Granados, 81.

\(^{53}\) Darío III, Tres mujeres en la vida de Rubén, 97–110.

deprived of an education similar to a man’s, a misfortune that she personified here as being her own:

¡Qué bello mundo en el que habita el sabio! . . .
¡A mí no me invitaron y envidiosa
contemplo aquella fiesta!
¡Han pasado los años sin que nunca
tal dicha conociera!
Mi cabeza está blanca,
y al través de los tiempos siempre piensa
en ese mundo ignoto,
donde la gloria y el saber penetran.

[What a beautiful world the wise man lives in! / . . . / I was not invited and enviously / I contemplate that party! / The years have passed without my ever / knowing such happiness! / My head is white, / and through the ages it always thinks / about that undiscovered world, / where glory and knowledge enter.]55

Where the subversive potential of these three women authors can best be appreciated, however, is not in their tempered criticism of the situation of inferiority imposed on women, but in the subtle way they appropriated discursive resources reserved, in principle, for men. As we have already noted, the most immediate and obvious way was to write for the public, although it is also true that Romanticism and its vindication of intuition and feelings authorized women to publish their works, provided that they kept within the limits laid down by the rules of good taste in terms of subject matter and form.56 Pepita García Granados, Amelia Denis and Rafaela Contreras, each in her own way and to a greater or lesser extent, exceeded all those limits and in so doing helped redefine the identitarian contours of the feminine, thereby transforming the prevailing gender discourse.

The “Sermon” that opens this chapter constitutes the clearest example of the transgression of form and substance, since Pepita García Granados appropriated no less than two specifically masculine discourses: the ecclesiastic and the erotic.57 Invocations to the Saints, prayers intercalated in Latin, the tone of admonishment and direct appeals to God are characteristic features that enable us to immediately recognize the format of the religious sermon, the exclusive domain of clergymen, and doubly

55 Denis de Icaza, Hojas secas, 5.
56 Sierra, “Frente a politicómanas, sibillas y otras mujeres-hombres,” 229.
insulting, given that Pepita was a woman and a layperson. If to this we add the use of terms that were considered obscene in her time, the condemnation of celibacy as an abnormal practice and the promise to preach by example, then the violation of female decorum was absolute; it is not surprising therefore that Pepita and Batres decided to take refuge in anonymity, even when their authorship was an open secret. According to those who have studied this satirical poem in greater detail, its purpose was not to sexually inflame its readers, but to put an end to the prudishness of society and ridicule the efforts of the Church to control human sexual behaviour. Whatever its purpose, the fact is that they subverted all possible codes of conduct, not just the gender code.

Not all the works by the three women authors studied are as flagrantly transgressive as the “Sermon,” although the recurrent theme of the political life of the nation in the output of Pepita García and Amelia Denis places them firmly within the public sphere, in theory the exclusive preserve of men. Given the privileged situations of their families and the circles in which they moved, it would be only natural for them to be aware of the hectic merry-go-round of nineteenth-century Central American politics; not for nothing were they accustomed to reading newspapers, in which they themselves often published articles, and they regularly attended salons in which they discussed the actions of the government and the strategies of the opposition with intellectuals and politicians. As a result, they were perfectly capable of giving their opinions on politics and they knew what they were talking about. That they should be familiar with the political dynamic was one thing—it was to some extent inevitable in private—but that they had the audacity to write about it was something else entirely, since it was considered an unacceptable interference in male competences. And yet, both women did it. The political complexion of Cien veces una, for example—the newspaper that Pepita García Granados and Batres used in order to attack the liberals who fled to San Salvador when Gálvez became President of Guatemala—is incontrovertible:

¿Quién te ha correteado a ti,  
pues que te has estado quedo?  
Si de venir tienes miedo,  
¿quién tiene la culpa, di?  
¿Qué decreto han dado aquí  
proscribiendo y confiscando?  
¿Qué sueldos se están cobrando

59 Carrera, Biografías de siete grandes, 50.
The matter-of-fact way in which Pepita attaches herself to a political party in this poem is striking, quite apart from the fact that parties at that time were more or less cohesive groupings that centred on personalities of note rather than true parties in the modern sense of the word; by acknowledging that she was a supporter of one of them, she was automatically placing herself on an equal footing with the men, who alone had the right to participate in politics. A similar interpretation can be made of the poems that both she and Amelia Denis composed to express their grief when they had to abandon their homelands, which they personify and engage in dialogue with, addressing them with disconsolate lines more appropriate to amorous discourse than to political writings. In “Despedida” (Farewell) for example, Pepita García Granados implored: “No me impongas la horrible tortura / de adorarte, perderte y vivir” (Do not force on me the horrible torture / of adoring you, losing you and living) after lamenting the fact that her “dulce patria” (sweet homeland) will not miss her. Amelia Denis de Icaza also mourned nostalgically for her country when she left Panama in 1875 to settle in Guatemala with her husband. This is how she expressed it to her sister in the poem she composed from her new home:

Desembarqué, la costa me aguardaba,
no era tan bella como yo soñaba
ni era tan fértil como yo esperé.
lancé un suspiro por mi patria, hermana,
por aquella graciosa colombiana
como una virgen del Ancón al pie.

[Passage from the first issue of Cien veces una, reproduced in Villacorta C., María Josefa García Granados, 123–26. The italics are ours.

Sorrow for her homeland was a constant theme in her writing, perhaps because her semi-voluntary exile was more long-lasting than Pepita’s or perhaps because she found poetry to be the perfect instrument for asserting her Panamanian identity and sharing, if only through her writing, in the upheavals that her country experienced during those years, such as the war with Chile between 1879 and 1886. However, her appropriation of national discourse can be appreciated best in the poems that she wrote after 1903, the year that Panama finally broke away from Great Colombia, which it had joined in 1821 after becoming independent from Spain:

¡Oh, Patria! Yo he sufrido contigo en tus dolores, tus luchas amargaron mis noches y mis días, de lejos he escuchado tus hórridos clamosores enviándote mi espíritu sus hondas simpatías. . . .

Escucha, Ser Supremo, la súplica ferviente que mi alma de rodillas eleva ante tu altar: conserva al pueblo ístmico su libertad naciente sin que un extraño lábaro la llegue a profanar.

Dejad, ¡oh, Ser Supremo!, que el Istmo siempre viva con el trabajo honrado y la virtud por guía, que no sea su esperanza cual sombra fugitiva, ni su soñada gloria como la flor de un día.

[Oh, my homeland! I have suffered with you in your sorrows / your struggles made my nights and my days bitter, / from afar I have listened to your horrifying cries / my spirit sending you its deep sympathies. . . . / Listen, Supreme Being, to the fervent plea / that on my knees my soul raises before your altar: / preserve for the people of the Isthmus their nascent freedom / without letting some strange labarum profane it. // Let the Isthmus, oh Supreme Being, always live / with honest work and virtue for its guide, / may its hope not be like a fleeting shade, / or its dreamed-of glory be short-lived.]

This last plea would very soon be shown to augur a new phase of dependence for the young nation, this time of an economic nature, since in

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62 “Canto a mi querida hermana Matilde Denis,” in Denis de Icaza, Hojas secas, 141–43.
63 “A Panamá,” in ibid., 9–11.
that same year the United States bought the shares of the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interocéanique de Panama and resumed construction of the canal that would break the isthmus in two. It is precisely this splitting in two that Amelia mourns in her extraordinarily famous poem “Al cerro Ancón,” composed when she visited the zone during the journey that she made in 1906 to be reunited with her family. The entire poem is a nostalgic song in which the author laments the feeling of being a stranger in a beloved part of her land, which, now that it is under the jurisdiction of the United States, she no longer recognizes as her own:

You no longer keep my footprints, you’re no longer mine, idolized Ancón!
For destiny’s now untied the bonds that my heart formed on your slope.
I dreamt of my return one day kneeling to greet my land; to tell of my homesickness, my anguish and to rest in your gentle shadow. I know you’re not the same; I want to see you and from afar contemplate your peak; my heart’s still here to love you, since I can’t weep by your side. Advanced sentinel, because of your mourning my lyre carries a crepe bow; your guardian angel soared up to heaven… you’re no longer mine, idolized Ancon!65

Although Amelia Denis expresses her feelings about the transfer of ownership of the hill in a very feminine and intimate way, her lines almost

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65 “Al cerro Ancón,” in ibid., 1–2.
immediately became the symbol par excellence of national identification with the geographical feature of the Isthmus of Panama, and even today the poem is still required reading in the schools of that country. Having become the voice of Panamanianism, Amelia Denis completely altered the boundaries of gender discourse, not by violating them explicitly but by availing herself of uses of poetry that were considered suitable for women; by using them in order to appropriate the patriarchal discourse that traditionally associated the landscape and patriotism with the feminine, however, she gave them new meaning, which made a powerful contribution to blurring the line that separated the areas marked out for men and women.

It is precisely this act of resignification that leads us to reflect upon the way in which these women authors helped forge differentiated female identities that were much richer and more complex than the one imposed by hegemonic gender discourse. Indeed, in contrast to the reductionist approach that disqualified all women as subjects with full rights because of their sex and sought to make marriage and motherhood the distinctive characteristics of their identity, the writings of Pepita García Granados, Amelia Denis and Rafaela Contreras speak to us of identities segmented by multiple dimensions of self that included nationality, class and race, and not only sex.

We have already seen how Amelia constructed her identity as both a woman and a Panamanian when she appropriated patriarchal discourse associating landscape with nationality; the case of Pepita is different, since we notice some ambivalence in her writings that invites us to consider her identity as a hybrid one, in which her unfaltering assertion as a Guatemalan is syncretized with the imprint of her Spanish roots. Indeed, the fact that she should feel fully Guatemalan does not mean that she rejected her origins, as the lines that she dedicated to the Duke of Rivas in

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1830 on the occasion of her “Himno a la Luna” (Hymn to the Moon) appear to indicate:

Yo también, como tú, desterrada,
de la plácida Bética hija,
el destino en América fija
mi existir de amargura y dolor.
[I too, like you, in exile / a daughter of placid Baetica / destiny fixes in America / my existence of bitterness and sorrow.]

It may have been a literary device to help create a fraternal link with the poem’s dedicatee, whom Pepita admired both for his poetry and his political ideals. Even if that were the case, what is especially significant is the skill with which she manages to combine in the same stanza her links with a country that she no longer felt was her own with the bitter taste that she was feeling at the time at being exiled from the other that she did consider as hers. In this way, she identified herself not only as a woman, but also as an exile from both the countries she called home.

The only one of the three authors who did not display a deep patriotic feeling in her works was Rafaela Contreras, which we may perhaps interpret as reflecting her personal experience of being a perpetual exile, since she never lived in any country long enough to develop a well-defined national identity; the daughter of a Honduran father and Costa Rican mother, she had to abandon her home every few years to escape political reprisals being taken, first against her father, and then when she married, against her husband. Perhaps this is why there is not a single reference to Central American countries in her short stories, which are set instead in exotic corners of Asia and Europe, although, by the same token, it should be borne in mind that one of the distinctive features of Spanish American modernism is its orientation towards the content and forms of expression of European literature, which often led to the plots being set in those parts.

As we saw when we traced their life stories, all three authors were born into well-to-do families that enjoyed a certain social prestige, which would in principle predispose them to upholding the hierarchical social system based on wealth that placed them among the privileged classes. What their works convey, however, is a certain fragile tension between...
class-consciousness and personal experience that at times seems to lean away from the criteria of social ordering. In this respect, the stories of Rafaela Contreras are paradigmatic, since, even though they extol luxurious settings and clothing in pure modernist style, delighting in descriptions of ornaments, fabrics and jewels, a more or less veiled criticism of the importance of wealth can be detected in all of them. Indeed, the moral of a number of her tales is that wealth cannot buy happiness. In “Mira la Oriental,” for example, Prince Ahmed had everything he could desire at his disposal, yet his life was empty, until he became infatuated with the woman who was turned into a glass statue and could only obtain her by giving up everything for her. In “La turquesa” (“The Turquoise”), Angelo thought he was loved by everyone until he bought a magic jewel that enabled him to detect the true feelings of others, when he realized that behind the flattery lay only contempt and envy, even in his fiancée. Finally, “El oro y el cobre” (“Gold and Copper”) presented the parallel experiences of two sets of parents; on the one hand, the Marquis and Marchioness, Roberto and Cristina, were plunged into sorrow when their small son fell ill and not even the most expensive remedies could cure him, while, on the other, the palace porter and his wife saw their son get better merely with the power of their love. Naturally, the dismissal of wealth may be interpreted as simply a literary cliché inherited from Romanticism, although perhaps we should also consider the writer’s own experience, which we have already mentioned.

Amelia Denis de Icaza, for her part, wrote several poems censuring social injustice, such as the kind that was committed against those who had no resources and had to make their way in the world without being given an opportunity, as in “El crimen social”:

No más oculta quede la sórdida bajeza
con que pretendes, mundo, mi corazón cambiar.
Mi crimen tiene un nombre, se llama “la pobreza”,
y, ¡oh, mundo!, ese delito no sabes perdonar
[Let sordid baseness remain concealed no more / with which, world, you try to change my heart. / My crime has a name, it is called “poverty,” / and, oh world, that’s an offence you can’t forgive.] 71

Oddly enough, it does not seem that she experienced any financial hardship that would explain the distilled resentment in her lines, although one of the characteristics of her literary work—which later became a hallmark of Panamanian women’s poetry in general—is precisely that

71 Denis de Icaza, Hojas secas, 5.
humane commitment towards those around her and solidarity with their cause, which made her fight against the hegemonic social order at every turn.\textsuperscript{72}

The case of Pepita García Granados is different again. In spite of the ups and downs of her family’s fortunes—never particularly severe—due to their political differences with the exaltados, she did not feel the urge to show solidarity with the dispossessed or to deny the validity of the economic criterion as a principle of social hierarchization.\textsuperscript{73} On the contrary, her writings pitilessly mock the liberals and their insistence on extending political rights to all men, regardless of wealth, in a futile bid to ensure they obtained an absolute majority in the elections, as can be appreciated in the first issue of \textit{Cien veces una}.\textsuperscript{74}

Whereas with regard to the dimensions of sex, nationality and class, there are sufficient indications in the works of these three authors to be able to state that they articulated their own identities by questioning the normative criteria of exclusion, the same cannot be said with regard to the dimension of race. Indeed, no matter how closely their poems, letters, articles and short stories are reviewed, there is not the slightest hint that they disapproved of race as a naturalized criterion of discrimination; quite the contrary, in fact. The writings of Pepita García Granados and Amelia Denis, for example, are absolutely silent on the matter, and a number of Rafaela Contreras’ short stories openly embrace an ideal of female beauty identified, without further ado, with the white race. So, when she describes her protagonists, they are always women with pale complexions, like Lucrecia in “La turquesa,” who eventually wins Angelo’s love, whom she introduces as “a young woman of nineteen, delicate, extremely slender and pale” or the Countess of Alta Mira, whom she makes British to justify her European beauty in the oriental country where the story of “La mujer de cristal” unfolds.\textsuperscript{75} In the multiracial Central American environment where the white population was a small minority, the convenient silence of these women on the subject of ethnic discrimination makes them self-serving accomplices in the very same conspiratorial discourse of difference, the sexist and classist nature of which they were denouncing in their works, a

\textsuperscript{73} García Granados, \textit{Memorias del General}, 2: 3.
\textsuperscript{75} Darío III, \textit{Tres mujeres en la vida de Rubén}, 105–19.
feature they share with other female Latin American writers of their time.  

À la carte identities  

Wives and mothers, born into wealthy families, belonging to the white race, brought up among progressive intellectuals and affected, directly or indirectly, by the vagaries of politics to the extent of having to go into exile; in spite of our initially guarded approach to the creation of groupings, Pepita García Granados, Amelia Denis de Icaza and Rafaela Contreras Cañas had more in common than might at first have been imagined. This prompts us to reflect on factors such as family context or socioeconomic position as possible influences on the emergence of social practices and transgressive discourses.

From what can be deduced from the courses that their lives took, there are notable discrepancies between the three of them and it is worth asking whether they were influenced by the different historical contexts that they lived in or whether it was a question of character. Pepita García Granados was, without doubt, the most transgressive of the three and lived a life that was out of the ordinary, if we use as a yardstick the model of feminine behaviour consecrated by liberalism; she attended meetings where only men were welcome, meddled in political affairs, openly expressed her opinions about everything and even dared to criticize the false morality of her times by writing serials in newspapers with a high sexual content, not to mention the freedom with which she, as a married woman, associated with Batres. Amelia Denis and Rafaela Contreras, on the other hand, always moved within the socially accepted limits of their sex, except, perhaps, where their literary activity was concerned, although it should not be forgotten that Rafaela gave up her narrative vocation when she achieved her objective of seducing Rubén Darío and married him. In any case, at the end of the nineteenth century, part of the Romantic legacy included allowing women to take part in literary activity as long as their writings had a moral slant and were directed towards educating other women, which is why the attitude of both corresponds to what was considered acceptable.


See, for example, the opinion of Pilar Sinués de Marco in her idealization of the “angel of the home.” Gómez-Ferrer Morant, “Las limitaciones del liberalismo en España,” 528.
Was it a question of personality, then? Possibly, but we should also consider the specific historical contexts in which they lived, since each of them takes us to different moments in the process of constructing liberal discourse on gender. To return once more to the case of Pepita, we should recall that she encountered disruption of the hegemonic gender practices on two separate occasions. The first time was in her native Spain, in the context of the War of Independence, the second, in 1821, in Guatemala, when the colony started its own independence revolution. On both occasions, gender roles were violently disrupted by the needs of war, which favoured greater participation in public life by women, to the extent, at times, of taking up arms and fighting side by side with the men, without this arousing in the latter too many reservations. Amelia Denis and Rafaela Contreras, for their part, lived through equally turbulent times of civil war and confrontations with neighbouring nations, although the context was different. The revolutions of the first third of the nineteenth century, motivated by the desire for independence from both Spain and the ruling principles of the Ancien Regime, had been left behind, and it may be considered that liberalism had now firmly secured itself on the basis of that exclusionary inclusion that we referred to at the beginning; given the regulation of gender models along liberal lines, it may not have been so easy to adopt transgressive behaviours as Pepita García Granados had done, although even so, the subversive potential of women writers should not be minimized, whatever age they lived in.

If we confine ourselves to what they expressed in their works, however, it seems clear that these three women articulated identities differentiated on the basis of their own interests and that feminine transgression was not yet pursuing universal gender empowerment, at least not in the time and places that we are dealing with. Pepita, Amelia and Rafaela were cultured women who were part of the socioeconomic elites and in contact with political progressivism, and precisely for that reason, were perhaps better placed than their fellow women to perceive the

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78 Davies, “On Englishmen, Women,” 315–16; something similar happened in Europe in the period after World War I, as can be seen in Gisela Bock, La mujer en la historia de Europa: de la Edad Media a nuestros días (Barcelona: Crítica, 2001), 150–51.

79 For the evolution of liberal discourses about gender models in nineteenth-century Spain, see María Cruz Romeo Mateo, “Domesticidad y política. Las relaciones de género en la sociedad postrevolucionaria,” in Historia de las culturas políticas contemporáneas en España y América Latina, vol. 2, La España Liberal (1833–1874), ed. María Sierra and María Cruz Romeo Mateo (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2014), 89–127.
inequality that their sex reduced them to. To be sure, they apparently regarded social differentiation as normal, to the point that—whether consciously or not—they only resisted whatever was to their own personal detriment, without questioning the contradictions that their own interested struggles might cause them to lapse into with respect to women of other classes and races.

Even so, it was probably not even something as simple as a question of personal interest, since, in the way they went about their activity as authors, there is at least one aspect of it that suggests that they did not feel free to openly challenge the gender system in which they had been brought up, namely that they all chose to disguise their identities with pseudonyms, and even anonymity when they wrote about especially sensitive subjects that could compromise them in the eyes of the public.80

Once more, the case of Pepita is paradigmatic, because she chose both practices and in the case of the pseudonym, she opted for its most extreme form, which involved refusing to be perceived or evaluated as a woman by the readers, renouncing her own sex by hiding behind a man’s name and so “transcending the narrow limits of the space that western cultural tradition granted to women.”81 Her attitude may have been the most transgressive, although it is also true that by making this choice, she denied herself the opportunity of fighting gender discourses on the basis of her identity as a woman. Amelia Denis and Rafaela Contreras, on the other hand, chose to use women’s names that protected them from public criticism but did not deny that they were women, and in the latter case, it is even possible to interpret her gesture as a strategy that subverted the traditional roles of seduction.

It is beyond dispute that the examples set by Pepita García Granados, Amelia Denis de Icaza and Rafaela Contreras Cañas are extraordinary and at no moment can they be extrapolated to all Central American women of their time. Through their race, class, fortune and education, they were part of the upper strata of the social hierarchy and, for that very reason, they had the necessary means to develop some awareness of the position of inferiority that they were reduced to because of their sex and to rebel. Ignoring their exceptionality, these three women authors offer, nonetheless, a unique opportunity to analyse, at what was still a very early

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phase, the way in which women contested the prevailing gender discourse by taking advantage of the resources that the same system that masked the differences made available to them.

The female identities that they helped construct direct us, however, to the very historicity of their subversion. Indeed, if the examples of Pepita, Amelia and Rafaela have demonstrated anything, it is that they were always motivated by their own life experiences and specific needs, which were linked precisely to the historical contexts in which they lived. There is absolutely no proof that they openly challenged discrimination against women in general, but quite the reverse, since their defiance of liberal discourses of difference extended only to other vectors of exclusion that affected them personally, while they deliberately ignored those, like race, that benefited them. As a result, it is clear that throughout the nineteenth century, the differentiated identities that arose on the margins of the liberal system were based on specific complex combinations of all those features that hegemonic discourse employed as criteria of exclusion, even though in this book, and for methodological reasons alone, we have devoted specific chapters to each of them.

Bibliography


CHAPTER FOUR

BODY TO BODY WITH THE LIBERALS:
THE ASSOCIATION MOVEMENT
OF THE COLOURED RACE IN CUBA

 PILAR PÉREZ-FUENTES HERNÁNDEZ

“No hay odio de razas porque no hay razas”
—José Martí

The extensive participation of the black and mulatto population in the Ten Years’ War and the reforms introduced after the Pact of Zanjón—which included the gradual abolition of slavery—meant that the main problem facing the Cuban liberals in the construction of a viable national project was the racial question. Given the shared experience of the war and the end of slavery, they wondered whether it was possible to integrate the so-called coloured race into the body of the nation and how to respond to the increasing demands of those who were insisting on their patriotism being recognized and on being treated as equals.

In this chapter, we approach Martí’s discourse of equality and brotherhood of races as a manoeuvre for including the coloured race within a proposal for citizenship without race. Nonetheless, formulating national identity on the basis of a pact of brotherhood involved the twofold exclusion of race and gender. We shall see in the following pages how the demand for social regeneration and the assumption of the model of hegemonic masculinity

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1 “There is no racial hatred because there are no races,” José Martí, “Nuestra América,” La Revista Ilustrada de Nueva York, January 10, 1891.

2 Spain took measures in favour of the gradual abolition of slavery with the Law of February 13, 1880, for Abolition of Slavery and Establishment of the Board. Abolition became final by Royal Order on October 7, 1886.
that it entailed were translated into a cultural project for whitening the body of the nation that simultaneously excluded women from citizenship.\(^3\)

In spite of the contradictions of the myth of racial equality, we cannot deny that this discursive artefact created a context that gave blacks and mulattos an opportunity to mobilize in defence of liberty and equality. The press of the coloured race, or the black press, as it was also called at the time, established a platform for identifying and constructing an emotional community that set out to achieve the respectability required to make it worthy of inclusion in the white body of the nation. As in other colonial contexts, the struggle for civil rights and the political equality of the subaltern sectors in Cuba was saturated with race, gender and class meanings that were articulated in a dynamic and contradictory fashion. The approach that we shall adopt in this chapter is indebted to those feminist and post-colonialist studies that have revealed the close links between race, gender and sexuality when it came to constructing and maintaining relations of power and domination in the colonial spheres, as well as their importance in the construction of national identities.\(^4\)

\(^3\) The term “hegemonic masculinity” is from Robert W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” Gender and Power, vol. 19, no. 6 (2005): 829–859. The concept refers to the ideal of masculinity established as normative in any historical society, which then serves to stigmatize other models of what it means to be a man, defined as subaltern masculinities.

\(^4\) Following Joan Scott, “Gender a Useful Category of Analysis,” in Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988): 25–50, we understand gender as a symbolic system that saturates other social and economic relations and is fundamental in the articulation of political processes and a key piece in the construction of male and female identities. There is an abundant literature on the articulation of the different categories; the most relevant for this study are Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (New York and London: Routledge, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power, Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Peter Wade, Race and Sex in Latin America (London: Pluto Press, 2009) and “Racismo, democracia racial, mestizaje y relaciones de sexo/género,” Tabula Rasa, Revista de Humanidades 18 (2013): 45–74, has examined in depth the racialization and sexualization of national identity in the Latin American context.
Racial equality as a discourse of inclusion and exclusion of the coloured race

It should be pointed out that the term raza de color or “coloured race” was the discursive category used by the Spanish administration to define all individuals whose blood was of African origin, irrespective of degree, so establishing a social hierarchy based on race. The so-called coloured race included the negros and morenos, or “blacks” and “dark-skinned people” respectively, and those who were referred to as pardos or mulatos, that is, “light-brown people” or “mulattos.” The terms that I use here, therefore, are part of the racial discourse of the period that is the focus of analysis in this chapter.

Belonging to the coloured race referred not only to a person’s racial appearance (their skin colour, facial features, hair texture, and so on) but also to their genealogy as recorded on their baptism certificate. It was, as we shall see, a historical construct that included customs and behaviours, spaces for socializing, ways of dressing, religious beliefs and even jobs and trades. In spite of the barriers set up to prevent racial contamination and protect the status of the whites, the phenomenon of mestizaje, or miscegenation, had been a reality in Cuban society since the eighteenth century. Since the differences in physical appearance were becoming blurred, concern for purity of blood constituted the central axis around which the collective anxieties and imaginaries revolved when constructing the social body of the nation.

For Cuban nationalists, it was fundamental to combat the idea that the racial question made it impossible to construct an independent nation, as was alleged by those who defended the colonial regime and predicted a racial revolution like the one in Haiti. Martí, on the other hand, argued in “Mi raza” that “the union between blacks and whites that had been forged

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5 The terms negro or moreno, according to the Cuban taxonomy, translated here as “black” and “dark-skinned” respectively, refer to people with a predominantly African phenotype, while the terms mulato and pardo, translated as “mulatto” and “light-brown” refer to those whose African ancestry was mixed with other races.


7 Purity of blood and the honourableness of the lineage became obsessions in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish society, and live on in contemporary societies. In the colonies, this prejudice became racial. For this, see Wade, “Racismo, democracia racial, mestizaje.” For the case of Cuba, see Verena Stolke, Racismo y Sexualidad en la Cuba Colonial (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1992).
on the battlefields had bound their souls and destinies together” to such an extent that independence was a feasible project. However, assimilating the consequences of that shared experience and, in particular, confronting the demands for equality that free blacks and mulattos laid claim to once the Ten Years’ War was over—what they referred to as “lo que nos corresponde,” or “our due”—required a complex process of rethinking race and Cuban identity that would enable a viable national project, and therefore an inclusive one, to be formulated. The key issue was how to ease the tensions and anxieties that the racial hierarchy generated and made construction of the nation so difficult. The solution worked out by Martí and taken up by other leaders of the independence movement was to conceive of nationality without race; “There is no racial hatred because there are no races.” (No hay odio de razas porque no hay razas) he stated, rendering any proposals for differentiated racial identity or considerations about the superiority of one race over another absurd.

El hombre blanco que, por razón de su raza, se cree superior al hombre negro, admite la idea de la raza y autoriza y provoca al racista negro. El hombre negro que proclama su raza, cuando lo que acaso proclama únicamente en esta forma errónea es la identidad espiritual de todas las razas, autoriza y provoca al racista blanco.

[The white man who believes himself to be superior to the black man on the grounds of his race admits the idea of race and authorizes and provokes the black racist. The black man who proclaims his race, when perhaps the only thing that he is proclaiming in the wrong way is the spiritual identity of all races, authorizes and provokes the white racist.]

The discourse of Cuban nationality without race, of Cubanness unconnected to skin colour, as championed by Martí, enabled Cuban nationalists to construct an imagined community that sidestepped racial tensions. In this way, all those factors that racism fed on and formed part of the mestizo essence of Cuban society remained, on the face of it, outside

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8 José Martí, “Mi raza,” *Patria*, April 16, 1893.
9 For the most important bibliography on the political and racial tensions that Cuban insurgents faced, see Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999) and Aline Helg, *Lo que nos corresponde. La lucha de los negros y mulatos por la igualdad en Cuba, 1866–1912* (Havana: Imagen Contemporánea, 2000).
10 Martí, “Mi raza,” and “Nuestra América.”
11 Martí, “Mi raza.”
political discourse, by which I mean those areas of private life and intimacy—the family and kinship, relations between men and women and sexuality—which create such anxieties in racially hierarchized societies and fill the Cuban literature of the period.

By identifying the nation as an imagined mestizo community, there was no room for the experiences that racism generated in the lives of men and women who were not white. The exclusion of the “Other” was not only effected in racial terms but also had a gender dimension that was inseparable from it, because in the end it led to the male citizen, the “new man,” a man without race, mestizo and natural, because “man is more than white, more than mulatto, more than black,” who stood in opposition to the man constructed culturally in hatred and racial inequality by the colonial power. Martí prescribed the need for a pact of solidarity between brothers, a pact between men without race, constructed on a masculinity redeemed of the vices of the colony and of Africanicity. What we are faced with, therefore, is the textual production of a mestizo social body that rested on the acceptance of the model of hegemonic masculinity of the white elites. In this body, there would only be room for civilized men, in other words, whitened ones, independently of the colour of their skin, “true men, black or white, [who] will treat one another with loyalty and tenderness, out of a sense of merit and the pride in everything that honours the land in which we were born” (Hombres verdaderos, negros o blancos, (que) se tratarán con lealtad y ternura, por el gusto del mérito y el orgullo de todo lo que honre la tierra en que nacimos).

In spite of the fact that this discourse of racial equality made it difficult for the coloured race to have any agency of its own with which to respond to the situation of inequality, this ideological manoeuvre was shared by the black and mulatto leaders. This permitted everybody, in their different ways, to conceive of the nation in inclusive terms and to project the future that they wanted to construct.

13 Martí, “Mi raza.”
14 Ibid.
15 Alejandro de la Fuente, “Myths of Racial Democracy: Cuba, 1900–1912,” *Latin American Research Review* 34, no. 3 (1999): 39–73. The author suggests that the myth of racial equality offered subaltern groups an opportunity to use the inclusive project in their own defence.
The regeneration of the body of the nation: the Creole liberals faced with the African “germ”

Martí, like other Cuban intellectuals, also drew on racial concepts and representations with their origins in Social Darwinism and positivism. According to this scientific discourse, the so-called coloured race, in other words, those who did not share the condition of whiteness, was at a primitive stage of social and psychological development and this was the reason for the moral degradation of their customs. Blacks and mulattos, situated at a lower level of human development, had to be redeemed by being physically and morally transformed. In Martí’s terms they would have to “ascend” to the level of the whites by means of education and also interracial marriage, the institution that regulated miscegenation. This process of interracial union, “the central issue,” as Martí defined it, had to be a gradual one and start with the humblest strata, and hence those that were "the most equal" to each other, in other words, the darkest ones:

¿Por qué tiemblan ante la unión legal de las dos razas los que han venido haciendo sin miedo hasta ahora la fusión ilegal? . . . La fusión de las dos razas se ha hecho, y se continuará haciendo. Veamos cómo se hará de modo que no degrade al que está arriba, sino levante al que está abajo. . . . ¿Por donde empezará la fusión? Por donde empieza todo lo justo y lo difícil, por la gente humilde. Los matrimonios comenzarán entre las dos razas entre aquellos a quienes el trabajo mantiene juntos. Los que se sientan todos los días a la misma mesa están más cerca de elegir en la mesa su compañera que los que no se sientan nunca en ella. De abajo irán viniendo de esa manera.

[Why do those who have so far engaged without fear in illegal fusion now tremble at the legal union of the two races . . . ? The fusion of the two races is already a fact, and it will continue to be a fact. Let’s see how it will be done so that it doesn’t degrade those at the top, but will raise up those at the bottom. . . . Where will the fusion begin? Where everything that is just and difficult always begins, with humble people. Marriages will begin between the two races between those that are kept together by their work. Those who sit down together at the same table every day are closer to

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16 Among the abundant literature on biological and anthropological racism in Cuba, see Consuelo Naranjo Oróvio and Armando García González, Racismo e inmigración en Cuba en el siglo XIX (Madrid: Ediciones Doce Calles, 1996); Pedro M. Pruna and Armando García, Darwinismo social en Cuba (Madrid: CSIC, 1989). For other colonial contexts, see McClintock, Imperial Leather.
choosing their mate from that table than those who never sit down at it. By this means, they will climb up from below.\textsuperscript{17}

The solution involved whitening the population, this process being understood both in terms of biological miscegenation and of culture and morality, since the “barbaric” customs of the free coloured population, as they were defined by reformers and hygienists, made it difficult to integrate them into the body of the nation and also threatened to contaminate the white population that they lived among.\textsuperscript{18} And what were these barbaric, immoral customs that defiled the social body and needed to be whitened? As Bastide correctly notes, it is not difficult to point to areas of conflict that have been silenced, because the question of race always invokes the response of sex.\textsuperscript{19}

Population censuses constitute interesting sources for finding out about different social practices and the normative discourses containing the concepts used to categorize them. So, according to the information gathered in the 1861 census and the later one of 1899 that was collected by the United States administration, legally recognized marriages and legitimate offspring, the twin pillars on which the racial purity and code of honour of the elites rested, did not form part of the experience of the coloured race.\textsuperscript{20} Most of the black and mulatto populations, and a good part of the poorer white sectors with whom they shared spaces and worked, lived according to other patterns of social and family relationship. Cohabitation with the formation of stable family units under the same roof, the figure of the visiting father or the concubine, female heads of households and high rates of illegitimacy are all indicators that relationships between men and women and ways of organizing family life among broad sections of the population were a long way off the Roman

\begin{thebibliography}{13}
\bibitem{17} José Martí, “Para las escenas,” \textit{Anuario del Centro de Estudios Martianos}, no. 1 (1978): 31–33.
\bibitem{18} Antonio Bachiller y Morales, “Memoria sobre las fuentes de desmoralización de las personas libres de color, con indicaciones sobre sus reformas,” in vol. 10 of 5th series, \textit{Memorias de la Real Sociedad Económica y Anales de Fomento} (Havana: Imprenta del Tiempo, 1865): 10–20.
\end{thebibliography}
Catholic morality and family customs of the white elites. It is clear that, among the subaltern sectors, social and emotional practices existed that were associated with quite different codes of respectability. That was how Esteban Montejo, a runaway slave, also recounted it in his memoirs, when he explained the way in which sexual relations among a large part of the coloured people followed other codes of sexual conduct. We see from his testimony that control of the sexuality of women, because it was bound up with the honour of men and their families, did not form part of the values and norms that governed gender relations among the greater part of the black and mulatto population.

The fact that men of the white elite controlled the (sexual) honour of their wives and daughters as guarantors of the family’s status and purity of blood did not prevent them from maintaining sexual relations or living in concubinage with non-white women from lower social classes who, in their eyes, did not require any reparation to their honour. In the memoirs of Antonio Barras y Prado about Havana in the mid-nineteenth century, the author explained that coloured women:


tienen mérito físico, si no nacen libres, se dan trazas, en su mayoría, para libertarse cuando se hacen mujeres, amancebándose con blancos, como si

21 As María del Carmen Barcia has shown, the family unit made up of mother and children was part of the system of the extended family in the widest sense. As can be deduced from their wills, there were mutual rights and obligations, as well as feelings of belonging. Family ties can also be perceived in the documents used to purchase freedom. They were highly dynamic relationships that gave rise to different filiations and show us that the family was conceived of in broader terms. For kinship networks among the coloured population, see María del Carmen Barcia, La otra familia: parientes, redes y descendencia de los esclavos en Cuba (Havana: Fondo Editorial Casa de las Américas, 2003); Gloria García Rodríguez, La esclavitud desde la esclavitud. La visión de los siervos (Mexico: Centro de Investigación Científica Ingeniero Jorge L. Tamayo, 1996); Digna Castañeda Fuertes, “Demandas judiciales de las esclavas en el siglo XIX cubano,” in Mujeres Iberoamericanas: Historia y cultura. Siglos XIX y XX, comp. Luisa Campuzano (Havana; Casa de Las Américas, 1997), vol. 1: 221–230.

22 Miguel Barnet, Cimarrón (Havana: Instituto del Libro, 1967), 50.

23 This theory is corroborated by the population censuses, which show that many free black and mulatto women were the heads of their own small households and developed social and racial strategies of mobility for themselves and their descendants, see González, Pérez-Fuentes and Valverde, “Hogares y familias en los barrios populares.”

24 Stolke, Racismo y sexualidad; Vera Kuzinski, Sugar’s Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism (Charlottesville, VA., University Press of Virginia, 1994).
realmente estuvieran casadas, y como los hijos hacen más estrecha la unión, muchas de estas relaciones suelen durar toda la vida. De esto hay infinitos ejemplos, y no tienen nada de extraño, si se atiende a que aquí por lo cálido del clima, son muy violentas las pasiones y no dejan lugar a la reflexión.

[are physically attractive [and] if they are not born free, most of them show signs of freeing themselves when they become women, cohabiting with whites as if they were really married, and since children make the union closer, many of these relationships often last a lifetime. There are infinite examples of this, and there is nothing strange about them, if one bears in mind that here, because of the hot climate, passions arise very suddenly and leave no place for reflection.] 25

It is difficult to know to what extent the decisions of these women formed part of a strategy of social mobility in search of economic security for themselves and their children, how much was due to violence or to a preference for other types of relationship. As a result, most of the population classified as non-white was saddled from birth with the twin stigmas of African blood and illegitimacy, the latter compounded by the fact that the names of the biological fathers did not appear in the baptismal records and a considerable proportion of children did not live with their fathers or even know their names or whereabouts. 26 As Esteban Montejo said:

Yo creo que tuve hijos; a lo mejor muchos, o quizás, no. . . . Si saco la cuenta de todas las mujeres que tuve en el Ariosa [ingenio], los hijos me sobran. Ahora que yo no conocí a ninguno. Por lo menos las mujeres que vivieron conmigo en el barracón no parieron ninguna. Las otras, las del monte, venían y me decían este hijo es tuyo. Pero quien iba a estar seguro de eso.

[I think I had children; probably lots, or perhaps not. . . . If I count up all the women I had in the Ariosa [a sugar factory], I must have had plenty of children. Now, I never got to know any of them. At least the women who lived with me in the bunkhouse did not give birth to any. The others, those

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25 Francisco de las Barras, La Habana a mediados del siglo XIX. Memorias de Antonio de las Barras y Prado (Madrid: Imprenta de la Ciudad Lineal, 1925), 115.
26 This phenomenon was rooted in the history of slavery since it prevented filiation from being known on the basis of surnames and the formation of stable nuclear units, especially the relationship between fathers and children. Taking the books of baptismal records of Morenos and Pardos as a source, we are able to verify that between the years of 1845 and 1899, 86.31 per cent of illegitimate coloured boys and girls in the Parish of Buen Pastor Jesús del Monte in Havana, 81.30 per cent in the parish of Espíritu Santo, also in Havana, and 98.26 per cent in the parish of Santísima Trinidad in Santiago de Cuba had no known fathers.
from the scrubland, would come and tell me this child is yours. But who
could be sure about that.]

It was this set of social practices that the Creole liberals identified as
the African “germ” that had to be eradicated from the social body. These
Creoles were enlightened professional elites who had been socialized and
emotionally constructed in the purity of blood and for whom the stigma of
illegitimacy and race could sully, not only their families, but also the
nation they wanted to build. A report produced by Bachiller y Morales
shortly before the outbreak of the Ten Years’ War about the demoralized
situation of the free coloured population and the possible reforms to be
carried out illustrated white Creole fears when faced with the end of
slavery. The author, who was committed to liberal principles, posited the
priority requirement that the coloured race should organize their family
and domestic lives along the lines of the white elite model: matrimony,
legitimate children and family structures that would not dissolve into
kinship networks.

In the 1880s, the threat to the nation’s future posed by the degradation
in which the black population lived increased the fears of these patriots
and took on a new political dimension. In his report on prostitution in the
city of Havana, the hygienist, Benjamín de Céspedes, put it as follows:

Se debe desconfiar grandemente de los destinos de un pueblo que consiente
la confusión lamentable de la raza civilizada y culta del país con elementos
extraños é incultos, que á la postre triunfan en sus vicios y costumbres
salvajes, inoculándolas como un virus en el organismo social, ya en forma
de diversión popular, ya en sus rebeldes instintos.
[One should have very little faith in the fate of a people that permits the
civilized cultured race of the country to be lamentably confused with
foreign uncouth elements that ultimately succeed with their vices and
savage customs, inoculating them like a virus into the social organism,
whether in the form of popular entertainment or in their rebellious
instincts.]

When it came to evaluating the degree of moral civilization of society,
we find, once more, that matrimony and the control of sexuality were the
determining factors for the health of the social body, and any behaviour
alien to the moral code of the white bourgeoisie was racialized:

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27 Barnet, Cimarrón, 67 and 79.
29 Benjamín de Céspedes, La prostitución en la Ciudad de La Habana (Havana:
Establecimiento tipográfico O’Reilly no. 9, 1888), 143–144.
Queda todavía el cenagal sobre el cual viven en concubinato, como en propio y natural lecho, una gran parte de la raza de color que es promiscua entre sí ó con blancos; hasta el punto de que en este contubernio de amancebados es muy difícil distinguir á la concubina de la prostituta; á la que cohabita con un solo hombre ó con varios por interés pecuniario.

[There still remains the quagmire in which a great part of the coloured race that is promiscuous with each other or with whites lives in concubinage as in their own natural bed; to the extent that in this cohabitation of couples living in sin, it is very difficult to distinguish the concubine from the prostitute; the woman who cohabits with only one man or with several out of pecuniary interest.]\(^{30}\)

For this well-known supporter of independence, the ultimate expression of what he called a “degenerate moral state” was that there should be so many “procreators of a bastard, perhaps not legitimated, filiation, . . . [which is] one of the factors behind our social annihilation in the cities and the commonest gateway to prostitution” (procreadores de una filiación bastarda y quizá no legitimada, . . . uno de los factores de nuestro aniquilamiento social en las ciudades y la antesala más frecuentada de la prostitución).\(^{31}\) Furthermore, the sexual relations that black and mulatto women maintained with white men were contaminating the body of the nation, so that:

contrarían enfermedades y sentimientos envilecidos y una proclividad hacia la africanidad y la “descivilización” que ponía en peligro la salud moral: . . . . Bajo un mismo techo se albergaba la familia honesta y el concubinato más licencioso entre amos y esclavos, y éstos entre sí; pululando toda una generación multicolor de hijos ilegítimos, como surgen de un cultivo gelatinoso los gérmenes parasitarios de una colonia de microbios.

[diseases, debased sentiments and a proclivity towards Africanicity and “decivilization” were being contracted and putting moral health in danger; . . . the same roof provided shelter for the decent family and the most licentious concubinage between masters and slaves, and the latter with each other; a whole multi-coloured generation of illegitimate children swarming around, just like parasitic germs of a colony of microbes emerging from a gelatinous culture.]\(^{32}\)

For Céspedes, slavery was not the only cause of moral degeneration, but the intrinsic perversion of the African race, a race that, in spite of the

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 131–134.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 128.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 70.
recent abolition of slavery, he described as “more enslaved than ever,” indolent, vicious and depraved:\textsuperscript{33}

Los instintos salvajes de la raza importada y que han venido transmitiéndose de generación en generación, hasta nuestros días, como una dolencia social, y persiste todavía, a pesar de la redención del esclavo, como una reminiscencia ó quizás como una señal tristísima de que esa raza manumitida socialmente, no ha logrado todavía alcanzar esa otra redención moral que habría de borrar para siempre de su triste historia, la filiación bárbara y salvaje de la estirpe de Cham.

[The savage instincts of the imported race, which have been transmitted from generation to generation, down to our own days, like a social sickness that continues to persist, in spite of the redemption of the slave, like a reminiscence or perhaps a distressing sign that that socially manumitted race has still not managed to attain that other moral redemption that would have erased forever the barbarous, savage filiation of the line of Ham from its sad history.\textsuperscript{34}]

The work of this hygienist doctor is a very good example of the way in which the Cuban nationalists articulated race, gender and sexuality in a complex, dynamic discourse that formed the basis on which the body of the citizen would gradually be constructed. As Wade has shrewdly pointed out for other Latin American contexts, race and gender formed part of a single system of colonial domination in which sexuality played a fundamental role in the process of naturalizing social hierarchies.\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{The association movement of the coloured race in defence of equality and respectability: “Our due”}

\textit{Building the emotional community}

As indicated earlier, it was the participation of a significant part of the coloured population in the war that brought the blacks and mulattos into contact with the ideas of freedom and equality that the Cuban liberals were fighting for against the mother country.\textsuperscript{36} The idea that everybody could fight for freedom, including their own, was gradually redefining their view

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 171.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 129.
\textsuperscript{35} See Wade, “Racismo, democracia racial, mestizaje,” and Wade, \textit{Race and Sex in Latin America}.
\textsuperscript{36} These included the Liberal Autonomists as well as those who supported the independence of the colony.
of the world and of themselves. As Juan Gualberto Gómez, one of the leaders of the coloured race said, “when all is said and done, the Revolution brought men together for ten years in the unforgettable intimacy of the battlefields in accordance with their opinions and not the colour of their skin” (al fin y al cabo, la Revolución hizo que los hombres se agrupasen durante diez años en la intimidad inolvidable de los campos de batalla según sus opiniones y no según el color de su piel). Out of the experience of living together, a new structure based on feeling was emerging that could be used to call for the end of slavery and also for their participation in the political construction of the nation.

The failure to comply with the Pact of Zanjón, which included putting the rights and freedoms of all Spaniards on both sides of the Atlantic on an equal footing, was an important trigger for the blacks and mulattos to take social action in defence of civil rights and for the Spanish Constitution of 1876 to be applied. The free coloured population still had no access to public schooling or public posts, certain trades were denied them, and the ban on marriage between races was maintained. Public and social spaces, such as hotels, restaurants, cafés and theatres, kept clearly separate areas for whites and blacks, who were even segregated at political meetings and in the workers’ and craftsmen’s mutual aid associations. The penal code established racial differences and considered that belonging to “the coloured race” was an aggravating circumstance in certain offences. They were not allowed to use the honorific titles Don or Doña before their


38 “Justicia,” La Fraternidad. Periódico político independiente consagrado a la defensa de los intereses generales de la raza de color, March 1888 (the day is illegible).

39 See Helg, Lo que nos corresponde; Carmen Montejo Arrechea, Sociedades negras en Cuba 1878–1960 (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2004); Barnet, Cimarrón, 71.
names in official documents, and records of births, marriages and deaths were kept separate and distinct.

In this context, the black and mulatto leaders used the racial identity that had been imposed by the colonial administration to create a powerful association movement with its own identity. Despite the movement being diverse and riddled with racial prejudices, its objective was to mobilize the coloured race as a single body through their common experience of white racism. The feeling of constant humiliation and racial hatred encouraged unity and joint action, not only in defence of equal rights but also in support of a dignity that was permanently challenged. In short, it generated an emotional community that emanated from a feeling of profound sorrow and indignation at the racism of white men, which was continually expressed in the black press.  

This experience of humiliation and hatred had a profound effect on the lives of the leaders of the coloured race, such as Rafael Serra, Martín

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40 Factors that set up complex barriers between the races were: skin colour and physical characteristics, African or Creole origin, experience of slavery or freedom, and income and occupation.

41 The concept of “emotional community,” developed by Barbara Rosenwein, Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), highlights the role of the emotions in creating social communities in which people share emotional expressions that bind them together and around which common values and objectives are constructed. The historian William M. Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001) also provides some interesting concepts for understanding the emotional component of political change. In the case of Spain, this historiographical proposal exploring the role of the emotions and sexual identities in the shaping of thought and human action is a very recent development, see María Sierra, Género y emociones en el Romanticismo. El teatro de Bretón de los Herreros (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico (CSIC), 2013).

42 El Emisario, September, 1886, quoted by Pedro Deschamps Chapeaux, El negro en el periodismo cubano en el siglo XIX (Havana: Ediciones Revolución, 1963), 44.
Morúa Delgado, Miguel Figueroa, Miguel Gualba, Antonio Maceo and Juan Gualberto Gómez, in their struggle to reconcile patriotism with negritude. Gómez, the son of slaves whose freedom had been bought when he was still in his mother’s womb, was a man of democratic convictions, a supporter of independence and a mason—the mulatto brother, as Martí called him—and the indisputable leader of the association movement of the coloured race on the Island. Through the columns of the newspaper that he founded in 1879—La Fraternidad. Periódico político independiente consagrado a la defensa de los intereses generales de la raza de color (Brotherhood: An independent political newspaper devoted to the defence of the general interests of the coloured race)—he began a crusade to shake off “the lethargy into which the black men in Cuba had sunk” and to encourage the creation of associations from which they could “work for rights and freedom.” The rights had been won on the battlefield: “We laid down the arms that we so spiritedly wielded for a decade, because we were promised that we would be treated the same as other Spaniards” and it was this right that, as Gómez put it, now prompted them to invoke the legislation in force and demand that it be complied with.

For this leader, the black man was not asking for privileges, on the contrary:

Su anhelo constante, su aspiración suprema consiste en conseguir que aquí imponga los principios de la igualdad política y social; que no se le destierre del banquete de la vida; que no se le postergue en el reparto de los bienes comunes; que no se prive de la porción de honra y de respeto que le corresponda.

[Hisconstant desire, his supreme aspiration consists of ensuring that the principles of political and social equality should prevail here; that he should not be banished from the banquet of life; that he should not be]

43 Gómez learned to read and write in a school for black boys and was later sent to Paris to learn a trade appropriate to his race, a carriage driver. He was deported and lived in Madrid between 1882 and 1890, where he was editor-in-chief of the Abolicionista and managing editor of the Tribuna, as well as parliamentary chronicler for several years for El Progreso and El Pueblo. He also worked as the Madrid correspondent for Cuban newspapers, such as La Discusión and La Lucha; see Juan Gualberto Gómez, Por Cuba Libre (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1974), which contains a brief autobiography, and also Leopoldo Horrego Estuch, Juan Gualberto Gómez: una gran inconforme (Havana: Editorial La Milagrosa, 1954).

44 “Nuestros propósitos,” La Fraternidad, August 29, 1890; the article is reproduced in Gómez, Por Cuba Libre, 255.
passed over in the distribution of common goods; that he should not be
deprived of the portion of honour and respect that is his due.\textsuperscript{45}

His discourse about equal rights, solidly constructed and legally argued,
was transmitted via newspapers and flyers: “Let it be understood that we
are only asking for what is reasonably ours. . . . The Constitution includes
us and therefore we too are citizens of the Nation” (Entiéndase, que solo
pedimos lo que nos toca por razón. . . . Estamos comprendidos dentro de la
conststitución y por lo tanto, somos también ciudadanos de la Nación.).\textsuperscript{46}

However, to achieve this objective, unity was required and their own
racial agency, capable of confronting the racial prejudices that existed
even between mulattos and blacks. The black press contributed to this
objective as a privileged platform from which the leaders, most notably
Gómez, tried to build a community and give it an identity of its own
without questioning Martí’s myth of racial equality. Over a period of two
decades, a framework of thinking and feeling was gradually created in the
press—at first, principally in \textit{La Fraternidad}, then in \textit{La Igualdad}—in
which all coloured men took part. In its manifesto “Lo que somos” (What
we are) of April 1892, the editorial department of \textit{La Igualdad} reaffirmed
its earliest statements of 1878 because “consciously or unconsciously, that
was the vocabulary with which we learnt to think and love\textsuperscript{47} as a
community of brothers where there was no room for racism and which
fought against the existence of groups of blacks and mulattos who tried to
maintain intraracial barriers:

Por eso no somos absurdos preocupados, como lo son los mulatos que
quieren alejarse del negro, a la vez que se miran rechazados por el blanco;
y que aspiran, por consiguiente, a crear una imposible clase intermedia.
Para nosotros el hecho histórico, que mantiene dos clases en el país es ya
bastante deplorable, y no necesitamos multiplicar sus efectos; así es que no
admitimos más que la existencia de dos razas, la blanca y la de color,
compuesta esta última de negros y mulatos, iguales bajo todos los
conceptos, hijos del mismo tronco, hermanados por las comunes afrentas y
las comunes desgracias, y que a nuestro juicio, no deben mantener otra
aspiración que la de llegar a la absoluta identidad de condiciones con los
blancos, a quienes están ligados por la comunidad de la historia y la
comunidad de la patria.

\textsuperscript{45} “Nuestros propósitos,” \textit{La Fraternidad}, 265.
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{El Emisario}, September 1886, quoted by Deschamps Chapeaux, \textit{El negro en el
periodismo cubano}, 44.
\textsuperscript{47} “Lo que somos,” \textit{La Igualdad}, April 7, 1892.
[This is why we are not ridiculously preoccupied like the mulattos who want to distance themselves from the black man even as they see themselves being rejected by the white man and who consequently aspire to create an impossible intermediate class. As far as we are concerned, the historical fact that maintains two classes in the country is already deplorable enough and we do not need to multiply the effects of this; so we do not recognize the existence of more than two races, the white and the coloured, the latter composed of blacks and mulattos, equal under all circumstances, children of the same origins, related through common affronts and common misfortunes and, in our opinion, they should aspire to nothing less than being on an absolutely identical footing with the whites, to whom they are tied by the community of history and the community of the nation.]

Most of the educational and recreational associations that were founded in Cuba after the Ten Years’ War welcomed coloured people, making no distinction between the morenos and the pardos. The names of these associations reflected precisely the unity of the race: La Armonía (Harmony), La Concordia (Concord), La Unión (Unity); or indicated their hopes for a future of progress and modernity, such as El Progreso (Progress), El Porvenir (The Future), La Aurora (Dawn), and so on. Nevertheless, some societies were only for mulattos or for blacks, in spite of being heavily criticized in the press:

¿Hasta cuando hemos de estar con esas ridículas preocupaciones? ¿Los pardos, ó mulatos el que más lejos ó más cerca no venimos del negro? Pues ¿Por qué hemos de hacer abstracción completa de él? No, amigos míos: es preciso que nos unamos, es necesario que no olvidemos las lecciones de la Historia y nos hagamos fuertes para que se nos respete.

Those who formed societies for mulattos did so only with the aim of distancing themselves from the blacks, seeking to increase their status, to “get ahead,” as they expressed it at the time. In many cases, this meant breaking family and affective ties, which caused extra suffering and
humiliations on top of the rejection by the whites. Some of the residents of Santiago de Cuba put it as follows after the creation of the Progreso circle, a social club that was “eminently for the light-browns (sic)” (eminentemente de pardos (sic)):

He ahí un gravísimo error: tanto más grave, cuanto que es hasta absurdo é incompatible con su título. . . . ¡Llamarse progresiva una Sociedad en cuyo seno no pueda la respetable madre morena o negra, como quieran llamarla, representar su verdadero papel; dónde la hermana más clara no pueda llevar a la hermana más oscura!

[Here there is a most serious error, all the more serious, because it is even absurd and incompatible with its name. . . . How can a Society be called progressive when the respectable dark or negro mother, whatever you want to call her, cannot play her true role within it; where the lighter sister cannot take her darker sister?]

The battle for the unity of the coloured race led by Juan G. Gómez resulted in the constitution of the Central Directorate of Societies of the Coloured Race in 1887 and managed to bring together more than six hundred thousand people and numerous associations from all over the Island. The democratic newspaper, La Igualdad: Peródico Democrático founded in 1892, was its official organ and continued, to some extent, the work started at La Fraternidad; both were faithful exponents of Martí’s thought. The members of the Directorate defined themselves over and above race, as “patriots above all else,” and as such claimed full citizenship for black men and mulattos. On the eve of the Assembly of the Societies of the Coloured Race that took place in July 1892 in Havana, Gómez confirmed his support for the principles that he had formulated in the foundational programme of La Fraternidad years before, the crusade for the equality of whites, blacks and mulattos, waged “without flagging, shilly-shallying, wavering or inconsistency, which would be unworthy of men who pride themselves on sticking to firm principles and sacrificing their passions to the great ideals of freedom and progress” (sin desfallecimiento, ni veleidades, ni inconstancias, ni inconsecuencias, que serían indignas en hombres que se precian de mantener criterios firmes y de sacrificiar sus pasiones a los grandes ideales de libertad y de progreso).

51 Ibid.
52 The Central Directorate of the Societies of the Coloured Race was constituted in 1887, but was inscribed in the Registry of Associations when the Law of Association came into force on the Island in 1892. See Montejo Arrechaga, Sociedades negras en Cuba.
53 “Lo que somos,” La Igualdad, April 7, 1892.
Nonetheless, the definitive constitution of the Central Directorate of Societies of the Coloured Race and its inscription in the Register of Associations was received with resentment and suspicion by the Creole liberals and also by some prominent members of the coloured race such as the Liberal Autonomist, Martín Morúa who saw it as an embryonic black party. However, the Directorate declared that it was opposed to any hint of racial struggle and expressed its commitment, beyond any shadow of a doubt, to racial democracy because:

No se trata de constituir un partido más basado en el hecho de la raza; sino por el contrario, se trabaja por la desaparición de desigualdades y preocupaciones que alejaban a los elementos negros de la órbita en que los partidos cubanos se mueven. Borradas estas desigualdades no tendrán ya los hombres de color aspiraciones particularistas que defender, y podrán ingresar más fácilmente en los diversos partidos cubanos. [It is not a question of setting up yet another party based on the fact of race; on the contrary, we are working for the disappearance of inequalities and concerns that used to keep the black elements at a distance from the circles that the Cuban parties move in. Once these inequalities are erased, coloured men will no longer have to defend particularistic aspirations and will be able to enter the various Cuban parties more easily.]

They insisted that their objective was the defence of the rights and interests of the coloured race, without this struggle meaning the adoption of a differentiated identity, but rather the condition of making it possible to construct a citizen without race.

**Blacks and mulattoes in search of respectability**

Along with the demand for civil rights that they already had as Spaniards, continual campaigns were mounted in the press in favour of regenerating the coloured race as a means of attaining dignity and

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54 Letter from Morúa to the editor of *La Tribuna*, April 10, 1890, in Martín Morúa, vol. 5 of *Obras Completas* (Havana: Comisión Nacional del Centenario de Don Martín Morúa Delgado, 1957), 148–149. In 1878, Morúa founded *El Pueblo*, a newspaper in defence of the rights of the black race, as well as the journal, *Nueva Era*, and the newspaper, *El Cubano Libre*, which was published in the USA. His mother was African, from the gangá longoba nation, and his father was Basque. For aspects of his life, see Leopoldo Horrego Estuch, *Martín Morúa Delgado, vida y mensaje* (Havana: Imprenta de Fernández y Cía., 1948).

55 “Lo que somos,” *La Igualdad*, April 7, 1892.
respectability; however, the search for brotherhood and intimacy between men both black and white that they pressed for required adopting a common model of masculine behaviour, which could only be the hegemonic one. The numerous newspapers that circulated on the Island, particularly *La Fraternidad* and later *La Igualdad* in Havana, constituted a policy space that passed on to the Societies the standards of behaviour that the incipient black middle classes were defining as civilized, standards of behaviour that signified profound changes in the models of masculinity and femininity, family organization, sexual behaviour, forms of sociability and even language. Through opinion pieces, social columns, even the budding field of advertising, a set of biopolitics was propagated aimed at whitening the black body as the basic condition for any possibility of a pact between patriots.56

The societies of instruction and recreation as well as mutual aid societies, the majority linked to the Central Directorate, were mainly responsible for this mission to regenerate and moralize customs. For the black leaders, they were a necessary tool in the struggle to be recognized as honourable citizens, worthy of forming part of the irrevocably white nation. The fact that those who ran the associations were required to be able to read and write placed them in a social position that could be defined as emerging middle class, particularly if they were educated or carried out trades and activities in the intellectual field, such as journalism:

> Por eso nosotros, sin ambajes (sic) ni rodeos, proclamamos la necesidad de una saludable inteligencia entre todos los miembros de la familia negra cubana, inteligencia que se extiende de un extremo á otro de la Isla y por eso pedimos que los hombres de color que se preocupen de la manera de ser de su raza en la sociedad en la que viven, se pongan de acuerdo para buscar el remedio al mal que moral y materialmente nos corroe, por eso queremos, que siendo nuestras sociedades el centro que ha de servir de base á nuestros trabajos, se organicen bajo las bases de la fusión de ideas y de intereses, que matará las rencillas y las rivalidades.

[Therefore, to get straight to the point and without beating about the bush, we proclaim the need for healthy intelligence among all the members of the]

56 *La Igualdad* (February 4, 1893; February 9, 1893; December 16, 1893), as well as several numbers of February and March, 1894. See also María Poumier, *Apuntes sobre la vida cotidiana en Cuba en 1898* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975).

57 The term is used in the sense given to it by Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la Biopolitique. Cours au Collège de France, 1978–1979* (Paris: Gallimard-Seuil, 2004). Control and political power over people is not only effected via the conscience or ideology, but also on the body and with the body.
black Cuban family, intelligence extending from one end of the Island to
the other, and so we ask coloured men to be concerned about the way of
life of their race in the society they live in, to agree to seek a remedy for
the evil that corrodes us morally and materially, which is why, since our
societies have to be the centre that serves as a basis for our work, we want
them to be organized on the basis of pooling ideas and interests that will
kill off petty squabbles and rivalries.] \(^{58}\)

The first condition for belonging to most societies was a “strong desire
to live with decorum (con decoro),” in other words, morally impeccable
behaviour without any hint of vice, because that was where the roots of
honour and respectability were to be found.\(^ {59}\) Some even specified that
members could only take their wives and legitimate children with them
and that young women should be accompanied by their parents or an older
person who represented them, although it was, on many occasions,
difficult to demonstrate legitimacy of filiation. Both the rules of the
societies as well as their publications show us a model of respectability
that was manifestly at odds with the ways of organizing family life and
emotional practices pointed out earlier.\(^ {60}\)

In spite of these difficulties, for many men of the coloured race, the
strenuous efforts that they made on behalf of individual and collective
honour in the societies that they belonged to represented a veritable
mission. These men behaved with the conviction that, only by clearly
adopting a position in which they rejected customs characterized as
African and decided to live “decently,” could they become honourable
citizens and feel self-respect. In this arduous task, the societies and a basic
education were their best weapons:

Ellas contribuyen con el estímulo constante que despierta en el espíritu, la
distinción y el público aprecio, á destruir funestas inclinaciones, fomentan
y aquilatan la pureza de sentimientos elevando al individuo en su propia
estimación, y con el respeto á sí mismo, le habitan al respeto á los demás;
son en fin, el más firme baluarte de la moralidad tan combatida, fundadoras
y sostenedoras de la santidad del hogar con su aplauso valioso para todas
las virtudes y su execración perenne de todos los vicios. ¿Dónde sino en
nuestras sociedades hayan fuerte valladar á sus torpes concupiscencias, el
libertinaje hipócrita ó descarado, la maligna é impúdica acechanza, la
corrupción en fin, sea cualquiera su forma y su arreo? . . . si deseamos en
fin distinciones para nuestros méritos, homenaje para nuestras virtudes,


\(^ {59}\) *La Igualdad*, May 30, 1893.

\(^ {60}\) Montejo Arrechea, *Las Sociedades negras en Cuba* has gathered together some
of the societies’ statutes.
veneración y respeto para nuestras familias, multipliquemos nuestros colegios, vigoricemos nuestros centros sociales, penetremos, en una palabra, de la inmensa responsabilidad que ante el mundo, y más aún, ante nuestra conciencia de hombres honrados y amantes de nuestro prestigio nos cabe.

[Through the constant spur to the spirit, the distinction and public esteem they confer, they help to destroy deplorable inclinations, to foster and value purity of feelings, raising the individual up in his own estimation and because he respects himself, they accustom him to show respect for others; they are, in short, the strongest bulwark of such hard fought for morality, the founders and supporters of the sanctity of the home, with their valuable applause for all the virtues and their perennial exaction of all the vices. Where else but in our societies do they find such a stout defence against their clumsy carnal desires, their libertinage, whether hypocritical or shameless, pernicious and lecherous stalking, in short, their corruption, whatever its shape or however it’s dressed up? . . . so, if we want distinctions for our merits, tributes for our virtues, veneration and respect for our families, let us multiply our schools, let us energize our social centres, in short, let us take upon ourselves the immense responsibility that falls to us, before the world, and even more, before our consciences as honest men and lovers of prestige.]

Using a vocabulary that illustrated the almost sacred dimension of this patriotic crusade to conquer individual and collective respect, the association movement, from the start, made an appeal:

... a todos los hombres de buena voluntad para hacer de las sociedades templos de regeneración moral, . . . convirtiéndolas [las sociedades] en sacrosanto templo donde nos congregamos todos y cada uno de sus fieles adictos en evangélica misión á trabajar por la salud de la patria.

[to all men of goodwill to make the societies temples for moral regeneration . . . turning them [the societies] into sacrosanct temples where each and every one of us, the faithful followers, congregate in our evangelical mission to work for the health of the nation.]

As a prime requirement for successfully carrying forward the social and political programme of the black societies, an appeal was made for them to keep their emotions in check, so as to avoid anything that might identify them with revolt and barbarism. For this reason, the way they expressed their demands and carried out their activities always carefully avoided displaying the slightest sign of radicalism that might cast doubt on their disciplined civic masculinity and further intensify fear of the

[1] La Fraternidad, July 1888 (day illegible).
coloured population and stir up emotions against them. Their defence of the rights of the black man had to be formulated “without unbecoming frivolities or vulgar display, but in unity and with moderation.” When public events were held, the press made continual appeals to “good sense” and “prudence” as befiting “men of order and morality,” which, as it stated, “most of the individuals of our race are.” La Fraternidad said that citizenship had to be earned with an “effective reform of our way of life.” Clothing and manners were also involved in this major whitening process. The case of the Payret Theatre is significant for understanding the importance that Gómez and his editorial staff attached to forms of social representation. Given that blacks were banned from entering the most respectable parts of this theatre, the leader encouraged them to acquire tickets for those areas and to occupy them “determined to show themselves to be as prudent and restrained, as assertive later in upholding their complaints” before the government and justice, “suitably dressed” of course, and accompanied by their wives. The staging for the Central Directorate’s congress, held on July 23, 1892 on the premises of the Bella Unión society and presided over by Gómez, is another example of this performative will, since the delegates of the hundred entities invited to the event wore English frock coats and top hats. Carnivals also gave cause for complaint because many blacks and mulattos dressed up as mangrove swamp blacks (negros de manglar), flashy blacks (negros curros), sugar factory slaves (esclavos de ingenio) and in other similar outfits, which, from the tenor of the letters of complaint received at La Igualdad, recalled the ominous times of slavery. For those who aspired to the regeneration of the coloured class, such spectacles perpetuated habits and customs that should be banished from the sight of the younger generations. Casting about for reverse symbolism, the readers of the newspaper recommended that the coloured population dress up for carnivals as Indians, white doves or Basques in order to offset the stereotypes of savages and barbarians with which they were identified.

The ideal was a new order and new manners, because the new nation that they were building needed citizens who could control their passions.

63 Juan Gualberto Gómez recommended systematically going to court to report the colonial administration whenever it failed to comply with the law.
64 La Fraternidad, September 10, 1888.
65 “Carta desde Manzanillo,” La Fraternidad, March 4, 1888.
66 La Fraternidad, March 1888 (day illegible).
67 “Lo de Payret,” La Igualdad, November 9, 1892.
68 Horrego Estuch, Juan Gualberto Gómez: un gran inconforme, 92.
69 La Igualdad, February 16, 1893.
and fight against the moral degeneration into which the liberals said the country had sunk. It needed men who were “disciplined” and “productive” — rather than shiftless and idle, which was how the blacks were viewed — and men with “determination, capacity for initiative and who [did] not waste their time in useless and harmful pastimes.”

It was a masculinity that was linked to education and the development of their intellectual capabilities, a long way from the slave body, since:

> en los tiempos que corren debemos de dar muestra de nuestra virilidad, porque si hubo una época en que se nos consideraba como cosas y no se ensalzaba más que nuestra resistencia corporal, debemos hacer todo lo posible porque llegue otra, que no está muy lejana, en que se vea que es tan potente nuestra inteligencia, como nuestro cuerpo para cultivar la tierra de donde ha de brotar el árbol frondoso de nuestra emancipación social.

[In these times we must demonstrate our manhood, because if there was a time when we were considered things, and only our physical stamina was lauded, we must do everything possible for another [time] to arrive, which is not far off, when it will be seen that our intelligence is as powerful as our body for cultivating the land from which the leafy tree of our social emancipation will spring.]

### Sexualities under control: a requirement of the pact of brotherhood

Disciplined masculinity meant, above all, sexuality that was more restrained and regulated by the institution of marriage. It meant virile men who were neither susceptible to female sensuality, as the mulattos were said to be, nor prone to barbaric sexuality, as the blacks were said to be. In the white press, patriotism and masculine continence were constantly associated with each other whenever references were made to the sexual behaviour of some rebel blacks, who were even accused of seducing white women. In view of the accusations being made of sexuality considered incompatible with the norms of civilized masculinity

70 “Perder el tiempo,” *La Fraternidad*, January 1889 (day illegible).
71 “Carta al Director,” *La Fraternidad*, July 9, 1888.
72 Margarito Gutiérrez, *La Mujer. Defensa de sus derechos e ilustración* (Key West, Florida: Imprenta el Cubano, 1888), 27; also published in *Minerva*, December 15, 1888.
73 Benjamín de Céspedes, *La prostitución*.
74 Ada Ferrer highlights the cases of the officers Guillermo Moncada and Quintín Banderas in “Rustic Men, Civilized Nation,” and “Raza, región y género en la Cuba rebelde.”
and the purity of the nation, *La Igualdad* took up the defence of the blacks by pointing to the respectful sexual behaviour that they had maintained towards white women during the war: “There was never a single case where those women, whose wandering lifestyle frequently presented them in a state of almost complete undress, were raped, or even solicited by the blacks who would run into them at every turn.” According to Gómez, black patriots would never dare sully the sexual honour of those who were the repositories of racial purity. Meanwhile, this is how the black character, José Dolores Pimienta, expressed himself in *Cecilia Valdés*: “It is very hard, extremely so, quite unbearable, that they can snatch the coloured women from us, and we cannot even look at white women.”

One wonders, in the light of this, how the leaders of the Directorate dealt with the fact that black and mulatto women lacked the right to sexual honour as far as the men of the white elites were concerned, and similarly, how it was possible to share a code of masculine honour that was based precisely on the control of women’s sexuality.

It was precisely as a result of the publication of Benjamín de Céspedes’ work on prostitution in the city of Havana, referred to earlier, that a highly significant debate started in the black press about issues relating to the ways of life of the women in the poorer sectors, and their sexuality in particular. Céspedes blamed the coloured population, and specifically the lascivious nature of the black and mulatto women, for the atmosphere of sexual immorality on the Island. This exercise in racialized sexualization of women by Céspedes viciously attacked the figure of the mulatto woman as an object of desire and a symbol of the greatest depravity: “The white man considers them merely as instruments of sensual pleasure, and as they cannot provide any other advantages except the natural ones of their lewd character, they always yield in their own interests.” Furthermore, by pointing out that the “despicable pact” of concubinage was the road that led inevitably to prostitution, most of the black women and the pardas were thereby classed as undercover prostitutes. Although *La Fraternidad* responded with profound indignation at such statements, in which their race was “viciously insulted” (vilmente ultrajada), it nevertheless accepted that concubinage was tantamount to prostitution and that coloured men did

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*La Igualdad*, May 27, 1893.

Cirilo Villaverde, vol. 1 of *Cecilia Valdés* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1982), 211.

Benjamín de Céspedes, *La Prostitución*, 172. The hypersexualization of women in the subaltern sectors also appears in María Sierra, “Cannibals Devoured: Gypsies in Romantic Discourse on the Spanish Nation,” chapter six of this volume.

not have control over their women. It blamed the “African” element, rather than the Creole, as well as slavery for the moral prostration of the coloured race, and chose not to go into too much detail about this painful and thorny topic—the respectability of women—for those who aspired to respectability based on the code of honour of the white elites:

No nos ciega la pasión y por eso no dejamos de comprender que nuestra raza está prostituida. ¡Pero cómo no ha de estarlo ella si lo está en grado superlativo la que se tiene por culta e ilustrada!” . . . y nosotros preguntamos quien de los paleros tal vez hermano, padre o hijo de ella, no ha contribuido a su desprestigio [al de la mulata] . . . No queremos entrar en otro género de consideraciones porque el asunto es de suyo demasiado enojoso y por que hay ciertas cosas que peor es menearlo (sic).

We are not blinded by passion and that is why we are at a loss to understand why our race is prostituted. But how can it not be if the race that considers itself cultured and enlightened is so to a superlative degree! . . . and we ask which of the paleros, maybe a brother, father or son of that race, has not contributed to her [the mulatto woman’s] bad reputation. . . . We do not wish to enter into any other kind of consideration because the matter is of itself too vexing and because with some things it is better to let sleeping dogs lie (sic).

Numerous letters were sent to La Fraternidad in support of its response to the attack on their outraged dignity; the letters showed that, although it was the women who were besmirched, it was the men of their race who had to raise their voices in their defence. They did not try to deny the accusation but to invert the terms of the question and consider the coloured women as the victims of male lasciviousness, especially, of the white men:

¿Nuestra infeliz raza está prostituida? Seguramente no. ¿La mulata en general es tal como nos la pinta el despechado Céspedes? -Lástima que lleve este apellido- Seguramente que sí, la que está acostumbrada a tratar a hombres como él . . . ¿A que si escudriñamos la vida del moralista nos encontramos con uno de los muchos que subrepticiamente se introducen en nuestros hogares y abusando del estado de ignorancia de nuestras infelices mujeres destilan en su corazón todo el veneno que cual rastrera culebra llevan oculto, saciando en ellas todo lo bruto y asqueroso de su apetito lascivo, dejando en cambio una mujer sin más consuelo que su propia deshonra? ¡Y para estos ladrones no hay castigos!

79 A palero is a priest of the Palo religion (also known as Reglas del Congo), originally developed by the slaves in Cuba.
80 “A la Tarde,” La Fraternidad, August 31, 1888, in italics in the text.
[Is our unhappy race prostituted? Certainly not. Is the *mulatto woman* in general really the way spiteful Céspedes depicts her? (What a pity that is his surname.) She certainly is, the sort who is accustomed to dealing with men like him. . . . What’s the betting that if we scrutinize the life of the *moralist*, we shall find that he is one of the many who surreptitiously wheedle their way into our homes, and taking advantage of the state of ignorance of our unfortunate women, distil into their hearts all the poison that these snakes in the grass have hidden inside them, using them to satiate all their brutal, disgusting, lecherous appetites and leaving, in return, a woman with nothing but her own dishonour as consolation. And for these robbers there is no punishment!]^{81}

The dialogue established between *La Fraternidad* and those who defended the discourse of the hygienist doctor, Céspedes, clearly reveals the tensions and anxieties that ran through the body of the nation, in which sexuality and *mestizaje* were omnipresent.^{82}

This concern with controlling the sexuality of black and mulatto women particularly affected the dances that were very popular among the coloured population.^{83} They became spaces of cultural *mestizaje* to the extent that young white men took part in them in search of relations with coloured women. It was the informal subaltern space par excellence that fed into nineteenth-century Cuban costumbrista literature.^{84}

By organizing these soirées, the societies of the coloured race raised funds to support schools and maintain aid for their members. Nevertheless, despite the fact that flyers and advertisements emphasized their morality, the dances became the target of constant criticism and debates about whether or not they were appropriate with respect to the objectives and values that the governing bodies were supposed to be aiming at:

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^{81} “Carta de adhesión,” *La Fraternidad*, August 31, 1888.


^{83} Letter from “El Fénix” Society of Trinidad to Juan Gualberto Gómez, dated July 16, 1892, Box 54, file 4089, Cartas dirigidas a Juan Gualberto Gómez por varias sociedades de instrucción y recreo, 1886–1909 (Letters Addressed to Juan Gualberto Gómez by Various Societies of Instruction and Recreation, 1886–1909), Fondo: Adquisiciones, Archivo Nacional de Cuba.

^{84} José Victoriano Betancourt, *Artículos de costumbres* (Havana: Cárdenas y Cía, 1941), 177–191; Benjamín de Céspedes, *La prostitución*. 
Téngase presente que no combatimos ni condenamos el baile siempre y cuando no deje de ser un ejercicio higiénico y de solaz; mas como quiera que aquí se abusa tanto del baile, hasta el extremo de convertirlo en industria de la cual sacan algunos pingües ganancias . . . que los empresarios de tales reuniones, admitan, indistintamente á toda clase de persona; siendo público y notorio, lo ocurrido en una de estas en la cual se confundía la impúdica ramera con señoras dignas de respeto por todos los conceptos.

[Bear in mind that we neither oppose nor condemn dancing provided that it is a hygienic and relaxing exercise; but since dancing is abused so much here, to the extent that it has become an industry from which some are making fat profits . . . to which the impresarios of such gatherings indiscriminately admit every type of person; it being common knowledge what happened in one of these, where the brazen whore was confused with ladies worthy of respect under any circumstances.]85

Since it was the obligation of the governing bodies to protect the virtue of women, who, as a counterpoint to the lecherous nature that Céspedes referred to, were projected as pure and fragile, “full of tenderness, pure and worthy of every feeling,” it was necessary to supervise and control society dances so that the women were not exposed to being seduced by the men, especially white men who went there looking for relations with coloured women. To avoid such situations, some societies restricted invitations to people of their same race or made it obligatory to show membership cards so that, as La Fraternidad put it, “there would be no scenes that could disturb the soirées.”86 Concern for controlling the sexuality of the women was apparent from the numerous complaints that reached the press about the immorality of the dances. This is a description of what happened in those that were held in Sagua La Grande and the distrust that the presence of white men in their ballrooms generated:

Allí concurren en ‘clase de mujeres’ de todas pintas, pero en los hombres (ni preguntas), ‘blanquizal de Jaruco’ . . . que Sagua despierte de ese letargo y se haga merecedora de las libertades que hoy se nos conceden.

[All sorts gather in the ‘women’s class’ there, but as for the men (don’t even ask) ‘chalky whites from Jaruco’ . . . let’s hope that Sagua awakes from that lethargy and becomes worthy of the freedoms that are granted to us today.]87

85 “Mal camino,” La Fraternidad, July 1888 (day illegible).
86 La Fraternidad, July 9, 1888; “Miscelánea,” El Pueblo, March 21, 1880; La Igualdad, February 7, 1893.
87 “Carta al Director desde Sagua La Grande,” El Pueblo. Órgano de la clase de color, Matanzas, March 1880 (day illegible).
The image of blacks as rapists of white women, of lecherous black women and seductive mulatto women that filled literary works and the white press was inverted and transformed into one where coloured men were fearful of the predatory sexuality of white men. This threat forced them to protect their wives and daughters since it questioned their honour and respectability as citizens:

Aquí donde todo se profana, donde de todo se hace vil granjería, dónde a cada paso recibe la virtud algún impuro choque, ¿no han de existir lugares consagrados, algo como refugio y salvaguardia de la pureza de nuestros sentimientos, del pudor de nuestras vírgenes, de la inocencia de nuestros infantes, de la respetabilidad y santidad de nuestro hogar?

[Here where everything is profaned, where everything is turned into vile profit, where at every turn, virtue is delivered some impure blow, should there not be consecrated places, something like a refuge and safeguard for the purity of our feelings, for the chastity of our virgins, for the innocence of our children, for the respectability and sanctity of our homes?]

*La Fraternidad* was serious in drawing the attention of the young coloured women and, more especially, the paterfamilias to the persistent immorality of the dances and soirées. Given some events that, far from being exceptions, were repeated in countless societies all over the Island, the editor of the paper advised "young people of both sexes to show some esteem for, or hold in regard, the good name of their parents, and to avoid flocking to those gatherings where chastity is lost and honour is tarnished."

A sense of shame accompanied these complaints as they contemplated the way in which all their efforts to construct a mimetic respectability were being shattered:

La cara se nos caía de vergüenza contemplando el espectáculo que a nuestra vista se ofrecía el viernes en la noche. Un pueblo frenéticamente escandaloso . . . ridículos doseles colocados en el salón principal de esa Sociedad para colocar bajo él a las reinas ó presidentas de las perlas de colores, conducidas en costosísimos trenes . . . ¿Era el premio que en esta fiesta se discernía á la mujer negra instruida? ¿Era a la niñez aplicada? ¿Era, en fin, á la virtuosa esposa, modelo del hogar, celosa cuidadora de sus hijos? No, nada de eso.

[We hung our heads in shame as we contemplated the spectacle before our eyes on Friday night. A frenetically scandalous people . . . ridiculous canopies set up in the main ballroom of that Society, to place under them the queens or lady presidents of the coloured pearls, being driven in

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88 *La Fraternidad*, July 1888 (day illegible).
89 “Mal camino,” *La Fraternidad*, July 1888 (day illegible).
extremely costly coaches. . . . Was it the prize awarded to the educated black woman at that fiesta? Was it for a diligent childhood? Was it, in short, for the virtuous wife, the model homemaker, the zealous carer of her children? No, none of that.[90]

For men committed to the cause of the rights of the black race, the dances became places of degeneration that threatened the virtue of their women, where frivolity reigned and what was being jeopardized was “what we, more than anyone, most need to preserve, our honour!”[91] Only the constant, vigilant presence of the men of the family could avoid:

el desolador espectáculo de tanto tierno ser lanzado prematura y cruelmente al revuelto cauce de las corrientes de la vida, de ese modo evitaremos las vandálicas invasiones de esos cosacos de la impudicia que talan y destrozan con brutal impureza las virginales flores de nuestros hoy desamparados hogares, de ese modo evitaremos en fin, que uno y otro día, la rabiosa inquina, el nefando despecho . . . lance sobre nuestro rostro el hediondo e infame lodo del deshonor.

[the distressing spectacle of so many tender beings tossed prematurely and cruelly into the turbulent currents of life; in that way we shall avoid the loutish invasions of those Cossacks of lechery who cut down and destroy with brutal impurity the virginal flowers of our homes, which today lie defenceless; so, in short, we shall avoid having furious ill-will, loathsome spite . . . fling the foul-smelling, vile mud of dishonour in our faces day after day.][92]

The family home as a metaphor of the nation

Advocating the model of a legally constituted, socially acceptable family home as natural and civilized was also the subject of a constant campaign in the press of the coloured race. For the leaders of the movement, the defence of equal rights and honour was conditional on being the responsible heads of whitened households. Black and mulatto males had “at all times, to maintain with integrity and conviction, their honour as men within the family and as citizens within the nation.”[93]

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90 “¡Que …sarcasmo! ¡Qué …ridículo!”, La Fraternidad, November 20, 1888. The term “mimetic” is employed in the sense defined by Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London & New York: Routledge, 1994).
92 Ibid.
93 This was the opinion expressed by Martín Morúa, editor-in-chief of the journal De Actualidad. Por la independencia y la unión de las razas, published in Key
legally constituted home, therefore, was both an indispensable element of
the nation-building project and a metaphor of it, and this is how it was
assumed and interpreted by the leaders of the coloured race. As in other
colonial contexts, the family home appeared as the crucial space for
defining masculine identity.94

The associations worked tirelessly in favour of this “most sacred
institution of theirs” and promoted the setting up of “true homes”:

Todos debemos aunar nuestros esfuerzos, encaminándolos resueltamente á
morigerar las costumbres, elevar el concepto de la verdadera dignidad,
crear, en una palabra, el hogar, el sagrado y verdadero hogar del hombre
moderno rodeado de consideraciones y respeto, y en cuyo umbral, como
ante inexpugnable y granítica muralla, se estrelle la infame asechanza, y en
cuyo augusto recinto no penetre jamás el hálito venenoso de la
concupiscencia y el deshonor. No de otra manera habremos de proceder, si
pretendemos borrar de nuestras frentes, el depresivo estigma con que nos
marcó la vileza de hebraicos mercaderes; si no han de ser huecas
declamaciones nuestro anhelo constantemente manifestado, de regeneración
y ennoblecimiento.

We must all pool our efforts, resolutely directing them towards
moderating our customs, elevating the concept of true dignity, in a word,
creating a home, the true sacred home of modern man, surrounded by
considerations and respect, and on whose threshold, as if against an
unassailable granite wall, the infamy that is lying in wait is dashed to
pieces, and in whose august premises the poisonous breath of lust and
dishonour never enters. In no other way are we to proceed if we expect to
wipe from our brows the depressing stigma with which the vileness of
Hebrew slave traders marked us; if our constantly manifested yearning for
regeneration and ennoblement is not to be hollow rhetoric.]95

The columnists of La Fraternidad thought that homes that were
“legally and honourably constituted” would do more for their social
regeneration than any number of efforts and sacrifices made in any other
way. Families created and maintained by men and dedicated to the sacred
purpose of their honour was the slogan upheld in the pages of that
newspaper, because it was by attaching themselves unconditionally to that
family that men would find the “reward for their efforts and perseverance”
in homes governed by order and a serious and thoughtful spirit “capable of

West. The quote is taken from Deschamps Chapeaux, “El negro en el periodismo
cubano,” 58.
94 McClintock, Imperial Leather.
95 “El Hogar,” La Fraternidad, September 10, 1888.
rejecting the irregularity of a frivolous and useless existence.” 96 In this 
way, the domestic household under the authority of the paterfamilias not 
only defined the space to which the women were relegated, but formed an 
integral part of masculinity and the nation. 97

The press of the coloured race ran campaigns against de facto unions and 
urged the population to enter into legal marriages, even in the form of civil 
matriomony, 98 although just as, or even more, important than the articles 
published on this question were the numerous social columns that reported 
and extolled the marriages of “beautiful and virtuous young ladies” to 
“respected and polite gentlemen,” baptisms where the presence of parents 
and family members and friends was highlighted, and excursions and soirées 
attended by people with clear genealogies—with both surnames emphasized 
whenever possible—and even references to women’s fashion. These social 
columns had a performative value where a whitened community was 
projected as the future to which the emerging coloured middle class, in 
imitation of those who represented status and political power, aspired.

The magazine Minerva, aimed at the woman of colour, was also 
strongly committed to the defence of the new family order and gender 
relations. Forming a legal family and having a stable home with the 
husband and father present was the model defended by Ursula Coimbra de 
Valverde, a representative of the emerging black middle class who wrote 
in the pages of the magazine:

Si la raza de color desea cordialmente dignificarse y ocupar en las 
funciones públicas el lugar á que están llamados todos los elementos 
componentes de la sociedad, empiece por formar una familia dentro de los 
preceptos dictados por la moral y exigidos por las leyes. Tenga presente 
que sin familia no hay organización posible.

[If the coloured race sincerely wishes to dignify itself and occupy the place 
to which all the component parts of society are called at public functions, 
begin by forming a family within the dictates of morality and as required 
by the laws. Bear in mind that without a family, organization is not 
possible.] 99

96 Ibid.
97 We could, to some extent, talk about the need for a domestic patriarchy as the 
basis for building a nation of citizens, as John Tosh points out in the case of 
England, A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle Class Home in Victorian 
98 La Igualdad, June 23, 1894.
99 “Raza de color élévate!” Minerva, Year 1, no. 6, December 30, 1888. Minerva 
was a fortnightly magazine for women of colour.
In this way, the black leaders predicated the viability of the Cuban nation on the existence of a household model that symbolized white civilization, in contradiction to other widespread ways of structuring kinship and communal living that were identified with African barbarism.

Naturally, the fight against the absence or scarce presence of fathers in the family homes could not be omitted from this campaign by the associations of the coloured race. Those who felt themselves destined to be citizens had to be men capable of exercising responsible fatherhood. Clear filiation and strong fatherhood formed part of the attributes of hegemonic masculinity, as argued by those responsible for the associations, who viewed with some concern what they saw as the wilful indifference of the fathers:

Triste es decirlo: en la clase de color abundan muchos padres indiferentes. La ignorancia les hace olvidar sus más elementales deberes. A veces ni se acuerdan de que tienen hijos. Y sin embargo, es necesario que tal situación, dolorosa y crítica, se modifique. No es posible que se continúe educando en la degradación, en la infamia y en el crimen a generaciones que son ya la esperanza de la patria. [Sad to say, but in the coloured class there are plenty of indifferent fathers. Ignorance makes them forget their most elementary duties. Sometimes they don’t even remember that they have children. And yet, this situation, both painful and critical, must be modified. It is not possible for the generations who are the hope of the nation to continue to be brought up in degradation, ignominy and crime.]

On occasions, the eagerness of the leaders of the coloured race to conquer respectability by means of legal marriages to wives legitimate by birth came up against a slavery that was still close at hand. The journalist, Ursula Coimbra de Valverde, advised the readers of *Minerva*: “Do not yet demand that the wife he chooses should be the daughter of a married woman; remember that that mother was a slave.”

It would seem that selecting wives of legitimate filiation as a symbol of social status, as reflected in the social columns, was an obsession for some enlightened blacks and mulattos, who sought to transport themselves to the immediate future by ignoring the mark that slavery had left on patterns of family and filiation in the coloured race.

Once the home was established as the temple in which masculine respectability was constructed and perpetuated, it became necessary to form virtuous, cultured women capable of raising disciplined moral

100 *La Fraternidad*, 1888 (date illegible).
101 “Raza de color élévate!” *Minerva*. 
patriots and of running and organizing their homes according to the civilized, hygienic criteria of the Creole bourgeoisie. The importance attached to the domestic environment and the family as the pillar on which the liberal political order rested required preferential attention to be given to women’s education, in which the association movement of blacks and mulattos also joined. The leaders of the Directorate supported education for women as the wives and mothers of patriots, stressing their essential role in the arduous campaign for regenerating customs and establishing strong homes. From Key West, Margarito Gutiérrez, a member of the black community in exile, wrote a guide to the rights and obligations of the new woman that was a compendium of liberal gender discourse. The author stressed the crucial role of women in the political project because “the future of the country depends on them” although as symbolic bearers of the nation, not as citizens with full rights; in the words of Gutiérrez, the nation needed women subject to the strictest domesticity and economic dependence as a symbol of the status to which men of the coloured race aspired. Minerva sought to pass on to women this model of femininity that was linked to the middle classes, writing articles in favour of teaching them so that they would be able to fulfil the new duties that the nation required of them. Gutiérrez’s book concluded that “the heart of the patriot does not have a sex” just as Martí had argued that it does not have a race. The words of this supporter of independence contained a discursive device that included women as part of the emotional sphere of the nation—an attempt to dignify their commitment and the heroism that many of them had paid for with exile, imprisonment and suffering—which simultaneously excluded them from citizenship.

By way of conclusion, I maintain that a dual mechanism of exclusion is locked into the discourse of a citizen body without either race or sex, which works by means of the inextricable “entanglement” of questions of race and questions of sex that affect the body and private life, and are

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102 Pérez-Fuentes, “Modelos de feminidad.”
103 Margarito Gutiérrez, La Mujer, 19–20.
104 This status was not readily accessible to the numerous black and mulatto Cuban women heads of families with children in their charge. The rates of employment among black women were very high compared to those of women classed as white. This is an indicator that the domestic ideal was highly unlikely to form part of the feminine identity for broad swathes of the population. See Pérez-Fuentes, “Modelos de feminidad.”
105 María Angeles Storini, “Una carta,” Minerva, November 30, 1888, year 1, no. 4.
simultaneously public and political.\textsuperscript{106} The quest for respectability on the part of men of the coloured race, which was the prerequisite for taking part in political life on an equal footing, meant accepting and adopting a set of biopolitics aimed at transforming their alterity. The adjustment of the black leaders and emerging middle class to white codes of conduct in the public and private spheres was the very condition that enabled them to become part of the (white) body of the nation.

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CHAPTER FIVE

A STRANGER IN THE HOUSE:
THE LATINO WORKER IN THE UNITED STATES IN THE TRANSITION FROM THE NINETEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURIES

SUSANA SUEIRO SEOANE

Introduction

One of the core ideas studied in this chapter is the metamorphosis in the perceptions and imaginaries of the United States among immigrants originating from Southern Europe. From the 1890s onwards, the positive images that associated the country with freedom, progress, modernity and the model republic gradually deteriorated, giving way to much more critical, disenchanted, even ironic portrayals, such as those found in the anarchist immigrant workers’ publications. This disillusionment, caused fundamentally by discrimination and the harsh living and working conditions that immigrants had to face, was precisely the breeding ground that led many to embrace radical anarchist activism.

The second core idea, which converges with the first, is that the ruling elites in the United States and white American society generally—including trade union organizations—abandoned the paradigm of open immigration in order to embrace the paradigm of the immigrant as the enemy within, basing their criteria first on nationality, then on race. Fundamental in this evolution towards racist discrimination was the impact of Lombroso’s positivist criminology. From the 1890s onwards, the nativists, who had for some time been expressing their fears about the
impact of foreigners on American culture and society, used Lombroso’s arguments about superior and inferior races in order to justify rejecting the masses of “new” immigrants who were entering the country, particularly the Latino workers. At the end of the nineteenth century, what was new was that this nativist sentiment was shifting to politics. The federal government gradually introduced increasingly restrictive legislation in order to limit immigrant numbers and finally to practically prevent them from entering the country.

Because of their illiteracy and lack of skills, the fact that they came from non-democratic countries and were Roman Catholics, the new Latino immigrants were regarded as distinctly inferior to the Northern or Central European immigrants from the more industrialized Protestant countries, and were seen as a threat to the health and racial purity of the nation. Their propensity to embrace radical ideologies, specifically anarchism, was also seen as dangerous. For their part, the first two generations, at least, of Latino immigrant workers showed no interest in integrating into American society. Consequently, as well as considering the criteria for exclusion, this chapter will address those relating to self-exclusion.

The “new” Latino immigration

The work force that made the USA the most powerful economic power in the world consisted of millions of immigrant workers. The Latin countries on the periphery of Europe—Italy, Spain and Portugal—countries that were poor by the standards of Western Europe, were slow to join the migratory flow and when they eventually did so, at the end of the nineteenth century, it was on a massive scale. Whereas the old immigration was made up of people from Northern Europe, the great wave of new immigration that started after 1890 originated basically from Southern and Eastern Europe. In 1896, the number of foreigners from these areas already represented more than half of the immigrant population and by 1901, 73.6 per cent. The immigrant presence was especially pronounced in the major cities. At the beginning of the twentieth century, four out of every five residents of New York were either immigrants or children of immigrants. In 1910, almost 15 per cent of the population of America was foreign.

The most numerous of the new immigrants were the Italians. By 1920, more than four million had arrived in the United States and they constituted more than 10 per cent of its foreign population. Of the five million who entered the United States between 1876 and 1930, four and a half million were from the mezzogiorno, from regions such as Calabria, Campania, Apulia, Abruzzo and Sicily; most of them were contadini, poor illiterate peasants who had lived in villages with pre-modern social and economic conditions and in America they typically carried out unskilled manual labour.

The fact that the Spanish and Portuguese were very much in the minority among the Europeans arriving in the United States meant that the Spanish immigrant population was comparatively small. According to official US census figures, between 1891 and 1900, almost nine thousand immigrants were Spanish; between 1901 and 1910, this figure rose to twenty-eight thousand, and between 1911 and 1920, to sixty-nine thousand, a paltry figure in comparison with Italian immigration. However, if to the Spaniards who came directly from Spain, we add those who arrived “on the rebound” after re-emigrating, in other words after spending periods in other parts of Spanish America, the number increases considerably. Consider, in particular, the many Spaniards who arrived on the coast of Florida from Cuba.

What the Spanish workers had in common with the Italians was that they were mostly unskilled workers from rural backgrounds, many of them illiterate, who went on to become urban labourers. Between a third and a quarter of all Latino immigrants settled in the cities where they could find work more easily. The well-known Spanish anarchist, Abad de Santillán, describes the shock experienced by these peasants who had never left their small villages and where “little or nothing had changed in a thousand years” when they arrived in the big city:

Aquello era como si se nos hubiese transportado bruscamente, sin transición ni adecuación previa, del Medievo a la era moderna, a los primeros automóviles y los primeros tranvías eléctricos. Un mundo completamente distinto.

[It was as if we had been transported suddenly, with no transition or previous preparation, from the Middle Ages to the modern era, to the first automobiles and electric trams. A different world altogether.]²

The American dream

To the workers from Europe, America was a construct made up of various images and viewpoints that moulded their expectations. In the 1880s, the prevailing image of America among European workers was a very positive one. Guides for emigrants presented an idyllic world of prosperity where, from the moment of his arrival, the worker achieved material success. When they returned to their countries of origin, the immigrants, together with those who recruited for the shipping lines, and some states that were in particular need of manual labour, spread stories singing the praises of America. The very word evoked wealth, prosperity and fortune. At a time when there was intense transnational circulation of people, ideas and texts, the expression, *la república modelo*, the model republic, formed part of the international vocabulary and spread extensively throughout Europe and Latin America. This persistent positive image of the United States as the land of their dreams had a few variants: it was the land of modernity par excellence, the land of opportunity, the country where life could be a great adventure and, of course, the land of freedom.

For the young dreamers who sought new worlds, America was the shining country, dazzling and dynamic, that awaited them across the sea. Many of those who were inspired to cross the Atlantic Ocean were driven not so much by economic necessity as by the quest for a different world, broader and more extensive in scope, where life could be an exciting adventure. The United States was also the land of freedom and democratic practices, an image common among middle-class European reformers but which also made an impact on the working class. For militants in the workers’ movements of the old autocratic or despotic monarchies of Europe—in Czarist Russia, the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires, and the monarchies of Italy and Spain, for example—the United States was the nation that offered asylum to political refugees. After 1886, the symbol of that land of freedom was the Statue of Liberty, whose official name was Liberty Enlightening the World, situated at the main port of arrival for immigrants to America in the mouth of the Hudson.

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River. It was the first thing seen by those immigrants who crossed the Atlantic to América la bella, America the beautiful. To celebrate its construction, Emma Lazarus (1849–1887) published one of the best-known poems in American history, "The New Colossus." The statue’s torch was the lamp that illuminated the golden door, which showed the way, as the poem put it, to the tired, the poor, the homeless, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. It was a beacon of hope for foreigners in search of a better life. In 1903, the poem was engraved on a bronze plaque and mounted inside the pedestal of the statue, and became the symbol of the American dream, the perfect expression of the American self-image as a generous nation that welcomed immigrants.

**The end of the idyllic image of “the model republic”**

1886 was a symbolic year. It was the year when the Statue of Liberty was opened in New York Harbour, but also the year when the workers’ campaign for an eight-hour day culminated, in May, in the Haymarket Square riot in Chicago (a bomb exploded) and the leading anarchists in the city were jailed. It marked a turning point in United States social history. For many American immigrant workers, the unfair trial of the eight Chicago anarchists (most of them German immigrants), carried out with “malicious ferocity” and extreme prejudice, and the hanging of four of them on November 11, 1887, was the crucial event in their lives that led to their becoming anarchists. The event had worldwide repercussions and remained imprinted on the international workers’ imaginary. The international labour movement would commemorate the day every year to honour the memory of the “Chicago martyrs.”

In such a climate, it is no wonder that the radical workers’ press considered the celebrations on Thursday October 28, 1886 that marked the inauguration of Bartholdi’s statue to be a festivity for the hypocritical bourgeoisie, those who lived in luxury and understood freedom in their own way, while the great mass of the exploited and hungry looked on in silence or with resentment.

6 See Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), xi. This was the expression used by the Governor of Illinois, John Peter Altgeld, who, in 1893, freed the surviving anarchists who were still in jail.

changed their perceptions of the United States. In the socialist and the anarchist press, some extremely bitter comments were made about the cruel disillusionment they felt. From that point on, it was repeated over and over again that the idyllic view of a free America was a lie, that the United States was equivalent to the despotic monarchies of Europe, that the workers had to fight the capitalist bourgeoisie everywhere.

**Lived experiences**

An important factor that contributed to the change in the way the United States was viewed was the transmission of real everyday experiences in the accounts of Latino immigrants when they returned to their countries of origin, in letters to their families from their new country, or in articles and testimonies published in the workers’ press. They gave accounts of the hardships of the transatlantic crossing, the shock of arriving at the immigration control centres, the difficult living and working conditions in the USA, the hostile welcome they received from the Anglo-Saxon population, and so on. Although the myth of America as the Promised Land was powerful, and continued to be so, the image of the United States, the way it was represented, gradually underwent a transformation and was redefined by the complaints about and criticism of the exploitative conditions and discrimination that the immigrants experienced.

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the times of transatlantic crossings were cut and costs came down, making it possible for many workers to pay for a third-class ticket. The cheapest ticket cost around thirty dollars, some three weeks’ pay for a coal miner. For that price, passengers were crowded together between-decks, close to the engine room, where hundreds of berths were set up (more than were stipulated by the regulations because the ship-owners set out to maximize the load capacity) and in the very worst conditions of ventilation and sanitation. Third-class passengers were also referred to as “steerage passengers.”

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Before the twentieth century, the transfer of emigrants was unregulated in Italy and Spain, and abuses by shipping companies and their crews were very common. In some press accounts, the immigration agents were described as “traffickers in human flesh” who tricked gullible immigrants, putting them in badly equipped boats built for carrying coal, where they were tossed like packages into the hold and transported like “anchovies in tin cans” for several weeks (an average of twenty days in 1890). According to one account, “the steamers rigged by these greedy people become sinister ghost ships which mark their slow path across the sea with a line of cadavers.”

The boats were loaded with more passengers than their legal capacity. It was not unusual for a steamer with a carrying capacity of 1200 or 1400 persons to accommodate up to two thousand. In the press, some emigrants claimed that one day’s voyage was equivalent to a year in prison, and there was abundant criticism of the lack of hygiene, unbearable heat, the stench, lack of drinking water, the accidents, the absence of lifeboats, the terrible meals, the lack of medical attention on board and the high rates of infant mortality. It is difficult to find a reference to any voyage made at the time that did not include the deaths of several children; in the case of Spain, transatlantic crossings claimed the lives of a total of ninety children in the first six months of 1889. Abad de Santillán’s account is testimony to the gruelling conditions of the voyage to America in third-class:

El pasajero era sometido a un régimen muy parecido al carcelario. Para el pasajero de tercera no había comedor ni servicios de ninguna clase. A las horas de comer se llevaban unas grandes ollas a cubierta, se formaba una larga fila y el pasajero acudía con un plato de hojalata, donde se le servía un rancho nada apetecible, que luego se comía sentado en el suelo o de pie, apoyado contra las barandillas de cubierta. Los dormitorios eran colectivos. Consistían en un amplio salón atestado de literas, dotados de jergones de arpillera y paja, donde proliferaban las pulgas, las chinches y los piojos. No había limpieza ni medios para realizarla. Cuando la situación se volvía francamente intolerable, se procedía a fumigar con desinfectantes, para


10 Ferruccio Macola, L’Europa a la conquista dell’America Latina (Venice, 1894), 97, quoted in Mark I. Choate, Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 90.
12 “Noventa niños muertos,” La Unión Mercantil, Malaga, August 9, 1889.
limitar de alguna forma la superpoblación de insectos. Pero los resultados de la fumigación duraban poco. Las cucarachas, las pulgas y los piojos, a los pocos días, eran nuevamente dueños del lugar. La higiene de los emigrantes se hacía al terminar el viaje, pero en tierra. En la promiscuidad imperante, mal nutridos y sin ninguna clase de higiene, parece raro que no se produjesen epidemias. Ello se debía principalmente a la recia constitución de los emigrantes, que provenían en su mayor parte de ambientes campesinos . . . . Subsistían en aquel antro de suciedad, soportando el trato despótico, no sólo de los oficiales sino también de los tripulantes.

[The passenger was subjected to something similar to a prison regime. For the third-class passenger there was no dining-room and no services of any description. At meal times, some large cooking pots were taken up on deck, a long queue formed and the passenger went up with a tin plate, where he was served an unappetising slop, which was then eaten sitting on the deck or standing up, propped against the guard rails. The sleeping quarters were communal. They consisted of a large saloon crammed with berths, equipped with mattresses made of hessian and stuffed with straw, where fleas, bedbugs and lice proliferated. There was no cleaning and nothing to clean with. When the situation became really intolerable, they proceeded to fumigate the area with disinfectants to try and somehow control the insect populations. However, the results of the fumigation did not last long. Within a few days, the cockroaches, fleas and lice took over the place once again. The hygiene of the emigrants was taken care of when the voyage was over, but on land. In the promiscuity that prevailed, badly nourished and with no hygiene whatsoever, it seems strange that there were no epidemics. This was principally owing to the robust constitution of the emigrants, the majority of whom came from peasant environments. . . . They survived in that filthy hole, putting up with the despotic treatment, not just of the officers, but also of the crew members.]

In contrast to the harsh conditions of the crossing endured by the workers, the voyage that the first-class passengers travelling in the same ships experienced was completely different: comfortable and entertaining. Adrián del Valle, an anarchist from Barcelona who settled, first in the United States, then in Cuba, remembers his transatlantic crossing as follows:

En el salón de primera clase se bailaba y reía, los privilegiados de la fortuna se divertían. Sin embargo, a pocos pasos de allí, el sufrimiento callaba, la miseria se ocultaba a montones en el camarote de tercera. Allí ni se bailaba ni se reía. Allí se sufría y se callaba . . . . Aquel buque era una fiel reproducción de la sociedad actual. Al lado del proletario, del

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13 Abad de Santillán, Memorias, 19.
miserable emigrante, pálido y demacrado, mal alimentado y peor vestido, había el opulento burgués, y el orgulloso aristócrata, ambos bien vestidos y comidos, divirtiéndose y gozando de todas las comodidades. Cerca de los que sufren y callan, los que gozan y ríen. ¡La riqueza mofándose de la miseria!, ¡qué ironía!

[In the first-class saloon there was dancing and laughter, the privileged wealthy enjoyed themselves. However, a few steps away, suffering held its tongue, there was plenty of poverty hidden away in the third-class quarters. There, nobody danced or laughed. There, they suffered in silence. . . . That ship was a faithful reproduction of present-day society. Alongside the proletarian, the wretched emigrant, pale and emaciated, badly fed and worse dressed, there was the opulent bourgeois and the proud aristocrat, both well dressed and well fed, having fun and enjoying all the comforts. Close to those who are suffering in silence, there are those enjoying themselves and laughing. The rich mocking poverty! How ironic!]14

The process of entering the United States was also radically different and contingent upon the socio-economic status of the passenger. Once those who had paid for a first- or second-class ticket had undergone the health inspections on board, they were allowed to disembark and enter the country without having to go through the immigration centres constructed by the government. The most famous and busiest of these centres was situated on Ellis Island in New York Harbour and it received three quarters of the immigrants that arrived in the United States, more than sixteen million from its inauguration on January 1, 1892, until it closed in 1954.15

Third-class passengers were the only ones regarded as immigrants and so possibly undesirable. Immigrant and third-class passenger were synonymous terms. The “other foreign passengers” travelling in cabin class did not have immigrant status, even though there may have been genuine immigrants in this category. The theory was that if a person was able to purchase a first- or second-class ticket, he or she was unlikely to become a burden on the state, since it was assumed that they were not going to end up in any institution or public hospital. It was the third-class passengers who had to be minutely inspected before they could be allowed to enter the country. When the boat docked at the Hudson or East River piers, these passengers were transferred to Ellis Island on ferries chartered

15 V. J. Cannato, American Passage: The History of Ellis Island (New York: Harper Collins, 2009). Another eight million had passed previously through Castle Garden, in Battery Park, Manhattan, until immigration control was taken over by the federal administration and the Ellis Island centre was built.
by the shipping companies, so that they could undergo medical and legal inspection. The Ellis Island station processed the entry of between two thousand and four thousand immigrants a day. A peak was reached on March 27, 1907, when 16,050 passengers arrived in twenty-four hours. It was normal for thousands of them to spend days waiting on the ship in the harbour, followed by hours waiting in the queues for the ferries. The Scottish writer, Stephen Graham, referred to the crowded barges as “floating waiting rooms.”\(^{16}\) It was not unknown for some passengers to die during the transfer process, above all sick children exposed to the icy cold of the Hudson River.

When they arrived, they were sprayed with disinfectant before they filed through to the Registry Office. According to the Immigration Act of 1882 (the first law regulating admission to the United States) and the later amendments that gradually added new categories of undesirables to the ranks of those excluded, those subject to expulsion included idiots, lunatics, convicts, polygamists, prostitutes, anarchists and, of course, the sick and physically handicapped and the poor without resources. Single mothers and unaccompanied minors were not allowed to enter either. If the immigrant’s papers were in order and they were in good physical condition, the inspection process lasted between three and seven hours. When the health personnel observed any anomalies, the initial letter of their sickness or disability was chalked on the lapel of the immigrant’s coat or jacket: heart, lungs, goitre, conjunctivitis, lameness, pregnancy, senility, or mental disorder. Among the diseases that led to exclusion were trachoma, epilepsy, alcoholism, tuberculosis, pellagra and venereal diseases, but also such conditions as varicose veins, hernias, anaemia and arthritis. Trachoma, a highly contagious disease affecting the eyes that was very common in Southern Europe, meant immediate isolation and deportation. All passengers with a chalk mark had to undergo a more rigorous examination, which might involve quarantine or even deportation.\(^{17}\) If they passed the physical, they went to a room where immigration agents interrogated them in their own language with the help of government interpreters. One of the questions they were certain to be asked was what means of support they had available. The employee who carried out the interview had the power to decide the amount deemed sufficient to enter the country until, in 1909, a minimum sum of twenty-five dollars per immigrant was established.


Even though relatively few were rejected and sent back to their countries of origin, the arrival at Ellis Island was a traumatic moment. There is an enormous bibliography about the experience of immigrants passing through.\textsuperscript{18} For Italians, the 1891 Immigration Act stipulated that the shipping company should bear the cost of the return voyage to Europe of any immigrant that the US inspectors rejected, so that the companies themselves meticulously inspected them at the ports of embarkation. Only 2 per cent of those who arrived were deported, although 20 per cent were temporarily detained. Between 15 and 20 per cent of those awaiting deportation were eventually deported on the grounds of some health problem, radical ideology, criminal behaviour, moral depravity or because they had insufficient funds. Sometimes, those who were waiting to be deported committed suicide, some three thousand in the history of Ellis Island.

There were corrupt public officials and unscrupulous people (representatives of immigrant aid societies, charitable institutions, labour contractors, boarding house owners, and so on) waiting to do business with the newly arrived immigrants, whom they cheated by charging abusive prices for particular services. Fortunately, there were also those who helped the immigrants to settle in and look for somewhere to live. During almost the whole of the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, millions of immigrants in the major cities of the United States lived in insanitary tenement districts crowded with working-class families, each family occupying one of the multiple small dwellings into which the tenements were divided. Some observers described the atrocious conditions of the working-class habitat, giving advice and warnings to possible immigrants from Southern Europe. We could cite the Italian immigrant journalist, Adolfo Rossi (1857–1921), who narrated his personal experiences in various short autobiographical accounts that enjoyed a notable success and had a considerable impact on reshaping the conception that the Italians had of America at that time.\textsuperscript{19} The work of the

\textsuperscript{18} See, for example, David M. Brownstone, Irene M. Franck, and Douglass Brownstone, eds., Island of Hope, Island of Tears (New York: Rawson, Wade, 1979); R. H. Bayor, Encountering Ellis Island: How European Immigrants Entered America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2014).

\textsuperscript{19} Adolfo Rossi, Naccocìù, la venere italiana. Avventure degli emigranti al nuovo mondo (Rome: Perino, 1889); by the same author, Nel paese dei dollari (Tre anni a New York) (Milan: Kantorowicz, 1893); Un italiano in America (Milan: Treves, 1894; Edizioni Trabant, 2014). See also Gianpaolo Romanato, L'Italia della vergogna nelle cronache di Adolfo Rossi (1857–1921) (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2010).
photojournalist, Jacob August Riis (1849–1914), published in 1890 under the title of *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*, also had a great impact; this work, which went through several re-editions, was a pioneering photojournalistic study with illustrations and engravings based on his photographs, in which he denounced the squalid conditions in which immigrant workers lived in the slums of lower Manhattan (New York’s Lower East Side), such as Mulberry Street.\(^{20}\) Riis instigated significant social reforms but, despite his sympathetic view and the fact that he wanted the privileged classes to overcome their indifference and help alleviate the suffering, he was not immune to the strong racial prejudices of the time in judging the immigrants who lived in the slums.

Most Latino workers were uneducated and so were prepared, particularly in the early years after their arrival, to accept any job, the hardest, dirtiest, most dangerous and worst paid ones that others did not want to do. In the case of the Spaniards, many were occupied in maritime and port activities. The New York, Boston and Baltimore docks were hives of activity where hefty stevedores loaded and unloaded the ships’ cargoes.\(^{21}\) They were jobs that not even the blacks wanted, according to one testimony.\(^{22}\) Many other Spanish workers worked in the mines in the western states, and large numbers of them also in the cigar factories of New York and Florida. From 1885, they settled in large numbers in Tampa, specifically Ybor City, known as Tampa’s Latin Quarter, a community of Spanish, Cuban and Italian (predominantly Sicilian)


workers. Many Italian immigrants were also employed in quarries, mines and construction; there was also a large number of them in the textile industry in New York and in nearby localities in the state of New Jersey, such as Paterson, Passaic or West Hoboken. These were dark, evil-smelling, unventilated sweatshops, crawling with immigrant workers; they were unhealthy because of the toxic substances used to dye the fabrics, and extremely noisy because of the constant deafening racket of the machinery and looms, forcing the workers to shout in order to communicate with each other. The essence of the sweatshop was the practice of exploiting the workers in abusive piecework conditions, known as the sweating system, one that literally made them sweat. Even when the factory concept with large galleries started to appear at the turn of the twentieth century, overcrowding continued, with very long hours and workers fined if they arrived for work even five minutes late. At the end of the nineteenth century, it was still common to work twelve hours a day, seven days a week. In the twentieth century, although the legal working day and week was ten hours a day, sixty hours a week, the workers, in practice, worked many more in order to fill the orders, under the gaze of foremen and forewomen who supervised their work, even monitoring the time it took to go to the bathroom. The eight-hour day that the socialists and anarchists fought for was seen as a distant goal, and only a few workers started to achieve it between 1915 and 1917.

Although wages in industry, construction and mining were higher than in Europe, the cost of living increased annually by 2.4 per cent on average between 1896 and 1912, and shot up with the outbreak of the First World War. It was a system subject to cyclical crises in which the years of prosperity were followed by periods of depression when it was difficult to find work and these intermittent economic crises revealed the precarious conditions in which immigrants lived and worked. In the letters that they sent home to their families, many of them warned that America was only for the strongest and healthiest, and not for the weak, who would not be able to survive.

Nativist prejudices

At the end of the century, the Latino workers who returned to their home countries recounted stories of the hostility with which the American population treated them. The view in Lazarus’ poem of the USA as a welcoming refuge for the poor and oppressed of the world was counteracted by a powerful current in American thought that opposed immigration: nativism. Nativists were citizens born in the USA who defended white American Protestant culture and opposed the arrival of immigrants who were not Anglo-Saxons. Descendants of the settlers of the original Thirteen Colonies, they thought of themselves as the true native Americans. At the same time as the United States was receiving mass immigration, an increasing number of nativists became fearful that that great influx of foreigners would corrupt American culture, undermine American democracy and impoverish American workers. In 1895, Thomas Bailey Aldrich—an author now mostly forgotten but who was much better known and more widely read in his day than Lazarus—published the poem, “Unguarded Gates,” which can be understood as the nativist riposte to the open-door ideals of Emma Lazarus’ poem. In it, he wonders whether it was reasonable to leave the gates to the United States unguarded, since people of every provenance were streaming through them, bringing with them incomprehensible languages, strange beliefs, unknown gods and rituals and unrecognizable passions, in a kind of menacing Tower of Babel. In 1904, a Harvard professor expressed a widely held perception at the time:

No one who notices, even in the most casual way, the faces of the people he sees on the streets and in the cars need be told that a most striking and fundamental change has taken place in the nationalities of our immigrants. A few years ago practically all of our immigrants were from northern and Western Europe, that is, they were more or less closely allied to us racially, historically, socially, industrially and politically. They were largely the same elements which had recently made up the English race. . . . Now however, the majority of the newcomers are from southern and eastern Europe and they are coming in rapidly increasing numbers from Asia.

These people are alien to us, in race... in language, in social, political and industrial ideas and inheritances.\(^{27}\) Nativist thinking cut across all sectors and made no distinctions between left and right, or progressives and conservatives. The socialist party of the USA adopted the idea that the new immigrants were primitive and unassimilable.\(^{28}\) For their part, the American unions—the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor (AFL)—not only did not allow them to join their ranks but put pressure on the federal government to pass laws to control immigration, arguing that they were jeopardizing the standard of living that the American workers had achieved.\(^{29}\) The membership of both workers’ organizations consisted of skilled, professional workers who had either been born in the USA or were first generation immigrants from Northern Europe, and they viewed the new immigrants as unfair competition and believed that they had come to take their jobs away from them. It is true that Latino workers accepted very low wages, which drove down the cost of labour. When American workers went on strike, the Latinos replaced them as blackleg labour and they were also hired as strike-breakers. However, the American unions not only demanded restrictions on the number of immigrants in order to maintain wage levels, but also, much more inexplicably, a qualitative restriction based explicitly on ethnic, cultural or simply racist criteria, and contrary to the spirit of class solidarity that figured in the statutes of both workers’ organizations.\(^{30}\) In his autobiography, the president of the American Federation of Labor, Samuel Gompers, who was an immigrant himself, used racist language to refer to non-white workers.\(^{31}\) Meanwhile, at the Knights of Labor delegate assemblies, T.V. Powderly, for his part, referred to the menace posed by the horde of Southern Europeans. It comes as no surprise that Powderly went from being a workers’ leader to becoming Commissioner-General of Immigration. In 1902, he published an article entitled “Immigration’s Menace to the National Health,” alerting the

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29 Andrew T. Lane, Solidarity or Survival? American Labor and European Immigrants, 1830–1924 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987).
31 Samuel Gompers, Seventy Years of Life and Labor (New York: Dutton, 1925).
nation to the dangerous contagious diseases that these new immigrants could bring into the country and calling for more restrictive immigration policies.\textsuperscript{32}

A third of Latinos were temporary immigrants, or “birds of passage,” whose original idea was to eventually return home after staying for a limited period in the USA. Nativist hostility towards this type of immigrant—ones without future long-term plans in the United States, with no attachments or loyalty to the country that welcomed them and gave them work, who did not want to invest their savings in America but only came to make money and take it away with them or send it home—was particularly obvious in American public opinion.\textsuperscript{33} Nativists protested strongly against the system of remittances that the immigrants used to send money to their home countries. In 1897, a supporter of restricting immigration told Congress that barring entry to the country should be extended to the “birds of passage, who, retaining domicile and citizenship in other lands, fatten on the substance of our own.”\textsuperscript{34}

Latino workers were considered intruders and were subject to strong economic and racial prejudice. To differentiate them racially and define them as a race inferior to the Anglo-Saxons, they were referred to using defamatory epithets, such as “dago” or “guinea,” because of their swarthy skin; in the twentieth century, Italians were also called “wops.” In the United States, European immigrants enjoyed the privilege of being considered white, except for the Latinos, who took several generations before they were perceived as being entirely white. It was not just that they did not look white, but that they did not behave like whites.\textsuperscript{35} Of course, they were not the target of the same racial discrimination as that suffered by the Afro-Americans, Asians and Mexicans, since the Italians and Spaniards had privileges that were not granted to the others, such as the right to become naturalized American citizens after several years of residence and to aspire to certain types of employment (the nativists advocated increasing the period before white immigrants could be


\textsuperscript{34} Mark Wyman, \textit{Round-Trip to America: The Immigrants Return to Europe} (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 104.

naturalized from five years to twenty-one, thereby extending the time during which they could not hold public office), although they did suffer ethnic hostility and were victims of racial prejudice.\(^{36}\)

In the period that concerns us in this study, a profusion of pseudoscientific racist theories circulated, both in the press and in academic journals, which disseminated the idea that Mediterranean types were genetically inferior to the peoples of Northern Europe. Social scientists and racial anthropologists of the Lombrosian School claimed that the so-called Mediterranean race of Southern Europe—known at other times as Italic or Iberic types—was inferior to the Teutonic or Celtic. After a number of trips around Calabria, Lombroso claimed that the population of Southern Italy had atavistic psycho-racial characteristics that showed up in their primitive behaviours; in 1900, he stated that it was an inferior race with criminal impulses, and that whites were biologically superior to the dark-skinned races. In 1895, Giuseppe Sergi, born in Sicily, and a close collaborator of Lombroso, published *The Mediterranean Race* (which he also called the "Italic people"), which, according to him, had been a superior race in its origins but had since degenerated.\(^{37}\) Niceforo, another Sicilian, popularized Sergi’s theories, arguing that race was the key to understanding Southern or Mediterranean barbarism and that the criminality typical of the South was part of their moral genetic inheritance, imprinted in the nervous system of those who lived there; this inheritance drove them to spill blood, so making this race inferior. Among other things, he stressed the point that there were two distinct races in Italy, differentiated by psychic and physical characteristics and that whereas the human type in the North was tall and broad-headed, in the South, it was long-headed, had a dark complexion and was of short stature. Furthermore the Italians of the South were closely related to the Iberians of Spain and the Berbers of North Africa. The theories of Lombroso’s Italian school of criminal anthropology and of his followers penetrated deep into American thinking on race and greatly influenced American criminology, helping validate it as science.\(^{38}\) In 1899, William Ripley, a professor at the


University of Columbia, published a seminal study entitled *The Races of Europe*, which divided the continent into three racial types, the Teutonic, the Alpine and the Mediterranean, and he had absolutely no doubt about the superiority of the first two in relation to the third. He also made a racial distinction between the Italians of the North and the South; the former were a mixture of the Alpine and Mediterranean types and they constituted competitive Italy, while south of the Tiber, the racial type became purely Mediterranean, and that was isolated and backward Italy. The North-South distinction that developed in Europe (in Italy in particular) in the course of the nineteenth century was transplanted to the quite different, geographically remote cultural environment of the USA.

As we shall see at greater length in another section, the scientific and academic debates about the different racial types eventually affected the American government’s immigration policy. In the same year that Ripley’s study appeared, the Commissioner-General of Immigration established a racial distinction between Italians of the North and the South that would remain in force for the next two decades; evidence of this was the practice of writing an N (to indicate those from the North) or an S (for those from the South) beside each Italian passenger’s name on the passenger lists of the shipping companies that transported emigrants to Ellis Island. The Italians were the only immigrant group that was broken down into two racial categories.

The first translation of Sergi’s *The Mediterranean Race* into English was in 1901, and many Americans, including President Theodore Roosevelt, read it. According to Sergi, the main characteristics that defined this race were its lack of discipline, inability to learn, a propensity to ignore laws necessary for social life, as well as a tendency to rebellion and crime. By then, Mediterranean, Southern and Latino workers had for quite some time been the butt of insults in a variety of cartoons, caricatures and songs that were very common in the 1890s and which depicted them as primitive, infantile, unintelligent, unwilling to adapt to a highly organized society and with a tendency to servile responses. They were also regarded as dangerous, irrational and irascible by nature, prone to crimes.

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of passion and use of the knife. Each time an Italian worker wielded his knife in a fracas, the newspapers stressed his nationality and aired his violent impulses with headlines that included the word “vendetta.”42 “The knife with which he cuts his bread he also uses to lop off another ‘dago’s’ finger or ear, or to slash another’s cheek. . . . He is quite as familiar with the sight of human blood as with the sight of the food he eats.”43

The perception of the increasingly numerous nativists and of the American population in general was that the Italian workers, who were flooding in, were the most degraded. According to the press, they came off the boats like a wretched, ragged mass. The stereotype of biological inferiority was reinforced with images of their physical contamination; they were portrayed as dirty, greasy and slovenly. There are frequent descriptions of the physical repulsion that they inspired using derogatory adjectives like pestiferous or filthy, or they were referred to as carriers of infectious diseases like typhus or cholera and so represented a menace to the national health of the Americans.

Racial discrimination particularly affected the Sicilians, who arrived en masse in the USA and were on the lowest rungs of the social ladder. On account of their swarthy skin, they were considered to be a race halfway between black and white, were seen as “white niggers” or “half negroes,” although some employers referred to them as black workers, in contrast to the white workers from the East and North of Europe. They were dubbed “vermin,” a menace to the future of the republic, and were on many occasions the victims of white violence, with cases of lynchings. There is evidence of Italians being lynched, not only in the Southern states, like Louisiana, Mississippi or Florida, but in others such as Washington, Colorado, Illinois, New York and West Virginia.44

A particularly dramatic episode took place on October 15, 1890; the New Orleans Police Chief, David Hennessy, was on his way home from a meeting at City Hall when five men shot him outside his front door. As he lay dying, his last words were, “the dagoes did it.” At that time, there were some thirty thousand living and working in New Orleans. The stereotype of the Italian as a criminal had spread. The existing prejudice against the Latino immigrants was now joined by fear of the Mafia, which was starting to organize around that time, with families and criminal syndicates

43 Appleton Morgan, “What Shall We Do With the ‘Dago,’” Popular Science Monthly 38 (1890), 177, quoted in Higham, Strangers in the Land, 66.
beginning to act. Hennessy had jailed one of the first Italian Mafiosi known in America and it is more than likely that his murder was a Mafia hit. In the wake of the murder, scores of Italians were arrested. Several were subjected to a much talked about trial that ended with a not guilty verdict. It was at that point, on March 14, 1891, when a mob of thousands of people, outraged by the verdict and convinced that the jury had been bribed, stormed the jail where the Italians were being held and lynched eleven of them there and then (most of them were shot, two were hanged). The lynching appeared to be spontaneous, although it was in fact premeditated. Some community leaders had incited the crowd. John Parker, for example, who later became Governor of Louisiana, said in 1911 that the Italians were “just a little worse than the Negro, being if anything filthier in [their] habits, lawless and treacherous.” Nobody was charged with the lynching, since it was decided that the responsibility for it was collective. Even so, President Benjamin Harrison paid the Italian government twenty-five thousand dollars in reparations.45

The mayor of New Orleans, who had been responsible for appointing the murdered Police Chief, despised the Italians and, in an extraordinarily scathing letter written eight months after the murder, he stressed that the Italians and Sicilians were among the worst type of Europeans, the most vicious, idle and worthless people of all those living in the USA. The New Orleans Times-Democrat reported that Sicilians had “low, receding foreheads, repulsive countenances and slovenly attire” that proclaimed their brutal nature.46 Theodore Roosevelt, who was not yet president, but did hold a senior post in government, said that the lynching had been “a rather good thing.” The New York Times published an editorial referring to


“sneaking and cowardly Sicilians, the descendants of bandits and assassins,”47 and the following day, another editorial declared that, “lynch law was the only course open to the people of New Orleans.” A citizens’ committee set up to investigate the lynchings said in their report of May 1891 that the Sicilians were undesirable as citizens and there was no reason why they should be permitted to participate in the blessings of a civilization that they were not only unable to appreciate, but refused to understand or accept.48

Other examples of violence directed at Latino immigrant communities can be pointed out. Theodore Roosevelt’s prediction that African and Mediterranean races would eventually displace the old Americans of Anglo-Saxon and German origin seemed to be coming true in Tampa, Florida, where the majority of the resident population was an amalgam of Spaniards, Cubans and Italians. In Tampa, there was racialization of Latino immigrant workers. Whereas the Spanish elite—the entrepreneur owners of the cigar factories—was considered white, this was not the case of the Spanish workers who mixed with other Latino and coloured workers in a multi-coloured community. In the eyes of Anglo-Americans, Latino workers were darker and duskier than the whites. In the 1890s, the Anglo-Saxon press, such as the *Tampa Morning Tribune*, attributed the robberies, assaults, murders, immorality and sexual scandals that occurred in the city to the “Latin temperament” of the new inhabitants. The Latin Quarter of Ybor City was described as a place of perdition, gambling, prostitution, vice and crime, while the stereotyping of Latinos—as idlers and lazy on the one hand, passionate and anarchists on the other—became commonplace.49 The local response to immigrants, branded as agitators, undesirables or dangerous for not respecting the social order and the values of the hegemonic native American social group, was to impose the effective, authentically American method of extra-legal repression called vigilantism. This consisted of setting up vigilante citizens’ committees that employed violence, including kidnappings, arson, attacks using fire-arms, lynchings, floggings, the notorious tarring and feathering and expulsion or enforced exile.50

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48 See references in the American press of May 7, 1891.
50 Miguel Carbó, “Resistencia de los obreros del tabaco en Tampa, 1886–1921. Anarquistas y sindicalistas españoles frente al vigilantismo,” in *Conquista y...*
Disillusionment, anarchist militancy and “propaganda by the deed”

The Latino immigrant workers arrived in America with high hopes of a new life and dreams of a promised land where they would prosper as a result of their efforts. They did not, however, find the America of freedom and opportunity, but a world that was very harsh and a life of privations, inequality and social injustice worse, in some respects, than what they had left behind in Europe. In the USA they were despised and badly treated. Their hopes were dashed. Their disenchantment became the breeding ground in which ideologies of revolutionary social change took root. For thousands of immigrant workers it was the experience of discrimination and exploitation that radicalized them.

Only a minority of workers were convinced anarchists before they emigrated and fervently committed to radically changing the social system. After they arrived, protected by freedom of expression in the USA, they published newspapers where they could, of course, express themselves with a freedom that would not have been permitted in Europe. The radical militancy of the majority, however, began after they arrived and were faced by a world of work where they were employed in the dirtiest, most dangerous and worst paid jobs, on the looms, down the mines, at the ports, in construction, and so on. The anarchist movement instilled in them the desire for freedom and to fight against the unjust system in which they lived. Many of the anarchists interviewed by the historian, Paul Avrich, stated that it was the poverty and squalor in the midst of abundant wealth and the exploitation they suffered that led them to anarchism.\textsuperscript{51} The metropolitan area of New York was the major centre of anarchism for the world’s diaspora. As we saw, neither the American unions nor the socialist party had any interest in recruiting unskilled immigrant workers; these workers were, on the other hand, encouraged to join the ranks of the anarchist movement and the major American revolutionary labour union, the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), formed in 1905, and known popularly as “Wobblies.”\textsuperscript{52}

The Italians were one of the largest ethnic groups in the anarchist movement in the USA. The Spanish anarchist immigrant, Marcelino García, stated that: “Of


course not all Spaniards were anarchists, but even those who were not, tended to be sympathizers. Spanish workers are by nature anarchists. Spaniards joined no other radical groups in any numbers in the US.”  

The Latino anarchists constituted a world apart. They closely followed and kept in touch with what was going on in their countries of origin. They were oblivious to political life in the USA, which was not their new homeland but just a place that tolerated its guests and where it was possible to prepare, with more or less freedom, the future revolution in their respective countries.

From the 1890s, which were years of deep economic depression, the image of the USA was cast in a more negative light, and expressions about free America or the model republic came to be used in an ironic sense in the radical Spanish and Italian language newspapers. Indeed, in some anarchist newspapers, the expression “the model republic” was systematically used to refer sarcastically to the USA and to point up the contrast between that model image and the harsh reality of brutal capitalism. With the crisis, unemployment soared to more than 18 per cent in 1894. Nevertheless, for the rich, it was a time of unprecedented opulence. The sociologist and economist, Thorstein Veblen immortalized the life-style of what he termed the “leisure class” in his famous description of “conspicuous consumption.” Many workers clearly saw the poverty that rapid industrialization of the economy had brought to the working-class masses on the one hand, and the wealth and power to a privileged minority on the other.

The anarchists helped to counteract the persistently positive view of the USA as the modern country of freedom and opportunity. Built on the edge of Lake Michigan, the White City—as the site of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition (also known as the Chicago World’s Fair) was called because of the whiteness of its buildings—introduced the world to the ideal city, the model city of a rich, industrialized country, whose technical innovations amazed visitors. Pedro Esteve, a Catalan anarchist who arrived in the USA in 1892 and was a fundamental figure in Spanish anarchism there until his death in 1925, visited that World’s Fair as soon as he arrived. He described the beautiful site and its buildings as “white as milk,” surrounded by lakes, gardens, fountains, statues, and a huge Ferris wheel 250 feet in diameter, along with the dazzling technological

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53 Avrich, Anarchist Voices, 393.
54 Briggs, Immigration and American Unionism, 64 and 68.
inventions exhibited in the different pavilions, which were not the heritage of Humanity, as was cynically claimed, but of a privileged capitalist class that vilified and defamed the true producers of so much wealth, the millions of beings who had worked day and night, and who, in spite of everything, were reduced to squalor and indigence. So that his working-class readers would sit up and take notice, Esteve started by giving an account of the staggering wealth of America, its soil and subsoil, the technological advances achieved, its political constitution, its acknowledged freedom of expression, and more; however, the eulogies of all that was good and beautiful about the republic, opinions that he knew many workers still shared, were abruptly cut short as he expounded at length on its charade and infamy:


[The wealth is superficial and the freedom a lie. The former is monopolized by a few, and the other, subject to the whims of the police. . . . The 106 years of the republic have only served to enthrone the aristocracy of capital. The sublime ideal is to get rich. Business is the sacred word.]

From that point, he went on to describe the falseness and hypocrisy of American bourgeois society, dwelling on its most grotesque and sordid aspects.

At that time, the anarchists not only made their radical social critique of the liberal-bourgeois economic and political system in speeches and writings, but also by “deeds.” The international anarchist movement decided to opt for the so-called “propaganda by the deed,” in other words, the perpetration of acts of violence, including assassinations, by the most committed militants who were ready to die for the cause. The final decade of the nineteenth century was the historical period when the largest number of monarchs, prime ministers and presidents were assassinated by anarchists.

In the eyes of nativist Americans, the reputation of the immigrant workers in the United States had already suffered a tremendous setback in 1886 due to the bloody Haymarket affair. The main anarchist speakers addressing the massed workers in the square when the bomb exploded were European immigrants (Germans), and American society reacted with fear and hatred towards those foreign fanatics. As a result of the Haymarket massacre, a wave of nationalistic hysteria swept across the country. The press spread a stereotype of the immigrant worker as an anarchist revolutionary who loved violence:

There is no such thing as an American anarchist. . . . The American character has in it no element, which can under any circumstances be won to uses so mistaken and pernicious.

These people are not Americans, but the very scum and offal of Europe . . . an invasion of venomous reptiles . . . long-haired, wild eyed, bad-smelling, atheistic, reckless foreign wretches . . . crush such snakes before they have time to bite. . . . [They are] a danger that threatens the destruction of our national edifice by the erosion of its moral foundations. . . . Our National existence, and, as well, our National and social institutions are at stake. 57

The same comparison between immigrant worker and dangerous anarchist was drawn when an Italian immigrant by the name of Gaetano Bresci, who was a silk weaver in a factory in Paterson, New Jersey, crossed the Atlantic and assassinated King Umberto I in Italy on July 29, 1900. The anarchist workers in Paterson, largely Italians, openly rejoiced at public mass meetings, where they made it clear that the tyrant king deserved to die. 58 The generalist press nicknamed Paterson “the world capital of anarchism.” 59

Some months later, on September 6, 1901, one of those workers with an unpronounceable name, Leon Czolgosz, who had been tremendously fascinated and impressed by Gaetano Bresci’s action, assassinated the 25th President of the USA, William McKinley—during whose mandate the country had become the world’s leading economic power—when he was visiting the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. Government suspicions led directly to Chicago, another American city with a great

57 Press extracts in Higham, Strangers in the Land, 55.
anarchist tradition, where the most prominent anarchists were arrested. American public opinion was shocked. In the words of the Spanish diplomatic representative in Washington:

La opinión pública está muy excitada contra los anarquistas, que hasta ahora eran vistos con total indiferencia. . . . Este país ha sido hasta ahora asilo tranquilo para los anarquistas. A él venían a refugiarse de las persecuciones que decían sufrir en algunos países de Europa. Aquí se reunían, aquí propagaban sus ideas y aquí preparaban con facilidad los atentados que habían de ejecutar en Europa. . . . Pero ahora la nación americana ha sido herida y es unánime el clamor por una reforma de las leyes o por un concierto internacional que permita a la sociedad defenderse de tan inicuos atentados.

[Public opinion is very worked up against the anarchists, who until now were looked upon with total indifference. . . . This country until now has been a calm refuge for anarchists. They came here to escape the persecutions they said they were suffering in some countries in Europe. Here they met, here they propagated their ideas and here they prepared the terrorist attacks that they were to carry out in Europe with ease. . . . But now the American nation has been wounded and the clamour for a reform of the laws or an international agreement to enable society to defend itself from such iniquitous attacks is unanimous.]

The perpetrator of the attack refused any defence and was executed in the electric chair. His brain was examined to see if any defect or anomaly could prove mental disorder. His remains were doused in sulphuric acid. In some cities, angry, terrified mobs sought revenge and began to hunt down anarchists. The same government repression that many European anarchists had fled from, to seek refuge in the USA, then started to be applied in a country that was gripped by fear. Theodore Roosevelt, McKinley’s successor, repeatedly asserted that there was a global terrorist threat, a loose network, shadowy but omnipresent, and he declared war on the anarchists, whom he accused of being criminals. In 1903, to mitigate the feeling of vulnerability that was spreading across the nation, the Anarchist Exclusion Act was passed, which barred all those who urged the violent overthrow of governments, as well as those who questioned the justice of the American political system, from entering the USA.  

Czolgosz, whose parents were Polish immigrants, had in fact been born in

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the United States, near Detroit; the new law, however, was based on the idea that anarchism, especially its violent side, was a philosophy restricted to foreign immigrants who arrived in the USA with disruptive ideas that they brought over with them from Europe. And there was a good deal of truth in that idea; in the USA, the anarchists, especially those who were party to propaganda by the deed, were immigrants and spoke languages that the American public did not understand.

The anarchists (and then also the IWW) constituted an additional threat to the ruling elites because they harshly criticized the arguments of white supremacy, rejected the racial segregation that was imposed in the USA and made an appeal to the solidarity and union of the races and to a class struggle without racial distinctions, all of which amounted to an unacceptable transgression.

In 1901, anti-immigration sentiment spread across the whole of the USA. Nativism was on the rise. Most native citizens saw the immigrants as threatening the cohesion of society. This sentiment would eventually lead to the Immigration Quota Acts, introduced in the 1920s.

**Guarded gates**

From 1882, successive revisions of the Immigration Act approved by the US Congress expanded the categories of exclusion that frontier agents could invoke to prevent recently arrived immigrants from entering the country. This measure, nevertheless, turned out to be insufficient to put a brake on the immense influx of new arrivals.

At the end of the nineteenth century, nativist Americans urged the government to classify all new immigrants according to ethnicity, rather than nationality.\(^{62}\) In March 1903, Congress passed the new Act that classified all immigrants by race rather than country of origin as they had done up till then, which had prevented the authorities from knowing whether an immigrant from Russia, for example, was ethnically Russian, Polish, Jewish or Finnish.\(^{63}\)

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Surprisingly, at a time when Lombroso’s theories had been abandoned by liberal reformers in Italy, they were elevated to canonical status in the United States federal administration. These theories became the basis for legitimizing anti-immigration legislation based on racial criteria, which determined the social composition of the USA in the twentieth century.\(^64\) In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt authorized an investigation into the immigration problem carried out by a special committee under the chairmanship of the senator for Vermont, William Dillingham. After four years, the Dillingham Commission issued an exhaustive report comprising forty-one volumes. Its conclusions were alarming. Whereas before 1882, the United States had benefited from the old immigration from the North of Europe, members of “Anglo-Saxon and Nordic races,” after that point, a sharp, very negative change had taken place: undesirable immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe had begun to arrive and were exacerbating the social problems in the cities and constituted a real threat to the American way of life. It was assumed that the Commission had carried out a complex scientific study, although in reality the 1911 Dillingham Report was fairly simplistic and unscientific; it revealed bias and passed off as scientific what was nothing more than racist stereotyping about immigrant communities. The writings of Sergi and Niceforo were the “scientific” sources of authority used and they were quoted repeatedly. Nativist perceptions, steeped in Lombroso’s theories, had contaminated the technical staff and survey takers.\(^65\)

Along with its report, the Commission drafted a book called the *Dictionary of Europeans or Other Races and Peoples*, a document that was described by the *New York Times* as an “authoritative” work of “novelty and importance.”\(^66\) Nevertheless, the Dictionary was riddled with crude racial stereotypes and alerted the ordinary American citizen to the concept of the “melting pot,” the fusion of individuals of diverse provenance to form one American people, *E pluribus unum*. The new immigrants from the South and East of Europe with their odd names, incomprehensible languages, who dressed and ate in strange ways, were so demonstrably different and so inferior to the native citizens and the old immigrants that they could never be assimilated and integrated into...

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\(^64\) Moe, “The Mediterranean Comes to Ellis Island.”


\(^66\) “The Races that Go into the American Melting Pot,” *New York Times*, May 21, 1911.
American society. The only way to stop American culture from being diluted and from disappearing was to implement a government policy that would drastically curtail or even stop immigration altogether.

The theories of the Italian Lombrosian school found renewed fame, not just in politics but also in academic circles, among economists, sociologists and historians in highly respected and respectable forums. Examples of that “respectable racism” multiplied. One of the most eminent social scientists of the early twentieth century, the well-known progressive sociologist at the University of Wisconsin, Edward A. Ross (1866–1951), the founder of American sociology, extensively quoted Niceforo as an authority in his works when he defined the Mediterranean Latino type as inferior. In 1911, the editor of the Century Magazine commissioned Ross to write a series of articles on immigrants in America, and he took up the task with great zeal. For three months he travelled around with his camera and his notebook, interviewing immigrants, immigration officials and volunteers who worked in hostels for poor immigrants. Between 1913 and 1914, he published twelve articles that gave rise to the most important work of nativist thought in the USA, *The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People* (1914), an exhaustive investigation, which concluded that the new immigrants, with their alarming rates of reproduction, had physical characteristics that demonstrated idiocy:

> Behold the new immigrants as they walk down the gangplank. They possess a distressing frequency of low foreheads, open mouths, weak chins . . . skewed faces, small or knobby crania and backless heads . . . . They are obviously of low mentality [and lack] the power to take rational care of themselves.

Since they had not reached a level of civilization compatible with democracy, it was necessary to restrict their entry into the country as much as possible. Ross’s prejudice-filled conclusion, namely, that the new immigrants were basically uncivilized cave-dwellers and so impossible to integrate as good American citizens, became a habitual idea in those days.

Over time, one of the proposals that the nativists stressed most was the introduction of a literacy test to filter out the illiterate foreigners of rural

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origin from the Catholic countries of Europe. The American unions supported these measures. On four different occasions, Congress passed laws obliging immigrants to pass a literacy test in any written language, only for them to be vetoed by Presidents Cleveland in 1897, Taft in 1913, and Wilson in 1915. In 1917, Congress at last obtained enough votes to override Wilson’s veto and a literacy test in the immigrant’s mother tongue became law. It did not, however, have the impact that the nativists had hoped for since the workers prepared specifically to pass the examination before they emigrated.

At the beginning of the 1920s, those in favour of restrictionism at last secured their objective, aided by the spiralling fear of foreign radicals suspected of stirring up class conflict in American communities unleashed after the Russian revolution. In 1921, the Emergency Quota Act was passed, followed in 1924 by the National Origins Act, which limited the annual entry permits for each country. It set a quota of 2 per cent of the number of immigrants per nationality who were resident in the USA at the time of the 1890 census. The year was chosen deliberately because there were relatively few Italians, Poles or Rumanians in the USA at that time, which meant that, under the new system, those countries received tiny quotas. On the other hand, the Irish, Germans and British, who represented what was known as the “old immigrants,” of whom there were millions when the 1890 census was taken, were granted generous quotas. The whole system was designed to ensure that immigration from Northern Europe would flow freely, while the flow of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe would be radically reduced.

The immigration statistics clearly show the discriminatory effect of the 1924 Act; the annual quota for Italy was just 3,845, whereas Italians had been entering the USA at a rate of almost two hundred and twenty thousand a year at the beginning of the twentieth century. The National Origins system, therefore, imposed a de facto reduction of 98 per cent on Italian immigration. Germany, on the other hand, received a huge quota of 51,227 people a year. Since, in 1924, fewer than forty thousand Germans per year were arriving in the USA, the new Act did not impose any real limit on immigration from that country. In the decade prior to the quota system being imposed, 63 per cent of all Europeans arriving in the United States

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71 Briggs, Immigration and American Unionism, 79.
were new immigrants from the nations of the South and East of Europe, although the countries they represented received just 11.2 per cent of the total quota, and 86.5 per cent went to the countries of the North and West of Europe. By granting huge quotas to countries that could not fill them and tiny quotas to countries with an enormous flow of emigrants, the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924 did exactly what was expected of them, namely, put an end to the biggest wave of immigration in American history.

**Self-exclusion**

The great majority of Latino workers who emigrated to America were young men travelling alone. Family emigration was not very common. The considerable improvement in communications made it possible for many migrant workers to return to their countries on a seasonal basis, regularly crossing the Atlantic back and forth in the course of their lives, a process known as “swallow emigration.” The improvement in communications also facilitated “chain migration,” in which some immigrants took others along with them, a process that led one author to talk of a veritable “migratory fever” and a “collective mania.” Many who had never left their villages before were encouraged to undertake the long transatlantic voyage knowing that, once they arrived, relatives, friends and neighbours from their village or local region would be waiting for them and would help them settle down in the same neighbourhoods in the same cities that they were already living in. In the case of the Italians, the quarrymen of Carrara (Tuscany) settled in Barre, Vermont, those from Molfetta (Puglia) went to Hoboken, New Jersey, and so on.

In the United States, the world of the Latino immigrant was a very inbred one. Single men, in the main, married women from their own countries, often from the same village or one nearby. In places where Latino workers from different countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal) lived and worked together in the same factories and neighbourhoods, mixed marriages were not uncommon. The most salient feature was that they built their lives around strong ties of family and friendship, while they turned their backs on American society. Within their neighbourhoods, they could speak their own language and did not need to learn English,

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74 Germán Rueda, *La emigración contemporánea de españoles a Estados Unidos, 1820–1950: De “dons” a “misters,”* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1993), 122
although, in any case, most did not have time to go to night school after a long working day of between twelve and fourteen hours. This isolation helped them preserve and keep alive the ways of life and customs of the countries of their birth and the villages they had left behind; for example, eating habits and culinary practices. In Latino neighbourhoods, there were many small restaurants, boarding houses and taverns where it was possible to eat typical traditional food. They were places to meet and socialize, where the identity of the immigrant was asserted and protected. Newspapers in the immigrant’s language, music, festive events, and so on, were also factors of identitarian cohesion. In all North American cities of a certain size, Italians created Little Italies where they tried to feel at home. The Italian State promoted the feeling of “Italianness” and the cultivation of traditions from the old country. The longest-running Italian newspaper in the USA, Il Progresso Italo-Americano, in New York, ran a host of subscription campaigns for a variety of Italian causes, for example, to raise monuments to Garibaldi, Verdi and Dante.

The children and grandchildren of immigrants were brought up to remember their country of origin and acquired a strong awareness of their national roots, inculcated into them by their elders. The autobiographical novel of a Spanish immigrant, Windmills in Brooklyn, describes, through the eyes of a child, the life of a working-class Spanish family in New York in the early decades of the twentieth century. His grandparents arrived in the USA at the insistence of a brother to whom they were very close and who had emigrated sometime before. He was eager to be reunited with them and so exaggerated the positive aspects of the new country in his letters to them. They ended up settling in Brooklyn, in New York, where most of the Spanish colony—with its circles, mutual aid societies and different regional centres—lived. The author reminisces about the friendly

atmosphere at the meals organized every Sunday evening in the boarding houses in Brooklyn Heights where the Spanish lodged, the animated conversations, the games of cards and the stupendous “paellas a la valenciana,” that remained engraved on his memory. The atmosphere in that area of the city was Spanish and Spanish customs reigned supreme, to the extent that “on Sunday mornings the girls went for a stroll, in the Spanish manner, before and after mass.” They celebrated fiestas, as in Spain, and arranged football matches with teams grouped according to their places of origin, after which they had picnics and the occasional pelotera, or “bust-up.” It was a community that was quite alien to the American way of life.

Roman Catholicism was an important element of Latino culture. Weddings were held in Catholic churches, or, in the case of workers of socialist or anarchist ideology, religious marriage was dispensed with altogether. In either case, they did not practise Protestantism, the dominant religion in American society, nor did they get divorced. If they separated, they did not make use of the legal possibility of divorce.

Many crossed the Atlantic with the idea of a short stay of three, five or ten years, during which time they had to make sacrifices, send remittances home and save enough to be able to return to their home country. The United States was for them the country of dollars, a place to make money as quickly as possible, but not a place to settle down with their families. With this objective, they would work wherever they could, in any job. Almost half of the Italian emigrants, the so-called ritornati, returned home, and when they did so, they automatically recovered their Italian citizenship, even those—the few—who had renounced it. The Latino immigrants adapted to, but did not assimilate into their new environment, nor did they become Americanized. The idea of returning home meant they had no interest in forming part of the new society, understanding its

80 Pereda, ibid., 28.
81 Interview with Carcagente in 1981, in Rueda, La emigración contemporánea de españoles a Estados Unidos, 90.
82 For an interview in 1981 with M. Rodríguez, ibid., 90.
83 Ibid.,185.
values, or taking up American citizenship. While they were there, they kept in close contact with their old country, the mother country. It was a vicious circle of exclusion and self-exclusion; the native Americans were suspicious of the Latino workers (a good many openly rejected them) and they, for their part, remained alien to and ignorant of American culture and its way of life.

The classic work by the famous Harvard professor, Oscar Handlin, on the history of European immigration to the USA, *The Uprooted*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1952, regarded the immigrant workers during the period of mass immigration as victims of a process of alienation. In the 1960s, Rudolph J. Vecoli, at that time an Assistant Professor, criticized Handlin’s interpretation and conclusions in a much-quoted article. In contrast to the paradigm of alienation, he studied the way that the immigrants of the new migratory wave clung to their own traditions and developed strategies to preserve their cultures and identities and avoid losing the legacies of their countries of origin, reluctant to embrace the socio-economic and political system of the USA. Vecoli’s criticisms opened up new lines of research and analysis and led younger historians, like John Bodner, to establish another paradigm, no longer that of the “uprooted” (the title of Handlin’s work), but of the “transplanted” (the title of Bodner’s), in the sense of people who transplanted the cultures of their country of origin into the one they emigrated to.

This chapter is based on the belief that they are not mutually exclusive interpretations. Without doubt, as Handlin pointed out, the gruelling experiences of the Latino immigrants who crossed the Atlantic and arrived in the USA had much of alienation, trauma and oppression about them. The hostile attitude of the host society reinforced their isolation. Faced with a society that received them badly and that was totally alien to them, they established well-defined ethnic communities where they could talk and be understood in their mother tongues and keep their culture and customs, such as cultivating close family ties, practising Roman Catholicism or cooking traditional meals. However, along with Vecoli, I think that segregation was, in part, also deliberate and voluntary. The Latino workers decided not to integrate, at least not as quickly as other groups did; they were reluctant to be Americanized.

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CHAPTER SIX

CANNIBALS DEVoured:
GYPSIES IN ROMANTIC DISCOURSE ON THE SPANISH NATION

MARÍA SIERRA-ALONSO

What good are the Gypsies anyway?

People have often asked me. ‘What good are the Gypsies anyway?’ One might reply by asking, “what good are the red-birds or the purple ragweed that grows along the road-sides?’ Apart from their contribution to the world by just being and by inspiring writers and artists for hundreds of years, Gypsies have kept alive and helped perfect to the highest degree the folk arts.

The person who challenged this repeated criticism, typical of Western culture, about the little or non-existent social usefulness of the Romany people, was one of their best known scholars at the beginning of the twentieth century, the American, Irving H. Brown (1888–1949). In 1922, he published a book in which he set out the recollections of his travels following the trail of a myth that he himself helped create, that of the Gypsies as an exceptional people because of their anomalous resistance to modernity.1 He went in search of that “primitive race,” whose language he

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had worked hard to learn and whose colouring he had tried to imitate with an intensive regimen of sunbathing, in one of the places where they most notably sought refuge, Spain. His discourse is a good example of the paradoxes of the Romantic love of Gypsies, which is the subject of this chapter.

Fig. 6-1: Charles Clifford, *The Alhambra: Gypsies Dancing, 1862.*

An ornament of nature like the birds and the flowers, a source of inspiration for artists and a repository of folklore: these were the chief virtues that this avowed friend of the Gypsies put forward in their favour when asked to justify his strange inclination towards them. As will be argued here, beneath the superficial benevolence of this opinion, beats the logic of alterity, constructed over a long period around the opposition between civilization and barbarism. It was the exoticizing effect of this that burdened the Romany people with a stereotype that had dire consequences. The same discourse that romanticized “gypsiness” is not in fact so far removed from the parallel scientific discourse that stigmatized it. There are many connections between the reference to their “just being”

*con una breve historia de la raza gitana y una introducción de George E. Woodberry* (Seville: Centro de Estudios Andaluces: Renacimiento, 2006), 50–51.
of a late Romantic such as Brown and the cold imagination of the English doctor, Robert Knox, who, in his influential *The Races of Man*, first placed the Gypsies in the virtual prison of another continent and then wondered what would be lost if Africa, with all the world’s Gypsies gathered there, sank beneath the ocean waves. His answer was nothing; “nothing to distinguish man from the brute,” since nobody responsible for discoveries, inventions, artistic creations, or sublime thoughts would be lost among them.²

Within the framework of the process peculiar to the modern Western paradigm that constructed a hierarchy of races and nations, this chapter presents a study of the cultural and political operation that affected Spanish Gypsies in the nineteenth century, redefining their traditional marginalization. Whereas Romany populations in Spain had been the targets of legislative initiatives of varying degrees of harshness from the fifteenth century, the establishment of the new liberal regime meant that their exclusion ceased to be principally a legal matter and became a socio-cultural reality that was more difficult to objectify and protest about. In general terms, the commentary about equality under the law in the *Enciclopedia Jurídica Española* of 1910 seems to reflect the situation well:

En la actualidad los gitanos están sujetos a la ley común; obligados como los demás españoles a avecindarse y subvenir a las cargas públicas, gozando también, sin restricción alguna de todos los derechos inherentes de ciudadanía. Pueden libremente, con sujeción a leyes y reglamentos, dedicarse a cualquier género de industria, profesión u oficio, y abolida la ley de vagos no se les puede acusar de otros delitos que los definidos en el código penal.

² Lou Charnon-Deutsch, *The Spanish Gypsy: The History of a European Obsession* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 122, takes up and comments incisively on Robert Knox’s view. There is also an interpretation of the work of Irving Brown, which I fully share from my own reading. For modern racism, the essential work is the classic George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1997).

³ Already from the end of the eighteenth century, the legislative initiatives of Charles III of Spain promoted opening up all trades to the Gypsies (obviously, in an attempt to assimilate them). In the nineteenth century, the legal instructions refer solely to their activity as *chalanes*, that is, itinerant horse-traders, meaning that this trade was also regulated in the case of non-Gypsies; in 1842, a law regulated the legal conditions that Gypsy horse-dealers had to comply with, while in 1878, it was extended to apply to any person who did that kind of work, irrespective of whether they were Gypsies or not.
At present, Gypsies are subject to common law; they are obliged, like other Spaniards to have a domicile and to pay their taxes, while also enjoying, without any restriction, all the rights inherent in citizenship. Subject to the laws and regulations, they may freely engage in any kind of industry, profession or trade, and since the Vagrancy Act was abolished, they may not be accused of offences other than those defined in the penal code.\(^4\)

It is no less true however that equal rights have never been a reality for Gypsies, either then or now. The history of the interplay between the integration and marginalization of the Gypsies compels us, therefore, to trace the way in which informal mechanisms of exclusion are produced and operated; alongside the political and legal regulations, a cultural strangeness that is more complicated to fathom needs to be studied.

The aim of this chapter then is to examine the political intentions and effects of the twofold cultural operation inscribed within the framework of possible discourses about Spanish national identity. This operation was so successful both inside and outside the country that the Gypsies, who were theoretically its citizens, were caught up in it and swallowed whole. My starting point is the premise that studying the most ancient strata of the stereotype that turned the Andalusian Gypsy into the symbol and essence of Spain will shed new light on the construction of identities and alterities that were decisive in the establishment of civic models (and anti-models) that are still with us.

**A word to begin with**

Before that though, some prior clarifications are needed, since even the term *gitano*, or Gypsy, is not—and should not be—assumed to be self-evident. In this study, and even though I am aware of its derogatory connotations, I use the term Gypsy because it belongs to the discourse that I am going to analyse. There are other class terms that are more politically correct and have a longer academic tradition or administrative intent (the Roma, *Tzigane*, Calé, travellers, and so on); nevertheless, “Gypsy,” along with any identitarian meanings it might have acquired from within, was the name that enabled outsiders to think about this “Other” that was at once both strange yet close to home. This is not the place to enter into a debate, which, admittedly, is fundamental to the way it affects our understanding of collective identities, although I would like to point out

\(^4\) See Bernard Leblon, *Los gitanos de España: el precio y el valor de la “diferencia”* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 1987), 76, for a brief survey of the laws.
that I share those approaches that problematize and understand identities as culturally constructed positions rather than objective realities.\(^5\) Like other categories, the Gypsy is a discursive construct and a historical product rather than an intrinsic element of the people who are defined by such collective labels, whether by themselves or by others. In this respect, we should really stop thinking of ethnicity as something that is obvious—a set of characteristics worn like a dress, by a person or group—and appreciate the contingent nature of categories that are invented for political purposes of different kinds, as Alejandro Grimson and Marcial Godoy-Anativia intelligently pointed out when they reopened the whole issue of migration.\(^6\) This cautious approach turns out to be particularly apt in the case of the Gypsies.\(^7\)

The second clarification refers to the particular intensity of the marginalization that this group has historically suffered. Ever since they arrived in Europe in the fifteenth century, they have been regarded as a threat and been the target of assimilation or extermination policies. After a short period, during which those who arrived in the West as “pilgrims” fleeing from the Turks were given shelter, similar legal measures were implemented in every state in an attempt to control them.\(^8\) They went from

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\(^7\) See, for example, Adèle Sutre, “‘Are you a Gypsy?’: L’identification des tsiganes à la frontière américaine au tournant du XXe siècle,” Migrations Société 26, no. 152: 57–73. Sutre, for example, has shown how the administrative and racial category of Gypsy used for processing immigrants at the North American frontiers at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth was constructed during the routine, but changing, practice of face-to-face interviews, when both the cultural resources (and prejudices) of the officials, as well as the strategies used by the interviewees came into play.

\(^8\) See Angus M. Fraser, The Gypsies (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1992) for a general survey in Europe; there is also a Spanish version by Fraser, Los gitanos (Barcelona: Ariel, 2005); for Spain, see María Helena Sánchez Ortega, Los gitanos españoles. El periodo borbónico (Madrid: Castellote, 1977) and “Evolución y
being seen as pilgrims to being suspected of spying for the Ottoman power, especially in the most sensitive countries on this geopolitical front. The Gypsies in fact came to be affected in a more general way by the same drive to homogenization that affected other religious and cultural minorities, such as the Jews and the moriscos (Moors who converted to Christianity). As a result, throughout the modern age, major features of the policies of most European monarchies with respect to the Gypsies have included erasing their identitarian features, obliging them to settle in one place, forcing them to assimilate and, in the worst cases, expelling or eliminating them. Paradoxically, the integration of many Gypsy groups into majority societies was undermined when, in the eighteenth century, enlightened ambition intensified control and instigated mass internments, as was the case in the Gran Redada (Great Gypsy Round-up) of 1749 in Spain.

The nineteenth century represented a hiatus at the legal level that was relatively widespread. In Western Europe, no openly discriminatory norms were promulgated and in Eastern Europe, the prolonged slavery of the Gypsies in territories such as Moldavia and Wallachia came to an end. The fact remains though that, at the level of expert knowledge, the discourse became increasingly laden with labels and insults that defined Gypsies as “human reptiles,” a “delinquent race,” or an “immoral race.” At the end of the nineteenth century, the burgeoning discipline of criminology took up the torch of western civilization and dealt with these (and other) enemies within who had had the temerity not to remain in the far-off lands of the colonial world at a reassuring distance from the good citizens of Europe.

The qualitative leap in anti-Gypsy violence that the Nazi regime represented in the interwar period cannot be understood without this intellectual tradition that was forged from multiple new disciplines—phrenology, anthropology, psychiatry, eugenics and so on—which

corno histórico de los gitanos españoles,” in Entre la marginación y el racismo. Reflexiones sobre la vida de los gitanos (Madrid: Alianza, 1987).
10 Antonio Gómez Alfaro, La gran redada de gitanos: España, prisión general de gitanos en 1749 (Madrid: Presencia Gitana, 1995).
supplied materials for the construction of racial prejudice that would be used to guide the Holocaust. After arresting, examining, testing, sterilizing, deporting and slaughtering those individuals considered to be of the Gypsy race, seventy per cent of the Roma people living in the various countries occupied or controlled by the Nazi army disappeared from the face of the earth, approximately half a million people in all.¹²

This figure of the enemy within that must be exterminated should be set alongside the corresponding figure of the enemy within that may be allowed under supervision, and even utilized. Determining the degree of exclusion built into inclusive models in modern politics—the ultimate objective of the research project that has resulted in this book—involves uncovering the cultural foundations of complex political operations, such as the one that made the Spanish Gypsies the symbol of a nation that looked to Europe as a reference while, at the same time, turning them into the dregs of the citizenry.¹³

The discovery of the Romantic traveller

In order to tackle the Gypsy stereotype in Spain, we must relocate to the earliest moment when the Romantic travellers of Europe—basically Frenchmen and Englishmen, but also Germans, Russians and so on—“discovered” Spanish Gypsies. Scores of European travellers visited Spain (and even more so, Andalusia) and described it as a special place on the periphery of modernity, a country not affected by industrialization and alien to the storm of progress; it was a potential paradise where one could discover primitive virtues at first hand and live (for a short while) with the authenticity of other times.¹⁴

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¹³ María Sierra, “Enemigos internos: inclusión y exclusión en la cultura política liberal,” in Desde la Historia. Homenaje a Marta Bonaudo (Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2014), 73–90. In this book, I point out the deceptively positive charge of the term inclusion, which is used to justify exclusion in the operation of tracing political frontiers and explaining which citizens are “naturally” fit to govern or be governed, and which are not (or would only potentially be).
¹⁴ Among the abundant bibliography on this topic, see Jean René Aymes, L’Espagne romantique: témoignages de voyageurs français (Paris: A.M. Métailié, 1983); Alberto González Troyano, ed., La imagen de Andalucía en los viajeros románticos y Homenaje a Gerald Brenan (Málaga: Diputación Provincial de Málaga, 1987); Alberto Egea Fernández-Montesinos, ed., Dos siglos de imagen de Andalucía (Seville: Centro de Estudios Andaluces, 2006).
Gypsies had not previously attracted the attention of the various types of people who travelled to Spain and particularly admired the country’s artistic and archaeological riches, although what was appreciated even in the eighteenth century was its Muslim—in other words—“Moorish” heritage. At that time, the Gypsies were still invisible, even though the tourists of the Enlightenment strolled through neighbourhoods like Triana in Seville and Sacromonte in Granada that came to form quintessential parts of Gypsy geography, and even though they watched dances like the fandango, considered to be indecent but which would later be attributed to the Gypsies as their own. It was in the nineteenth century, then, that successive generations of travellers captured in writing (travel journals, guides, novels) and in images (oil paintings, engravings, photographs) the traits of a people that aroused ethnographic curiosity and stimulated the modern craving for authenticity in a Europe that regarded itself as civilized.15

Fig. 6-2: Gustave Doré, Dancing in a Patio in Seville, 1847.

15 I follow here Charnon-Deutsch, The Spanish Gypsy, for his invaluable synthesis of the major landmarks in this process of invention. There are other partial studies of Gypsy stereotypes in Spain, although the one just mentioned rigorously systematizes the most important information on this subject.
The essential components of the Gypsy stereotype, as constructed by Théophile Gautier (1811–1872), Alexandre Dumas (1802–1870) and Prosper Mérimée (1803–1870) on the French side, and George Borrow (1803–1881) and George Eliot (1819–1880) on the English side (to reduce a long list of names to a few very well-known ones), are as follows. To start with, it was understood that the Gypsies were an archaic people, or fossil race, that had not evolved over time. This general consideration, from which the moral and cultural characteristics that were attributed to them were derived, affected all European Romany groups, although for Spain a good few observers stated that the (alleged) African origin of the calé (those Gypsies living on the Iberian peninsula and in the south of France) accentuated their natural primitivism.  

16 This prehistoric race, which still lived in caves even, as could be observed in Spain, would remain close to the distinctive animal nature of primeval man, with all the good and the bad that that implied. So, those accounts that took cannibalism among the Gypsies for granted were just the most extreme examples of a gaze that was ready to be horrified at what it classified as licentious morality, especially in the sexual space. That Gypsies were not disgusted by incestuous relationships can be found in the writings of the elder Dumas (his Impressions de voyage de Paris à Cadix, 1847) as well as George Sand (La Filleule, 1853).

Nonetheless, outwardly, the Romantic stereotype is largely positive. If Gypsies were characterized by anything, in virtue of the particular anthroplogy attributed to them, it was that they were so instinctively artistic, loved the nomadic life, needed contact with nature and, especially, were so radically free. Such an existence could not have been more to Romantic taste, and the voices of assorted poets, novelists, playwrights and musicians fuelled the new invention with material that continues to inspire films and other contemporary genres even today.  

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16 Although the most serious studies of the time (fundamentally philological) claimed a common Indian origin for all the Romany groups scattered throughout Europe, many writers insisted on linking the Spanish Gypsies with “the Moors”, whether as a distant origin or as direct descendants of those Muslims who had lived in Spain for centuries and been driven out by the Catholic Monarchs.

17 According to Charnon-Deutsch, The Spanish Gypsy, at least sixty-four “Gypsy operas” alone are recorded in the nineteenth century, which spread the Romantic stereotype to the main musical capitals of Europe (London, Paris, Vienna, Naples, Dresden). Dozens of novels, dramas, comedies, paintings, engravings, etc. were inspired by Gypsy themes (some references in Carmen Olivares Marin, “El gitano imaginario y la cristalización del mito,” Gazeta de Antropologia 25, no. 2 (2009). For artistic representation in Spain, useful introductions are Eduardo Quesada
overexposure has been such that the subject being portrayed might, paradoxically, even be said to be in danger of disappearing, following the theory proposed by Didi-Huberman for other marginal peoples and social groups.\footnote{Georges Didi-Huberman, \textit{Pueblos Expuestos, Pueblos Figurantes} (Buenos Aires: Manantial, 2014).}

As with any subaltern identity, gender cuts across the Romantic stereotype of the Gypsy in more than one direction.\footnote{See Anne McClintock, \textit{Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest} (New York: Routledge, 1995) for the intersecting categories of gender, race and class in the context of Western imperialism.} The male had to be brutally brave, with even violence being adapted to the honour code of uncivilized masculinity, while the Gypsy woman was hypersexualized; her beauty, described as animal and wild, was related to exhibition in some dances, defined as sensual, erotic, even lascivious. There are countless examples, so that three quotes spread over a century obsessed with observing Gypsy women will have to suffice. For John Carr (1772–1832), the Gypsy women of Cadiz attracted attention because of the indecent and voluptuous way they danced the fandango; according to George Borrow, although they were chaste at heart, “no females in the world can be more licentious in word and gesture, in dance and in song” while, decades later, Irving Brown likened them to panthers because of their animal magnetism and the sensuality of their movements.\footnote{John Carr, \textit{Descriptive Travels in the Southern and Eastern Parts of Spain and Balearic Isles, in the Year 1809} (London: Printed for Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, Faulder and Rodwell, and J.M. Richardson, 1811), 51. George Henry Borrow, \textit{The Zincali, an Account of the Gypsies of Spain} (London & New York: J.M. Dent & Sons-E.P. Dutton & Co., 1841), 56. Brown, \textit{Nights and Days on the Gypsy Trail}, 15.} The legendary story of Carmen, in which Mérimée transformed Miguel de Cervantes’ little Gypsy girl, Preciosilla—who was in fact a little white girl stolen from her parents—into a “real” Gypsy woman, an alluring, all-devouring femme fatale, is a compendium of multiple verbal and visual images produced by Romantic travellers (and constantly re-nourished by their successors).\footnote{For an interpretation of the myth, see Evlyn Gould, \textit{The Fate of Carmen} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).}
Romanticization, of course, did not exclude them from being assigned an inferior status in the anthropology that gave lasting shape to this stream of discourse. In any of the dozens of travel books that were written in the nineteenth century, in any play or novel, even those most sympathetic to the Gypsies, the material and cultural backwardness of the people was naturalized and associated with their racial condition and the morality that was the result of it. In this respect, it is not difficult to deconstruct George Borrow himself, who was highly influential in the creation of the image of the Spanish Gypsy. His works, *The Bible in Spain* (1843) and especially *The Zincali* (1841), have been read as redeeming portraits written by someone who was a friend of the Romany people. Nonetheless, even though the Protestant propagandist in Borrow undertook the mission of a *Romany Rye*—the title of another of his works, that is, a Gypsy gentleman, instructor and saviour of the Romanies—does not prevent *The Zincali* from being saturated with statements about their moral degeneration, tendency to theft and skill at cheating their friends. So, just in case his anthropologically pretentious observations, based on his contacts with Gypsies during his journeys across Spain between 1836 and 1840, were not enough, the first part of *The Zincali*, which is devoted to the history of the people, recycles an old horror story about the bookseller of Logroño, in which a detachment of Gypsies, roaming the peninsula like a ferocious horde, makes plans to poison the city’s water supply. After the ensuing battle, the human landscape presented by the defeated gypsies is described with a firm literary hand. Borrow, however, makes absolutely no attempt to create observational distance or show any degree of scepticism by commenting that such a grisly tale might well not be true:

> There lay grim men more black than mulattos, with fury and rage in their stiffened features; wild women in extraordinary dresses, their hair, black and long as the tail of the horse, spread all dishevelled upon the ground; and gaunt and naked children grasping knives and daggers in their tiny hands.

There is a very close relationship between the Romantic notion of the Gypsy and Orientalism, which, in the sense coined by Said, was also constructed during the same period of the Enlightenment. Together these

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two ideas share the same side of the coin made up of identity and alterity. In this case, moreover, the mysterious origins of the Gypsies were repeated so often that the two concepts became blended, to the extent that the Orient came to be imposed as a frame of reference. The combination of attraction for and rejection of that distant exotic “Other” was repeated with regard to this more familiar “Other,” following a similar process of strangeness; “knowledge” of that Orient helped explain this intruder in the West. The English traveller, Isabella F. Romer, for example, summed up the connection between the Gypsy and the East that she found in Andalusia when Mateo Jiménez, Washington Irving’s famous guide, arranged some dancing at her inn:

Colonel H-, who was just returned from India overland, was struck with the similarity existing between these dances and those of the Nautch girls of India and Persia; and I, for my part, found very little difference between them and the performances of the dancing girls I had seen in the Harems of Turkey.

The way of observing and relating to the Gypsy type, even when it was of admiration, was unmistakably colonial and involved multiple practices that created subalternity. Once again, a critical reading of books that bring together recollections and souvenirs of journeys, memoirs and other classes of literature supplies endless examples of the process. However, the scene that Dumas captures among his notes of the journey he made to Spain in 1846 serves, perhaps, as a masterly summary of this kind of practice. Dumas entered Granada, leading a group that included his co-writer, Auguste Maquet—known in Paris as “the indispensable ghost-writer”—and various other artists. A compatriot of his who lived in Spain acted as their host and gathered together Gypsies from Sacromonte for them in his house in the Arco de los Cuchilleros. This is what Dumas says:

De cette terrasse, on dominait toute la place, . . . Couturier avait fait tendre des draps, lesquels mettaient une portion de la terrasse à l’ombre en laissant l’autre dans le soleil. Les Bohémiens, habitués à une chaleur presque tropicale, devaient se tenir au soleil ; Couturier et son daguerréotype devaient opérer à l’ombre. À l’ombre aussi nous devions être assis, Giraud, Desbarolles et Boulanger pour dessiner, Maquet et moi.

25 Isabella Frances Romer, The Rhone, the Darro and the Guadalquivir, a Summer Ramble in 1842 (London: R. Bentley, 1843), 115.
pour mettre nos notes au courant, Alexandre pour faire quelques vers en réponse à des vers qu’on nous avait adressés. Les Bohémiens, groupés sur la partie de la terrasse exposée au soleil, le père fumant et jouant de la guitare, les filles assises à ses pieds et nattant leurs cheveux, les fils debout et caressant un chien.

[From that terrace we looked out over the whole square, . . . Couturier had had some sheets hung up, which cast shade on one portion of the terrace and left the other part in the sun. The Bohemians, accustomed to almost tropical heat, had to remain in the sun; Couturier and his daguerreotype had to work in the shade. Giraud, Desbarolles and Boulanger also had to sit in the shade to draw; Maquet and I to bring our notes up to date, Alexandre to compose a few lines in response to other lines that had been dedicated to us. The Bohemians [were] in a group on the part of the terrace exposed to the sun, the father smoking and playing the guitar, the daughters sitting at his feet and braiding their hair, the sons standing up and stroking a dog.]26

Dumas focuses his attention mainly on things, not people, with the latter reduced to props so as to appreciate better the technical wonder of the daguerreotype: “In five or six minutes at most, Couturier produced three marvellous proofs; down to the smallest details of the fabrics, the stripes on the trousers, the fringes on the shawls, everything was there, full of colour and form” (En cinq ou six minutes tout au plus, Couturier fit trois essais merveilleux; les moindres détails des étoffes, les raies des pantalons, les franges des châles, tout était venu, plein de couleur et de modelé.). The human scene is of less interest than the novelty of the procedure for capturing the revolutionary image.

Hiring Gypsies was becoming common, whether it was parties of tourists who wanted to witness dance performances organized for them in their hotels or in the gitanerías (gypsy neighbourhoods), or travellers who wanted to take home a pencil sketch or, later, a photograph of them as a typical souvenir. It seems that it was the photographer, Charles Clifford, who initiated the iconographic tradition of placing “real” Gypsies in tourist settings famous for their beauty (such as the Alhambra), thereby adding an extra touch of local colour [Fig. 6-1]. At any rate, aside from the role of Charles Clifford, the tradition was an invention and coincided with the appearance of photography in Spain.

European Romantic discourse on Spanish Gypsies not only affected them specifically, but situated all Spaniards generally on a lower rung of that ladder of evolution and progress of humanity that would be dominated by “the North.” The stereotypical image of sensuality, laxness, laziness,

passion and hedonism—a blend of Gypsy and Moorish elements—could be seen embodied most completely in the people and ways of life of Andalusia, but also extended to the nation as a whole.\textsuperscript{27} Furthermore, in some instances, most notably in the case of Borrow himself, the underlying intention of the critical discourse on Gypsies might have been to fuel the critical discourse on Spaniards. Lou Charnon-Deutsch has shown that, in the work of Borrow, humanity is naturally divided into peoples. The Spanish people, as reflected in its Gypsies and because they were Roman Catholics, would be clearly inferior to the English, where Protestantism together with civilization defined the best national anthropology.\textsuperscript{28}

Away from Spanish soil, International Exhibitions juxtaposed the place of Gypsies in Spain and the place of Spain in the world as if they were one and the same thing. In the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, a couple dancing in Gypsy style symbolized a nation that was situated, together with others of similar exoticism (the Turks, Russians, Indians, South Americans), on the cultural periphery of industrialized, civilized Europe. This was graphically summed up in a cartoon entitled “The Happy Family in Hyde Park,” published in the satirical magazine, \textit{Punch} [Fig. 6-3].\textsuperscript{29} True, the representation was a caricature; nonetheless, this operation that turned Gypsy Andalusia into the essence of the national spirit was greatly exaggerated in later editions. The pastiche reached a peak in the 1900 Paris Exhibition where, together with dancing and singing performed by more or less authentic Gypsies, the organization constructed a mock-up of a town entitled \textit{L’Andalousie en temps des maures} (Andalusia in Moorish times) that allowed visitors to walk in the shadow of the Giralda (an actual tower that visitors could go up on a donkey) and offered the public entertainment in the form of Flamenco scenes, jousts between Christian knights and Moors, Gypsy weddings and so on.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Charnon-Deutsch, \textit{The Spanish Gypsy}, 97–98.
\textsuperscript{29} For an interpretation of colonial observation reflected in this caricature in \textit{Punch} magazine on July 19, 1851, see Sadiah Quereshi, \textit{Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain} (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011), 235–236; also Jeffrey A. Auerbach, \textit{The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display} (Yale University Press, 1999).
Even though the stereotype tended to affect Andalusia more than any other region of Spain—so fuelling the local prejudice that made a distinction between the hardworking north and the festive south—the whole of Spain, nonetheless, would seem to have been situated in that underworld in all its ornamental exoticism that started south of the Pyrenees. Postcards, posters and publicity images demonstrate as much, and it was necessary for the success of the discourse of the Exhibitions, which explained how the various national and racial communities of the world, obviously reduced to a series of hierarchical stereotypes, could be
organized into one synoptic panoramic picture.\textsuperscript{31} As Burton Benedict points out with respect to peoples and spaces outside Europe, such Exhibitions imply a colonial mechanism endowed with a complex performative capacity in the long term, an idea that I would like to recuperate for the second cultural manoeuvre that I want to examine.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{The Gypsies “from within”}

As I stated at the beginning, the Spanish Gypsies turned out to provide the raw material for a twofold operation and the time has come to focus on the local part of this pincer movement. My aim here, of course, is not to reveal that Spanish nationalism has at various times made use of \textit{lo gitano} as material suitable for constructing a national identity. Many studies have dealt with music, cinema, art or literature as vehicles for Spanish nationalist discourses, which did indeed come across the Gypsies at different times, notably in the 1920s and 1930s and of course during the Franco regime.\textsuperscript{33} Or rather, the Gypsy stereotype; these studies, in fact, are all concerned with the way in which the Gypsy is incorporated into the discourse of nationalism and is used to serve it, not with the way that


\textsuperscript{33} Because of its particular characteristics, the cinema has been an especially propitious medium for disseminating all sorts of politicized images, including those of Gypsies. For studies highlighting the connection of the cinema with nationalist discourses of the time, see Marta García Carrión, “El pueblo español en el lienzo de plata: Nación y región en el cine de la II República,” \textit{Hispania: Revista española de historia} 73, no. 243 (2013): 193–222; Io Labanyi, \textit{Lo andaluz en el cine del franquismo: Los estereotipos como estrategia para manejar la contradicción} (Seville: Fundación Centro de Estudios Andaluces, 2003); Emilio José Gallardo Saborido, \textit{Gitana tenías que ser: Las Andalucías imaginadas por las coproducciones fílmicas España-Latinoamérica} (Seville: Fundación Pública Andaluza Centro de Estudios Andaluces, 2010). The literature of the nineteenth century has also been well studied by Xavier Andreu Miralles, “¿Cosas de España! Nación liberal y estereotipo romántico a mediados del siglo XIX,” \textit{Alcores: Revista de Historia Contemporánea}, no. 7 (2009): 39–61.
images about the Gypsies affect them by conferring upon them a stereotyped collective identity.

My purpose is different, since, at this point, my intention is to approach the cultural field of nineteenth-century Spanish costumbrismo (depictions of local or regional customs and types) from the critical viewpoint that is of interest to this study, which is to shine a (political) light on an artistic operation that I understand as something quite different from the explanation offered in histories of art, and of literature in particular, namely that it was a Spanish nationalist reaction against the invasion of European fashions.34 In my view, costumbrismo is not so much a local reaction against universal Romanticism, but rather one of its manifestations, making authentic use of some of its imaginings. Spanish costumbrista painting is a good space to find support for this working hypothesis.

Fig. 6-4: Manuel Cabrál Aguado Bejarano, The Fritter Stall, fragment, c.1854.

In this respect, the history of the mid-nineteenth-century Seville school—a large group of artists that spread to Madrid and figured prominently in the market and official institutions of the Spain of Queen Isabel II—is quite illuminating. The Seville school includes Antonio María Esquivel (1806–1857); José Gutiérrez de la Vega (1791–1865); Manuel Rodríguez de Guzmán (1818–1867) and, in particular, the dynasties that

included the Bécquer family (José Domínguez Bécquer, 1805–1841; Joaquín Domínguez Bécquer, 1817–1879; Valeriano Domínguez Bécquer, 1833–1870) and the Cabral Bejarano family (Antonio Cabral Bejarano, 1788–1861; Manuel Cabral Aguado Bejarano, 1827–1891). Their representations of scenes and types—dancing, taverns, romerías (religious pilgrimages), fairs and religious processions; bullfighters, Gypsy women, bandits, beggars, Flamenco dancers, street urchins and so on—that had every appearance of being realistic observations of popular everyday life correspond in fact to the exoticizing gaze of the Romantic traveller “discovering” Spain [Fig. 6-4].

To begin with, the local people and settings that these painters concentrated on were drawn from a set of options that had previously been determined by foreign artists in their own right, most notably the Scotsman, David Roberts, and the Englishman, John Frederick Lewis. According to Méndez Rodríguez, during their visits to Seville and Granada in 1833, these two painters were instrumental in fixing the practically definitive models of all the costumbrista variations and creating the mythical image of Andalusia that would be published in books and replicated by local artists. The influence of Roberts on local Seville painters, such as José María Escacena (1808–1858) and José Domínguez Bécquer, both of whom copied his working methods, was particularly important. Secondly, it was the demand from tourists who wanted to take home with them small pictorial souvenirs of their journeys that sparked off the serial production of local types and scenes, which some people were well positioned to take full advantage of; José Domínguez Bécquer, who had a commissioner in Cadiz that exported this type of painting to England and could not keep up with the demand for paintings and book illustrations, came to an agreement with his cousin, Joaquin, to share the painting of small pictures in their respective workshops in order to produce them more quickly.

The activity of Antoine Marie d’Orléans, Duke of Montpensier (1824–1890) in this area presents a very interesting case in point for reflecting on the interaction between European Romanticism and Spanish costumbrismo. The son of King Louis-Philippe of France, he was educated

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36 Luis Méndez Rodríguez, *La imagen de Andalucía en el arte del siglo XIX* (Seville: Centro de Estudios Andaluces, 2008), 35–36
by Antoine de Latour (1808–1881), a writer and Hispanist who helped other French Romantics to discover Spain. The tutor, who later became his personal secretary, also accompanied the Duke when he moved to the land of the Gypsies after entering into a strategic marriage with the Spanish Infanta, Luisa Fernanda. Once the Duke had taken up residence in the San Telmo palace in Seville, the French brother-in-law of Isabel II soon became known as a keen collector and patron of the arts. He had a more than notable collection of costumbrista works, and his protégé was a young French painter, Alfred Dehodencq (1822–1882), whose paintings combined Orientalism with españolismo, Spanishness. Two of these were commissioned by the Duke of Montpensier with the intention of capturing, in a pair of oil paintings, the essence of the land that welcomed him: one showed a religious procession in Seville and the other some Gypsies dancing in a Mudejar setting.

The blending of Andalusian folk culture with “gypsiness” and the elevation of this to the status of a national icon of Spain thus collaborated in the cultural reductionism that the Romantic (and late Romantic) travellers had effected previously and would continue to develop later. This was all taking place, moreover, at a time when the various political families of Spanish liberalism were tackling—with all the doubts and limitations imaginable—the construction of national narratives, and who naturally enough could well have found a first-rate instrument for this in painting. Indeed, these artists were called upon to set up Galleries of National Customs, show their paintings in National Exhibitions of Fine Art or, in the most successful cases, hang them in the Spanish pavilions at International Exhibitions.

38 See Vicente Lleó Cañal, La Sevilla de los Montpensier (Seville: Focus, 1987) for the contribution of Montpensier as a collector. For the political context, see María del Carmen Fernández Albéndiz, La corte sevillana de los Montpensier (Seville: Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, Área de Cultura, 2014).

39 Una cofradía pasando por la calle Génova, 1851; Un baile de gitanos en los jardines del Alcázar, delante del pabellón de Carlos V, 1851.


41 Thus Manuel Rodríguez de Guzmán would be commissioned by the Crown in 1853 to set up a great Spanish Gallery of Customs (which was inaugurated with a single picture representing the Fair in Seville), and years later Valeriano Bécquer...
Rather than follow the thread of liberal discourses of the nation and trace the place occupied in them by the stereotype of “gypsiness” as framed by costumbrismo, what interests me now is to reflect on the colonizing element of these discourses, in various senses. First, between 1840 and 1860, local artists adopted and replicated some of the stereotypes—ones that the Romantic travellers had produced—that served both to exoticize and to inferiorize, which helped construct the image of a country in which fiesta, passion and religion went hand in hand in real everyday life. Then, after this first wave of costumbrismo, another generation of painters—of greater prestige, economic success and international renown—took up this profitable legacy. Mariano Fortuny (1838–1874), José Villegas Cordero (1844–1921), José García Ramos (1852–1912) and others achieved excellent sales in England, Italy and France at the end of the nineteenth century with highly contrived late costumbrista paintings that prolonged and even magnified the Gypsy element of the Spanish essence, some of them also stressing their Oriental and Orientalist background.

Once incorporated into the imaginary of the local artists, this accumulation of images that identified the Spanish-Andalusian-Gypsy-African essence overflowed into an endless visual cascade of successes and imitations. Brave bullfighters, sensual Gypsy women, Flamenco dances, Arab blood, and so on, were all insiders’ reflections of the Romantic imageme of Spain [Fig. 6-5]. Spanish artists collaborated in the construction of stereotypes that were gradually reinforced as they went back and forth, replicating each other.

would be paid by the Ministerio de Fomento [Ministry for Public Works] to set up a similar gallery. For his part, José Domínguez Bécquer saw some of his costumbrista paintings exhibited at the international exhibitions. Méndez Rodríguez, La imagen de Andalucía en el arte del siglo XIX.

See Carlos González, Pintores españoles en París (1850–1900) (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1989) for this second generation of costumbrista painters. The sensation of verisimilitude convinces many observers, as well as art historians, who think that the society portrayed in this late nineteenth-century painting, including the Gypsies, is represented more realistically and that “they have moved beyond the earlier clichés” (“by means of figures full of grace and vitality who move in a naturalistic space awash with light,” according to Méndez Rodríguez, La imagen de Andalucía en el arte del siglo XIX, 97).

The category of imageme is used to refer to an image in all its implicit, compounded contradictions and polarities, in Joep Leerssen, “Image,” in Imagology, edited by Beller and Leerssen, 342–344.
My hypothesis—the development of which is beyond the scope of a chapter as brief as this—is that a similar colonizing phenomenon of expert discourse on the Gypsies and their place in the nation can also be verified in other cultural fields, such as literature, photography and the emerging Spanish anthropology. The first of these spaces, moreover, had particularly powerful vehicles for disseminating easily naturalizable common social wisdom; in the nineteenth century in particular, the theatre in its various forms spread authoritative references and models of behaviour that
transcended socio-cultural barriers. Gypsies were the main characters in a good number of works specifically designed to be staged (in many cases, sung and danced) and these works outlined in broad brushstrokes all the hackneyed commonplaces about the kind of people they were, even as they were being identified with everything that was essential to the real Spain. One comedy that triumphed was *El tío Caniyitas*, first performed in Seville in 1849 and then all over Spain (in Cadiz it was even performed every evening of the week and in three different theatres at the same time). The work features an English traveller, both ridiculous and ridiculed, Mr. Frich, who is passionate about the Gypsy world and wants to learn to speak like them (the character is probably very closely based on the figure of George Borrow). His counterparts are “authentic” Gypsy men and women, who both win his love and manipulate him, showing how childish his enthusiasm for them really is. However, satire and laughter turn out not to be an infallible antidote to the performative effects of a colonial discourse with as much power as the one that concerns us.

What lies beneath *El tío Caniyitas*, as well as other works, is the acceptance of images that have been constructed by outsiders (hetero-images), although the mechanism behind this identitarian trap is perhaps more openly revealed in those other works. So, when Baron Charles Davillier (1823–1883) remembered his trip around Spain in the company of Gustave Doré (1832–1883) and the hosts of *sainetes* (one-act farces in verse) that caricatured foreign tourists like themselves who were seeking out everything that was typical about the country, he made a note of a few lines that reflected the way in which the “barbarism” assigned by outsiders could become an identitarian element that was proudly and aggressively accepted by the insiders:

Desde allende el Pirineo/ losextranjis muy ufanos/ nos apodan africanos/ porque vamos al toril, / y si alguna vez ocupan/ el tendido de la plaza/ con un palmo de bocaza/ van graznando: Oh qué plaisir!

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44 María Sierra, *Género y emociones en el romanticismo. El teatro de Breton de los Herreros* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2013).


Spanish artistic *costumbrismo* contributed in many ways to the seemingly realistic and objective descriptions of the Gypsies “by insiders.” Local artists and writers included them in their stories as main characters, along with their customs, presenting them as exotic and, at the same time, home-grown. It was hybridization on a colossal scale, paradoxical and incoherent, as could not be otherwise.

On this point, it should be observed that just as there was an inherent tension at the root of Romantic European discourse in the way that it considered the observed group—Gypsies were seen as artistes but also socially useless; admired for being free spirits but feared for that very reason, because they were outside the law or even criminals; appreciated for their authenticity but diagnosed as backward—so the reverberation and local amplification of this discourse combined symbolic sublimation with contempt. For many national artists, intellectuals and national critics, the romanticized Gypsy was undoubtedly a basic component of the Spanish essence, which they helped define in their respective fields. At the same time, though, the prejudices against the real, flesh and blood Gypsies—the ones they came across in the streets and not in pictures—were maintained and consolidated in the discourse of these experts.

The opportunistic calculation of nationalistic advantage was making its home within this intellectual schizophrenia. For example, if among the journalists covering the nineteenth-century International Exhibitions, there were some like José Luis Pellicer who, in 1889, protested at “the inevitable troupe of Gypsies with their captain” and “the classic scene of Flamenco; with laments, hoarse voices, olés . . . the lascivious, provocative solo dances of shameless women, and the repugnant presence of those disgusting pimps and thugs who neither resemble nor are they men,” there were others like Luis de Orellana who, in 1867, asked them “to make the most of this weakness”—in this case, the weakness of the French—and to give them all the Flamenco and Orientalism that they were

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47 Jean Charles Davillier and Gustave Doré, *Voyage en Espagne. Le tour du monde* (1862–1873), *Viaje por España*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Grech, 1988), 481. These lines, somewhat difficult to translate, concern the Spaniards’ enthusiasm for bullfights and the criticism of this by foreigners who nonetheless marvel at the spectacle of the bullfight.
looking for in Spain. Eighty years later, in the post-Civil War period, the nationalist exploitation of the Gypsy by the Franco regime would continue to present similar contradictions. In 1948, a few intellectuals, notable among them the folklorist, Ortiz de Villajos, were the driving force behind the First Gypsy Exhibition in Granada. The appeal of the mystery and art of the Gypsies served to initiate the rehabilitation of Spain’s image for export, although, in order to do so, it would be important to state the historical fallacy that here “there was no persecution of the Gypsies” (no hubo persecución contra los gitanos). The advance of this major political operation of the Francoist love of Flamenco was, nevertheless, compatible with the political and military discourse that, in parallel, accused the Gypsies of being anti-Spanish and claimed that their nomadic life cut them off from all possibility of patriotic loyalty.

The “fatherland” that devours its children

In 1993, Jean Kommers published a very interesting book on the stereotyped figure of the Gypsy in literature for children and teenagers, by examining the tales written and translated in Holland that introduced these characters during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The intersection of anthropological perspective with historiographical sensibility led him to propose an interpretation of the political effects of this kind of cultural production, which directly inspires the conclusions of this chapter. For Kommers, literature is not simply a representation of social reality but a powerful element in its construction. With this as his premise, he shows how the literature for young people in his country, with the pedagogical objective of teaching the younger generations to be obedient sons,

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48 Journalistic opinions, quoted in Ruiz Sazatornil and Las Heras Peña, “París y la ‘españolada,’” 273, 278, and 286.
49 Cándido G. Ortiz de Villajos, Gitanos de Granada (1949), a work quoted and contextualized in the tradition of national thinking about the Gypsies in Charnon-Deutsch, The Spanish Gypsy, 208.
50 According to Lieutenant-Colonel José Valles’ article, “Patria” in the journal Ejército, no. 37, published in February 1943, the Gypsies, like the “hawkers, idlers, thugs and the rest of the international vermin,” have no homeland, although in their specific case one might wonder “whether they are quadrupeds or men,” quoted in Juan Carlos Losada Malvárez, La ideología del Ejército franquista, 1939–1959 (Madrid: Istmo, 1990), 29. I am grateful to Alberto Carrillo for bringing this text to my attention.
daughters and citizens “turned” the Gypsies into child stealers. The figure of the Gypsy represents the threat that hangs over disobedient children, who can easily be kidnapped if they do not stick to the rules that protect them. Away from the civilized world, there are still nomadic tribes that pass through town one day, and the next, they have already disappeared into their rootless mist. So, in order to show the young the advantages of loving their own families and cultures, Gypsies are represented to succeeding generations as dangerous anti-citizens. The stereotype of Gypsies as kidnappers of children (white and blond, of course), whom they carry off to their camps for sinister purposes, is as persistent as the stereotype of cannibalism, or even more so. The title of Kommers’ study sums up his argument, which is that wherever the talk is of “stealing” children, it is the Gypsies who are being “robbed”: of their opportunity to be respectable subjects and not just a collection of negative stereotypes.

Based on his proposal, I should like to conclude by drawing together some of the arguments put forward in the previous sections, so justifying the title of this chapter. My main thesis is that it is those who are accused of cannibalism who are in reality the object of an operation in which they are culturally (and politically) cannibalized by a nation that “devours” them. In this Saturn-like operation, the “fatherland” devours its Gypsy children, those who are legally defined as citizens, used as a symbol and civically marginalized, all at the same time, as I sum up in the three main conclusions that follow.

In the first place, I maintain that the discourse that exoticized them was so powerful that it gave the subjects in question great performative capacity, and continues to do so. This can be verified in particular in the commonplace of Gypsies as artistes devoted to national Flamenco song and dance, which has been attributed to them so persistently by outsiders that it has been incorporated and assimilated by those on the inside. In this respect, the Gypsies could be considered a “performative community,” the result of the cultural activity of a few observers fictionalizing—in writing or in pictures—and creating identities. To state that a discourse creates a certain cultural reality does not imply that the Gypsies can be reduced to images, circumventing social practices that have marked and continue to mark the lives of many people.\footnote{Kommers, “Gypsies”. As Kommers points out, scholars and observers in various fields have been working on and developing a historical concept of what it means “to be a Gypsy” that models socio-cultural reality; Gypsies live through images and, in this sense, images “create” Gypsies. Various studies have traced the modi operandi of those scholars who have historically looked for the “true” Gypsies, deciding who can be included in that category and why, providing the basis for the}
It does however imply taking into account that decades—even centuries—of observation have generated practices that have produced a collective identity. I say all of this not to play down the capacity for resistance, negotiation and re-elaboration of the subjects in question, but precisely in order to bring it out. A good example of this tension would be Mariano Fernández, better known as Chorrojumo, a Gypsy famous as a model for photographers and artists [Fig. 6-6].

![Fig. 6-6: Rafael Garzón: Chorrojumo. The Prince of the Gypsies, n.d.](image)

It was Fortuny who created his image, dressing him in a white shirt, short blue jacket with silver ornamental buttons, a scarlet sash and so on; and he appears, providing the human touch, in a variety of photographs, postcards and paintings of monuments in Granada, wearing the inevitable sombrero de catite, the hat with turned up brim and pointed crown, and with a staff in his hand. Chorrojumo lent his striking appearance and pose to the business of art and tourism, to the extent that he even had visiting cards, policies of every type that have targeted them, and still do. Outstanding among these is the already mentioned Willems, *In Search of the True Gypsy.*
advertising himself as a model and a “Gypsy prince.” The Gypsies then are not simply passive receptors of other people’s discourses; in the twentieth century of course the capacity for agency associated with this identity expanded to accommodate strategies of survival and social mobility.

We know Chorrojumo’s real name and it would be possible to write a biography of him; nevertheless, his luck, if luck is the word, is not the same as that of the scores of Gypsy men and women who were forced to become artistes, ever ready to satisfy the gaze of travellers from outside, not to mention that of the señoritos (rich young wastrels) on the inside, as the critical social literature increasingly records. There are plenty of nineteenth-century photographs, like the one depicted below, in which bodies drained of all life give shape to what the observing eye expects of them [Fig. 6-7]. Condemned to be artistes of Flamenco singing and dancing constructed as the expression of the essence of the nation, this is the space where, for better or worse, they are visible. If they pursue any other form of art, they are no longer visible as “Gypsies” and it is easier to read them using some other identitarian cliché; this is what happened, for example, with Helios Gómez, a magnificent draughtsman and poster designer who started out hand-painting pottery in Triana and joined the cause of the anarchists, first, and then the communists, during the turbulent decade of the 1930s. It should not, in my view, be understood that when Gómez is speaking as a politicized artist, he is speaking only or mainly as an anarchist or a communist (simply because he is no longer a stereotypical Gypsy). The fact that he was concerned about the problems of the Gypsies in Spain and pointed to political solutions—within the idealized Soviet model that he learned about on a trip—shows that assigned and assumed identities are fluid spaces that should be understood

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54 The work of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez at the turn of the century is particularly representative in this respect. See Timothy Mitchell, Flamenco Deep Song (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) for the co-dependency between señoritos and marginal artistes in the creation of Flamenco, presented as a negotiation, albeit an unequal one.

55 For one approach to his biographical profile, see Ursula Tjaden, Helios Gómez: artista de corbata roja (Tafalla, Navarre: Autores Editores, 2011).
as compatible emotional communities, rather than hermetically sealed compartments with labels on them.\textsuperscript{56}

Secondly, from the perspective of the history of citizenship, it is possible to state that the Gypsies have been turned into an essential part of the symbolic body of the Spanish nation as a result of a protracted political and cultural operation, which has nevertheless led to the real, non-symbolic bodies and their problems being forgotten about.\textsuperscript{57} Also cast into oblivion, incidentally, are the histories of those Gypsies who do not fit the

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Granada_Group_of_Dancing_Gypsies.jpg}
\caption{Rafael Garzón: Granada: Group of Dancing Gypsies.}
\end{figure}


\textsuperscript{57} A suggestion along similar lines, which has inspired this one, can be found in chapter four of this volume, Pilar Pérez-Fuentes, “Body to Body with the Liberals: The Association Movement of the "Coloured Race" in Cuba, 1878–1898.
stereotype—the ones who are not nomads, Bohemians, free spirits, artistes, lawless or live outside the social order—and who, to an even greater extent than Helios Gómez, do not appear in the photos, not ones like these, whose whereabouts are more difficult to trace, but in the “photo” that is imagined and repeated through the gaze of the Other [Figs. 6-8, 6-9].

Fig. 6-8: Helios Gómez in his Studio, 1929; Fig. 6-9: Two gypsy soldiers, fragment, 1976.

This set of acts of forgetfulness continues down to today; we have proceeded to deconstruct the symbol—there are studies of Francoism that explain and dismantle the use of Flamenco by the regime—but without confronting the problem(s) of a historical exclusion that has proved particularly durable. By this, I do not mean that there have not been welfare initiatives addressing marginalization in the economy, education and healthcare (there were some when the welfare state functioned in Spain) nor that there is no Gypsy association movement demanding them, but that there is a dearth of publicly-funded scientific projects in the academic environment aimed at stripping away the myth.

The third and final conclusion then is that there have been scarcely any intellectual initiatives that have shown any interest in critically analysing the history of this exclusion. It is necessary to investigate in historical terms the reasons for and modi operandi used to create this marginalization, which has been comprehensively naturalized by society,
as can be appreciated in such commonplaces as: “Gypsies live like that because they want to” because “that’s just the way they are,” or “they exclude themselves of their own free will” because “they don’t want to integrate.” Whereas, from the beginning of the transition to democracy, Spanish anthropology and sociology produced academic initiatives that dealt with, and continue to deal with, the actual conditions in which many Gypsy communities live in Spain and the way they are undervalued in political and civic terms (on this point, the studies of Teresa San Román and her team are fundamental), the truth is that there are practically no history studies on this topic in the Spanish academic world. What is more, this gap contrasts with the state of Romany studies in the historiography of other European countries.

This topic in my opinion urgently needs a systematic research programme with a long-term chronological view and, above all, a broad geographical scope. Studying the history of the Gypsies in Spain also means studying them in Latin America, where they were early arrivals from the Iberian peninsula and where some of them today form a special Hispanic universe; it also means connecting with the past of European Gypsies, adopting an approach to history that is not only comparative, but

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58 For introductory guides, see the studies by Teresa San Román, ed., Entre la marginación y el racismo: Reflexiones sobre la vida de los gitanos, Alianza Universidad 471 (Madrid: Alianza, 1986); Teresa San Román, La diferencia inquietante: Viejas y nuevas estrategias culturales de los gitanos, Antropología y Etnología (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España, 1997).
59 The modern era has benefited from a number of studies, notably the pioneering study by Sánchez Ortega, Los gitanos españoles. El periodo borbónico; which have not had any historiographical continuity. See also, Manuel Martínez Martínez, Los forzados de Marina en el siglo XVIII. El caso de los gitanos (1700–1765) (Almeria: Universidad de Almería, 2007). For the contemporary era, there are no overall views of the history of Spanish Gypsies, apart from the few pages that Leblon devotes to them in his pioneering study, Los gitanos de España, which focuses basically on the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In this regard, Charnon-Deutsch’s oft-quoted The Spanish Gypsy, a study of the historical construction of the image of the Gypsies, has no equal in Spanish historiography. Some young researchers have recently become interested in the role of Gypsies during the Spanish Civil War; see, for example, David Martín Sánchez, “Gitanos en la guerra civil española,” Tchatchipen, No. 51 (2005): 27–36.
60 See for example Thomas Acton, Gitanos (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1983); David Mayall, Gypsy-Travellers in Nineteenth-Century Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Fraser, Los gitanos; and Hancock, The Pariah Syndrome. These are but a few examples of the state of the question, which I do not claim to be exhaustive.
truly transnational. Tackling such a multifaceted object of study with so many civic implications should certainly involve collaboration across multiple disciplines, some of which, as has just been indicated, have more of a tradition in Romany studies. History may, nonetheless, contribute its own particular deconstructive potential. If there is one category in Western culture that has been sustained for centuries on images of alterity, it is the Gypsy one. More than any other national stereotype, the one pertaining to this people without a territory of its own has been constructed out of such an extensive flow of fictional, artistic and scientific narratives that, as Ian Hancock states, it may be a mission impossible to deconstruct it at all. This stereotype is not a thing of the past; it is still with us, implanted in the common sense of our societies, and discriminates right now against entire communities at the very heart of the First World. Though the task may be arduous, deconstructing these images that feed prejudice is, in the opinion of this author, an important civic obligation for those of us who study society from different points of view. History is probably the best tool for this demolition work, since it offers the opportunity of appreciating the way in which certain social and political realities that are not at all natural, inevitable or necessary, have been constructed culturally. The study of the past is, in this case, especially pregnant with the future.

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