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**FRAMING THE NATION: THE FAMILY AS A MODEL FOR NATION
BUILDING IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH AMERICAN NOVEL**

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Bonnie Loder

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The dissertation of Bonnie Loder was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Julia Cuervo Hewitt
Professor of Spanish
Dissertation Advisor
Chair of Committee

Fernando Operé
Professor of Spanish
University of Virginia
Special Committee Member

Thomas O. Beebee
Professor of Comparative Literature

Mary E. Barnard
Professor of Spanish

Guadalupe Martí-Peña
Senior Lecturer of Spanish

Giuli Dussias
Department Head

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I explore how novelistic representations of the family, family ties, and domestic spaces provided a framework through which nineteenth-century Spanish American writers mapped out their visions for the nations when these were politically, culturally, and geographically divided. By examining seven novels from Argentina, Peru, and Cuba between the years 1839 and 1889, I analyze how the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces allowed writers to unite readers and incorporate them into what Benedict Anderson has termed an “imagined” national community. At the same time, the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces also provided fertile sites for dialogues regarding the political order, social hierarchy, and gender in the new nation and was capable of accommodating different visions for the newly-emerging national communities. By examining the families presented in nineteenth-century Spanish American novels, their structure, and the way they interact with the fictional society developed in the novel, I compare, as well as contrast, the way that nineteenth-century writers from Argentina, Peru, and Cuba writers envisioned the nation through the family.

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Introduction

In the minds of many intellectuals, independence from Spain and the founding of the new republics presented Spanish Americans with the opportunity to achieve the goals of justice and progress that had been suppressed under the colonial regime. The political revolutions and scientific discoveries taking place in Europe and North America exerted an immense influence on Spanish America, infusing intellectuals with a sense of their capability and even duty as historical agents who actively shaped the present and future of the new nations.¹ With the arrival of Romanticism as the new literary movement in Spanish America, furthermore, intellectuals gained an appropriate mode of expression through which they could voice their desire for complete political, cultural, and artistic liberation. Literary critic Antonio Ruggiano captures the sense of hope and expectation that Romanticism presented to Spanish Americans when he describes this era as:

un despertar a la realidad histórica de América, un principio de su toma de conciencia como ser en el mundo: la conquista de un *tiempo* para la historia y el establecimiento de un *espacio* para la existencia propia. (286; emphasis in the original)

However, while nineteenth-century Spanish American elites pursued a level of cultural and economic prosperity that could equate them with—and perhaps even propel them

¹ For an explanation of the shift from Classical metaphysics to Romantic historicism during this period, see Morse Peckham's 1951 article "Toward a Theory of Romanticism" (10-11). See also Isaiah Berlin's 1999 *The Roots of Romanticism* (5-10).

² For example, Simón Bolívar, the "libertador" of South America, went on to accept life term as

beyond—Europe and North America, the disunity that characterized the post-independence period exposed the true fragility of the Independence project.

While the former colonies had been able to unite in a common front during the struggle against Spain, the first decades of the post-independence era constituted a time of fragmentation and violence. As John Chasteen explains in his introduction to *Beyond Imagined Communities: Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (2003), the nativist discourse of “us” versus “them” had provided a sort of socio-political glue during the wars of independence, fostering a sense of shared purpose where feelings of inclusion were weak and where ethno-racial and regional loyalties regularly prevailed over more abstract modes of identification. As Chasteen explains, the nativist discourse functioned:

by rhetorically asserting affinities among the vast native-born majority in contradistinction to a vulnerable, neatly defined enemy. Focus on a common enemy had tremendous political utility in the creation of broad political alliances because, unlike problematical aspirations of national solidarity, anti-Spanish and anti-Portuguese sentiments were something that (Latin) Americans of all social classes did indeed share. (xv)

However, the collapse of the colonial regime was followed by a period of division and political strife, during which several leaders did not hesitate to assume exceptional powers.² The result of this state of affairs, as Emilio Carilla affirms in *El romanticismo*

² For example, Simón Bolívar, the “libertador” of South America, went on to accept life term as president of Bolivia, and he later ruled Colombia with virtually dictatorial power (Peloso and Tenenbaum 3). Similarly, Mexican general Agustín de Iturbide proposed a constitutional monarchy that would feature a Bourbon king; however, when his band of supporters staged an

en la América Hispana (1958), “es [que] la desorientación, el caos, y la disyuntiva de la época parece ser ‘Anarquía o despotismo’” (21).

The nations that emerged from the former Spanish colonies between the years 1810 and 1825 were beset by border disputes, civil wars, and unpredictable governments. The vast distances and geographical barriers also led to a progressive and often violent fragmentation of larger political entities into smaller ones. For example, by 1831, Gran Colombia had divided to form Colombia (which at the time was called the Republic of New Granada and included Panama), Ecuador, and Venezuela. However, even after statesmen succeeded in delimiting the borders, many of the new territories were nations more in theory than in practice. This situation was particularly notable, for example, in Peru, where it took travelers around twenty-five days to make the journey from the Andean city of Cuzco to the coastal city of Pisco. The difficulties of the journey meant that coastal urbanites were uninformed and often unconcerned about life in the highland regions. As North American traveler George E. Squier observed, “En Lima, mucho menos se sabe del Cuzco que de Berlín. Por un limeño que ha llegado al Cuzco, cien han visitado París” (Qtd. in Denegri 162). As these examples demonstrate, while the leap from colonialism to nationhood was supposed to imply a fundamental shift in one’s way

uprising in favor of naming him emperor, Iturbide had himself crowned Agustín I. In Argentina, Juan Manuel de Rosas acceded to the position of Governor of Buenos Aires and quickly established himself as absolute ruler of Argentina. As I discuss in Chapter 1, Rosas’s dictatorial regime led to a mass exile of Argentine thinkers and writers.

of identifying within society, the actual practice of nationhood in Spanish America typically fell short of theoretical ideals.³

Upon independence from Spain, the new Spanish American nations lacked the discursive infrastructure capable of forging a sense of national community and of making the nations real and compelling in the minds of the new citizens.⁴ In addition to the political instability of the new nations, the soaring illiteracy rates meant that Spanish American writers faced serious challenges in their attempts to reach a wide readership. Nonetheless, these circumstances did not discourage writers from considering themselves guiding models for the citizens of the newly-independent Spanish American nations; rather, as Jean Franco observes: “In the absence of an educated ruling elite, they had to be prophet, critic and architect of the new society” (348). During this time period, literature provided a model through which intellectuals imagined the new socio-political order and projected their dreams for harmonious, modern, and prosperous nations. As critics have

³ As Chasteen notes: “The territorial limits of the patria defined, or were supposed to define, a sovereign people, the essential foundation of republican legitimacy. Those born within it felt, or were supposed to feel a powerful affinity. Those who shared the new national identity shared, or were supposed to share, the rights and obligations of citizenship, including a relatively broad male suffrage” (xv). However, as Chasteen’s use of the conditional suggests (“were supposed to define,” “were supposed to feel,” “were supposed to share”), many of these goals remained unfulfilled during the nineteenth century. In fact, most historians agree that only with the coming of the twentieth century did “mass political participation make nations compelling communities in the imagination of most Latin Americans” (Chasteen xix).

⁴ As David Bushnell and Neill MacAulay observe in *The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (1994), while the colonial regime was a primary source of oppression in Spanish America, life in the colony “had the compensating virtue of letting people know at all times where they stood and giving them a certain feeling of security in that social niche” (7). Political independence from Spain, for its part, raised questions concerning the individual’s place within society and provoked uncertainties about his or her rights and responsibilities.

noted, the novel was particularly suited for this task.⁵ On the one hand, the novel's capacity to juxtapose multiple, often contradictory voices and discourses (what Mikhail Bakhtin referred to as "heteroglossia") made it an effective means of examining (either to promote or to challenge) the new rational, scientific, and cultural ideas of the time period. In addition to its aggregate quality, however, the novel's particular form also favored greater reader identification. As Ian Watt explains in *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (1964), as opposed to other literary forms, the novel's ability to present detailed explorations of inner life often gave readers the impression of *knowing* the protagonists and participating in their trials and travails (204).

In this dissertation, I explore how the nineteenth-century Spanish American writer envisioned his or her mission as "architect of the new society"—not as a function of constructing a physical/geographical map of society—but rather as that of conceiving an ideological, morally inclined map for each respective nation and for Spanish America as a whole. The objective of this study is to bring into focus how writers utilized literary representations of the family, family ties, and domestic spaces as a framework through which they imagined the nations when these were politically, culturally, and geographically divided. By taking the years 1839 to 1889 as the chronological scope of my study, I am able to show that the family continued to provide Spanish American writers with a model to imagine the nation during very different stages of the nation-

⁵ See, for example, Doris Sommer's 1991 *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (24), Antonio Benítez Rojo's "The Nineteenth-Century Spanish American Novel" (419), and Fernando Unzueta's 1996 *La imaginación histórica y el romance nacional en Hispanoamérica* (119).

building process.⁶ In addition to studying novels by writers from Argentina and Peru, I include the case of Cuba, a nation not yet independent, in order to compare, as well as contrast, how authors still living in a Spanish colony expressed their desire for an independent national community through the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces. Through their representations of the family and domestic spaces (which, in Cuba during the nineteenth century, often included slaves), Cuban writers fostered a new cultural and geographic consciousness at a time when writers could only imagine the island as a modern, independent nation.

My study expands upon recent scholarship on the interplay between literature and politics during the Spanish American nation-building era such as Doris Sommer's *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991). In her study, Sommer highlights Spanish American writers' tendency to project utopian visions for the new nations through novels that allegorize different elements of the republics. As she argues:

The coherence comes from their common project to build through reconciliations and amalgamations of national constituencies cast as lovers destined to desire each other. This produces a surprisingly consistent narrative form that is apparently adequate to a range of political positions; they are moved by the logic of love. (24)

⁶ In fact, Margarita Saona argues that the family continued to provide Spanish-American writers with a model to voice national concerns during the twentieth-century in her study *Novelas familiares: Figuraciones de la nación en la novela latinoamericana* (2004).

However, while Sommer elucidates critical patterns within nineteenth-century nation-building texts in Spanish America and serves as a guiding model for my study, her primary focus on male-authored novels gives a limited perspective on the types of nation-building projects that evolved in nineteenth-century Spanish America.

The present study incorporates lesser-theorized novels in order to bring into focus how nineteenth-century Spanish American writers, in particular *female* writers, envisioned alternative and conflicting visions of the family and the nation in their novels. Drawing on the recent scholarship of critics like Francine Masiello, Nancy LaGreca, and Francesca Denegri, I explore how female writers proposed and amended national agendas through their own unique visions of the “nation-family.” For example, I draw on several ideas from Masiello’s *Between Civilization & Barbarism: Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina* (1992) in order to underscore the intermediary position taken by many female writers with regards to the discourse of “civilization versus barbarism.” One of the central premises of Masiello’s study is that “a history of women in Argentine culture reveals an unraveling of false oppositions, as if to repudiate an equivocal program of intelligibility that has been set in motion by the leaders of state” (10). However, by examining constructions of the family and the nation by Peruvian and Cuban female writers, I reveal that this was not limited to Argentina but rather that it constituted a more general phenomenon. I also draw on LaGreca’s *Rewriting Womanhood: Feminism, Subjectivity, and the Angel of the House in the Latin American Novel, 1887-1903* (2009) in order to analyze how nineteenth-century Spanish American female writers tended to adopt and adapt—rather than explicitly reject—hegemonic discourses about the nation and the family in order to politicize the home and reinstate

women with political and historical agency. In her study, LaGreca argues that female writers often adopted the paradigm of the “Angel of the Hearth” and manipulated it “for the purposes of promoting women’s agency, intellectual abilities, and participation in public life—aims that were not part of national discourses on women’s place” (6).

Nineteenth-Century Spanish American Literature Overview

During the nineteenth century, Spanish American writers were faced with the task of describing the new nations and their inhabitants as unique. The belated arrival of Romanticism to Spanish America provided a vehicle for a new mode of expression. The advent of Romanticism as the dominant cultural and literary form is generally ascribed to the Argentine poet, Esteban Echeverría (1805-1851), who saw in the new movement a means of making a definitive break with the past and of forging a future for the new Spanish American nations. During his five-year stay in Europe (mainly in Paris), the young Argentine experienced the most fervent years of Romanticism, becoming inspired by the works of writers such as François-René Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, and Lord Byron.⁷ Upon his return to Argentina in 1830, he set out to disseminate the major tenets of Romanticism and to convert his fellow Argentine writers to the new movement. The emphasis on artistic originality and the search for national origins constituted decisive components of Echeverría’s translation of European Romanticism to the Spanish

⁷ Regarding the impact of this trip to Europe on Echeverría, the Argentine bard himself wrote that: “Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe, y especialmente Byron me conmovieron profundamente y me revelaron un mundo nuevo. Entonces me sentí inclinado a poetizar [...], escribí algunos versos que aplaudieron mucho mis compatriotas residentes en París” (*Obras completas* 449).

American context, as these would contribute to the development of an authentic, national literature and would remind readers that they inhabited a particular geographic space known as, for example, Argentina, Peru, or Cuba.⁸

Another element that formed a crucial part of Echeverría's translation of European Romanticism was the emphasis on liberty, equality, and fraternity. As he proclaimed in his famous literary manifesto, "Clasicismo y romanticismo" (1837), a text that was highly influenced by Victor Hugo:

El espíritu del siglo lleva hoy a todas las naciones a emanciparse, a gozar de la independencia, no sólo política sino filosófica y literaria; a vincular su gloria no sólo en libertad, en riqueza y en poder, sino en el libre y espontáneo ejercicio de sus facultades morales y de consiguiente en la originalidad de sus artistas. (45)

This excerpt highlights the appeal that Romanticism would have posed to those writers seeking to construct more democratic national communities. Writers perceived the new literature as an instrument that could help them complete the process of emancipation that began with the wars of independence. However, the exact direction and extent of this project of emancipation was a matter of debate among liberals of the nineteenth century.

⁸ In the *Advertencia* to his foundational poem *La cautiva* (1837), Echeverría affirms that writers should derive the substance of their poetry from autochthonous national elements. As he writes: "El Desierto es nuestro, es nuestro más pingüe patrimonio, y debemos poner nuestro conato en sacar de su seno, no sólo riqueza para nuestro engrandecimiento y bienestar, sino también poesía para nuestro deleite moral y fomento de nuestra literatura nacional" (117). As I explain later, however, while members of Argentina's Generation '37 saw the unpopulated expanses of the rural interior, along with its non-white inhabitants, as appropriate motifs for the new national literature, most writers could hardly consider accepting them in their state of "barbarism" as a part of a modern nation.

Nineteenth-century Spanish American liberals were deeply invested with challenging the old order and exorcising traces of the colonial past. At the same time, they appreciated the importance of reinforcing the new socio-political order that was in the process of development. Without a body of citizens who respected the new laws, Spanish America would never transition out of the period of anarchy and despotism that followed the wars of independence. Among other reasons, the urgent need to stabilize the new nations led many nineteenth-century Spanish American writers to avoid certain motifs from European Romanticism that would be counterproductive to their nation-building projects. As Isaiah Berlin shows in *The Roots of Romanticism*, certain modalities of Romanticism (which Berlin considers the only authentic Romanticism, but which other critics have termed “radical” Romanticism), did *not* advocate adjusting oneself to pre-established rules, finding one’s place in society, or even professing one’s loyalty to the nation (8-9). Rather, living by “romantic” principles often implied a challenge to those structures (religious, social, familial, etc.) that restricted the freedoms of the individual. For these reasons, the skepticism and exacerbated individualism of poets like Lord Byron (1788-1824) and José de Espronceda (1808-1842), although admired, were either avoided or adopted with great prudence by most nineteenth-century nation-building writers.

In this way, while writers drew on tendencies within Romanticism to transmit nationalism to their reader and to exercise their new artistic freedoms, most of the works produced during the nineteenth century continued to appreciate the importance of adjusting to society, which was a basic component of a stable, cohesive nation.⁹ The

⁹ According to Leopoldo Zea in *Dos etapas del pensamiento en Hispanoamérica: Del romanticismo al positivismo* (1949), French traditionalist thinkers such as Joseph de Maistre,

mission of encouraging positive codes of behavior in readers and instructing them about their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the new nations held a privileged space in the minds of nineteenth-century Spanish American writers, many of whom saw their role as nothing less than shaping the course of nineteenth-century history. The result of this situation is the immensely didactic and morally inclined quality that characterizes much—but not all—of nineteenth-century Spanish American literature. This view is born out by the numerous prologues to the novels of the time period, which reflect the writers' belief that their works had real effects on their readers and attest to the ethical imperative these writers placed on their work.¹⁰ The prologue to Bartolomé Mitre's novel *Soledad* (1847) is particularly revealing of the writer's perceived role as society's moral guide. In his prologue, Mitre carefully distinguishes the "authentic" novel from the poorly handled imitation that perturbs its reader and moves his or her passions to dangerous heights. The true novel, according to Mitre, presents "un espejo fiel en que el hombre se contempla tal cual es, con sus vicios y virtudes, y cuya vista despierta por lo general profundas meditaciones o saludables escarmientos" (8-9).

Essays and speeches from the nineteenth century likewise reflect the vision of literature as a powerful instrument of social reform. The concern for reinforcing the social order through literature shines forth readily, for example, in José Victorino

Chateaubriand, Benjamín Constant, and the Vicomte de Bonald provided Spanish American writers "las armas para combatir el ingenuo utopismo en que habían caído los ilustrados" (39).

¹⁰ We can see this reflected in the prologues to novels such as *La educación de las mujeres: ó La Quijotita y su prima* (1819) by the Mexican writer José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, *La novia del hereje, o, La inquisición de Lima* (1846) by the Argentine writer Vicente Fidel López, and *Aves sin nido* (1889), by the Peruvian writer Clorinda Matto de Turner.

Lastarria's (1817-1888) *Discurso de 1842*. In this speech, the Chilean politician encourages writers to:

llenar vuestra misión de utilidad y progreso; ascribid para el pueblo, ilustradlo, combatiendo sus vicios y fomentando sus virtudes, recordándole sus hechos heroicos, acostumbrándole a venerar su religión y sus instituciones; así estrecharéis los vínculos que lo ligan, le haréis amar a su patria y lo acostumbraréis a mirar, siempre unidas, su libertad y su existencia social. (Qtd. in Zea 134-135)

As this excerpt highlights, many nineteenth-century Spanish American intellectuals perceived literature as a way to reconcile man with society, to discourage vice, and to promote virtuous codes of behavior. We can see intellectuals taking a similar position with regards to literature toward the latter part of the century as well. For example, in 1876, the Peruvian writer Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera proclaimed that literature constituted “la luz mas [sic] pura y bienhechora, que puede llegar hasta la conciencia de un pueblo; es el mejor bruñidor de las malas costumbres y de los hábitos viciosos de una sociedad” (7). Later in her text, Cabello de Carbonera signals that:

Las letras son tambien [sic] una arma poderosa y afilada, con que se puede combatir los errores relijiosos [sic], que exitan al fanatismo, ese monstruo que tantos y tan grandes males ha causado; ese pérfido tirano que, donde quiera que su dominio se ha dejado sentir señoreándose, ya sea sobre los poderes ó sobre las masas de un pueblo, no ha hecho mas [sic] que

envilecer á los unos y embrutecer á los otros, ahogando en un mar de sangre los mas [sic] nobles y generosos instintos del hombre. (7-8)¹¹

This excerpt reinforces Fernando Unzueta's point in "Scenes of Reading: Imagining the Nations/Romancing History in Spanish America" (2003) that: "Intellectuals of the period had enormous faith in the power of the written word, both formative and corruptive... they believed that literature in fact influences the way readers behave and see themselves and their worlds" (119). Considering writers' conviction that their literature had real consequences for the nation by molding the impressions, tastes, and even the moral and intellectual development of their readers, it is no wonder they went to such lengths to awaken readers to their new roles as citizens of the nation.

Because debates about the family in Spanish America were highly influenced by European ideas and philosophical movements, the following section will briefly trace the changes occurring in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe that led to the triumph of the affective, nuclear family. By establishing some of the principal characteristics of the affective family in this introduction, I will then be able to examine how different Spanish American intellectuals utilized literary representations of the family in order to express their ideal visions for the new national communities.

¹¹ Cabello de Carbonera read this speech on 19 July 1876 at the first of the famous *Veladas literarias* held in Lima by the Argentine expatriate, Juana Manuela Gorriti.

The Family as a Model for the Nation

The Rise of the Affective Family in Europe

Thinkers have been concerned with the dynamic relationship between the family structure and the political state as early as Plato's *Republic* in the third century B.C. However, changes taking place in Western Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought greater focus on the importance of this social unit to the wellbeing of society. John Locke's (1632-1704) theory of *tabula rasa*, which posited that individuals came into the world free of innate ideas, contributed to a renewed emphasis on early education and family life as means of improving intellectual and moral development.¹² The rise in the perceived importance of childhood also meant that the home was increasingly perceived as an intimate realm where children learned the lessons that would determine their character and their behavior in society. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712-1778) *Emile: Or, Treatise on Education* (1762), which exerted a strong influence in Spanish America, attests to the growing concern about the connection between family life, early education, and social wellbeing.¹³ Consistent with his emphasis on the individual and the emotions, the Genevan philosopher distinguished the gender-based, "affective family" as the social unit that could reconcile citizens with society while preserving their natural goodness. Rousseau contrasted this family archetype to the

¹² If Locke's theory was correct, and all knowledge originated in sensory experience, then early childhood had a much more significant impact on the growth of individuals than thinkers had previously believed.

¹³ We can see the influence of *Emile* on the Mexican writer José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi in his novel *La educación de las mujeres: ó La Quijotita y su prima* (1819).

austere, aristocratic family, a social unit structured by oppressive patriarchal authority and held together largely by economic—as opposed to emotional—ties and interests. For its part, the loving, affective family is distinguished by diminished patriarchal authority and strong emotional bonds between its members, who fulfill family obligations out of fondness as opposed to self-interest.

Democracy in America (1835; 1840), by Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), was also popular within Spanish American intellectual circles. In his work, Tocqueville reinforces the notion of the family as a social unit that mirrors the manner in which authority is exercised in the political sphere. Stated in another way, the family reflects the polis. As we read, within monarchical societies:

the father enjoys more than just a natural right. He is given a political right to command. He is the author and support of the family; he is also its magistrate...He is listened to with deference and approached only with respect, and the love that one bears for him is always tempered with fear.

(686-687)

Consistent with his view of the family as a reflection of the state, Tocqueville held that liberalizing the political sphere brought about more horizontal relationships within the domestic space. In his examination of the North American family, which had experienced the transition to a representative form of government, Tocqueville notes that “as power slips away from the aristocracy, we see all that was austere, conventional, and legal vanishing from paternal power...and a kind of equality establishing itself around the domestic hearth” (688). Tocqueville thus established an equation between representative forms of government and more egalitarian family structures.

As Elizabeth Garrels explains in her excellent study “‘El Espíritu de la familia’ en *La novia del hereje* de Vicente Fidel López” (1987), Tocqueville was widely read in Spanish America, particularly by Argentine intellectuals, who accepted as true the theory that the family and the household reflect the larger political and social institutions of a given society. As Garrels explains:

El impacto de esta perspectiva se registró no sólo en el joven [Vicente Fidel] López sino en el círculo de amigos que lo rodeaba en Santiago de Chile. Está presente, por ejemplo, en muchas páginas del *Facundo* (1845), que su buen amigo Sarmiento publicó primero como folletín en el diario *El Progreso* e inmediatamente después como libro. Repetidas veces el autor del *Facundo* reproduce anécdotas de la vida familiar de Rosas y de Quiroga para substanciar sus observaciones sobre los sistemas políticos que los dos supuestamente personificaban. (8)¹⁴

Garrels also notes that in many nineteenth-century Spanish American novels, we can discern glimpses of the “affective” family outlined by Rousseau in his *Emile*. Following the assumption that a nation of self-determining citizens could only function through stable family structures, writers typically projected their goals of cohesive, modern nations onto the micro-level of the loving, yet decidedly patriarchal, family.

As Lawrence Stone reminds us in *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (1979), the rise of the “affective” family was part of a larger movement toward the principles of individualism. As Stone explains, the dissolution of traditional,

¹⁴ I discuss a number of these scenes from *Facundo* in detail in Chapter 1.

communal ties and the shift toward individual contractual relationships encouraged new modes of understanding one's place within society.¹⁵ According to Stone "affective individualism," with its emphasis on the self and the pursuit of personal happiness constituted "the most important change in *mentalité* to have occurred in the Early Modern period, indeed possibly in the last thousand years of Western history" (4). The rise of affective individualism also had direct consequences for the family, which, with the disintegration of the kinship system, had experienced a gradual yet progressive closing from an extensive family to the immediate, nuclear family. According to Stone, the new emphasis on love and the increased emotional bonding between members of the family was complemented by the emergence of "companionate" marriages, that is, marriages in which emotional preferences played a significant role.

Eighteenth-century England also saw a mass of publications devoted to discussions and considerations about women. Because mothers were often the primary educators of children, intellectuals became increasingly dedicated to the examination of women, their inherent "nature," and their role in society. However, as Stone duly notes, women were not generally treated as autonomous subjects in these texts but rather as a means of improving society. Many intellectuals argued for improving women's education in order to ensure that mothers were adequately prepared to educate their children and to provide better companions for their husbands (Stone 225-228). The renewed concern about mothers, children, and education was not an exclusively English phenomenon. The

¹⁵ As Stone observes, "Our civilisation as a whole is based on individual contractual relationships, as opposed to the unwritten, traditional and collective relationships of previous societies; and the idea of contract played an important part in the theoretical development of political individualism" (63-64).

rising importance of mothers in their role as educators had wide-reaching effects in Western Europe and Spanish America alike. Intellectuals during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from both regions would ascribe women a new moral superiority, through which they were believed to exert a positive influence over those around them. In *Emile*, for example, Rousseau proclaimed women as the guardians of private and public morality and the keystone of social health. According to Rousseau:

On the good constitution of mothers depends, in the first place, that of children; on the care of women depends the early education of men; and on women, again, depend the manners, their passions, their tastes, their pleasures, and even their happiness. (263)

However, while Rousseau perceived women as a valuable part of society, his model of the affective family was decidedly patriarchal. In the chapters on Sophie's education in *Emile*, for example, Rousseau emphasizes that women's education should enhance the differences between the sexes in order to foster codependence and to teach women to be obedient to men. For Rousseau, therefore, the family archetype that best served the individual and society was characterized by relaxed, yet undeniably present, patriarchal authority.

However, as critics have noted, while the domestic woman was hailed as the foundation of civilized society, the ideal of women's domesticity and the normalization of gender roles during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries increasingly prohibited them from participating in the public sphere. As critics have observed, the growing division between the private and public spheres set the conditions for the triumph of the

Angel of the Hearth, the new domestic archetype for women.¹⁶ The “Angel” guarded over her family, caring for her children, serving as loving companion to her husband, and maintaining domestic order through her abnegation, love, and moral superiority. As Catherine Jagoe explains in “La misión de la mujer” (1998):

Por esto se le llama el ángel, porque es realmente como una santa; nunca se altera, nunca tiene necesidades propias: todo lo sacrifica en aras del bienestar de los demás. Su altruismo y abnegación son infinitos. La mujer llega a ocupar un papel realmente nuevo en la mitología burguesa, como el hada buena, el alma de la familia. (30-31)

As Masiello, Peluffo, and LaGreca have affirmed, this archetype of female domesticity (along with the contradictions that this archetype embodied) was adopted by most Spanish American thinkers as a central component of the modern, refined, and virtuous family.¹⁷

¹⁶ Jürgen Habermas offers the following description of this spatial division in *The Theory of Communicative Action*: “With the bourgeois family and the decentralized religiosity of the congregation there arises a new sphere of intimacy that is expressed in a deepened culture of reflection and feeling and that alters the conditions of socialization. At the same time, a political public sphere of private persons takes shape, which, as a medium for permanent criticism, alters the conditions for the legitimation of political domination” (341).

¹⁷ For the rise of the image of the domestic woman in Peru, see Ana Peluffo’s *Lágrimas andinas: Sentimentalismo, género y virtud republicana en Clorinda Matto de Turner* (2005).

The Function of Literary Representations of the Family in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America

Spanish American liberals were attracted to the idea of modernizing the family to reflect their desires for greater social justice and equality. However, in the context of nineteenth-century Spanish America, where governing institutions were weak and reactionary forces threatened the new order, these writers were also quick to reinforce the importance of social adjustment. The image of peaceful domesticity became the new goal for the Spanish American community and served to support the stability and development of the new liberal states. As Masiello observes:

The representation of the unified family thus served the stability of the emerging nation. It became a model for the reproduction of national values and for the advancement of state ideology. It provided an equilibrated version of domestic life in the newly independent society and challenged any evidence of a [sic] national anarchy or chaos. (18)

In this way, the treatment of the family in the literature of nineteenth-century post-independence Spanish America tended to follow a pattern similar to that of North America. As Emily VanDette observes in *Family and Nation in Nineteenth-Century American Women's Fiction* (2004), while the revolutionary era had witnessed a rebellion against patriarchy, the Republican era saw an “anxious return to a sense of patriarchal order in the American family, perceived by many as a necessary sacrifice to ensure the success of self-determining citizens” (5-6).

Similarly, for many Spanish American writers, the patriarchal family constituted the only imaginable—and consequently, *natural*—base of stable republican society.

From this perspective, many argued that applying the ideal of equality within the family itself would be impracticable in the young Spanish American societies. At the same time, however, there were exceptions to this tendency. The Chilean Francisco Bilbao (1823-1865), for example, took a rather radical stance with regards to democratizing the family structure in his essay “Sociabilidad Chilena” (1844). According to his essay, the family as practiced in both Spain and Spanish America was fundamentally hierarchical and needed to be reformed for individuals to truly be free. Later in the essay, Bilbao credits his models:

La Francia está a la cabeza de esta revolución, Jorge Sand a la cabeza de la Francia. Ahí está la sacerdotiza que se inmola, pero sus miradas proféticas señalan el crepúsculo de la rejección [sic] del matrimonio. (Qtd. in Garrels “El Espíritu” 10)

However, most Spanish American intellectuals proposed that to establish the equality of the sexes would threaten the new, fragile social order. This hesitance with regards to female liberation is clearly reflected in a speech by Miguel Cané (1851-1905), one of the members of Argentina’s Generation ‘37. As Cané cautiously stated:

We do indeed think that woman needs an emancipation lifting her from the lamentable condition in which uses and customs less republican than those necessary for our society have placed her, but we are far from espousing that the female occupy the space that among us the male himself does not know how to fill. (Qtd. in Garrels “Sarmiento” 275-276)

Most nineteenth-century Spanish Americans adopted Cané’s middle-course policy with regards to how far the ideal of liberty could be taken within the family itself.

What the nations needed—the dominant liberal discourse of the time went—was to stabilize the nations, expand the cities, educate the populace, and reconcile them with the new social order. In this way, Spanish American novels typically idealized loving—yet patriarchal—families bound by strong feelings of affection and mutual respect. Furthermore, the image of the Angel of the Hearth was incorporated into nineteenth-century Spanish American literature as a symbol of the refined, Americanized version of the white, European, patriarchal family (Denegri 79). LaGreca notes that support and praise for the Angel of the Hearth cut across political, social, and ideological divisions, making its way into “church sermons, Positivist journals, women’s magazines, novels, and nationalist essays” (11). The defining characteristics of the Angel, in both Europe and Spanish America, were her tenderness, her virtue, and her willingness to sacrifice personal happiness for her family.

As my study will demonstrate, even female writers who were critical of patriarchy in their personal correspondence and in their essays, such as Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda and Clorinda Matto de Turner, tended to depict rather traditional, hierarchical families in their novels. However, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar remind us in *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979), it is important to recall that nineteenth-century women writers who published their work necessarily broke with normative ideals of female domesticity and propriety, an act that often created pressure to comply with proper codes of feminine behavior in their work. This pressure increased when women chose to write novels, a genre that was considered unsuitable for female writers. However, for several Spanish American women of the nineteenth century, the advantages that the novel offered them

outweighed the risks, as it allowed them to contribute their own unique perspectives on nation building. As LaGreca points out:

a woman author held the attention of a reader for the course of several hundred pages. She had an audience. Indeed, she had power, because she earned an opportunity to pen her own version of the world and present this subjective alternative reality to a reading public. (4)

While female writers ostensibly upheld patriarchal values by presenting idealized depictions of traditional, patriarchal, white families, they also inserted arguments that destabilized this discourse. The use of humor and irony, for example, allowed female writers to subtly pinpoint injustices and inconsistencies within patriarchal discourses. Female writers also sought to expand female agency by reinforcing the importance of women to the family unit. Following this notion, one of my claims will be that female writers drew on the analogy between the family and the nation in order to politicize the home and thus reinstate women with political and historical agency. By depicting women as the fundamental base of the family and, by extension, the nation, writers also challenged what Nancy Armstrong identifies as the “symbolic behavior that constituted a private domain of the individual outside and apart from social history” (10).

At the same time, the second half of the century saw efforts on the part of several influential male *and* female writers to define new roles for women outside of the options of wife and mother, which often proved to be utopias that did not coincide with the lived experiences of many nineteenth-century Spanish American women. Women were becoming increasingly more insistent on the need to acquire an education, not only in order to properly raise their children and oversee domestic affairs but also to support

themselves if they should lose their spouse.¹⁸ As Sarmiento's "*Informes sobre educación*" (1856) demonstrates, male intellectuals also called on women in order to foster the nascent educational system, a treasured component of many Spanish American nation-building projects. However, while women found in Sarmiento one of their most staunch supporters, his struggle to improve their education responded more to a desire to shape the future generation of citizens than to expand women's role in society. As I will explain in the following chapter, Sarmiento never completely questioned the gender hierarchy that situated women in a secondary position to men; in fact, his writings reflect the conviction that women's subordination was a necessary feature of society.

Finally, I posit that literary representations of the family and domestic spaces aided writers in the inclusionary/exclusionary practices of nation building, allowing them to convey to readers who should belong within the nation, in what capacity, and who should be excluded from the national fabric.¹⁹ Nineteenth-century Spanish American intellectuals actively sought to construct a body of like-minded citizens, which they saw as an indispensable attribute of modern nations. As Mónica Quijada explains in *Homogeneidad y nación con un estudio de caso: Argentina, siglos XIX y XX* (2000), in the context of nineteenth-century Argentina:

¹⁸ In societies where matches between younger women and older men were encouraged, this scenario was all too frequent. For example, the Peruvian writer Clorinda Matto de Turner became a widow at the young age of twenty-three when her husband Joseph Turner passed away and left her with substantial debts to pay. Matto de Turner depended on her writing in order to support herself.

¹⁹ As Antonio Benítez-Rojo reminds us, while the term "nationalism" was not used during the early years of nation building in Spanish America, it was widely understood "as a practice designed to manipulate the differences which are in play in a given sociocultural arena, either in order to include or gather them together as native to the land, or in order to exclude or isolate them as alien" ("The Nineteenth-Century" 418).

Afirmaciones tales como que sin una población homogénea no hay nacionalidad, o que el progreso de un país ‘depende de la unidad y la uniformidad de los elementos que concurren a mantener la vida y animación del cuerpo social’, y la atribución de toda responsabilidad en el atraso del país respectivo a la ‘disparidad racial’, se hicieron recurrente en discursos, escritos, ensayos, panfletos y medios de comunicación. (50)

However, while national discourses in Argentina often called for the isolation and/or elimination of native elements, in Peru and Cuba, which boasted a substantial non-white population, nation builders required alternate strategies to achieve the much-desired goal of national homogeneity. One of my objectives in this study will be to trace the various discourses and strategies that writers used in order to construct the ideal national subject, and to point out that there were differences in the ways intellectuals, writers, and politicians envisioned the ideal citizen of the new nations. These differences were imbricated in both national and personal agendas.

One point that I emphasize over the course of this study is that female writers often sought to carve out a space in the national imaginary for the nation’s disenfranchised, with whom they had a shared experience of marginalization. Through their depictions of the family, family ties, and domestic spaces, female writers offered a new perspective on nation building, one that took into consideration the effects of the discourse of “progress” on women and non-white individuals. At the same time, I call attention to the fact that female-authored texts were not free of the Eurocentrism that pervaded nineteenth-century Spanish American society. However, I argue that the compassionate representation of peoples such as the slaves, gauchos, and women in these

novels marked a substantial change from the dominant masculine discourse that marginalized the nation's underprivileged sectors in order to facilitate the road to modernization.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 explores how Argentine writers utilized the nation-family metaphor in order to imagine a united nation both during and after the period of Juan Manuel de Rosas. In *Facundo* (1845), Sarmiento makes recourse to depictions of the family and domestic spaces in order to outline his theories about authority. His reconstructions of early episodes from the lives of Juan Facundo Quiroga and Juan Manuel de Rosas present allegories of *caudillismo* and reflect anxieties about weakened patriarchal authority, which he outlines through his construction of families featuring authoritarian mothers and dangerously rebellious sons. Absent from Sarmiento's text is the Angel of the Hearth who could preside over the home and mitigate violence and barbarism of the nation; rather, along with non-white individuals, Sarmiento represents powerful mother figures as sources of barbarism that must be eradicated on the nation's path to progress. In *Amalia* (1851/1855), José Mármol continues to make recourse to depictions of the family and domestic spaces in order to play up the dangers of Rosas and his multiethnic coterie. Mármol's treatment of Rosas's family in *Amalia* reflects the need to reform what he presents as an oppressive and outmoded form of society; meanwhile, he offers a glimpse of a new type of national community, a republic of individuals joined by (symbolically) familial solidarity and the principles of the May Revolution. In this way, the rhetoric of the family—as opposed to actual families connected by blood ties or matrimony—serves as the keystone of Mármol's nation-building discourse, encouraging readers to adopt a new, national consciousness based on the ideal of a republic composed of brothers and

sisters. However, my reading reveals that Mármol's proposed nation-family is not as liberal and fraternal as the rhetoric makes it appear. Like Sarmiento in *Facundo*, Mármol highlights that Rosas's darker, uncouth supporters necessarily formed a place outside the "national family." Furthermore, while Mármol depicts women as active participants in the struggle against Rosas, his novel longingly projects forward to a time when women could serve the nation through a more domestic role.

Sarmiento was deeply influential not only within Argentina but throughout nineteenth-century Spanish America. However, the ways in which he engaged the discourse of "civilization versus barbarism" did not define the nation-building projects of all Spanish American writers, nor for that matter did it define the nation-building projects of all Argentine writers.²⁰ As I will demonstrate in this study, along with the appeals for homogeneity, progress, and modernization came critiques of the direction that progress was taking in Spanish America. Eduarda Mansilla's novel *El médico de San Luis* (1860) offers a fruitful counterpoint to *Facundo* and *Amalia*. Her sentimental portrayal of a middle-class family living in rural Argentina not only undermines the associations between the autochthonous and barbarism, but it also demonstrates how diverse national elements can be harmonized within the domestic space. In my approach to this novel, I am taking a cue from Nancy Vogeley, who observed that *Foundational Fictions* does not

²⁰ Like Echeverría, Sarmiento celebrated aspects of Spanish American "barbarism" for its literary attraction. In *Facundo*, he identified the struggle between civilization and barbarism as productive material for the new national literature. As he writes: "Si un destello de literatura nacional puede brillar momentaneamente en las nuevas sociedades americanas, es el que resultará de la descripción de las grandiosas escenas naturales, y sobre todo de la lucha entre la civilización europea y la barbarie indígena, entre la inteligencia y la materia" (21). However, while Sarmiento and Echeverría identified Argentina's autochthonous elements as a generative source of the new national literature, they could hardly consider accepting them in their state of "barbarism" as part of the new national order.

amply address the way that novels can encourage sensitivity in their readers by depicting the plight of its protagonists. Making an insightful connection between nineteenth-century Spanish American literature and European literary traditions, Vogetley reminds us that many eighteenth-century English novels:

were written to induce suffering and bring about new social habits in the process. Benevolence and sociability...were individual virtues with public benefits that one could learn from reading such novels. In postcolonial Latin America, with its every-man-for-himself atmosphere of brutality and ugliness fostered by colonial exploitation and recent civil war, the need for making men feel (i.e., suffer) for one another was a much-lauded goal for art and literature. (393)

In *El médico de San Luis*, Mansilla engages the affective contours of the novel not only to garner sympathy for the white creole family at the center of the narrative but also for the impoverished members of the nation, for orphans, and even for gauchos. Through her construction of an inclusive nation-family that peacefully civilizes the countryside and its inhabitants, Mansilla offers a counter-response to Sarmiento's *Facundo* and accuses the policies that exploited the gauchos as cheap labor on the *estancias* and as army recruits and that denied them the basic rights of citizenship.

As I will discuss, Mansilla draws on the discourse of the Republican Mother in order to present women as an instrument of national unification in Argentina. Under the guiding influence of the Republican Mother, the family depicted in Mansilla's novel mediates between the nation's underprivileged sectors and the feudal institutions that unjustly persecute them. At the same time, however, a closer inspection reveals the

ethnocentric desire for homogenization that was a hallmark of nineteenth-century nation-building discourses. Throughout her novel, Mansilla foregrounds education as the primary means of integrating the nation's Others into a society that privileged European culture over its indigenous elements. Rather than problematizing the cultural loss entailed in these acts of assimilation, Mansilla presents the erasure of cultural difference as an inevitable, even desirable, step in the nation-building process. Mansilla's treatment of the problem of national heterogeneity seems to reinforce E. Bradford Burns's observation in *The Poverty of Progress: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (1980) that "Intellectuals did not have to be hostile to local or native American cultures to advocate Europeanization of the New World. Their own Europeanization blinded most of them to any alternative" (25).

Mansilla's treatment of education within the domestic space as a means of incorporating the nation's marginalized members elucidates a pattern that would later be followed by the Peruvian novelist Matto de Turner in *Aves sin nido* (1889). Not only do both novels demonstrate how the nation's Others could be successfully (and peacefully) transformed into citizens by being incorporated into and educated within the white domestic space, they also tacitly reinforce education as the instrument that could mold more productive citizens out of its female members. Emphasizing the Pygmalion-like quality of Argentine women and the way they can be incorporated into the nation, Mansilla represents these as ready recipients of education and therefore potentially contributing members of a united, moral, egalitarian nation-family.

In **Chapter 2**, I examine Luis Benjamín Cisneros's *Edgardo o Un joven de mi generación* (1864) and Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido* (1889) in order to

analyze the function of the family in the nineteenth-century Peruvian novel. I begin by tracing the time period leading up to the nation's belated independence in 1824, calling attention to how the vast disarticulation between social sectors and the feuding military "caudillos," or strongmen with their own private armies, impeded the process of national consolidation in Peru. However, the guano boom and the relatively stable government of caudillo Ramón Castilla set the conditions for the growth of a national literature and the triumph of the romantic novel in Peru. I then move on to examine how Luis Benjamín Cisneros's *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación* (1864) represents well-ordered family life as the key to national prosperity and a panacea for violent revolution and *caudillismo*. Written within the context of mounting resistance to the military governments on the part of the emergent middle classes, this novel posits the peaceful, honorable family as an ideal blueprint for the nation, one that would support the new liberal state and provide a stable foundation for society during a period of rapid changes and industrialization.

Throughout the novel, domesticity emerges as a prerequisite for national wellbeing. Like Eduarda Mansilla in *El médico de San Luis*, Cisneros highlights the importance of women to the family and the nation, representing how they aid in uniting the warring nation through their virtue and charitable sensibility. At the same time, the novel's idealization of women also seems aimed at shaping (and controlling) mothers for the new nation. The heroine's trajectory from virginal maiden to fallen woman and her ultimate redemption through motherhood offers a strong justification for restricting women's movements and reinforces their domestic role as wives and mothers. Cisneros's novel also calls attention to the unique problems that Peruvians faced during the nation-building era. Unlike the Argentine novels, in which writers tend to discourage fusions

between the nation's "antithetical" sectors, it is the mestizo who emerges as the hero of Cisneros's novel and the symbol of Peru's future.

In *Aves sin nido* (1889), credited by many as the first *novela indigenista*, Clorinda Matto de Turner also uses her writing as a vehicle through which she plays out the challenges of nation building. During a time when Peru's intellectual elite looked to Positivism as a means of regenerating the nation, Matto de Turner undermines the theories about the inferiority of women and non-white peoples through her idealized portrayal of an enlightened, multiethnic family. Like Mansilla, Matto de Turner approaches the problem of national heterogeneity through the white domestic space, which is presented as a site of cultural *mestizaje* par excellence. Taking advantage of the imaginative possibilities presented by the family and domestic spaces, Matto de Turner utilizes adoption in order to forge a legitimate place for indigenous peoples in the minds of her readers. The family's role as a homogenizing element in society emerges in the text when the Republican Mother, Lucía Marín, adopts what are believed to be two indigenous girls into the white, creole family and instructs them within the domestic space. Matto de Turner thus demonstrates how the family offered a solution to the problem of national heterogeneity by peacefully incorporating indigenous elements into society. At the same time, however, it is discovered that one of the girls, Margarita, with whom Matto de Turner carefully links the fate of the Peruvian nation throughout the novel, is actually the daughter of an indigenous mother and a white father. Thus, like in *Edgardo o Un joven de mi generación*, it is the citizen of mixed blood who is ultimately hailed as the future of the Peruvian nation.

Like in *El médico de San Luis*, the nation-family that Matto de Turner constructs in *Aves sin nido* presents a powerful case in favor of improving female education. The scenes that depict the education of Margarita and her half-sister not only reinforce the way education will regenerate the nation's marginalized sectors, but it also highlights the need to improve female education in order to mold Republican Mothers for the nation. Matto de Turner reinforces this message through her construction of Lucía Marín, the educated and charitable wife whose commitment to justice and social equality makes her an integral component of the modernizing project in Peru. In this way, I will be arguing that Matto de Turner questions the so-called rationality that validated the exclusionary practices of nation building through her construction of a feminized, multiethnic nation-family. At the same time, Matto de Turner's novel is not free of the Eurocentric tendencies of the time period; rather, the author's emphasis on linguistic, cultural, and even biological homogeneity demonstrates that she does not fully overcome the ethnocentric, patriarchal tendencies of dominant nation-building discourses.

In **Chapter 3**, I explore how the family, family ties, and domestic spaces allowed writers to map out their ideal visions for the Cuban nation. While the socio-political context in which they wrote presented few possibilities of actually carrying out their imaginings for the nation, Cuban intellectuals made recourse to the family and domestic spaces in order to articulate their utopian desire for a politically and culturally independent nation.²¹ For Cuban writers, the greatest—but certainly not the only—threat

²¹ Along with the presence of Spanish authorities on the island, Cuba's isolation from mainland Spanish America and anxiety about slave uprisings stalled the emergence of an independence movement on the island, and it was only in 1868 that Cuba saw a united struggle against the colonial regime.

to Cuban culture and independence was the slave system, which provided the machinery for the rapidly expanding sugar economy. As a result, the beginning of Cuban literature was intimately tied to the debates around slavery. I begin the chapter by discussing the ideological conflicts on the island and the rise of the Cuban Reformists at the turn of the nineteenth century, who sought to improve what they saw as the fallen state of Cuban society by challenging the slave trade and by advocating education reform. I then discuss how these objectives were taken up later by the Venezuelan-born patron of the arts, Domingo Del Monte, who contributed to the beginning of Cuban national literature through his literary circle in Havana in the mid-thirties. Desiring to demonstrate the horrors of the slave system and its deleterious effects on both Cuba's black *and* white population, Del Monte pushed the writers of his circle to create anti-slavery narratives for publication abroad. One of the works that came out of this effort was the novel *Francisco, el ingenio o las delicias del campo* (1839), by Anselmo Suárez y Romero.

In his novel, Suárez y Romero focalizes problems that he conceives as impediments to Cuban progress and wellbeing through the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces. Through his scathing depiction of a corrupt white, Cuban slave-owning family, he gives embodiment to the anomalies generated by slavery and the colonial situation, which included the progressive decay of family values, the deplorable state of public education on the island, and the confusing position occupied by slaves in society. Throughout the novel, Suárez y Romero traces these problems back to the domestic space, representing the Cuban creole mother as the primary carrier of familial—and, by extension, national—disorder. Like in Sarmiento's *Facundo*, the powerful and arbitrary mother emerges in *Francisco* as the root cause of social illness. Spoiling her

first-born son and prompting his moral and intellectual deterioration, the mother in *Francisco* fails to foster the type of family that would be constructive for the new nation. Suárez y Romero presents a model of the white, creole mother that appears in other Cuban novels of the nineteenth century, including Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdés* (1882). The overall message seems to be that, unless the ignorant, undisciplined mother is replaced with an enlightened mother who presides carefully over the nation-family, Cuba will continue on its downward trajectory of decadence.

I then move on to examine Gómez de Avellaneda's novel *Sab* (1841), which offers an important counterpoint to the *delmonte* novels. In *Sab*, Gómez de Avellaneda constructs an idealized depiction of a creole, slave-owning family living in the cattle-raising town of Puerto Príncipe. Gómez de Avellaneda engages the family and the domestic space as a framework through which she imagines a national community in which women have a voice not only in their own destinies, but in the future of the island itself. Drawing direct parallels between slaves and women, Gómez de Avellaneda presents an agenda of racial and gender equality as integral components of a united, moral Cuban nation.²² In addition to revising the gendered terms of the *delmonte* anti-slavery novels, however, Gómez de Avellaneda also takes a different stance with regards to immigration. While many Cuban nation builders saw foreign immigration as the solution to the island's growing African inheritance, Gómez de Avellaneda offers a negative characterization of foreigners in her novel, portraying these as dangerous transmitters of the capitalism and mercantilism that threatens to corrupt the benign, yet

²² In its critique of the slave system and of the secondary position of women in society, *Sab* dialogues with Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* (1748).

patriarchal structure of Cuban society. For her part, she daringly proposes that the honest, noble, creole slave Sab, already whitened through *mestizaje* between a female African slave and a white creole man, is morally superior to the European foreigner.

Chapter 1

The Family and Domestic Spaces as Sites of Nation Building in the Nineteenth-Century Argentine Novel

Introduction

Throughout the nineteenth century, Argentine intellectuals strived to guide what they saw as a nation predestined for greatness toward its glorious future. After all, Buenos Aires was the city in which the shouts of revolution first rang out in May 1810.²³ The proud and independent character of this city had its roots in the eighteenth century, when an influx of enthusiastic merchants from abroad put Buenos Aires in contact with Europe. As Diana Balmori, Stuart F. Voss, and Miles L. Wortman explain in *Notable Family Networks in Latin America* (1984), in addition to foreign capital, these merchants brought the Enlightenment philosophy that later served as the ideological underpinning of the independence wars (31). The fusion of foreign merchants with established creole families in Argentina formed a new ruling class that transformed the port city of Buenos Aires from a sleepy, backwater town into a bustling center of commerce.²⁴ As a result,

²³ The year 1810 also saw the eruption of the independence movement in Mexico when the creole priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla rallied the inhabitants of Dolores, a town near Guanajuato, to rise up against their oppressors on September 16. The Mexican War of Independence lasted eleven years, until, on 27 September 1821, Agustín de Iturbide and his troops made their triumphant march into the capital.

²⁴ This new class, well read in the ideas and literature of the Enlightenment and eager to create sustained connections with Europe, played an important role in the acts leading up to independence. It was the heirs of this new class that went on to form the *juntas* and town councils

Tulio Halperín Donghi explains in “Argentine Counterpoint: Rise of the Nation, Rise of the State” (2003), “When Buenos Aires still did not know of what nation, if any, it was destined to become the capital, it already knew that its glory outshone that of much more famous cities” (41). However, while nineteenth-century Argentine intellectuals desired a nation in which they could live out their destiny of progress and prosperity, multiple issues undermined their dreams of establishing a unified, modern, and prosperous nation.

One of the major situations that exacerbated national discord was the hegemony enjoyed by Buenos Aires, where policymakers ignored the leaders from the interior who petitioned for free navigation of the rivers and a share in the substantial customs revenue issuing from the port.²⁵ As John Lynch explains in “The River Plate Republics from Independence to the Paraguayan War” (1985), the administration of Buenos Aires was dominated by members of the landed elite, most of whose wealth was tied to the cattle-ranching business and the exportation of hides and salted meats (649).²⁶ The House of Representatives promoted policies of free trade, which benefited the export economy by

in the colony’s administrative centers during the crisis of the Spanish monarchy in 1812. Later, many would lead and finance the independence movement (Balmori et al. 31).

²⁵ Even Sarmiento, one of Buenos Aires’s most steadfast supporters, lamented how the leaders in the capital selfishly ignored the demands emanating from the provinces, and in his work *Facundo* he writes: “En vano le han pedido las provincias que les deje pasar un poco de civilización, de industria y de población europea; una política estúpida y colonial se hizo sorda a estos clamores” (13). Ironically, however, Sarmiento would later come to support the very policies he had criticized in 1845 when, following Juan Manuel de Rosas’s defeat in 1852, he advocated the secession of Buenos Aires from the rest of the nation in order to maintain its various monopolies.

²⁶ While landowning had been one of the primary occupations of wealthy creoles since the colonial period, the post-independence period saw the triumph of the great *estancias* in Argentina. As Lynch explains, cattle-ranching and the exportation of hides and meat constituted lucrative businesses in pre-industrialized societies, since their major requirements were mass labor and land (649).

keeping the costs of labor low and allowing ranchers to distribute their products at higher rates (Lynch 621-622). For their part, the leaders from the interior fought tenaciously to invigorate their economies by demanding trade protectionism, free navigation of the rivers, and the opening of ports other than Buenos Aires (621). However, the greatest division undermining national unity in the early years of Argentine independence was the split between *unitarios* who advocated for a centralized government and *federales* who supported governing powers for the provinces.²⁷ Referring to Argentina during the years following independence, Chasteen notes that: “the new nation was imagined in partisan terms, so much so, that party upstaged nation as a primary locus of collective identity” (xxii).

The multiple conflicts that arose during the post-independence period combined to gridlock the nation of Argentina in a sterile cycle of civil wars that devastated private property, disrupted businesses, and divided families. This situation was only checked when Juan Manuel de Rosas, a caudillo who represented the interests of the wealthy cattle ranchers, was elected governor of the Buenos Aires province. Beginning in 1835, Rosas made full use of the extraordinary powers vested in him by the legislative assembly, demanding outward signs of party loyalty and calling on the *Mazorca*—the militarized sector of the *Sociedad Popular Restauradora*—to silence any dissident voices. Rosas’s brutal administration sent hundreds of Argentines into exile, including

²⁷ As Fernando Operé reminds us in *Civilización y barbarie en la literatura argentina del siglo XIX: El Tirano Rosas* (1987), however, it is often difficult to distinguish a guiding set of characteristics that defined these two parties, given that family ties, geographical location, and economic interests factored in alongside ideological differences to determine party affiliation (20).

members of Argentina's Generation '37. As I explain in my introduction, this literary and cultural group, led by the poet Esteban Echeverría, viewed literature as a fundamental element of an independent nation. Echeverría shaped the development of an Argentine national literature through the *Salón Literario* in 1837, organized in the library of Marcos Sastre. When Rosas prohibited the *Salón*, Echeverría formed the literary, cultural, and political organization, the *Asociación de Mayo*.

Rosas's rise to power led to a mass exodus of Argentines, scattering the members of the Generation '37 to regions including Chile, the *Banda Oriental* (present-day Uruguay), and Bolivia, where they accessed the presses in order to raise their voices (and their pens) in an impassioned choir against the regime. Until Rosas's fall in 1852, exiled Argentine writers made recourse to the serial novel, the newspaper article, and the essay in order to continue the struggle for independence that began with the 1810 May Revolution. Sarmiento underscores the subversive power of the presses when he addresses Juan Manuel de Rosas in the following way: "¡La prensa! ¡la prensa!... va a turbar tu sueño en medio del silencio sepulcral de tus víctimas" (*Facundo* 5). Rosas's rise to power created a compulsion to narrate and was the generating force behind a number of Argentine works. Among these were Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo. Civilización y Barbarie. Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga* (1845), published serially in the Chilean newspaper *El Progreso* and later as a book, and José Mármol's novel *Amalia*, which began to appear in Montevideo's *La Semana* in 1851 and was completed later in 1855.

Rosas's opponents frequently made recourse to representations of the family—particularly the afflicted or divided family—in order to articulate what they saw as a

fallen nation. As illustrations from the Montevidean periodicals demonstrate, treatment of the family during the Rosas era often took on propagandistic overtones as writers manipulated the aura of sanctity surrounding the family in order to criticize the regime.²⁸ Depictions of the divided family thus formed part of a programmatic plan to discredit the dictatorship, pointing up the supposed immorality and indifference of Rosas and his supporters regarding the family and the home. However, in addition to this propagandistic function, the representation of the family and domestic spaces also provided fertile sites for dialogues regarding the political order, social hierarchy, and gender in the new nation. Consequently, the manner in which writers engaged the family unit in their literary works often reflected their theories about the nation. In the following pages, I examine the treatment of the family and domestic spaces in Sarmiento's *Facundo* (1845), José Mármol's *Amalia* (1851/1855), and Eduarda Mansilla de García's *El médico de San Luis* (1860) to explore how literary representations of the family, family ties, and domestic spaces provided a framework through which writers imagined the present state and direction of the Argentine nation.

As I explain in the introduction, literary representations of united families in nineteenth-century Spanish America provided a context for writers to delineate the type of society they desired for the new nations. Depictions of united, harmonious families permitted writers to foster a new cultural and geographic consciousness when the former colonies began to imagine themselves as modern nations. However, images of peaceful domesticity are conspicuously absent from the pages of the famous anti-rosista texts. On

²⁸ See Roberto Moro's collection of prints from the time period in *Rosas en las láminas de "El Grito": El Grito argentino, Muera Rosas!* (1974).

the contrary, writers like Sarmiento and Mármol adopted divided and persecuted family units as metaphors of national crisis: dislocated families, inverted families, and families withdrawn to their homes in fear of the *Mazorca* all serve to reflect the absence of legitimate government and to support the discourse of “civilization versus barbarism” informing both texts. As critics have noted, Rosas’s opponents envisioned Argentina as a nation containing two antithetical and warring societies within the same national territory: “la una española, europea, civilizada, y la otra bárbara, americana, casi indígena” (*Facundo* 33). As I will argue, anti-*rosista* writers juxtaposed supposedly antithetical families and domestic spaces in order to play up cultural and racial differences. Applying the discourse of civilization versus barbarism to their representations of homes and families of inhabitants in Argentina’s cities and those of the countryside allowed writers to construe these as microcosms of civilization and barbarism, respectively.

The anti-*rosista* writers often characterized Argentina’s rural sectors, its non-white peoples, and its autochthonous elements as part of the “barbarism” that impeded the civilizing process in Argentina. Along with the figure of Rosas himself, for example, they disparaged his multiracial army and the uneducated masses of the rural interior that offered him their support. However, once Rosas was defeated at the Battle of Caseros (1852), the vilification of national sectors and local expressions was seen by some men and women of letters as an obstruction to national unity. This is the position taken by Eduarda Mansilla in her domestic novel *El médico de San Luis* (1860), written during the period of national reconstruction in Argentina. In this novel, Mansilla constructs a morally superior family that contributes to social peace and order through its tolerance

toward gauchos and through its inclusion of members from the lower classes. By positioning this positive family archetype outside the city of Buenos Aires, Mansilla also provides a more nuanced engagement of the civilization versus barbarism dichotomy, exposing (rather than avoiding) the inequities that widened the gaps between wealthy and poor, enlightened and uneducated, city-dwellers and rural inhabitants, etc., in post-independence Argentina.

Additionally, in her reconsideration of the ideal nation-family, Mansilla also adds a strong argument for expanding the role of women in Argentina. Making recourse to the Republican Mother archetype, she reaffirms the importance of women to the wellbeing of the nation and undermines old associations between women and nature/barbarism. At the same time, while my analysis of Mansilla's novel reveals how she enacts a (con)fusion of the categories of "civilization" and "barbarism" in order to create a more inclusive map of the nation-family, it also suggests that she does not surpass these categories entirely in her text. While Mansilla avoids the deep racism and classism underwriting *Facundo* and *Amalia*, her nation-family does not include *all* national sectors. Her disparagement of the indigenous inhabitants of the pampa in her novel demonstrates, for example, that she does not consider these as appropriate components of the national imaginary. Also, despite her genuine concern for improving the situation of rural inhabitants in Argentina, these must be reformed before they can become acceptable members of the new nation-family. In the scenes of adoption and education Mansilla presents in her novel, the reader witnesses how a member of the lower class experiences a thorough cultural and intellectual transformation, during which she acquires the knowledge, culture, and mannerisms of the dominant class and loses the markers of her humble origins.

At the same time, in addition to their desire to homogenize the population, writers and intellectuals sought to define the ideal role that women would have in the new nation-family. As Mary Louise Pratt explains in “Women, Literature, and National Brotherhood” (1990), this task required a different set of strategies than those used to approach Argentina’s non-white populations. As Pratt writes:

While subaltern ethnic and class groups can sometimes be contained as separate regional entities or as distinct genetic kinds, women cannot readily be dealt with in these ways. They are, after all, expected to cohabit with men, not to live in separate parts of the city or national territory. (52)

In the following section, I will examine some of the debates about women in nineteenth-century Argentina. Not only will this allow for a better understanding of the representation of women during the era of Rosas, but it will also shed light on the obstacles that female writers had to grapple with once they began to voice their opinions through the press upon Rosas’s defeat in 1852.

The “Woman Question” in Nineteenth-Century Argentina

Upon gaining independence from Spain, Spanish America saw the introduction of the debates about women that had occupied intellectuals from Europe since the end of the eighteenth century. As LaGreca, Peluffo, and Masiello have demonstrated, the bourgeois ideal of the Angel of the Hearth was adopted by thinkers of the new Spanish American nations as a central component of the stable, virtuous family of European descent. The

Angel found support not only in religious rhetoric (she is often likened to the Virgin Mary), but also in notions of women's biological nature. As Bridget Aldaraca points out in *El Ángel Del Hogar: Galdós and the Ideology of Domesticity in Spain* (1992), opponents of female participation in the public realm found justification in pseudoscientific theories about women's weak disposition. These theories allowed thinkers to argue that women were ill-prepared to withstand the rigors of public life, which was often construed as "corrupt, unstable, chaotic and most important of all, to a great degree, unfathomable and unknowable" (56). Lee Skinner's analysis of the Angel in "El discurso religioso y los papeles de la mujer en el periodismo decimonónico hispanoamericano" (2006) sheds light on the inconsistencies that riddled this female archetype:

Esta imagen doble de la mujer como ser simultáneamente débil y especial fue un concepto común en la cultura hispanoamericana decimonónica... aparece la idea de la mujer frágil e inferior, pero a la vez superior en el campo emocional. Esta mujer idealizada es la madre perfecta, el reflejo de la Virgen María, completamente adaptada a la vida en el hogar. No puede sobrevivir por sí misma; siempre estará al lado del hombre. (66)

The bourgeois ideal of the Angel of the Hearth—the product of a confluence of numerous eclectic discourses—was also adopted by Argentine intellectuals and writers; however, this female archetype was highly malleable, and therefore was manipulated by different writers in order to argue both for and against women's emancipation.

Clara Brafman explores the highly ambiguous treatment of women in Argentina in “Imágenes femeninas y familiares en los libros de lectura de la escuela primaria (1800-1930)” (1994). In her study, Brafman demonstrates that even in Argentina, where the secularization of society was perhaps the most marked in Spanish America, ideas about women’s propensity to sinfulness, drawn from religious discourse, allowed those individuals vested in preserving traditional gender roles to play up the urgency of sheltering women. As Brafman observes, writers often adopted this rhetoric alongside the new sentimentalized discourses about women, creating highly ambiguous portrayals of womanhood:

los mismos libros que tan cruelmente denigran a la mujer, al mismo tiempo, en otras de sus páginas, la exaltan en su bondad, modestia y espíritu de abnegación en una clásica actitud ambigua de atracción y repulsión. (241)

At the same time, many writers and statesmen emphasized that women’s influence within the family made them an essential component of the nation-building process. As the primary educators of the younger generations, it was necessary to regulate and improve women in order to raise capable citizens to govern the nation. However, while many male writers and intellectuals stressed the importance of women to the nation, they rarely questioned the enduring gender hierarchy that situated women in a secondary position to men.

Like many of his contemporaries, Sarmiento’s treatment of the woman question was very ambiguous. On the one hand, he consistently emphasized the importance of women to the nation and to the civilizing project. Sarmiento stressed the importance of

mothers in an article from 1841, in which he explained that women's primary responsibilities consisted of:

fulfilling the duties of motherhood...these being of such great importance since from the lap of the mother comes the man fully formed, with inclinations, characters and habits which his first education molds. (Qtd. in Garrels "Sarmiento" 277)

Following this conviction about the mother's importance as a repository of habits and customs and the educator of future generations, Sarmiento argued that it was essential to improve female education. His desire to civilize the nation through education also contributed to the creation of new spaces for women, through which they were able to access the professions. According to Sarmiento, women made optimal teachers at the primary school level. As Garrels notes:

already in 1843 [Sarmiento] speaks of teachers as a social category when he writes that 'a woman is the only competent teacher of her sex' and the best instructor in early childhood since, 'simply by instinct and the admirable disposition of her nature, she knows how to bend to the condition of a child.' ("Sarmiento" 286)

In this way, Sarmiento aided in forging a new space for women within the nation, one that allowed them to leave the domestic space and even earn their own living.

Sarmiento's efforts on this front proved fruitful: as Néstor Auza notes in *Periodismo y feminismo en la Argentina, 1830-1930* (1988), by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, primary school instruction was predominantly a female vocation. By the year

1886, out of the seventeen normal schools in Argentina, thirteen of them were for women, three were for men, and one was co-ed (72).

Sarmiento's efforts in favor of reforming female education played a crucial part in the emergence of a group of enlightened Argentine women, who would later expand upon his work in order to demand more rights for female citizens. At the same time, it is important to note that, while women found in Sarmiento one of their most staunch supporters, his struggle to improve their education responded more to his desire to shape a future generation of citizens than to expand women's role in society. As Irene Coromina points out in "La mujer en los escritos antirrosistas de Echeverría, Sarmiento y Mármol" (2006):

son conocidos los esfuerzos loables de Sarmiento por promover su educación. Pero en el fondo, Sarmiento no discrepa con los demás opositores de Rosas. Sus escritos no dejan de ser conservadores porque nunca pierden de vista el objeto final de las iniciativas promovidas por él: las mujeres educadas serán mejores madres, y formarán a mejores ciudadanos. (16)

Sarmiento was clear in expressing his distaste toward the idea of women participating directly in matters of the State; in fact, he regularly made recourse to the motto: "Men form the laws and women shape our customs" (Qtd. in Masiello 54). In this way, like many of his contemporaries, Sarmiento sought "to keep the institutionalized aspects of

the gender system intact, especially in the formation and maintenance of appropriately feminine tasks in the home” (Masiello 54).²⁹

Garrels strikes upon a similar tension in Sarmiento’s treatment of women, noting that he vacillates between presenting women as agents of civilization and presenting them as dangerous components of the barbarism that stunted Argentina’s path to progress. As she explains:

One begins to discern that, for Sarmiento, women abandoned to their instincts have a lot in common with the ‘popular masses.’ These are two groups which in their present state constitute a danger, for they are both too close to nature and too far from civilization. (“Sarmiento” 286)

As I will show later in this chapter, José Mármol follows a similar pattern in his treatment of women in *Amalia*. On the one hand, the heroines of his novel are veritable fountains of culture. On the other hand, however, the women in Rosas’s circle constitute one of the most persecuted targets in the novel. They emerge as the transmitters of the deleterious “Spanish inheritance” that was seen by Argentine intellectuals as a source of the “barbarism” in their present-day society. These women represent the negation of the family and nation imagined by Mármol, not only because they supported *rosismo*, but also because female political activity was deemed dangerous and “unnatural” in the eyes of male liberal writers.³⁰

²⁹ Similarly, Garrels observes that Sarmiento continued to emphasize “the need to subjugate women, to deny them the same freedom of movement etc. that society allows men” (“Sarmiento” 273).

³⁰ As my examination of Peruvian and Cuban novels will demonstrate, the attacks on strong, active women that occur in *Facundo* and *Amalia* form part of a general pattern in nineteenth-

However, with the fall of Rosas in 1852 and the lifting of the restrictions on the presses, women had the opportunity to challenge the secondary role they held in the nation. As Auza notes, during this time period, “existe un nuevo clima cultural en la ciudad y todo se somete a revisión y cambio como consecuencia de la caída de Rosas” (32). With the beginning of female journalism, one of the questions that was subject to reexamination and revision was the place of women within the Argentina that was developing in the aftermath of the dictatorship. The writer Rosa Guerra (1834-1864) founded two different literary journals, *La Camelia* (1852) and *La Educación* (1854), in which she expanded the debates about women’s role in the nation. In one of her articles in *La Educación* dated August 7 1852, Guerra assesses the deplorable condition of women in Argentina, accusing Rosas of purposefully maintaining Argentine women in a state of ignorance:

Given the state of our society and the intellectual poverty in which the tyrant has wished to maintain us for over twenty years...we women have not escaped that sphere of inaction to which an obsolete custom has condemned us. (Qtd. in Masiello 21)

Guerra’s articles inaugurate and set the tone for a new era in Argentina, in which female writers would shatter some of the basic stereotypes that served to justify women’s secondary place in society. In addition to denouncing the deficient state of women’s education and their limited access to culture in Argentina, Guerra defended their rights both as readers and creators of literature. Juana Manso (1819-1875), like Guerra, was a

century Spanish American novels written by male authors, who often associate powerful women with a crisis of authority.

pioneer in the struggle for women's cultural emancipation in Argentina. Besides directing the women's journals *Álbum de Señoritas* (1854) and *La Siempre-Viva* (1864), Manso aimed to give women access to culture by organizing the scholarly Ateneo de Señoritas (LaGreca 16). Like Guerra, Manso vehemently rejected inherited ideas about women's nature that supported their relegation to the domestic sphere, emphasizing the centrality of education in the struggle for women's intellectual and cultural emancipation.

However, the majority of female writers in nineteenth-century Argentina avoided the explicit approach taken by Guerra and Manso in their projects of national reform.³¹ Instead, writers like Juana Manuela Gorriti and Eduarda Mansilla adopted strategies in order to advance their struggle for greater freedoms for female citizens while avoiding backlashes from the public. For example, these authors continued to cultivate highly sentimental, romantic descriptions of the families that they represented, even as they incorporated elements from the new Realist and Naturalist schools. They also inserted their voices in the public sphere by playing up the nation-family metaphor. As Masiello explains, female writers in Argentina: "represented the home as a site for education and reflection, [and they] publicized it as a space of communal reunion for those in search of democratic ideals" (54). In their novels, the home becomes a cultured space in which the Republican Mother supports the nation by raising intelligent, virtuous citizens for society.

³¹ As Coromina explains in "El Álbum de Señoritas y la emancipación de la mujer" (2008): "Relativamente pocas mujeres se atrevieron en el siglo XIX argentino a opinar sobre cuestiones políticas y sociales. Aparte de Rosa Guerra (quien fue responsable del periódico *La Camelia*, de 1852, revista redactada por varias mujeres que firmaban con seudónimo) y de Juana Manso, no hubo escritora que reclamara abiertamente la justicia social ni la igualdad entre los sexos" (176).

In this way, female writers continued to emphasize the importance of motherhood in their depictions of the family and the home. However, while the nation-families that they constructed may initially appear to abide by patriarchal values, their blurring of the public/private divide also suggested that women could contribute meaningfully to society in ways that fell outside the domestic responsibilities of tending to the family, cleaning, and cooking. As I point out in my analysis of *El médico de San Luis*, for example, while Mansilla constructs a traditional, patriarchal family, she utilizes the secondary families in her novel to reflect how allowing wives and mothers more active roles in society would benefit (as opposed to endanger) the nation. In her depiction of the governor's wife, for example, who takes the reins in matters of local politics, Mansilla not only reveals that women are qualified to participate in social and political questions outside of the home, but she dares to suggest that some women are more capable than men in these duties. In Mansilla's map of the Argentine nation, therefore, women are the mothers and guides of the nation, and they have relevance within and without the domestic sphere.

Sarmiento's *Facundo*: Divided Families and Anarchic Domestic Spaces as Metaphors of National Crisis

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo* (1845) inaugurated a guiding model for future Argentine intellectuals writing about the nation. In his generically hybrid text—an amphibious mix of biography, essay, and literary creation—Sarmiento narrates the rise of the Argentine caudillo, Juan Facundo Quiroga. Toward the beginning of his work, Sarmiento announces that one of his objectives in composing the text is to illustrate “el

tipo de los caudillos de las campañas, que han logrado, al fin, sofocar la civilización de las ciudades, y que, últimamente, han venido a completarse en Rosas” (50). In this way, Sarmiento’s biography of this Argentine figure takes on triple significance: not only does it trace Quiroga’s development from boyhood to adulthood, but it also mirrors the development of the caudillo as a social type; finally, it anticipates the rise of the newest and most formidable of the caudillos—Juan Manuel de Rosas. Throughout *Facundo*, Sarmiento identifies the absence of legitimate authority as the primary cause behind the emergence of caudillos in Argentina. As he explains, legitimate authority must be reinforced in order to stabilize the nation and put an end to rule by the strongest. In a statement that leaves little doubt as to the perspective that will govern his work, Sarmiento asserts that: “La autoridad se funda en el asentimiento indeliberado que una nación da a un hecho permanente. Donde hay deliberación y voluntad no hay autoridad” (69). What the young nation needed, according to Sarmiento, were rational, stable systems of authority capable of fostering respect for the new socio-political order and challenging the power hungry caudillos.

As he proclaims in Part I of *Facundo*, young nations are like children whose healthy development required “que hombres de alta previsión y de alta comprensión les sirvan de padres” (80).³² However, as much of his writing demonstrates, the family was

³² Thinkers of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries frequently compared the birth and development of civilizations to the stages of man’s growth from infancy to old age. The implications of this juxtaposition were for the most part harmful to younger civilizations. While cherished for their supposed vitality, strength of imagination, and closeness to nature by the Romantics, younger societies were also characterized as unpredictable, irrational, and incapable of self-governance. For example, in Chateaubriand’s *Sketches of English Literature*, whose influence is manifest in Part II of *Facundo*, the French writer described the Middle Ages in the

far more than a rhetorical device for Sarmiento. Rather, Sarmiento identified the cultured, patriarchal family as a foundational model of legitimate authority and a means of stabilizing the nation. In his 1841 article “De la educación de la mujer” in the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio*, for example, he describes the family as an:

embrion [sic] de la sociedad, que liga sus miembros recíprocamente por
afecciones mútuas i hace nacer las ideas de autoridad, obligacion [sic],
derechos, a la par de las afecciones del corazon [sic] que son su mas [sic]
fuerte vínculo. (230)

Following some of the key ideas from Rousseau’s *Emile: Or, Treatise on Education* (1762), the keys to cohesion in the ideal family described by Sarmiento above is affection and codependence, as opposed to fear and domination. The society that will grow out of this family archetype, therefore, is one in which the hierarchies—although present—are softened through a new emphasis on fondness and interdependence.

At the same time, the power of the father is fundamental to Sarmiento’s concept of national wellbeing. While he affords women a prominent role in the new nation in their capacity as mothers, he specifies that it is their work *within* the domestic sphere that sustains the ideal nation-family. As Sarmiento writes in the same article, the mother, “Encargada del hogar doméstico, adaptando sus ocupaciones a la fuerza y su capacidad, y guiando los primeros pasos de su progenie, dará origen a la familia” (230). Not only is the mother the source of affection that unites the ideal nation-family envisioned by Sarmiento, but it is she who instructs younger members of the family in “las ideas de

following way: “The infancy of those ages was barbarism, their maturity full of passion and energy” (43).

autoridad, obligacion, [y] derechos” (230). In this way, the Republican Mother forms a crucial part of the civilizing process desired by Sarmiento, challenging the outmoded and backward behaviors of the colony and fostering republican values.³³

Having traced the basic features of Sarmiento’s ideal family archetype, I will now move on to discuss how the *absence* of this family from the pages of *Facundo* is a symptom of the national crisis Sarmiento describes throughout his text. By depicting the homes and families of powerful landowners on the pampa and those of the laborers who serve them—both negations of the family Sarmiento desires for the nation—Sarmiento offers an explanation of arbitrary rule in Argentina. In the following section, I will begin by discussing Sarmiento’s theory of *caudillismo*, moving on to analyze how he reinforces this theory through representations of the family and domestic spaces. As I emphasize in my analysis, images of weakened fathers, unruly children, and domineering mothers allow Sarmiento to express what he perceives as the arbitrary nature of power in Argentina. I argue that one of the principal messages of his text is that, just as children and wives needed governance by a just, yet strong, father, the new nation needed

³³ Sarmiento expands upon his model of the Republican Mother in his autobiography, *Recuerdos de provincia* (1850), which contains a veritable apotheosis of mothers. As Sarmiento writes: “Todos los que escriben de su familia, hablan de su madre con ternura. San Agustín elogió tanto a la suya, que la Iglesia la puso a su lado en los altares; Lamartine ha dicho tanto de su madre en sus *Confidencias*, que la naturaleza humana se ha enriquecido con uno de los más bellos tipos de mujer que ha conocido la historia; mujer adorable por su fisonomía, y dotada de un corazón que parece insondable abismo de bondad, de amor y de entusiasmo, sin dañar a las dotes de su inteligencia suprema que ha engendrado el alma de Lamartine, aquel último vástago de la vieja sociedad aristocrática que se transforma bajo el ala materna para ser bien luego el ángel de paz que debía anunciar a la Europa inquieta el advenimiento de la república” (161). As we can see, women—intelligent, virtuous, loving mothers in particular—are vital members of Sarmiento’s vision for the national community. Sarmiento supported the notion of the Republican Mother as a force that was capable of erasing vestiges of colonialism from the new society.

enlightened, paternal rulers in order to recover from the centuries of colonial rule and the decades of tyranny under Rosas.

Sarmiento's Allegories of *Caudillismo* in *Facundo*

Sarmiento attributes Argentine *caudillismo* to the absence of united communities in the countryside and the pampa, a situation that he asserts fostered an “unnatural” weakening of social bonds and an unhealthy level of individualism in rural inhabitants. Drawing on ideas from European political theory, Sarmiento argues that rational systems of authority are only possible in cities, where the concentration of people within a limited area foment personal and professional relationships and stimulate respect for the law. Sarmiento attributes special importance to *asociaciones*, a term he uses to speak generically about a number of types of relationships, from bonds between neighbors, business connections, and legal contracts (*Facundo* 17-18, 30-33).³⁴ Associations form through mutual interests and shared purposes, creating bonds of interdependence and investing individuals in the social order. According to Sarmiento, these relationships develop organically in the cities, where frequent contact between men lead to the creation of sympathies and shared interests. In his sketch of the pampa in *Facundo*, by contrast, he

³⁴ The 1843 edition of the *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* defines *asociar* in the following way: “Tomar por compañero á otro, para que le ayude en algun ministerio ó empleo” (74). Significantly, the third definition offered by the *Diccionario* addresses the commercial and legal connotations of the term: “Juntarse, acompañarse con otro para algun efecto; como los comerciantes para sus tratos, los jueces de un tribunal con los de otro para determinar algun pleito” (74).

observes that the distances separating inhabitants from one another lead to an unnatural degeneration of habits, customs, and morality:

fáltale la ciudad, el municipio, la asociación íntima y por tanto, fáltale la base de todo desarrollo social; no estando reunidos los estancieros, no tienen necesidades públicas que satisfacer: en una palabra, no hay *res pública*. El progreso moral, la cultura de la inteligencia descuidada en las tribus árabe o tártara, es aquí, no sólo descuidada, sino imposible. (18; emphasis in the original)

Sarmiento first illustrates his theory of *caudillismo* in his discussion of the wagon train. Far away from the amenities of the city, the men of the wagon train moved goods across the pampa without law enforcement to protect them or their merchandise in the event of a robbery or a raid by the indigenous peoples of the pampas. The harsh demands of this lifestyle, Sarmiento notes, endow the men with a rough-hewn individualism and a special set of skills that allow them to survive their hostile environment:

En estos largos viajes, el proletario argentino adquiere el hábito de vivir lejos de la sociedad y de luchar individualmente con la naturaleza, endurecido en las privaciones y sin contar con otros recursos que su capacidad y maña personal para precaverse de todos los riesgos que le cercan de continuo. (14)

Out on the deserted pampas, the foreman must take justice into his own hands in the case of insubordination, a situation that often results in execution without trial. According to Sarmiento, this absolute power constitutes the beginning of “el predominio de la fuerza brutal, la preponderancia del más fuerte, la autoridad sin límites y sin responsabilidades

de los que mandan” (14). In the absence of centralized law, brute strength represents the only respected form of authority.

As we can perceive from this early juncture, Sarmiento “sees” and constructs the Argentine pampa by way of the texts he has read about Asian societies. Many European writers considered that there was a connection between a society’s treatment of the land and the form of rule it developed. Montesquieu, in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), affirmed that the uneven distribution of property in Asian societies led to steep power imbalances and a particular form of rule that he referred to as “Oriental despotism.” As Perry Anderson explains in his study *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (1974):

Montesquieu, deeply influenced by Bodin and an assiduous reader of Bernier, inherited from his predecessors the basic axioms that Asiatic States lacked stable private property or a hereditary nobility, and were therefore arbitrary and tyrannical in character—views which he repeated with all the lapidary force peculiar to him. (Anderson 463-464)

Sarmiento draws amply from this theory in order to describe the rise of *caudillismo* in *Facundo*, attributing the amassing of land into the hands of the few to the rise of men like Quiroga and Rosas. These despotic rulers exercise almost complete sovereignty over the servile *peones* and *gauchos*.³⁵

At the same time, however, Sarmiento establishes a subtle parallel between despotism on the *estancia* and the crisis of patriarchal authority within the domestic

³⁵ Tellingly, in his search for the causes of Rosas’s authoritarian style of administration over Buenos Aires, Sarmiento states: “perdone si me equivoco, pero esta idea me domina hace tiempo: en la *Estancia de ganados* en que ha pasado toda su vida, y en la *Inquisición*, en cuya tradición ha sido educado” (136; emphasis in the original).

sphere. Drawing on the theory that the family and domestic spaces reflect the larger socio-political structure, Sarmiento affirms that Quiroga and Rosas receive their earliest lessons within the family, which, in Sarmiento's vision of families on the pampa, is "la familia feudal, aislada, reconcentrada," a repository of Spanish barbarism (17). In this way, it is through domestic spaces that the customs of the colony are preserved and reproduced in rural Spanish America. A bit earlier in his examination of Rosas, we see that, in this context, the mother becomes a part of the barbarism that surrounds her and, what is worse, she transmits this to her children.

Sarmiento introduces the theme of Rosas's family life with the following question: "De dónde ha tomado tan peregrinas ideas de gobierno este hombre horriblemente extravagante?" (134). To answer this question, Sarmiento directs his reader's attention to the figure of the mother, noting that:

Rosas descende de una familia perseguida por *goda* durante la revolución de la independencia. Su educación doméstica se resiente de la dureza y la terquedad de las antiguas costumbres señoriales. Ya he dicho que su madre, de carácter duro, tético, se ha hecho servir de rodillas hasta estos últimos años; el silencio lo ha rodeado durante la infancia, y el espectáculo de la autoridad y de la servidumbre ha debido dejarle impresiones duraderas. (134; emphasis in the original)

In the scenario outlined above, Sarmiento depicts the authoritarian, cruel mother as the primary transmitter of the "colonial mentality" that remained entrenched in the attitudes

and institutions of the new Spanish American citizens.³⁶ She is the reverse image of the Angelic figure of the Republican Mother who helps eradicate the inherited behaviors that posed obstacles to the establishment of a more liberal social order. As the other chapters of this study show, the attack on the improperly educated, domineering mother that Sarmiento enacts in *Facundo* (and later, that Mármol enacts in *Amalia*) forms part of a theme in nineteenth-century Spanish American novels written by male authors. For example, Cuban writers established parallels between the white creole mother's abusive treatment of slaves within the household and her son's brutal treatment of slaves on the sugar plantation. In this way, the ignorant, powerful mother is the primary source of familial and, by extension, *national* disorder.

Faulty upbringing also sows the seeds of familial and national discord in Sarmiento's sketch of Juan Facundo Quiroga. In this scenario, Sarmiento focalizes the crisis of patriarchal authority through the depiction of filial rebellion. At the beginning of his account, Sarmiento acknowledges his use of legends and lore to narrate Quiroga's growth from child to man; however, he simultaneously stresses the usefulness of legends, noting that "no pocas veces entre fábulas inventadas por la adulación, se encuentran ya en germen en ella los rasgos característicos del personaje histórico" (47). Biography and literary creation fuse together in a more explicit manner in Sarmiento's narration of Quiroga than in other sections of *Facundo*, allowing Sarmiento to present an almost mythical account of filial rebellion to his readers.

³⁶ For more on the treatment of the colonial mentality by nineteenth-century Spanish American thinkers, see Chapter 1 of Leopoldo Zea's *Dos etapas del pensamiento en Hispanoamérica: Del romanticismo al positivismo* (1949).

Sarmiento begins his portrait with a brief account of Quiroga's childhood on the vast untamed plains of La Rioja, during which time he was a veritable stranger to social conventions. According to the picture presented by Sarmiento, Quiroga's wild upbringing on the pampa fostered a legendary disdain for authority and a contempt for society, which surfaced when he was sent to the nearby town of San Juan (the town of Sarmiento's birth) for schooling. As Sarmiento narrates:

En la casa de sus huéspedes, [a Quiroga] jamás se consiguió sentarlo en la mesa común; en la escuela era altivo, huraño y solitario; no se mezclaba con los demás niños sino para encabezar actos de rebelión, y para darles de golpes. (47)

Over the years, Sarmiento notes that Quiroga became “Cada vez más sombrío, más imperioso, más selvático” (47). By the time he reached the age of twenty-two, he had shot a man and killed a judge. Unable to conform to society and accustomed to imposing his will on others, by strength if necessary, Quiroga is the negation of the ideal national citizen. Sarmiento inflects his story with Oedipal dimensions with his account of Quiroga's attempt to murder his parents and burn down his house. As he explains:

Cuéntase que habiendo negado su padre a darle una suma de dinero que le pedía, acechó el momento en que su padre y su madre durmieran la siesta, para poner aldaba a la pieza donde estaban, y prender fuego al techo de pajas con que están cubiertas, por lo general, las habitaciones de los Llanos. (49)

A few lines later, Sarmiento explains that when Quiroga's father petitioned for governing officials to control his son, Juan Facundo retaliated and, “cayendo de improviso sobre [su

padre] le dio una bofetada, diciéndole: ‘¿Usted me ha mandado prender? ¡Tome, mándeme prender ahora!’ , con lo cual montó en su caballo y partió a galope para el campo” (49).

Sarmiento makes full use of his novelistic talents to play up the anomalous nature of Quiroga’s family and to endow their struggle with mythic proportions. The attempted parricide dramatizes Sarmiento’s overall message about authority, i.e., that legitimate authority—represented by the *pater familias*—required fortification in order to mitigate the influence of the caudillos. By pointing up the dangers inherent in weak fathers and dominant mothers and children, Sarmiento reinforces the notion of the father as the foundation of authority and the guarantor of well-regulated freedom, not only within the family but within the nation at large. In both of these accounts, the patriarchal family emerges as the only imaginable—and consequently, *natural*—base for a stable society and an antidote to *caudillismo*.

The Construction of “Civilized” and “Barbarous” Domestic Spaces in *Facundo*

Throughout *Facundo*, Sarmiento makes recourse to the depiction of homes and their interiors in order to reinforce his theory of Argentina as a nation encompassing two antithetical and warring cultures. This becomes evident at the beginning of *Facundo*, when he contrasts the industrious family of Buenos Aires’s European sector to the disorderly and regressive families of the villages. As he writes:

Da compasión y vergüenza en la República Argentina comparar la colonia alemana o escocesa del sur de Buenos Aires, y la villa que se forma en el

interior; en la primera las casitas son pintadas, el frente de la casa siempre aseado, adornado de flores y arbustillos graciosos; el amueblado sencillo, pero completo, la vajilla de cobre o estaño, reluciendo siempre, la cama con cortinillas graciosas, y los habitantes en un movimiento y acción continuos. Ordeñando vacas, fabricando mantequilla y quesos han logrado algunas familias hacer fortunas colosales y retirarse a la ciudad a gozar de las comodidades. (15)

From this early juncture, the stable, industrious family emerges as an embodiment of a European Argentina in which the values of civilization, stability, and progress coalesce. Sarmiento commends the prudence of these families by observing that they manage their houses in proportion to their means. Orderly, neat, and tastefully decorated, the houses themselves reflect the middle-class *habitus* of the families dwelling within them.

Following this portrait in miniature of civilized Argentine society, Sarmiento proceeds to describe life in the villages as its antithesis, adorning his canvas with all of the *topos* of barbarism:

La villa nacional es el reverso indigno de esta medalla; niños sucios y cubiertos de harapos viven con una jauría de perros; hombres tendidos por el suelo en la más completa inacción, el desaseo y la pobreza por todas partes, una mesita y petacas por todo amueblado, ranchos miserables por habitación y un aspecto general de barbarie y de incuria los hacen notables. (15)

In his description of the village, the children's ragged clothing would have been interpreted by contemporaries as unmistakable markers of the barbarism reigning in the

village. The sluggish pace of village life also encapsulates Sarmiento's claim that "los progresos de la civilización se acumulan sólo en Buenos Aires" (13). In stark contrast to the industrious family of Buenos Aires, in a constant flurry of production and advancement, Sarmiento unsympathetically construes the villagers as indolent men brutalized by their torpid environment and lacking any incentive for self-improvement.

However, as readers will note, in the aims of disparaging Rosas, whose administration brought the industrialization process to a halt and obstructed relations with Europe, anti-*rosista* writers frequently equated barbarism with poverty. Natalio Botana addresses this tension, noting that "In contrast to the reality of rich and poor, of the learned gentlemen and *montonera* fighters...Sarmiento subsumed these actors into two elements of struggle—city and countryside" (104; emphasis in the original). Depicting the *gauchos* of the pampa and the impoverished members of the rural villages as naturally indifferent to the values of private property, family, commodities, etc., Sarmiento presents their destitution as a lifestyle choice (rather than a consequence of social inequity). In this way, he makes a case for the persistence of wealth, race, and status as primary markers of personal worth and justifies the marginalization of the impoverished in nineteenth-century Argentina. Furthermore, his scathing depiction of rural degradation points up the need for strong, paternal leadership in Argentina. According to the perspective presented in *Facundo*, the nation of Argentina, composed for the most part of uneducated individuals who are ill-prepared to accept the burdens of citizenship, required strong, enlightened leaders to guide them.

In conclusion, in my analysis on *Facundo*, I have outlined how the absence of affective, patriarchal families allows Sarmiento to represent the crisis of authority in

Argentina. By depicting scenarios in which family life is virtually nonexistent (the gauchos and the villagers), or where fathers have been deposed by their children (the Quiroga family), or where mothers are domineering and cruel (the Rosas family), he emphasizes the need to regulate authority within the nation by reinforcing patriarchal power at the level of the family. In terms of his representation of women in *Facundo*, the cumulative message seems to be that, without a civilized home to govern, the Argentine mother does not have a constructive role in the nation. In fact, as Sarmiento's depiction of Rosas's mother suggests, in the absence of stable systems of authority, mothers become transmitters of the very barbarism that statesmen and writers sought to eradicate.

José Mármol's *Amalia*: A Nation of Brothers-In-Arms

Un millón de hombres individualizados no vale más,
señores, que dos o tres hombres asociados por las ideas, por
la voluntad y por el brazo.

—José Mármol

José Mármol's historical novel *Amalia* not only constitutes an impassioned condemnation of Juan Manuel de Rosas but also an analysis of the effects his dictatorship had on the manners, customs, and spirit of the nation. While Mármol did not begin composing *Amalia* until 1851, he chose to set his novel in 1840, a year when Rosas's regime convulsed under pressures emanating from within and without the nation.³⁷ Along

³⁷ One of the more long-term threats Rosas faced was the French blockade: Buenos Aires, a city that depended upon trade and the income from customs for normal functioning, had been suffering the damaging effects of the blockade since its imposition in March 1838. As Lynch explains, this situation "harmed the regime in a number of ways. It caused the economy to stagnate and deprived the government of vital customs revenue; it de-stabilized the federal system and gave heart to dissidents in the littoral and the interior" (645). Rosas faced a more immediate

with these threats to the regime came a concomitant escalation in the violence and brutality enacted by the *Mazorca*, which Rosas employed to crush any designs of rebellion in Buenos Aires. The effects this had upon public and private morale, according to the narrator of *Amalia*, were devastating:

la salud del ánimo empezaba a ser quebrantada por el terror: por esa enfermedad terrible del espíritu...A las cárceles, a las *personerías*, a los fusilamientos, empezaban a suceder los asesinatos oficiales ejecutados por la Mashorca, por ese club de bandidos a quien los primeros partidarios de Cromwell habían mirado con repugnancia, y los amigos de Marat con horror. (68-69; emphasis in the original)

Within the context of fear and violent repression painted in *Amalia*, images of peaceful domesticity are conspicuously absent. Rather, Mármol depicts anarchic families in order to epitomize a nation in crisis. At the same time, however, the breakdown of stable, patriarchal families in the novel opens up a crucial space in which Mármol fosters new modes of affiliation. As I will demonstrate, Mármol imagines a new type of national community for Argentina, a republic of individuals joined by (symbolically) familial solidarity and the principles of the May Revolution. In this way, the *rhetoric* of the family—as opposed to actual families connected by matrimony or blood ties—serves as the keystone of Mármol’s nation-building discourse, encouraging readers to adopt a new, national consciousness based on the ideal of a republic composed of brothers and sisters.

concern in the person of unitarian leader Juan Lavalle, who was organizing troops with the end goal of ousting the dictator.

In *Amalia*, Mármol tells the story of Daniel Bello, the son of a prominent *federal*, his friend the *unitario* Eduardo Belgrano, and Daniel's cousin, Amalia, the young and beautiful widow of a distinguished *unitario*. When Eduardo Belgrano is injured by a member of the *Mazorca*, Daniel brings him to Amalia's home so that Eduardo can recuperate out of the sight of Rosas's men. Throughout the time that Amalia and Eduardo spend together in the peaceful haven afforded by her charming home, they fall in love and are eventually married. For his part, Daniel Bello becomes embroiled in a plan to topple the dictatorship. Although he is the son of one of Buenos Aires's most important *federales*, Daniel is a staunch enemy of Rosas (in this way, Mármol reflects that, to a certain degree, the old division between *unitarios* and *federales* has made way to a new division, that which separated the supporters and the enemies of the dictatorship). Upon learning that the Unitarian leader Juan Lavalle is planning to lead a resistance army from the *Banda Oriental* (present-day Uruguay) into Argentina to confront Rosas, Daniel directs efforts toward organizing resistance within Buenos Aires. However, Lavalle's mission fails, and Eduardo, Amalia, and Daniel's plans are exposed. While the recently wedded Eduardo and Amalia plan to seek refuge in Montevideo, they are too late. The final scene of the novel shows Rosas's men storming into Amalia's house, killing Eduardo and leaving readers unsure of the fates of Amalia and Daniel. In this way, failure to liberate the nation from the dictator leads to the collapse of the ideal nation-family proposed by the union of Eduardo and Amalia.

As I mentioned above, the weak and divided family units presented in *Amalia* are far cries from the types of harmonious families that could serve as models of a united nation. Set during the period in history when Rosas directed his efforts toward

eliminating dissidents, *Amalia* portrays a society in which even the most basic, “natural” social ties—those underlying families and friendships—were weakening amidst the violent acts orchestrated by the *Mazorca*. In the following speech by Eduardo Belgrano, Rosas is identified as a destabilizing force that capitalizes on national division in order to remain in power:

Estúdiense como se quiera la filosofía de la dictadura de Rosas, y se averiguará que la causa de ella está en la individualización de los ciudadanos. Rosas no es dictador de un pueblo; esto es demasiado vulgar para que tenga cabida en hombres como nosotros: Rosas tiraniza a cada familia en su casa, a cada individuo en su aposento; y para tal prodigio no necesita, por cierto, sino un par de docenas de asesinos. (321)

Like Sarmiento, Mármol identifies the inveterate individualism of the Argentine nation and the weakness of personal relationships as primary obstacles to national unity.

Mármol, like Sarmiento, draws heavily on the discourse of Oriental despotism in order to depict how Rosas converted the men and women of Buenos Aires into unthinking hordes through persistent attacks on their property and moral constitution. As Perry Anderson explains, citing some of the key ideas in Montesquieu’s theorization of Oriental despotism in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748):

Oriental despotism, moreover, not merely rested on an abject fear, but also on an erasive *equality* among its subjects—for all were alike in their common subjection to the lethal caprices of the despot. ‘The principle of despotic government is fear...it is uniform throughout.’ This uniformity was the sinister antithesis of the municipal unity of classical antiquity:

‘Men are all equal in a republican state; they are also equal in a despotic state; in the first, because they are everything; in the second, because they are nothing.’ (464)

According to the perspective offered in *Amalia*, the public humiliations, killings, and property seizures ordered by Rosas are not arbitrary acts of violence but rather they form part of his calculated plan to break the relationships that were responsible for transforming Buenos Aires into a cultured space and bustling center of commerce. As opposed to the representative government desired by the anti-*rosistas*, the citizens of Buenos Aires are subject to the whims of the dictator, who, seeking to preserve power in the hands of the landowning minority, appoints his cronies to government positions and calls on the *Mazorca* to silence any opposition.

Mármol points up the carnivalesque nature of authority under Rosas on multiple occasions, criticizing the immense power wielded by landed families who had ties with the dictator.³⁸ The novel’s depiction of the dominance of landowners had a strong historical basis. According to Lynch, 60 percent of the House of Representatives during Rosas’s second term as governor “were landowners or had occupations connected with land. This was the assembly which voted Rosas into power and continued to vote for him” (637). Mármol reinforces the urgent need to dissolve the society represented by these families through his depiction of filial rebellion. Daniel Bello, the son of a wealthy cattle rancher and *federal*, must rebel against his family in order to fulfill his patriotic duty. Throughout the novel, Daniel makes use of his ties to prominent members of

³⁸ See, for example, Daniel Bello’s scathing remarks about those powerful families protected by Rosas, such as the Aranas and the Anchorenas (102).

Rosas's circle in order to conspire against the dictatorship. In this way, as Pratt points out, Mármols's treatment of the family in *Amalia* reflects the need to eradicate an "already defunct colonial patriarchy" (Pratt 54). Biological family ties thus play a secondary role in *Amalia*, opening a space onto which Mármol may present a new type of affiliation and a new model for the nation-family, one premised upon the principles of Argentina's May Revolution.

Heroic Revolutions and Forging the Fraternal Nation-Family in *Amalia*

As Homi Bhabha observes in the preface to *Nation and Narration* (2003), one of the primary attributes of nationalist discourse is its ability to link nations to a distant past so that they "lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye" (1). In the case of Argentina, the May Revolution of 1810, the moment that inaugurated the birth of the nation, was fairly recent; nonetheless, this did not divest it of the mythical aura that Bhabha describes. Over the course of the nineteenth century, Argentine nationalist texts would harken back to the heroic May Revolution in order to inspire present and future generations and encourage them to continue the struggle for independence initiated during the colonial period.³⁹ In *Amalia*, the resounding force of the May Revolution becomes especially perceptible during one of the secret meetings

³⁹ Kathryn Lehman explains in "Naturaleza y cuerpo femenino en dos narrativas argentinas de origen nacional" (2004) that: "Esa hora suprema bautizó el espacio público donde nació la patria y donde todavía reside la suma autoridad de la nación. Una fecha denomina una generación, una ideología se concreta en un espacio sagrado, y de allí se engendra un destino irreversible" (176); for the notion of the past as utopia in Spanish American literature, see Carlos Alonso's *The Burden of Modernity: The Rhetoric of Cultural Discourse in Spanish America* (1998).

held among the novel's anti-*rosistas*. At a culminating moment during the meeting, Daniel appeals to the memory of the Revolution to evoke the time when the former colonies united in a common front against Spain:

¿Queréis patria, queréis instituciones y libertad, vosotros que os llamáis herederos de los regeneradores de un mundo? Pues bien, recordad que ellos y la América toda *fue una asociación de hermanos durante la larga guerra de nuestra independencia, para lidiar contra el enemigo común; y asociaos vosotros para lidiar contra el enemigo común; y asociaos vosotros para lidiar contra el enemigo general de nuestra reforma social* (325; my emphasis)

As this (somewhat repetitive) quotation demonstrates, the notion of the body politic as a family, organized beneath the patriarchal figure of the king, made way—in theory, at least—to a more democratic nation-family organized along the lines of a horizontal brotherhood.

According to Daniel's speech, upholding the ideal of fraternity is more important than the actual outcome of the anti-*rosistas*' rebellion. As he explains, if their struggle ends in failure, it will be of value inasmuch as it serves as a testament to the ideal of fraternity:

Unidos, sistematizada nuestra defensa; solidarios todos para la venganza del primero que caiga, o suspenderemos el brazo de los asesinos o provocaremos a la revolución, o podremos emigrar en masa, cuando se pierda para todos la última esperanza de exterminar la tiranía, o por

último, moriremos en las calles de nuestro país *habiendo antes dejado una lección honrosa a las generaciones futuras*. (323; my emphasis)

In this passage, not only does Mármol foreshadow the tragic ending of the novel, but he presents the heroic story of Daniel, Eduardo, Amalia, and Florencia's united struggle against Rosas as an inspiration for future generations. The novel, which Mármol presents in his prologue as a work "destinada a ser leída...por las generaciones venideras," immortalizes the sublime sacrifices that this young band of "brothers" and "sisters" made for each other and for the nation (61).

At the same time, however, the centrality of fraternity in Mármol's nation-building discourse raises many questions about the new order envisioned in *Amalia*. Mármol's ideal map of the Argentine nation as a horizontal brother/sisterhood initially seems to fly in the face of the dominant liberal project in Argentina, which pursued a homogenous, European nation at the expense of the popular classes. However, Benedict Anderson reminds us that the ideal of fraternity has always coexisted with social injustice. As he explains, the nation:

is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitations that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. (7; emphasis in the original)

Amalia is a paradigmatic example of the way the ideal of fraternity, the rhetorical cornerstone of the new imagined national community, projects the illusion of equality

and unity in the midst of vast social inequality. On a second reading of *Amalia*, it becomes evident that Mármol's ideal of fraternity is quite exclusive, promoting unity between the anti-*rosistas* but deepening the divide between the remaining national elements.⁴⁰ The discourse of fraternity espoused in *Amalia*, for example, works to exclude the popular classes by way of a series of discursive strategies.

Throughout *Amalia*, while Mármol promotes Argentine cohesion through the notion of a united brotherhood, he simultaneously constructs the *rosistas* as the “Others” against whom he defines the novel's heroes, their mission, and the ideal nation. This polarizing treatment of fraternity shines forth in Daniel's above-mentioned speech, in which he reveals that the “asociación de hermanos” will unite “para lidiar contra el enemigo común” (325). What initially appears to be an inclusionary vision of the nation inviting all sectors of the nation in reality only accommodates a small, privileged sector of the nation. Another discourse that Mármol draws on in order to “explain” why certain sectors of Argentine society should be denied membership to the new fraternal nation-family is the civilization/barbarism binary. Taking up this discourse, Mármol paints Argentina as a nation harboring two conflicting models of society—the one urban, European, and desirous of a constitution and democratically elected government, the other savage, regional, and easily seduced by populist leaders. Depicted as the embodiment of barbarism, the popular classes emerge as abject beings who are unqualified to take on the responsibilities that came with nationhood. According to the

⁴⁰ Hunt sheds light on the double-edged nature of the discourse of fraternity. In her study, she reveals that during the radical years of the French Revolution (1792-1794), “fraternity defined a kind of ‘us’ and ‘them’ of revolutionary politics... The slogan ‘fraternity or death’ seemed to capture this sentiment in dramatic fashion” (13).

perspective offered in *Amalia*, concepts like nationhood, cooperation, and self-sacrifice are inconceivable to these sectors.⁴¹

Making recourse to the discourse of civilization versus barbarism, Mármol characterizes the wealthy, urban based *unitarios* as everything that the popular classes are not: racially pure, cultured, and European. Furthermore, unlike the gauchos and indigenous peoples who are described as ill-prepared to receive the boon of liberty, Mármol offers countless examples of his heroes' willingness to risk their lives for their fellow citizens and the nation. The ideal subjects in *Amalia* are identified as the white *anti-rosistas*, who alone are presented as capable of combating the "espíritu de individualismo que por desgracia de nuestra patria ha caracterizado siempre los argentinos" and realize that their fate was inextricably connected with that of the rest of the nation (322).

Mármol's exclusionary vision of fraternity finds reinforcement in his juxtaposition of the cultured homes of the *anti-rosistas* and the bleak, bare homes of Rosas and his supporters, which he represents as microcosms of civilization and barbarism, respectively. In his presentation of Amalia's luxurious villa, Mármol meticulously enumerates the European commodities decorating the interior space in order to characterize her home as a locus of refinement in the midst of Spanish America

⁴¹ This characterization of the popular classes as blind followers of populist leaders is developed from the beginning of the novel, when, after failing to capture the escaped Eduardo, one of the members of the *Mazorca* exclaims to his cohort: "Nosotros somos mandados; y cuando veamos la cosa mal, nos pasaremos; entretanto yo me he de hacer matar por el Restaurador, y por eso soy de la gente de confianza del comandante" (79).

barbarism. With its Italian floor coverings, Indian lace, and Spanish wine, Amalia's home epitomizes the desires of those Argentines who believed that civilization could only be fomented through sustained contact with Europe. Furthermore, servants within Amalia's home are deferential and keep a respectful distance from their superiors. This desire to keep a decorous distance between the masters and the domestic help is reinforced by the house's rational construction, which allows servants to enter without passing through the interior rooms (95). By contrast, Mármol presents a dystopian model of the nation through his descriptions of the dark, sinister houses of the *rosistas*, which are frequented by gauchos, members of the *Mazorca*, and even indigenous peoples of the pampa.

The homes of Juan Manuel de Rosas and his sister-in-law, María Josefa Ezcurra, are treated extensively in Part I Chapter 4 of *Amalia*. As opposed to rationally planned spaces of repose, these homes are described as the generative locus of Argentine chaos and barbarism, where plots are hatched and brutal sentences are ordered. Furthermore, Mármol establishes a parallel between the physical structure of the home and the contact between different levels of society. Describing the house's confusing layout, its winding hallways, and the lack of barriers between the servants and the family, he reflects the distasteful (con)fusion of diverse classes and races that intensified in Argentina under Rosas. This is registered acutely in the description of the completely unlit entryway leading to Juan Manuel de Rosas's house, where ten fully armed men—two gauchos and eight indigenous people from the pampas—sleep at the front door. From this position, the narrator invites the reader to observe the interior of the house through a crevice afforded by the partially opened door. According to the narrator, the bare room:

contenía solamente un candelero con una vela de sebo, y unas cuantas sillas ordinarias, donde estaban, más bien tendidos que sentados, tres hombres de espeso bigote, con el poncho puesto y el sable a la cintura, y con esa cierta expresión en la fisonomía que dan los primeros indicios a los agentes de la policía secreta de París o Londres, cuando andan a caza de los que se escapan de galeras, o de forajidos que han de entrar en ellas. (118)

The description above draws on some of the same motifs as those used in the depiction of Argentina's rural villages in *Facundo*. Like Sarmiento, Mármol underscores the general neglect of these spaces, the shabby disrepair, and the complete absence of finery as reflections of the backwardness of their inhabitants. In this case, Mármol plays up the positivist disparagement of other races and cultures already present in *Facundo* to suggest the criminal tendencies of the men around the table. Together with the racially-mixed individuals positioned outside of Rosas's house, the three men who inhabit the gloomy room reflect the "espíritu de indolencia orgánica" that Mármol presents as a basic characteristic of Rosas's supporters (322). These scenes serve to remind readers that unlike the heroes Daniel, Amalia, and Eduardo, whose polished language, elegant manners, and fair skin serve as markers of their superiority, the darker, more irrational members of the lower classes necessarily form a place outside the new horizontal brotherhood.

At a telling moment in *Amalia*, Mármol adopts the term "family" to refer to the undesired confluence of diverse classes and races during the Rosas era. Describing how the servants of María Josefa Ezcurra (Rosas's sister-in-law) fail to address Daniel's

fiancé Florencia with the outward signs of deference and respect that her class and pure race require, the narrator laments the disintegration of old social hierarchies. As he explains:

por una ficción repugnante de los sucesos de la época, osaban creerse, con toda la clase a que pertenecían, que la sociedad había roto los diques en que se estrella el mar de sus clases oscuras, y amalgamándose la sociedad entera en una sola familia. (179)

In this way, while Mármol evokes the ideal of fraternity in order to foster solidarity among his readers and link them emotively to their fellow citizens and to the nation, he consistently places conditions on who could join the new fraternal nation-family.

The Role of Women in *Amalia*

Significantly, the brand of fraternity promoted in *Amalia* does not exclude women. Unlike the ideal heroines of many Romantic novels, who were often characterized by their passive dispositions and selfless dedication to hearth and home (Jorge Isaacs's *María* [1867] and Luis Benjamín Cisneros's *Julia* [1861] immediately come to mind), Amalia and Florencia espouse strong political sentiments and actively champion the rebellion against Rosas. Detached from the roles of wife and mother, these protagonists take on a political agency that was generally associated with men. Amalia, for her part, becomes involved in the conspiracy against Rosas when she offers her home

as a safe haven where the wounded Eduardo can recuperate.⁴² Daniel's fiancé, Florencia, takes advantage of her social contacts in order to spy within the homes of Rosas's supporters and convey important information back to Daniel. In this way, *Amalia* does not present a clearly defined public/private divide; rather, the movement of the female protagonists push the boundaries between the two spheres, exerting their influence within both.

Mármol even goes so far as to suggest that women are more disposed than men to defend the dignity of the nation, as they would the family itself. At one moment in the text, Amalia censures her beloved Eduardo for undervaluing her level of commitment to the nation. She then poses the following question:

¿Cree usted, Eduardo, que bajo el cielo que nos cubre no hay también mujeres que identifiquen su vida y su destino a la vida y el destino de los hombres? ¡Oh! Cuando todos los hombres han olvidado que lo son en la patria de los argentinos, deje usted a lo menos que las mujeres conservemos la generosidad de nuestra alma y la nobleza de nuestro carácter. (282)

Amalia continues by asserting that she would willingly step in front of an enemy's blade to save the life of "un hermano, un esposo, un amante" (282). The final scene of the novel, in which she fearlessly attempts to protect Eduardo from the *federales* who invade

⁴² Amalia lives an extraordinarily independent existence that distinguishes her from other Romantic heroines: a wealthy, educated widow of a deceased *unitario*, she resides in her charming home with only the visits of her cousin and the presence of servants to monitor her movements. Florencia Dupasquier, for her part, enjoys a comparable freedom of movement: in virtue of her father's absence from Buenos Aires, Florencia moves around the city without the constraints of a chaperon.

her home, attests to the veracity of this statement. Amalia's and Florencia's participation in the struggle against Rosas raises many questions about the role of women in the new nation envisioned by Mármol and his generation. Do these heroines represent a broadening in the narrow political viability of women, or are they simply emblems of those ideals Mármol wished to convey to readers? As Lynn Hunt perceptively observes in *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (1992):

The iconographic tradition had it that abstract qualities were best represented by female figures even when, as in the case of Fraternity or Force, for example, the representation by a female figure seemed to suggest a contradiction. (82-83)

Do the heroines in *Amalia* or does their strong protagonism reflect a widening in the limited role of women?

I tend to disagree with critics like Sommer and Masiello, who have interpreted the characters of Amalia and Florencia as statues or banners that wordlessly signify male desires for the nation. Rather, I would argue that the activity of these female protagonists undermines (initially, at least) the notion that female citizens could only serve the nation through domestic activities. At the same time, however, Sommer and Masiello have identified in *Amalia* a paradox that was common in the representation of Argentine women throughout the different historical contexts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: while women were invited to fight alongside men during times of political struggle, they were expected to surrender their public identity once the situation was stabilized. This situation shines forth in *Amalia*, in which women leave their domestic roles in order to fight for the nation, but in which they are conspicuously (or not so

conspicuously) absent during the political meetings held by their male counterparts.⁴³

Among the twenty-three people attending the anti-*rosista* gathering, not a single woman is present to discuss the principles of the new ideal society. The absence of women at this meeting suggests that women should only act in the public sphere as a last resort and must follow the plans and decisions made by the men. It also anticipates the limited political power that women would have after Rosas was defeated in 1852.

Furthermore, although Amalia and Florencia play active roles in the struggle against Rosas, they never reject their destinies as wife and mother. As Coromina observes:

cuando no están ocupadas en defender a los hombres que aman, se dedican a soñar con su futuro de mujer casada. En definitiva, Mármol admite la participación limitada de la mujer en la actividad política, aunque no en detrimento del matrimonio y la maternidad. (“La mujer” 18)

The novel apotheosizes the sacrifices of patriotic women at the same time that it projects forward to a future time when women could serve the nation through a more domestic role. As Pratt observes, the women in *Amalia* “have not been domesticated;—Republican Motherhood has not been consolidated (though the stage is seemingly set for it)” (56-57). In this way, it appears, *Amalia* longingly anticipates the moment when women could lay down their arms and fulfill their sublime role as mothers and Angels of the Hearth.

⁴³ As Leonor Calvera observes in “Revoluciones, minué y mujeres,” women in nineteenth-century Argentina were “codo a codo en la lucha, pero no en las decisiones” (168).

Eduarda Mansilla's *El médico de San Luis*

Rosas's defeat at the Battle of Caseros (1852) inaugurated the period of national reconstruction in Argentina. General Justo José de Urquiza, the caudillo from Entre Ríos who aided in vanquishing Rosas, assumed the position of Provisional Director of the nation and set about drafting a national constitution under the judicious counsel of Juan Bautista Alberdi. However, while freedom from Rosas was predicted to bring peace and reconciliation to the nation, this constituted yet another era of political uncertainty for Argentina. Buenos Aires, refusing to recognize Urquiza's authority and unwilling to forfeit its monopoly over customs revenue as required by the new federalist order, seceded from the nation in 1852 and functioned as a sovereign state until it rejoined the Confederation in 1860. In addition to national schism, Nancy Hanway explains in *Embodying Argentina: Body, Space and Nation in 19th Century Narrative* (2003) that the period of Argentine national organization would also see:

several outbreaks of civil war, war with Paraguay, massive immigration, brutal epidemics of yellow fever and cholera, national expansion into the pampas, a war against the indigenous people of the southern pampas, and abrupt economic gains and losses. (2)

Unless national unity were aggressively defended, statesmen and intellectuals had little hope of realizing their visions for a progressive, modern nation. During the early years of national reconciliation, the vilification of certain national elements and local expressions was perceived by some men and women of letters as an obstruction to national unity. José Mármol, for example, decided to temporarily discontinue writing *Amalia* upon Rosas's

defeat, claiming that the novel proposed “un ataque demasiado violento al partido federal” (Qtd. in Fernández 41). This also describes the position of Juan Bautista Alberdi, who, in his *Cartas quillotanas* (1852), chastised Sarmiento for continuing his polemical writing after Rosas had fallen. According to Alberdi, Sarmiento’s penchant for criticizing Urquiza and condemning certain national sectors delayed the process of national reconstruction and reenacted the cycle of violence that had long impeded Argentine unity and progress. As Alberdi wrote:

Con *caudillos*, con *unitarios*, con federales, y con cuanto contiene y forma la desgraciada República, se debe proceder a su organización, sin excluir ni aún a los malos, porque también forman parte de la familia. Si establecéis la exclusión de ellos, la establecéis para todos, incluso para vosotros. Toda exclusión es división y anarquía. (17-18; emphasis in the original)

According to Alberdi, the heterogeneous elements of the nation must come together and unite as a single, cohesive “family.” Alberdi thus evoked the family-nation analogue to foster the ideal of Argentine unity.

Paradoxically, Alberdi’s spirit of inclusivity did not extend to include the nation’s indigenous inhabitants. On the contrary, in his *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina* (1852), which served as a framework for the Constitution of 1853, he explicitly excluded Argentina’s indigenous sectors, asserting that:

Hoy mismo, bajo la independencia, el indígena no figura ni compone mundo en nuestra sociedad política y civil. Nosotros, los que nos

llamamos Americanos, no somos otra cosa que Europeos nacidos en América. Cráneo, sangre, color, todo es de fuera. (36)

Alberdi's rejection of indigenous inhabitants, while consistent with the thoughts and attitudes of most Argentine intellectuals of the time period, directly contradicts his formula for national unity. The incongruities embedded in Alberdi's treatment of national organization also inform Eduarda Mansilla's novel *El médico de San Luis* (1860).⁴⁴ In this work, Mansilla constructs her map of the Argentine nation through the framework of a patriarchal, yet loving, nuclear family that acts as the generous benefactor of subalterns (with the exception, however, of the nation's indigenous population). Describing how James Wilson's virtuous, middle-class family mediates on behalf of orphans, gauchos, and members of the lower classes, Mansilla forges a space in the collective imaginary for these marginalized peoples. At the same time, however, a closer inspection reveals the ethnocentric desire for homogenization that pervaded nineteenth-century nation-building projects. Throughout her novel, Mansilla foregrounds education as the primary means of integrating gauchos and members of the lower classes into a society that privileged European culture over its indigenous elements. However, rather than problematizing the cultural loss entailed in the acts of assimilation, she presents the erasure of cultural difference as an inevitable, even desirable, step of the nation-building process.

⁴⁴ Eduarda Mansilla de García was born in Buenos Aires in 1838 to one of Argentina's most influential families. Her mother, Agustina Ortiz de Rozas [sic], was the younger sister of the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas. Her father, Lucio Norberto Mansilla, was a prominent *unitario* who came to serve the Rosas administration after he wed Agustina Ortiz de Rozas. José Mármol makes several references to the Mansillas in *Amalia* (1851/1855), using them as an opportunity to characterize the dictator and his family members as morally deprived, uncultured, and even monstrous.

Critical Reception of *El médico de San Luis*

While lacking the action and suspense of *Amalia*, which kept readers on the edge of their seats with its cloak-and-dagger storyline and cliffhanger endings, Mansilla's sentimental novel about James Wilson, a middle-aged doctor from Edinburgh, his creole wife María, and their children Juan, Lía, and Sara was received enthusiastically by critics at the time of its publication. Praise for the novel called attention to Mansilla's delicate treatment of the emotions and nuanced exploration of domestic issues like spousal affection, parental responsibility, and courtship, themes closely tied to the rise of the bourgeois family that were often overlooked or treated hurriedly by writers cultivating the literature of attack required during the Rosas era. Ventura de la Vega, the Argentine poet and playwright, applauded Mansilla's talent for exalting human sentiment while conveying morally constructive messages to readers:

¡Qué ternura, qué delicadeza de sentimientos! Qué moral tan pura, qué filosofía tan práctica, no predicada en sermones empalagosos, ni en afectados y secos razonamientos, sino desprendiéndose y como deslizándose insensiblemente de las entrañas de la obra; de manera que se infiltra en el alma, sin que el lector lo note.⁴⁵

For his part, Argentina's famous literary critic and writer Juan María Gutiérrez celebrated the work "as an elegant novel of national manners and morals" (Hanway 3). The novel's optimistic reception suggests that Mansilla's concentration on the domestic sphere and

⁴⁵ This excerpt is taken from Pombo's preliminary study of Eduarda Mansilla, which is included in the the Biblioteca Popular de Buenos Aires edition of *El médico de San Luis*, published in 1879.

her focus on the moral qualities provided a welcome respite from the positivist perspective adopted in the previous era.

Departing from the path paved by writers of the Rosas era, Mansilla looked to Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) as the dominant literary model for her novel.⁴⁶ Promoting the ethos of virtue and hard work that pervades Goldsmith's sentimental novel, Mansilla adopts the voice of a Scottish doctor who counsels readers about the dangers of egotism and encourages them to place their confidence in family life and faith in the world beyond. As Hanway perceptively observes:

The resonance of Goldsmith's novel is found in the voice of the British narrator himself, and the domestic politics—the values of virtuous labor, strong family, and prudent marriage—that the novel espouses. (71)

Like Goldsmith, Mansilla positions her idyll of family life in the outskirts, presenting the small town of San Luis as an exemplary world where precedence may be given to the spiritual dimension as opposed to the material realm of experience. From this new vantage point, Mansilla offers an interpretation of rural life that challenges earlier assessments of the supposed backwardness of the provinces. She accompanies this change with a more favorable treatment of local cultural expressions and heterogeneous peoples. The act of reframing provincial life in a more positive light allows Mansilla to revise the old dichotomies that presented country dwellers as inherently barbarous and inferior to the enlightened city-dwellers. At the same time, while Mansilla draws on Goldsmith's novel in order to consider age-old arguments from a new perspective, she

⁴⁶ Mansilla signals her indebtedness to Goldsmith's novel at various moments in the text, beginning with the extended quotation with which she introduces her novel.

also departs significantly from her literary model. Most importantly, she rejects the satirical elements that undercut the authority of the *pater familias* in Goldsmith's humorous sentimental novel. *The Vicar of Wakefield* features a well-intentioned but somewhat stodgy protagonist who is constantly undermined by his domineering wife and daughters. In this way, the vicar's initial description of his family as "The little republic to which I gave laws" in Goldsmith's novel might provoke readerly mirth, since his efforts to establish order are often thwarted by the headstrong members of his family. In *El médico de San Luis*, by contrast, Mansilla takes a more careful position with regards to her novel's narrator, sacrificing humor in order to emphasize the goodness of the meek and gentle Dr. Wilson. In order to understand this revision, we must recall that constructing appropriate parental figures constituted an important part of the decolonization process in Spanish America. This was realized to a great extent at the level of the novel, through which novelists of the time strived to shape their readers into constructive citizens and educate them in the new modern sensibility. As Sommer reminds us, mid-century writers sought to transform society through their texts by "reforming one thing into another: valor into sentimentalism, epic into romance, hero into husband" (15). The proliferation of sensitive, bourgeois fathers who began to replace the austere, patriarchal figures of the Old Regime reflect a desire to democratize society at the level of the family.

The Family as a Microcosm of the Nation in *El médico de San Luis*

Throughout her novel, Mansilla emphasizes the notion that domestic order is a prerequisite for national wellbeing by pointing up the moebius-like relationship between the nation and the family. The description heading of Chapter 4, which postulates that “La sociedad reposa en la familia: la felicidad pública depende de la felicidad privada,” is particularly indicative of this aspect of the novel (25). James Wilson dedicates the first few chapters to presenting his household, his family’s simple yet pleasant daily routine, and the sweet companionship he enjoys with his wife, María. He also describes the fond feelings developing between his daughters and two young men, a poor local boy named Amancio and Jorge Gifford, the son of James’s old friend from Edinburgh. On the other hand, James’s wayward son, Juan, constitutes a perpetual source of paternal affliction. Vaguely evoking the story of the prodigal son, Juan abandons the family fold and is thrown into prison after becoming entangled in the criminal exploits of a local caudillo. At the end of the novel, however, Juan repents and is reconciled with the family. The storyline of *El médico* thus revolves around two separate but complementary plotlines, each of which reinforces the intimate relationship between domestic order and national wellbeing: first, the courtship and the marriages between Amancio, Jorge, Lía, and Sara that conclude the novel and second, James’s successful mission to restore his son to the bosom of the family.

One of the principal messages transmitted in *El médico de San Luis* is that wealth has the potential to corrupt the delicate fabric of family life. According to the middle-class sensibility pervading the novel, domestic (and, by extension, national) happiness is

built upon loving, companionate marriages as opposed to economic convenience. Comparing himself to his ill-fated friend from Edinburgh, Carlos Gifford, who married for wealth over love, James attributes his personal happiness to choosing a spouse based on emotional preference rather than on fortune. As he relates, “Y si como a mi compañero Gifford, la fortuna no me ha prodigado sus más pingües favores, puedo asegurar que en el corazón de mi María he hallado una niña inagotable de bondad y dulzura” (9). The digressions versing on the errors of fortune hunters and the dangerous temptations of wealth attest to the new focus on the spiritual realm that reigns in *El médico de San Luis*. Adopting the didactic tenor of a conduct manual, James Wilson presents his family as a possible palliative to what is construed as the positivist spirit of the time. The description of Dr. Wilson’s modest house is also consistent with the novel’s middle-class ethos: a small, simply-constructed white-washed home (a nearly verbatim reproduction of the house described in Goldfield’s *The Vicar of Wakefield*), the doctor’s domicile reflects comfort and neatness but none of the ornateness that could suggest aristocratic degeneracy. In this way, *El médico* diverges from *Amalia*, in which luxury items like watches, fine clothing, and lavish furniture are offered up as markers of culture and legitimacy that distinguish the upper classes from the lower classes.

The Family as an Instrument of Homogenization in *El médico de San Luis*

In her novel, Mansilla reveals how the relationships that form within the family and the home can radiate outward to embrace gauchos, orphans, and members of the nation’s poor. The family’s role as a homogenizing instrument of society becomes

particularly clear in the scenes in which Dr. Wilson makes his rounds to attend to his patients. Like the travel narratives that constructed the nation-space by tracing the journeyer's movement across the national territory, Wilson's visits to his disadvantaged patients work to incorporate different social classes into the national imaginary. This strategy of inclusion is made more explicit, however, when the doctor visits the home of Águeda, a single mother dying of tuberculosis. Águeda's home, in which a modest chair and table constitute the only pieces of furniture, evokes the interior spaces of the gauchos, villagers, and *federales* depicted in the works of anti-*rosistas*. However, while these works offered depictions of impoverished, miserable spaces in order to emphasize the inferiority and lack of refinement of their inhabitants, scenes of poverty are to be regarded with sympathy in *El médico de San Luis*. The doctor introduces the reader to Águeda's dwelling space in a manner that inspires tolerance, declaring that "un espectáculo enternecedor se ofreció a nuestras miradas" (60).

During this scene, Dr. Wilson takes in Águeda's seven-year-old daughter, Aguedita, after her mother passes away. The doctor's benevolent act of adopting Aguedita and the eagerness with which María, Sara, and Lía accept their new roles as caregivers of the young orphan demonstrate how the socially minded family can forge citizens out of previously marginalized sectors of the nation. At the same time, however, this charitable act quickly takes on strong ethnocentric overtones. In a pattern that would be repeated later in the Peruvian novel *Aves sin nido* (1889) by Clorinda Matto de Turner, the orphan of Mansilla's novel undergoes a process of homogenization by which the symptoms of her difference are effectively erased. For example, Dr. Wilson relates how:

A fuerza de halagos y cariños consiguieron al fin las niñas [Sara y Lía] apaciguarla [a Aguedita], ocupándose en el momento de cortarle y coserle un trajecito de luto. Jorge, que se interesaba vivamente por la huerfanita, se ofreció a enseñarle a leer, a pesar de no hablar aún bien el castellano; poniéndose a la obra desde el día siguiente. (63)

The reader thus witnesses as Aguedita begins her transformation from an illiterate member of the rural lower class into an educated, well-spoken young lady. Aguedita's education at the hands of Jorge Gifford, the educated young man from Scotland, clearly reflects the desire to collapse difference through strategies of homogenization. As Quijada explains, education provided the primary channel through which nation builders sought to mold a body of like-minded, enlightened citizens for society. As she notes, throughout the post-independence period, education was seen as a way to:

formar 'ciudadanos ilustrados y felices', para configurar una base demográfica unificada en sus costumbres y orientada al bien común. Por ello, los informes oficiales de la época establecían que la educación financiada por el gobierno había de ser no sólo pública, gratuita y abierta a todos los ciudadanos, sino además uniforme. (37)

Mansilla's faith in the transformative power of education is also reflected in her treatment of the gaucho in her novel, Pascual Benítez. Her sympathetic portrayal of Benítez works to revise previous negative constructions of this national icon, which often drew on the gauchos' nomadism, lack of private property, and legal transgressions in order to justify their exploitation. In Chapter 18, when Doctor Wilson is unjustly thrown into jail by a corrupt Justice of the Peace, he meets the gaucho Benítez, who relates to the

doctor the unfortunate story of how he went from working on the *estancia* to becoming an outlaw. As he explains, when the foreman unjustly denied the gaucho his wages and threatened to report him to the authorities, Benítez killed him in a moment of rage. His tale then leads the reader from San Luis to the *tolderías* of the indigenous peoples and back again to the little town, where he was apprehended and thrown into prison.

Anticipating José Hernández's *Martín Fierro* (1872/1879) by more than a decade, Mansilla utilizes Benítez's story to censure the legislators and local authorities who called on the gauchos to work as cheap labor on the *estancias* and as army recruits while denying them the basic rights of citizenship.

Attacking the gaucho problem from the discourse of education, Dr. Wilson frames the problem of the gauchos' lawlessness in terms of their lack of instruction, as opposed to biologically determined factors. Affirming that the gauchos were intelligent and moral beings capable of generosity and selfless acts of heroism, he presents education as the channel through which they could be redeemed, reformed, and integrated into society. Without the proper education, Dr. Wilson argues, the government could not expect gauchos to understand the demands that citizenship placed on the members of the nation. At a critical moment in the text, he poses the following questions: "¿Qué sabe un gaucho de sus deberes de ciudadano? ¿Quién se los ha enseñado jamás? ¿Cómo podéis exigir el cumplimiento de lo que ignora?" (135). The solution to the gaucho question, he continues, lies in educating the gauchos about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, reinforcing their good impulses, and instructing them about how to act within the law.

In terms that highlight her degree of faith in the civilizing capacity of education, the narrator declares that "El secreto de su grandeza está en su educación. Educad al

pueblo, fortificad en él los sentimientos morales, y sólo por ese medio seréis *grandes, respetados y felices*” (136; emphasis in the original). At the same time, following the pattern of acceptance and rejection that characterizes Aguedita’s adoption into the family, the novel stresses that the gaucho’s redemption depended on his assimilation into society. Prior to his education, Dr. Wilson explains, the gaucho of the pampa resembles the indigenous peoples “en sus costumbres, en sus ideas, en su ignorancia” (135). The process of education, however, transforms the gaucho, reforming his habits and bringing about “el refinamiento de las costumbres” (135). As these declarations indicate, the gaucho must abandon the qualities that distinguished him from the dominant class if he was to join the national “family.”

For their part, however, Argentina’s indigenous population, differing in phenotype and in language from the dominant class, is excluded from the acts of adoption and assimilation foregrounded in the novel. In fact, Mansilla’s assertions about indigenous peoples often verse on their essential malevolence. As she explains in her later novel, *Pablo o la vida en las pampas* (1869):

Indios y gauchos llevan el mismo tipo de vida nómada y aventurera; la gran diferencia reside en que el indio es ladrón por naturaleza. El gaucho es desinteresado y generoso, aun a expensas de su propio interés; el indio, por el contrario, es naturalmente ávido y rapaz. El instinto de robo es lo único que los impulsa a cometer las terribles *razzias* que quedan grabadas en la memoria de sus víctimas. (159; emphasis in the original)

As this example demonstrates, the indigenous tribes of the pampas serve as examples of “natural” inferiority and moral depravity that Mansilla uses to juxtapose with the

gaucho's naturally virtuous, yet misguided, character. At the same time, while Mansilla's sympathetic representations of the lower classes and the gauchos challenged the negative disparagement of these sectors presented in works like *Facundo* and *Amalia*, her emphasis on education indicates that she could only view these sectors as fully integrated parts of Argentine society after they had passed through processes of assimilation.

Mansilla's Representation of Women in *El médico de San Luis*

As Masiello has shown, the changing treatments of men and women in nineteenth-century Argentine literature make charting the representation of women an all but straightforward endeavor. The conclusion that she comes to in her study is that literary depictions of women closely responded to the changing needs of the state. As she explains, nineteenth-century Argentina presented "a shifting of discourses on gender and the family, determined by political crisis and by changing assessments of the interrelationships between domestic and public life" (8). On the one hand, writers had to face the reality that Argentine women played an important role as patriots both before and after independence was achieved. Women's political activity in several altercations during the colonial and revolutionary eras remained embedded in the national imaginary and undermined the notion that women could only serve the nation through domestic housekeeping. Referring to women's participation in the Argentine militias during the British invasion of Buenos Aires in 1807, Donghi pronounces that:

The image of ladies pouring cauldrons of boiling oil on the British soldiers engaged in bloody skirmishes in the streets below was to remain forever

engraved in Argentine patriotic mythology. These militias were the decisive factor in the total victory of the revolutionary movement, and even after they were gradually disbanded by the regime they had brought to power, their exploits survived in collective memory. (41)

Female political activity continued throughout the independence era. While unable to participate formally in politics, women in nineteenth-century Argentina influenced the course of thought through *salons* and epistolary correspondences. As Sarah Chambers observes in “Letters and Salons: Women Reading and Writing the Nation,” Spanish American women of the nineteenth century “were active in intermediary social spaces between the public and domestic spheres, where philosophies were discussed, plots hatched, and alliances formed” (56). Mariquita Sánchez (born in Buenos Aires in 1786), for example, “identified strongly with Argentina throughout her life, despite the young nation’s changing borders and her own lengthy periods of exile in Montevideo” (Chambers 67). Sánchez contributed to the nation-building project by hosting influential political and cultural salons, serving as president of the charitable organization Society of Beneficence, and participating in the struggle against Rosas from exile in Montevideo. However, the Battle of Caseros inaugurated a turn toward a more traditional treatment of women. As Brafman explains:

A la caída de Rosas la prensa coincide en señalar la necesidad de reducir a la mujer al ámbito del hogar. Este clima coincidió por otra parte con la llegada de los primeros libros franceses (leídos probablemente por la élite) en torno al rol de la mujer como educadora, especialmente en los atinentes a sus hijas. (240)

However, a group of Argentine female writers challenged this turn toward female limitation by underscoring women's potential to transform society. In *El médico de San Luis*, for example, Mansilla emphasizes women's supposed strengths in order to show how they could contribute positively to the nation underscore if they were imparted a more public role. In a strategy that José Mariano de Larra (1808-1837), a Spanish writer, used in his articles about Spanish society, Mansilla adopts the voice of a foreigner in *El médico de San Luis* in order to examine gender roles from the perspective of a "civilized" outsider. Taking the voice of a male speaker also allows her to challenge some of the gender stereotypes of her time, an act of subversion that went against normative codes of femininity. At one moment in the text, she even goes so far as to claim that, "En la República Argentina, la mujer es generalmente muy superior al hombre, con excepción de una o dos provincias" (26). Among women's set of special strengths, Dr. Wilson notes, is their "rapidez de comprensión," a view that directly opposes the notion that women were incapable of abstract thought. Wilson also mentions their "facilidad para asimilarse... todo lo bueno, todo lo nuevo que ven o escuchan. De aquí proviene la influencia singular de la mujer, en todas las ocasiones y circunstancias" (26). Mansilla's construction of the Argentine woman directly confronts the idea of women as stagnant keepers of tradition in order to ally women with movement, progress, and advancement.

After documenting women's strengths, Wilson observes with dismay how the mother is degraded in Argentina to the detriment of society. While the Argentine woman reigns as "soberana y dueña absoluta" in the roles of wife, sweetheart, and daughter, Doctor Wilson observes with dismay that:

pierde por una aberración inconcebible, su poder y su influencia como madre. La madre europea es el apoyo, el resorte, el eje en que descansa la familia, la sociedad. Aquí, por el contrario, la madre representa el atraso, lo estacionario, lo antiguo, que es a lo que más horror tienen las americanas... Muchas veces me ha lastimado ver una raza inteligente y fuerte, encaminarse por un sendero extraviado, que ha de llevarles a la anarquía social más completa, y reflexionando profundamente sobre un mal cada día creciente *he comprendido que el único medio de remediarlo sería robustecer la autoridad maternal como punto de partida, inspirando a los hijos el respeto del pasado y haciendo que los padres no sacrifiquen sus más caras prerrogativas a un necio movimiento de vanidad.* (26-27; my emphasis)

This pejorative view of mothers, Dr. Wilson argues, meant that the supreme power of mothers was squandered in Argentine society. Contrasting the backward structure of the Argentine family to the modern family of Europe, in which maternal authority was (according to the novel) supreme, he uses the discourse of modernity to promote her program of female emancipation.⁴⁷

Mansilla reinforces the notion of women's superiority through her depiction of the Governor's home, in which normative gender roles are reversed. In caricaturesque style, Mansilla paints the Governor as "un ente estúpido, ridículo, grosero y sin el menor

⁴⁷ As Burns explains throughout *The Poverty of Progress: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century*, the buzzwords of the era were "progress" and "modernization," both of which were largely seen as irreconcilable with American "barbarism."

barniz de educación” (114). Preferring his fighting cocks to the tasks of governorship, he turns a blind eye to the myriad abuses committed by the town’s Justice of the Peace, Redobledo. However, while the Governor ignores his responsibilities toward the people of San Luis, his wife, Martina, takes up the reigns of governorship. Mansilla describes this gender reversal with humor, noting that the governor “es el esclavo de su mujer, que según las malas lenguas influye más de lo que debe en los asuntos del Juzgado” (114). However, unlike the majority of novels that censured women who exercised authority over their husbands, Martina is revealed to be an able governor. Martina’s concern for social justice leads her to convince her husband to intervene on behalf of the doctor and to order his release from jail. In this way, Mansilla politicizes the domestic sphere, revealing how women indeed held sway over the public world through the personal relationships they sustained in the home. Furthermore, Mansilla argues in favor of women by endowing them with an acute social consciousness.

Patriarchal Values in *El médico de San Luis*

It is important, however, not to exaggerate Mansilla’s subversion of patriarchal discourse, since her promotion of female emancipation is often counterbalanced by traditional and even pejorative depictions of women in her novel. For example, her representation of Amancio’s vain, spendthrift mother perpetuates the discourses of the time period that functioned to censure female activity outside of the home and, in turn,

reinforced the archetype of the Angel of the Hearth.⁴⁸ Brafman analyzes this type of misogynist discourse, which flourished after the Battle of Caseros, in the following way:

Es posible comprender este disciplinamiento en el marco de la crisis de la familia patriarcal hacia los últimos años de la colonia, a la que seguramente se haya sumado otro factor: la larga duración de las guerras de la Independencia, así como de las guerras civiles, que significaron para la mujer una posibilidad de participación en lo público. La pacificación nacional así como el probable advenimiento de formas familiares burguesas explican el auge que tomó en este momento el discurso ordenador. (240)

Mansilla also upholds patriarchal values in her representation of James's wife María, whose name calls attention to the text's latent Marianism.⁴⁹ María's primary role within the family is limited to raising the children and safeguarding the religiosity of the family. In this way, as Hanway observes, while the narrator espouses strong arguments in favor of reinforcing maternal authority, "the figure of María never appears much in relation to her household: there are few scenes that discuss her domestic activity" (74).

⁴⁸ In several newspaper articles, for example, Sarmiento "chastises ignorant women who fail to recognize the weighty responsibility of motherhood" (Garrels "Sarmiento" 284).

⁴⁹ Wilson's description of his wife's faith is also reminiscent of Chateaubriand's glorification of the Angel of the Hearth as a protector of the Christian religion. As Wilson exclaims: "¡Oh, cuántas veces en las noches de los primeros años de nuestro casamiento la he visto arrodillada delante de una imagen de la Virgen del Rosario, teniendo a su lado a las mellizas que con sus cabezas rubias y sus manecitas juntas semejaban la corona de ángeles que adorna el fondo de una estampa francesa de la Virgen, muy común en la América, mientras que Juan, mi hijo mayor, y dos criados que lo han visto nacer, hacían coro repitiendo la constante invocación a la madre de Dios!" (17-18).

Mansilla also takes a decidedly careful stance in her approach to women's education, asserting that women's religion and domestic instruction should take precedence over other aspects of their education. When describing the education given to his daughters, James Wilson exclaims (with what seems to be paternal pride) that their instruction "distaba mucho de ser brillante" and that it was limited to learning domestic tasks (25). Despite his wife's petition that he give their daughter lessons, he refuses, explaining that:

Yo, respecto a la educación de la mujer americana tengo ideas muy diversas de las que generalmente se profesan aquí, le respondía siempre que lo poco que ella sabía había de ser mucho más provechoso a nuestras queridas hijas, que cuanto yo pudiese enseñarles. No que fuese mi intención descuidar absolutamente su educación, sino por creer que aquellos conocimientos generales de alto interés, que sobre ciertas materias debe por fuerza adquirir una señorita destinada a vivir en Grovesnor Square, siempre sería tiempo de enseñarlos a mis dos puntanitas, luego que supiesen cuidar de la casa, componerse su ropa, preparar el café con el esmero que su madre, y alabar de continuo al Dios bueno que no se cansa de prodigarnos sus favores. (26)

Wilson's deprecation of women's instruction is ironic considering that Mansilla herself received an exceptional education for a woman of her time. In his biography on Mansilla, Rafael Pombo noted that "De posición y educación no pudo haber aspirado a más de lo

que le tocó.”⁵⁰ However, unlike writers like Rosa Guerra and Juana Manso, who expressed indifference and sometimes antipathy for certain aspects of women’s education like household duties and manual labor, Mansilla took a more careful approach to the question of women and their role in Argentine society, often masking her arguments in favor of women behind highly sentimentalized depictions of domesticity. However through her moderate and careful approach to national questions, Mansilla constructs a more inclusive (yet still patriarchal and European) type of nation-family, one in which the transformative powers of education permit the incorporation of society’s marginalized members.

The literary representation of the family and domestic spaces thus permitted Argentine writers to articulate their views on the nation during the Rosas period and during the era of national reconstruction. Sarmiento, Mármol, and Mansilla each utilized the family as a model through which they conveyed the elements of the nation that should be embraced and incorporated into the nation-family, and, by contrast, the elements that should be excluded in order to achieve their ideal vision for Argentina. Depictions of the family and domestic spaces also provided a means of shaping the nation in other regions of Spanish America during the nineteenth century. In the following chapter, I examine the function of the family and domestic spaces in two Peruvian novels, *Edgardo o Un joven de mi generación* (1864), by Luis Benjamín Cisneros, and *Aves sin nido* (1889), by Clorinda Matto de Turner.

⁵⁰ Pombo signals that her superior intelligence made Eduarda a special favorite of her uncle, Juan Manuel de Rosas. According to Pombo, when Mansilla was only eleven years old, Rosas ivid her to serve as interpreter when the French envoy, the Count of Walewski, came to Buenos Aires.

Chapter 2

The Family and Nation Building in Two Nineteenth-Century Peruvian Novels: Luis Benjamín Cisneros's *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación* and Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido*

Introduction

Following a painfully prolonged revolutionary period that lasted between 1811 and 1824, Peru became the last of the South American territories to shake off the Spanish colonial yoke.⁵¹ As in the case of Argentina, however, the breakdown of the colonial order in Peru meant that the new nation had to be forged against a backdrop of profound cultural, political, and racial/ethnic rifts. As José Tamayo Herrera observes in *Nuevo compendio de historia del Perú* (1985), the geographic region that came to be known as the Republic of Peru was:

compuesta de grupos sociales distintos, sin mayor nexo entre ellos, en que diferentes grupos étnicos, clases sociales y segmentos regionales, habitaban un territorio tremendamente desarticulado, en lo social y lo geográfico. (245)

⁵¹ The viceroyalty of Peru comprised one of the last bastions of colonial authority in Spain's crumbling empire, with Lima serving as headquarters of a royalist army boasting 70,000 soldiers (Higgins 100). In the absence of an autochthonous movement against Spain, it ultimately came down to foreign generals to penetrate the Spanish stronghold and liberate Peru. In 1820, Argentine General José de San Martín reached the coast of Peru with his army, declaring Peruvian independence the following year from the plazas in the center of Lima. The Spanish were finally ousted in 1824.

In addition to the extreme heterogeneity that challenged the goal of national consolidation, *caudillismo* would pose a problem to nation builders throughout the nineteenth century. The first of Peru's many caudillos was Simón Bolívar himself, the Venezuelan general who was key to the achievement of national independence. After the allied revolutionary forces dealt the final blows to the Spanish at the Battle of Junín in August 1824 and at the Battle of Ayacucho in December of the same year, Bolívar stayed on as leader of the republic. However, Peruvians quickly became dissatisfied with Bolívar's rule, as James Higgins explains in his study *Lima: A Cultural History* (2005):

the Liberator's initial popularity among Peruvians soon gave way to resentment against his dictatorial manner, the influence of his entourage of Venezuelan and Colombian advisors and the continued presence of Colombian troops on their soil. (9)

As a result, the Peruvian population was relieved overall when, in 1826, Bolívar left for Colombia.

However, the Peruvian creole elites had difficulties garnering the popular support necessary to consolidate their power.⁵² Furthermore, Tamayo Herrera explains:

No existían tampoco partidos sólidos, con base social definida, ni líderes que pasaran de las disquisiciones teóricas. En estas condiciones de orfandad política no existía una verdadera clase dirigente, sólida y eficaz,

⁵² For a discussion of the relationship between Peru's creole elites and the general populace in the early years of Independence, see Heraclio Bonilla's "El problema nacional y colonial del Perú en el contexto de la Guerra del Pacífico" (529).

que se hiciera cargo de la marcha política-administrativa del naciente estado. (247)

The only figures capable of asserting authority in the early, anarchic years of independence were the caudillos, of which Peru would see no fewer than eighteen between 1826 and 1895 (Higgins 10). A period of relative stability finally came in 1844 with the rise of strongman Ramón Castilla, an astute leader who deftly counterbalanced his demand for order with respect for constitutional principles. Castilla's administration gained financial reinforcement with the discovery of the nation's deposits of guano, excrement left by seabirds on the islands off the coast of Peru that was extracted and exported for use as fertilizer to European markets. The guano industry flourished between the years 1842 and 1866, affording a level of political stability and economic prosperity previously unknown to the nation. As Paul Gootenberg explains in *Imagining Development: Economic Ideas in Perú's "Fictitious Prosperity" of Guano, 1840-1880* (1993):

For Peru, it was a rags-to-riches story: stylish living for citified elites, bloated budgets, millions in fancy imports, a purchased political peace, unlimited access to London credit. (1-2)

Castilla made use of the new wealth to pacify and modernize the nation, organizing the country's finances, promoting European immigration, and exploring the untapped resources of Peru's jungles.

More importantly for the purposes of this study, Castilla valued the manner in which literature and culture could aid in the process of forging a united national community. As Francesca Denegri notes in *El abanico y la cigarrera: La primera*

generación de mujeres ilustradas en el Perú (1996), Castilla allocated a portion of the wealth issuing from the guano boom to the establishment of schools and to the stimulation of Peruvian art and culture. As a result, Denegri explains: “El mundo de la educación y la cultura de las élites comenzó un renovado y activo período con el apoyo directo que el Estado brindaba a la literatura, el teatro y la prensa” (33). Until that moment, *costumbrismo* had constituted the hegemonic literary genre among national writers.⁵³ However, several aspects of Peruvian *costumbrismo*—including its lack of character development and privileging of urban themes to the exclusion of other regions of Peru—undermined its ability to inscribe symbolic connections between readers and the nation. Also, as Maida Watson Espener observes in *El cuadro de costumbres en el Perú decimonónico* (1979), Peruvian *costumbrismo* gave little representation to non-white individuals and the lower classes. As she explains:

Los costumbristas ignoran los niveles bajos de la sociedad, negros e indios, o los retratan con un criterio idealizante. La ausencia de integrantes de la clase baja en sus escritos nos revela una completa carencia de percepción de los problemas nacionales y de la estratificación social, actitud ésta que resulta en completa consonancia con la total separación entre las clases alta, media y bajo del período. (59)

⁵³ As Ventura García Calderón explains in his study *Del romanticismo al modernismo: prosistas y poetas peruanos* (1910), with the establishment of newspapers and cultural journals following independence from Spain, Peru witnessed the emergence of “Toda una escuela de costumbristas que parece derivarse de Larra, Mesoneros Romanos y Estébanez Calderón” (Allain 16). Writers like Felipe Pardo y Aliaga, Manuel Ascencio Segura, and Ramón Rojas y Cañas depicted Peruvian customs and traditions in their epigrams, sonnets, and *cuadros*.

Furthermore, the satirical and at times overly critical lens through which the *costumbristas* tended to portray national life undercut the nation-building possibilities of this literature.⁵⁴ Summarizing all of these points, Antonio Cornejo Polar affirms in *La formación de la tradición literaria en el Perú* (1989) that Peruvian *costumbrismo*:

liquidaba todo impulso destinado a colaborar, desde la literatura, en la construcción de la nación, sea problematizando un designio histórico todavía informe, sea imaginando una utopía social. Desde el punto de vista social, la función del costumbrismo fue—por decirlo de alguna manera—mucho más municipal que nacional. (30-31)

With the rise of the Romantic novel in the sixties, however, Peruvian writers acquired a literary form through which they could more fully represent the nation and its changing social, political, and economic situation. The novel allowed writers to imaginatively negotiate contemporary problems like national schism, ethno-racial heterogeneity, and political oppression. Nineteenth-century Peruvian novelists frequently mapped out their visions for the nation through sentimental representations of the family, family ties, and domestic spaces. Their treatment of the family and domestic themes not only permitted these authors to reflect the particularities—linguistic, sartorial, culinary, etc.—of Peruvian culture, it also allowed them to project their dreams of creating a harmonious, modern, and prosperous nation.

⁵⁴ García Calderón discusses this feature of Peruvian *costumbrismo* in his literary anthology, explaining that it tended to present a “reflejo deformado de nuestra política y el itinerario de nuestra burla. Sustancialmente, nada ha cambiado. Costumbre antigua y quizás mala costumbre es llevar tan lejos la crítica de la realidad nacional” (16). For more on Peruvian *costumbrismo*, see Velázquez Castro’s 2010 article “Los orígenes de la novela en el Perú: Paratextos y recepción crítica (1828-1879)” (77, 83-84).

In this chapter, I will analyze Luis Benjamín Cisneros's *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación* (1864) and Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido* (1889) in order to shed light on how the family allowed these writers to project their national utopias at very different stages in the nation-building process. In the first section of this chapter, I will examine how Luis Benjamín Cisneros's *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación* represents well-ordered family life as the key to national prosperity and a panacea for violent revolution and *caudillismo*. Written within the context of mounting resistance to the military governments on the part of the emergent middle classes, Cisneros (1837-1904) posits the peaceful, honorable family as a blueprint for the nation that would support the new liberal state and stabilize the nation in preparation for an anticipated period of industrialization. Cisneros insists upon the need to reinforce the family in order to shift from a bellicose past to a peaceful, prosperous present, and he stresses that the prominence of caudillos and revolutions preclude this turn toward domesticity.

In *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación*, women emerge as solutions to national crisis, unifying the war-torn national community through their sensitivity and charity. However, at the same time, the novel's idealization of women seems aimed at shaping (and controlling) mothers for the new nation. The heroine's trajectory from virginal maiden to fallen woman and her ultimate redemption through motherhood offers a strong justification for restricting women's movements and reinforces their domestic role as wives and mothers. Cisneros takes a similarly ambivalent approach to the representation of Peru's indigenous population in his novel. On the one hand, Cisneros offers commentaries about the abandoned state of indigenous communities in Peru's interior. In these representations lies an implicit criticism of the Peruvian government for neglecting

to include this sector into the nation. However, the novel's ostensibly pro-indigenous stance is destabilized by the subsequent shift toward more exotic and idealized reflections on the past Incan civilization. *Edgardo* thus presents a curious mix of the aesthetics of *incaísmo* and real social commentary about the situation of Peru's indigenous peoples.

Peru saw a more concerted effort toward representing the nation's indigenous inhabitants during the last third of the century. This time period saw fundamental alterations in both the content and tenor of national discourses and literature in Peru, changes that were prompted largely by the disasters that came at the tail end of the guano boom. The exhaustion of the guano deposits, financial crisis, and the nation's crushing defeat in the War of the Pacific (1879-1883)—during which Peruvians not only suffered the humiliation of seeing Lima occupied by Chilean troops but also lost control over the nitrate-rich territories to the south—had a profoundly negative impact on the national morale.⁵⁵ At the same time, however, these losses stimulated important debates among intellectuals and opened up new lines of inquiry with regards to the future of Peru. A central figure during this time was Manuel González Prada (1844-1918), the thinker, writer, and politician who exerted significant authority over the Peruvian lettered elite until his death in 1918. As Antonio Cornejo Polar explains, González Prada spearheaded:

la búsqueda de un proyecto nacional nuevo que pudiera garantizar la regeneración del país y su progreso futuro. En este segundo aspecto, González Prada asumió inicialmente las formulaciones genéricas de la

⁵⁵ For more on the impact of the war with Chile on Peruvian society, see Heraclio Bonilla's "The War of the Pacific and the National and Colonial Problem in Peru" (1978).

burguesía modernizante y antioligárquica, bajo los principios del culto positivista al Progreso, la Razón y la Ciencia. (*La formación* 94)

A staunch advocate of science and its potential to reform the structure of society and its institutions, González Prada encouraged the members of his literary group, the *Círculo Literario*, to examine the national panorama with unrelenting objectivity.

One of the objectives of González Prada's new national program was the incorporation of Peru's indigenous communities into national life. As he affirmed in his famous speech "Discurso en el Politeama" (1888):

No forman el verdadero Perú las agrupaciones de criollos y extranjeros que habitan la faja de tierra situada entre el Pacífico y los Andes; la nación está formada por las muchedumbres de indios diseminadas en la banda oriental de la cordillera. (24)

González Prada thus opposed contemporary thinkers who persisted in desiring a white national community at the expense of the indigenous and mestizo majority. Validating this marginalized demographic as the "real Peru," González Prada stresses the need to incorporate Peru's indigenous populations into national life. He saw the key to rehabilitating this national component in their education. As he proclaimed later in his discourse:

Trecientos años ha que el indio rastrea en las capas inferiores de la civilización, siendo un híbrido con los vicios del bárbaro y sin las virtudes del europeo: enseñadle siguiera a leer y escribir, y veréis si en un cuarto de siglo se levanta o no a la dignidad de hombre. A vosotros, maestros de escuela, toca galvanizar una raza que se adormece bajo la tiranía del juez

de paz, del gobernador y del cura, esa trinidad embrutecedora del indio.

(24)

As we can see in his portrayal of Peru's indigenous peoples, González Prada's treatment of this national sector was riddled with tensions and contradictions. On the one hand, his attack on the colonialism of provincial authorities emphasize that social conditioning—rather than “natural” inferiority—constitutes the primary cause of the fallen state of indigenous peoples. On the other, his references to “[los] vicios del bárbaro y las virtudes del europeo” and his insinuation of their lack of human dignity (in their present condition), are widely pejorative and stress the urgent need to “civilize” what is represented as an utterly debased people. As Nelson Manrique indicates in *La piel y la pluma: Escritos sobre literatura, etnicidad y racismo* (1999), ethnocentric theories and attitudes infiltrated the thinking of some of the most progressive intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including those who sought to defend Peru's indigenous population (11).

According to González Prada, writing constituted the most effective vehicle for the reconstruction of national life. As we can see in another well-known speech, “Propaganda y ataque” (1888), he ascribed writers a sacred role in the task of regenerating the national community during the post-war period:

Ardua tarea corresponde al escritor llamado a contrarrestar el influjo del mal político: su obra tiene que ser de propaganda y ataque. Tal vez no vivimos en condiciones de intentar la acción colectiva, sino el esfuerzo individual y solitario... Hay que mostrar al pueblo el horror de su envilecimiento y de su miseria; nunca se verificó excelente autopsia sin

despedazar el cadáver, ni se conoció a fondo una sociedad sin descarnar su esqueleto. (90-95)

González Prada's aggressive prose and evocative metaphor of Peru as an ailing body sets the tone for a new national literature. His literary call to arms was taken up by the writer Clorinda Matto de Turner, who, in her essays, journal articles, and novels adopted writing as the vehicle through which she denounced—and imagined solutions to—the issues that were afflicting the nation.

Matto de Turner (1852-1909), originally from the Andean town of Cuzco, formed part of the new wave of women's writing that began in the years leading up to the War of the Pacific. Prior to this time period, the traditionalist attitudes about women and their appropriate place in society had posed an obstacle to female participation in the cultural and literary life of the nation. As Sara Beatriz Guardia indicates in *Mujeres peruanas. El otro lado de la Historia* (1986), the poverty of female education contributed significantly to their exclusion from the world of letters. At many schools, Guardia notes, female education was limited to domestic preparation, cooking, drawing, urbanity, poetry, and a few notions of history and literature, “cursos dirigidos a preservar sus labores domésticas e insuficientes para proseguir estudios superiores (51-52). Furthermore, while the decade of the fifties saw the establishment of several liberal reforms including the abolishment of slavery and the practice of *mita*, the Indian tribute system established during the colony (however, the landowners and the local churches of the Andean highlands continued to demand the unremunerated labor of indigenous peoples throughout the century, which is

a situation that Clorinda Matto de Turner later denounced in *Aves sin nido*), female education remained in a state of neglect.⁵⁶

However, in the decade of the seventies, a group of female Peruvian intellectuals challenged the secondary place they were assigned in the new nation. Among their objectives was to elevate the quality of female education, which they recognized as the first step to improving their place within the nation. In her study, LaGreca notes the rise in female activity in the following way:

If one were to look at a graph charting women's participation in public life in Peru through the nineteenth century, it would consist of a peak in activity in the first two decades, followed by a sharp decline in the new republic at midcentury, and then a gradual rise through the 1870s and 1880s, when women began seeking education reform and publishing their own essays, fiction, poetry, and journal articles. (78)

The world of letters constituted the principal channel through which women inserted their voices into the public sphere and contested the limited role of women in society. The famous *Veladas literarias* of Argentine expatriate Juana Manuela Gorriti played a prominent role in encouraging female writing and in incorporating women into the nation-building project. These *Veladas*, held in Lima between 1876 and 1877, brought together intellectuals such as Matto de Turner, González Prada, Ricardo Palma, and

⁵⁶ As Maritza Villavicencio explains in *El silencio a la palabra: Mujeres peruanas en los siglos XIX y XX* (1992), the discrepancy in the number of schools for boys versus girls in Peru widened exponentially over the first few decades of the century. By 1849, only thirty-three out of the approximately two thousand six hundred schools were designated for girls (36).

Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, producing a heterogeneous mix of discourses that ranged from poetry recitations to political essays.

In addition to providing a platform for the exchange of ideas and the circulation of female-authored texts, the *Veladas* stimulated essays and arguments in favor of expanding women's role in society. Participants of the *Veladas* frequently argued that women must assume more active roles in society in order for Peru to fulfill its destiny as a truly "civilized," Christian nation. Furthermore, like John Stuart Mill in his essay "The Subjection of Women" (1869), thinkers criticized the practice of restricting women to the domestic sphere as a reckless mismanagement of human potential. These ideas are illustrated in "La educación social de la mujer," an essay written by Abel de la E. Delgado and recited at the first *Velada* on July 19, 1876. According to Delgado, the positive influence that women exercise over those around her make of her "una prenda eficacísima de civilización y progreso" (32). Given woman's power of influence, he argued that expanding her sphere of activity would signify a broader application of these strengths for the benefit of society:

repito que la sociedad estará fraccionada, en tanto que la mujer, sin perjuicio de ser el ángel de nuestro hogar y el alma de la familia, no lleve á todas las esferas de la vida social el precioso contingente de las dotes admirables con que la adornó la Providencia; en tanto que la mujer, sin faltar á los deberes que su estado señala, no influya poderosamente en los negocios públicos, no se interese eficazmente en todas las causas nobles, y no comprenda y hasta ayude á resolver los altos problemas de la ciencia, del derecho y de la política. (33)

At the same time, however, Delgado goes on to stipulate that women should not assume responsibilities that would interfere with their role as wives and mothers. Delgado also echoes the view that certain aspects of women's "nature" rendered them unsuitable for certain enterprises and areas of public life. As he notes:

Confieso que me halagaría muy poco ver á la mujer convertida en una notabilidad financiera ó en una celebridad tribunicia. Poco simpática sería, la que debe ser toda sensibilidad y ternura, dirigiendo una batalla, luchando con una fiera ó elevándose en un globo á las regiones etéreas

(32)

Likewise, women had no place "en las grandes luchas y agitaciones de los partidos... los parlamentos... los colegios electorales y... las turbulencias del *meeting*" (37). According to Delgado, women should only be permitted to influence these areas of public life through indirect channels.

Matto de Turner participated in the *Veladas* in 1877, and her work was commended by the other participants. However, Matto de Turner had also been active in the literary and cultural sphere prior to her visit to Lima, circulating her ideas in the newspapers and literary journals of her time, usually under a pseudonym. Later, during the decades of the eighties and the nineties, she would become the director and editor-in-chief of several important papers. As Mary Berg explains in "The Feminist Essays of Clorinda Matto de Turner" (1991):

When Matto became the editor of *La Bolsa* of Arequipa in 1881, the first woman in the Americas to head a prominent daily newspaper, she had a national forum for her articles, many of which relate to women's

education, women's role in society, and women's often suppressed capabilities. As editor-in-chief in 1889 and 1890 of *El Perú Ilustrado*, the most important literary magazine of its time in Lima, she had an even larger audience for her views on feminism and education. (para. 3)

Besides her advocacy of female education and emancipation, Matto de Turner's writings versed on the need to secularize society and to redeem Peru's indigenous population. Matto de Turner's active participation in the debates of her time defied the notion that women could only aid the nation through their role as wife and mother, but it came at a steep price. Her audacious attack of the Church in *Aves sin nido* rankled the conservative sectors of the nation, especially as it was made by a woman. As a result, the Archbishopric of Lima waged a campaign against Matto de Turner, banning the novel, excommunicating the author, and burning her effigy in public. Later, Matto de Turner became the victim of even more violent attacks in 1895 with the rise to power of Nicolás Piérola, the opponent of one of Matto de Turner's protectors, Andrés Cáceres. Piérola's troops ravaged her home and took control of her publishing house. Matto de Turner fled Peru and lived in exile in several places, mainly in Buenos Aires, where she continued to campaign for women's rights through the press.

Matto de Turner's novel *Aves sin nido* constituted one of the first best sellers in Spanish America. Apart from the two editions published in Peru and Argentina, the novel was translated into English and published in London in 1904. Part of the reason behind its acclaim, Rocío Ferreira explains in "Clorinda Matto de Turner, novelista y los aportes de Antonio Cornejo Polar al estudio de la novela peruana del siglo XIX" (2005), was the

novelty of the author herself and the major themes that she presents in her work. As she explains:

[*Aves sin nido*] fue la primera novela escrita por una mujer serrana insertada en el centro de la ciudad letrada que encara abiertamente la abyecta situación de la población indígena, que desafía la corrupción de las autoridades provincianas, y que va a asignarle a la mujer educada el rol civilizador de madre republicana. (30)

In my reading of this novel, I explore how Clorinda Matto de Turner constructs a new national model through her portrayal of an enlightened, multiethnic family composed of white parents and two adopted daughters, a mestiza and an indigenous girl. Taking advantage of the imaginative possibilities presented by the family and domestic spaces, Matto de Turner utilizes adoption in order to forge a legitimate place for indigenous peoples in the minds of her readers. In this way, the white, creole home becomes a space of biological and cultural *mestizaje*, where society's marginalized sectors are rescued and incorporated into the white nation-family.

At the same time, Matto de Turner's struggle to improve the conditions of indigenous peoples in Peru simultaneously veils an argument in favor of women, or, according to Ana Peluffo, the indigenous discourse running through the novel constitutes a "feminismo disfrazado de indigenismo" (16). However, while I agree with Peluffo's interpretation of the overlapping nature of these two discourses, I prefer to think about such discourses as complementing each other, rather than as one dominating the other. Recognizing the similarities between the oppression of indigenous peoples and women,

Matto de Turner makes recourse to the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces in order to incorporate both of these marginalized groups into national life. Furthermore, in her construction of an intelligent, educated, and strong Republican Mother, she underscores the importance of women in forging a united nation. While Matto de Turner's Republican Mother is graced with the same generosity, sensitivity, and virtue as the heroine that Luis Benjamín Cisneros idealizes in *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación*, she suggests that giving women a solid education and access to culture makes them more equipped as mothers of the new nation-family.

Luis Benjamín Cisneros's *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación*: Scenes of Family and Nation Building

Edgardo simboliza un implícito llamado al orden, a la paz, a la cordura, a la organización, a la solidaridad social y nacional. Obra escrita inmediatamente después de las grandes agitaciones que conmovieron a la juventud entre 1854 y 1860, refleja el cansancio ante la discordia intestina
—Jorge Basadre

As early reviews of the novel established, Luis Benjamín Cisneros's *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación* denounces the enduring influence of the military in Peru, which delayed the processes of national unification and modernization. In *El carácter de la literatura del Perú Independiente* (1905), for example, José de la Riva Agüero wrote that "En *Edgardo* parece Cisneros haberse propuesto a demostrar las funestas consecuencias de la anarquía y las guerras civiles" (38). Ventura García Calderón echoed this interpretation five years later in his anthology *Del Romanticismo al modernismo*:

Prosistas y poetas peruanos (1910), expanding upon the eponymous hero's noble yet misguided struggle to regenerate the Peruvian nation through the military:

Los que soñaban—soldados poetas—en altos hechos bajo grandes capitanes, veían su sueño desmenuzado en minúsculas revoluciones de campanario...[Edgardo] y sus compañeros de armas, queriendo sinceramente redimir al Perú, sólo aumentaron su incertidumbre política.

He aquí la moraleja de la obra. (207)

Edgardo may thus be read as a cautionary tale about the dangers of romanticizing larger-than-life heroes like Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín, figures who were key to realizing Spanish American independence but whose present-day avatars prevented the Peruvian nation from working through the stages of rebellion, independence, and consolidation. Cisneros examines this national problem through the romantic hero, Edgardo Arceles, who strives to fulfill what is presented as the irreconcilable roles of soldier and family man. While he desperately seeks to provide for his young family, Edgardo is driven by a noble yet frenzied desire to carry out his “Sueños de grandeza moral y de prosperidad material para su país” (113). This struggle ultimately ends in tragedy: Edgardo, bedridden from a mortal injury received in battle, reflects bitterly upon his failure to fulfill either goal. Fixing his gaze upon a portrait of his hero, the historical Peruvian general, Felipe Santiago Salaverry, Edgardo reflects upon the last words of this famous Peruvian caudillo:

¡Salaverry! Salaverry! muero joven como tú, pero sin gloria! Yo comprendo en este instante más que nunca la sublime significación de tus

palabras... ‘Preferí la felicidad de mi patria á la de mi familia, y al cabo no me han dejado hacer ni la una ni la otra...’ (126)

Like Salaverry, Edgardo fails both to realize his utopian imaginings for the nation and to provide for his young family. The parallel between historical and fictional hero fans out to express the unlucky condition of all Peruvians born in an era of civil strife. Once again addressing his hero—but the reader, as well—Edgardo declares that: “Ese grito imperecedero de desesperación no es sólo tuyo; es mio [sic] también. Ese es el grito de una generación entera... No!... no!... de dos generaciones; la que ha pasado y la que pasa” (126).

In *Edgardo*, Cisneros tells a bleak story about Peru as a pre-industrialized nation trapped in an era of colonialism. According to the view presented in the novel, this owes largely to the selfishness of the caudillos and military leaders, who clamor for justice and constitutionalism when they are wronged but who break these principles when they find themselves in power. The violent and futile nature of power in Peru unfolds before the eyes of Edgardo and the reader in the last third of the novel, when the hero resolves to study the history of his nation. Enchanted by the story of the conquest and the wars of independence, Edgardo is simultaneously dismayed when he reads about the contemporary leaders of his nation and their unconscionable maneuvers to rise to the highest levels of command. From Edgardo’s perspective, these men:

parecen niños soberbios ó idiotas que juegan con el destino del país ante un lago de sangre, olvidados de que la Providencia les inflige á cada instante la pena del tali6n. Edgardo se sintió aterrado ante ese círculo fatal

de dolores, de sangre y de tribulaciones, que nada crea, que nada consolida y de que no queda sino el recuerdo. (101)

However, Edgardo fails to apply the lessons learned in this scene of reading to his own present situation. Only upon finding himself on his deathbed does he comprehend that social revolutions—even those inspired in “los grandes principios de las sociedades modernas”—only serve to exacerbate the fragile state of the Peruvian nation and its institutions (102). In summary, Edgardo, like his compatriots who sought to regenerate the nation through the institution of the military, inadvertently adds another link to Peru’s long chain of violence.

According to the perspective presented in the novel, to break the endless cycle of violence that began with the conquest and continued into post-independence society, men must pursue livelihoods that contribute positively to the growth of the nation and to the wellbeing of their families. We see this desire played out in the novel’s presentation (and emphatic dignifying) of honorable, hardworking families. Mapping out the nation through the family, family relationships, and domestic spaces, the novel seeks to replace the paradigm of the courageous soldier with that of the middle-class father—a goal that, as Sommer points out, appears in several nineteenth-century Spanish American novels and was imbricated in national interests. Referring to the Spanish American creole male, Sommer notes that:

He had been the hero of the wars of Independence, and even of the civil wars that followed. Then the fighters had been called home to be fathers; manly independence had given way to the negotiated domesticity of

notables who had traded diplomatic daughters in cross-sectoral alliances to secure the peace. (23)

One positive instance of this shift from military pursuit to middle-class stability is found in the case of Edgardo's father. The elder Arceles, a captain under the famous general Salaverry, abandons the unpredictable and poorly remunerated life of the soldier in exchange for a modest, yet happy, stability. Retiring to his native Moquegua, a province in the south of Peru, Arceles accepts a position on his brother's *hacienda*. As we learn:

Su hermano vio con placer esta ocasión de serle útil y le propuso encomendarle un pequeño fundo de viñas, que él administraría y cuyo producto compartirían entrambos. El capitán Arceles aceptó sin vacilar, se reunió a su mujer y a su hijo y fue a vivir en el trabajo y en la oscuridad, contento con el cargo de dependiente o mayordomo de su hermano y en una medianía que apenas sobrepasaba los límites de la pobreza. (36)

Accepting this humble position on the *hacienda* allows Arceles to support his family while contributing to national stability. Furthermore, this shift presents a constructive model for men that could temper the preeminence of the military, which, according to the novel, “ni es solo una de las carreras más caracterizadas entre nosotros: ella es también la de más pronto y menos difícil acceso, sobre todo en ciertas épocas” (37).

Cisneros's novel encompasses a strong critique of the military and its preeminence in society, a facet of national life that was also denounced by the *costumbristas* (Watson Espener 57). However, unlike the *costumbristas*, who often deprecated the laboring classes or excluded them from their portrayal of Peruvian society, *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación* exhibits a new appreciation for artisans, for

seamstresses, and for small-time agriculturors. For example, he praises the “desgraciada familia que se mantenía de su trabajo” and he emphasizes “la satisfacción del que gana el pan de la vida con el trabajo manual” (12; 7). In this way, Cisneros’s novels attests to the growing importance of Peru’s emergent middle classes. As Mario Castro Arenas observes in *La novela peruana y la evolución social* (1964):

Con Cisneros, la clase media insurge por vez primera en la novelística nacional. Familias venidas a menos, viudas y huérfanas de oficiales de alta graduación, agricultores de provincia emigrados a la ciudad, comerciantes, nuevos ricos, forman el paisaje humano de *Julia* y *Edgardo*, novelas escritas en la época del contrato de consignación del guano y en las vísperas de la conflagración con España. (65)⁵⁷

What made the stable, middle-class family such an attractive prospect for Cisneros? A look at one of his essays, “Ensayo sobre varias cuestiones económicas del Perú” (1866) suggests several likely responses to this question. Cisneros dedicated much of his life to promoting a program of industrialization in Peru. In his essay, he sets out to analyze the relative progress that Peru had seen in its forty-some years of independence from Spain. To do this, he reviews statistics on the nation’s mining, agriculture, imports, and exports. His findings bring him to declare that those individuals who “nos acusan de que en cuarenta y un años de Independencia no hemos hecho más que degollarnos mutuamente nos calumnian sin saber lo que dicen” (25).

⁵⁷ For the importance of the middle class in Cisneros’s novels, see also Denegri (49) and Velásquez Castro (81).

At the same time, Cisneros admits that much remained to be done in terms of modernizing the nation, many regions of which lagged behind the cities. According to the essay, the solutions to the backward state of society in Peru lay in industrialization, in the construction of roads and bridges, and, last but not least, in embracing a new work ethic. As Cisneros notes optimistically in the essay, the nation had already begun to see positive changes in this respect:

El desarrollo del comercio con el exterior ha producido también otros frutos; la industria se ha hecho una profesión respetada y honrosa; los hábitos industriales comienzan a dominar en nuestra sociedad; *y el trabajo personal no afecta ya a la dignidad del hombre. Hace treinta o veinticinco años que, merced a las tradiciones de la educación española, el hijo de una familia mediocrementemente acomodada se habría sentido humillado en ir a colocarse tras del mostrador de un almacén.* Hoy el hijo de una familia rica acepta una plaza de dependiente de comercio como un favor y con reconocimiento. (31; my emphasis)

According to Cisneros, the Peruvian citizen should no longer feel ashamed to work behind a counter, to till his own soil, or to take up any profession that contributed to transforming Peru into a prosperous nation.

Returning to the novel, we can see how Edgardo's adoption of the soldier's life goes against the new work ethic permeating Cisneros's essay and novel. The novel underscores the deleterious effects of the military on family life, illustrating how the soldiers' meager salaries leave them unable to maintain their loved ones in comfort. The poorly-furnished home in which Edgardo and Adriana take residence after getting

married, for example, exteriorizes the instability of the young family's life together. We thus read how:

Edgardo comparaba secretamente el lujo de las casas a donde iba con la desnudez, las penurias y las tristezas invisibles de su desmantelado departamento. El desorden inseparable de los interiores pobres, en que todo se aja y se trunca y en que unos objetos van cayendo a pedazos por falta de otros, le inspiraba cierto malestar no sólo físico sino moral. Todo esto acrecentó en el joven el sentimiento desolador de su pobreza. (111)

Ironically, while the narrator describes the poverty endured by Edgardo's father on the *hacienda* as a situation that underscores the honesty and hard work of the retired captain, in this case the destitution of the domestic space acquires overtones of moral decay, serving to denounce the deleterious effects of the military on the nation. Ashamed of the penury in which his family lives, Edgardo ultimately comes to regret his decision to join the military. However, by this time, it is too late:

En medio de sus tribulaciones, Edgardo pensó con amargura en el bello porvenir que habría podido ofrecer á Adriana si hubiera consagrado toda la actividad de su juventud al comercio, á la industria ó á la agricultura en un rincón de su provincia. (111)

The novel also calls attention to how military campaigns undermine the social order by depriving families of the male head of the household. Chapter 14, which describes the violent siege of Lima by the revolutionary forces, underscores the vulnerable position of families during armed conflict:

Las puertas de las casas se entreabrían como temerosas del asalto de una multitud sin freno. El alma amedrentada de las familias se estremecía ante el gran drama de sangre y de desorden que pasaba á sus ojos. Cada esposa se preguntaba por su esposo, cada hermano por su hermano, cada madre por su hijo! (119)

This scene underscores the moebus-like relationship between the family and the nation and reflects Cisneros's adoption of the family and the domestic space as the framework through which he makes an impassioned appeal to national order and social harmony. Framing Peru's military conflicts from the perspective of family crisis, Cisneros calls on the reader's sense of common morality to incite a collective desire for national peace.

Throughout *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación*, widowhood, orphanhood, and family trauma become metaphors for the deleterious effects of the military on the young nation.⁵⁸ At the same time, however, the fatherless family serves a crucial, symbolic function in the novel. As I will discuss in the next section, the representation of the Lorbezas, composed of doña Inés and her three daughters, permits a more focused exploration of attributes such as generosity, sympathy, and religious sentiment, qualities that were associated at the time with female sociability and were seen as lacking in the post-independence period. The fatherless family provides a peaceful, conciliatory model of patriotism that counterbalances that embodied by the heroic, public acts of men like Edgardo and his companions. Since women were proscribed from both military service

⁵⁸ Significantly, two historical battles provide a framework to the novel that is both structural and thematic: on the one hand, the death of the Major Lorbeza in the 1838 Battle of Guía plunges the previously comfortable Lorbeza family into poverty; on the other, Edgardo's death in the 1855 Battle of the Palma leaves Adriana solely responsible for raising their young son.

and political positions, the feminized family theoretically offered a conciliatory model of society in which members were bound by fraternal feelings.⁵⁹

Cisneros thus examines this peaceable family and the military as two institutions that competed in shaping future generations of Peruvian citizens. While the military promotes a public model of nationalism modeled to a certain extent on the caudillos who led the historic battles of the past and whose feuding posed a primary obstruction to the nation's path of progress, the family provides a constructive nationalism embodied by the private identities of father, mother, and child. The virtues of the Lorbezas, "modelo increíble de abnegación y de virtud," are presented as radiating from within the nuclear family and moving outward to society to foster a national identification that transcended political, racial, and class differences. Thus, while Cisneros enacts the destruction of the united, nuclear family in order to denounce the perseverance of military conflict in Peru, he adopts the femino-centric family as a framework through which he imagines a conciliatory, less hierarchical model of nationhood.

The Femino-centric Family as Symbolic Ideal for the Peruvian Nation

While the novel coaxes readerly desire for the union between Edgardo and Adriana, it is the Lorbezas, composed of doña Inés and her daughters Carmen, Adriana, and Eduvigis who emerge as the primary instrument of healing in the war-torn nation. Narrating these women's visits to San Bartolomé, the military hospital next to their home

⁵⁹ As Lynn Hunt explains in *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (1992), fatherless families were also attractive to French writers on the eve of the revolution because they were perceived as symbols of greater freedom.

in Lima, Cisneros paints this altruistic family as a paragon of virtue and selflessness and a palliative for the egotism and violence of the age. The family provides an essential support system within society, looking after those soldiers injured in the nation's many armed conflicts. As Jeffrey Klaiber reminds us in "La Iglesia y la marginalidad en el Perú y América Latina del siglo XVI al XXI" (2011), female volunteers were vital in Peru, particularly following the violent wars of independence:

Después de la Independencia, hubo un gran vacío en el área de la salud y la asistencia social...A lo largo del siglo XIX, llegaron al Perú distintas congregaciones hospitalarias y de asistencia social que, en gran medida, resolvieron el problema (172)⁶⁰

The generous activities of the Lorbezas offer poignant examples of how women acted as agents of national regeneration in the war-torn nation.

The charitable activities of the Lorbezas also serve as exempla through which Cisneros promotes virtue constructive codes of behavior. Describing the Lorbezas' visits to the military hospital next to their home in Lima, the narrator expresses in emotionally charged terms the feelings of sympathy and piety that these charitable women awaken in others:

para quien las hubiera seguido en los días consagrados á esta tarea de misericordia y las hubiera contemplado en el momento de penetrar en las salas de los enfermos y en medio de esas salas, no habría habido un

⁶⁰ For more on women's participation in charitable associations in Peru, see Chapter 4 of Ana Peluffo's *Lágrimas andinas: Sentimentalismo, género y virtud republicana en Clorinda Matto de Turner* (2005).

espectáculo más tierno ni más digno de admiración. ¡Cuántos episodios conmovedores hasta las lágrimas! (50)

In a similar vein, their landlord is inspired by the selfless, nurturing qualities of his female tenants:

estas tres jóvenes consagradas, por el sentimiento de amor hacia la memoria de su padre, á auxiliar á los enfermos de un hospital; la ternura de esta anciana por el recuerdo de su marido...habían llevado á su corazón, con las primeras impresiones de la mañana, como un soplo fresco de consuelo y de tranquilidad en medio de las monótonas tareas de la vida ordinaria. (12)

Significantly, the narrator explains that the women actively avoid celebrity or economic gain for their kindness by withholding their names during their visits to the hospital. As the narrator explains: “La familia Lorbeza era una verdadera agencia, pero una agencia desinteresada del hospicio” (52). Obeying Thomas Kempis’s dictum *ama nesciri*, or “love to be unknown,” the Lorbeza family provides a national model constructed on a private, anonymous level that countered the public life of the soldier and the violent “torbellino de los hombres y de la historia contemporáneo” that bewilders Edgardo but to which, ultimately, he adheres (100). The influence of Marianism is unmistakable in the novel’s construction of the Lorbeza family. Besides the Virgin Mary, however, Cisneros makes recourse to attributes of Santa Rosa de Lima, Spanish America’s cherished patron saint famous for her charity work and renowned asceticism, in order to construct this ideal family. For example, the novel’s heroine, Adriana, is initially presented in the following way:

Al verla, se hubiera pensado involuntariamente en que ese tipo ideal y sagrado de belleza y de virtud evangélica, que se llama en nuestras tradiciones religiosas *Santa Rosa de Lima*, no ha muerto y vive aún en las generaciones de su patria. (4; emphasis in the original)

In addition to this direct reference to the saint, the narrator refers twice to “cierta severidad” in Adriana’s expression, another attribute linking the heroine to the saint, whose austerity was legendary.

Santa Rosa de Lima held an important place in the popular imagination during the colonial period and the nineteenth century. According to Villavicencio:

Isabel Flores de Oliva—Santa Rosa de Lima—encarnó la virtud y la santidad. Los castigos corporales a los que se sometía para penitenciarse...representaban el desprendimiento de la sensualidad que debían conseguir las mujeres, así como la obligación de dedicar su vida al cultivo del espíritu. Ella constituyó el modelo de mujer que se ofreció a las criollas, en particular a las de alta posición social. (21)

During the post-independence period, Santa Rosa de Lima’s image was adapted to coincide with the new angelic, domestic woman. The image of Santa Rosa was used to propagate national piety and to mark the shift toward a new peaceable sensibility, not only during the romantic period but throughout the nineteenth century. We can see this, for example, in the works written on the occasion of the third centenary of the saint’s birth in 1886. In his introductory speech, Juan Antonio Ribeyro reinforces this interpretation of Santa Rosa as a harbinger of peace in the contrastive analysis he makes between “the two Isabels”—Isabel the Catholic and Isabel Flores de Oliva, the birth name

of Santa Rosa. As opposed to the aggressive force and combat represented by Queen Isabel, Santa Rosa is depicted as a symbol of peace and unity and an example of the strength of sacrifice and endurance over violence:

[Santa Rosa de Lima] no luchaba, no, con huestes aguerridas, no ajustaba contratos con enemigos ya vencidos, no orlaba su cabeza corona de bruñido oro, no arrastraba el manto de la púrpura real; pero, en cambio, el cilicio aprisionaba su cuerpo esbelto y delicado; no llevaba en sus manos un cetro; pero acariciaba en sus brazos un niño, que debía ser su místico [sic] esposo, su solaz, el objeto de sus penitencias, de sus oraciones y de sus arrobamientos. (16)

Ribeyro concludes, with patriotic zeal, that it is *this* Isabel who solicitously watches over the nation of Peru and glorifies America.

At the same time, Cisneros's idealization of the realm of the feminine and his use of religious iconography to construct his female protagonists inaugurates a rigorous standard for women that, while praising those who abide by the norms of the "angel," punishes those who refuse to comply with proper codes of feminine behavior. In *Edgardo*, the love theme that develops between Edgardo and Adriana contains several lessons about proper female behavior for readers. The seventeen-year-old Adriana meets Edgardo Arceles during one of the family's regular visits to San Bartolomé. While Adriana and the young and injured *forastero* fall in love, doña Lorbeza is reluctant to marry her daughter to a poor soldier. However, parental interference only serves to exacerbate the couple's passion and, on the night before Edgardo must ship out of Lima with his squadron, he arranges to meet the unchaperoned Adriana on an unlit street.

During their meeting, we are told how: “El joven oficial invocó los pocos días que les quedaban para verse, insistió con pasión y concluyó por triunfar de los buenos instintos del ángel” (31). Adriana, shocked by the “horror de su conducta,” discovers later that she has become pregnant—“la más cruel desgracia que puede sobrevenir á una familia honrada” (34).

Nancy Armstrong’s study *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987) is particularly useful in shedding light on Cisneros’s treatment of Adriana. According to Armstrong, “narratives which seemed to be concerned solely with matters of courtship and marriage in fact seized the authority to say what was female” (5). The very manner in which the narrator talks about sex shifts responsibility for sexual transgressions and their undesirable consequences on women, reinforcing the notion that women’s honor and that of their family was tied to her status as a virgin. Much of the novel revolves around Adriana’s attempts to hide her pregnancy from the rest of her family and the shame that this assault upon her chastity brings to her. When doña Inés finally discovers her daughter’s pregnancy, she is forced to give her blessing to the young lovers, since “no vió otro medio de redimir la falta de su hija y de salvarla de la deshonra que el de casarla con Edgardo” (91).

While we are taught to sympathize with the heroine, for whom unexpected pregnancy can bring social death, we are also explicitly told that ultimately she is responsible for the misfortunes that transpire. It is to Adriana that Cisneros ascribes “los ímpetus ciegos de este amor,” and not to the couple as a whole (63). This becomes clear when Adriana reveals her pregnancy to Edgardo. During this scene, the narrator relates the unexpected pregnancy of Adriana as a result of Edgardo’s tragic fate, or “la fatalidad

de su estrella” (77). In this way, Edgardo is not chastised for engaging in sexual relations outside of marriage, as Adriana is. As the narrator explains, where sexual transgressions were concerned: “el galán expone á veces su vida; la doncella expone siempre su honra” (29).

At the same time, the moral fall of the heroine reinforces motherhood as an ideal role for women. After enduring the trials brought upon her by her pregnancy, Adriana is eventually restored to a position of honor when she gives birth to Edgardo’s child. As the narrator relates: “La expiación de Adriana era tal vez superior á su falta. Las cosas cambiaron repentinamente de aspecto, cuando la Providencia creyó colmada la medida” (93). In this way, while Adriana, “en un momento de delirio había hecho no solo su propia deshonra y su propia desgracia, sino la deshonra y la desgracia de su familia,” she regains her lost honor when she becomes a mother (88). In conclusion, by representing women as vessels of morality on which family honor and national integrity depend, Cisneros provides a strong justification for circumscribing women to the domestic realm.⁶¹ In this way, it would be left up to later novelists to point out the ways in which women could contribute to the nation outside of the domestic sphere. As Nancy LaGreca explains:

This battle would necessarily have to entail an attack upon the angel standard through the elimination of virtue as the sole saving grace for their sex (an ambitious goal for that era), or at least an expansion of what it

⁶¹ As Bridget Aldaraca observes in *El Ángel Del Hogar: Galdós and the Ideology of Domesticity in Spain* (1992): “the end result of placing women on a pedestal was to justify and maintain almost *all* women’s exclusion from public life and their restriction to the domestic sphere of activity” (20; emphasis in the original).

meant for a woman to be virtuous. In addition, women would have to privilege their own intelligence and skills outside the home. (87-88)

The Ethnic Other in *Edgardo*

Tengamos presente que la propiedad territorial se halla considerablemente dividida en las poblaciones indígenas de la República, y que los indios dueños de pequeñas porciones de terrenos constituyen la masa más importante de la población numérica del Perú.

—Luis Benjamín Cisneros (49)

While the majority of *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación* is set in Lima and the southern province of Moquegua, Edgardo's travels over the national territory toward the end of the novel incorporate the nation's rural interiors and the indigenous populations inhabiting these areas into the national imaginary. These sections provide Cisneros an opportunity to represent the uneven contours of the modernizing project, which failed to integrate certain areas and inhabitants into national life. As the narrator relates in Chapter 13:

En su marcha de Lima hasta Jauja, los cerros áridos y tristes, los abismos, los despoblados cubiertos de nieve, los desfiladeros, los puentes primitivos y la rusticidad de las poblaciones de indios le oprimieron el corazón. El

Perú estaba menos civilizado y era más mezquino de lo que él creía. (107)

Edgardo's travels conjure up a woeful image of Peru as a vastly disarticulated nation in which certain areas and populations languish on the outskirts of modernization.

Significantly, Cisneros returned to this topic in the “Ensayo sobre varias cuestiones económicas del Perú,” which he completed in Havre in 1866. In this essay, Cisneros attributes the nation’s thwarted path to progress to the enduring power of the military, the lack of industrialization, and the isolation of the nation’s rural inhabitants. The essay stresses the need to incorporate the indigenous populations inhabiting these areas into the modernization project, not so much in order to improve their situation, but rather in order to link the rest of Peru together and achieve the goal of a unified nation. Cisneros emphasizes the substantial indigenous population, declaring that: “los indios dueños de pequeñas porciones de terrenos constituyen la masa más importante de la población numérica del Perú” (49). The essay partially attributes the lagging progress of the indigenous peoples of the interior to their socialization, pointing out that: “nadie ha enseñado ni probado hasta ahora al indígena que su pequeño y humilde campo puede también prosperar” (49). Besides the construction of bridges and roads, he posits European immigration as a way to link the peoples of Peru’s interior with the rest of the nation. According to Cisneros, European settlers will provide a model for adjacent indigenous communities, illustrating the benefits generated through industriousness and incorporation of the new ideas from Europe. He describes this process in the following manner:

El día en que cada indígena vea que su vecino, sin más bienes ni instrumentos que con los que él mismo cuenta, labra su campo de tal manera que se procura una cosecha de mejor calidad y más abundante que la suya; que al mismo tiempo sabe aprovechar los más insignificantes productos de la vegetación; que una vez satisfechas las necesidades de su

familia, busca por cuantos medios puede el modo de comerciar con el resto de sus cosechas ya en el pueblo mismo, ya transportándolos a otros lugares; que cada año aumenta su bienestar de su casa, que hace de su fundo y de su humilde rancho una mansión agradable; que vive en limpieza y el orden; que hay en su pueblo seis u ocho familias que, aunque pobres como él, trabajan y viven de la misma manera; ese día, decimos, comprenderá el indio que la prosperidad de su destino se halla en sus propias manos, y sintiendo el estímulo de la ambición, saldrá de la indolencia que lo embarga, imitará al extranjero y mejorará su porvenir con el trabajo, la iniciativa y la actividad. (49)

While seeking to redeem this national sector, Cisneros simultaneously perpetuates the old stereotypes about indigenous peoples and their “natural” apathy and inferiority to European peoples. Cisneros thus presents a complex and at times contradictory representation of Peru’s indigenous peoples. Thus, while he points to their proscription from the education process as a cause of their present situation, Cisneros simultaneously reinforces injurious preconceptions circulating at the time about indigenous people about their inherent indolence. At one moment in his discussion about the degraded state of the nation’s interior, for example he notes that “entra también como causa, y por mucho, la tradicional apatía de los indios” (49).

The representation of the indigenous population in his essay differs from that in his novel, which largely avoids making social commentary about Peru’s indigenous peoples by idealizing them and through the aesthetics of *incaísmo*, which connect indigenous peoples to removed and idealized settings (Cornejo Polar *La formación* 31).

At several moments in *Edgardo*, the narrator evokes aspects of indigenous culture as sources of national pride. In Chapter 8, appealing to his reader's sense of patriotism, the narrator elaborates on the beauties of the *yaraví*, a musical form characteristic of the Andean region:

Si sois peruano, si amais la América, si en vuestro corazón germinan las emociones de la naturaleza en que habeis nacido, las más dulces armonías de Donizetti y de Bellini no impresionarán jamás vuestra alma como los tiernos sollozos de un yaraví, agudos y monótonos sin duda; pero cuyas notas, llenas de una patética dulzura, cuando las escuchais perdidas en la soledad y en el silencio, os sobrecogen y dominan inflexiblemente con un sentimiento de tristeza embriagadora. (71)

This exaltation of indigenous culture allows Cisneros to build a sense of nationalism in the reader by describing the land and its inhabitants as unique. This effort to *peruanizar* aspects of indigenous life anticipates—to a certain degree—one of the strategies Matto de Turner later adopts in order to “write” indigenous society into the nation.

However, Cisneros evades social commentary on this national sector through his imaginative evocation of the Incan civilization. The sections in which Edgardo reads about this fallen empire follows a common tendency in nineteenth-century Spanish American literature, i.e., he exalts this past civilization in order to establish a story of the nation's cultural origins and describe the nation as distinctive from Europe:

En las sencillas narraciones de Garcilaso y en los cuadros coloridos de Robertson y Prescott, el joven oficial contempló abismado la noble y gloriosa civilización de los Incas, no trasplantada como todas las

civilizaciones antiguas y modernas de la Europa, cuyo itinerario nos marca la historia, sino nacida de sí misma como la luz de la nada (98).⁶²

At the same time, however, this survey of the Peruvian past ultimately moves beyond the figure of the indigenous person in order to exalt the Spaniards as civilizing agents of what was now the national territory:

Admirando las proezas titánicas de los hombres que trajeron al Perú la bandera conquistadora, cuya raza forma hoy el elemento más activo, más ilustrado y más civilizador de nuestra nacionalidad, Edgardo lloró y comprendió el estupor de la raza primitiva al ver en un solo día destruido el imperio, degollados sus reyes, condenada su religión, derribados sus altares, perdidos sus dioses, y cuya conciencia, al contemplar destruido lo que ella creía indestructible é imperecedero, sintió de repente que le faltaba toda base y cayó, en medio de este cataclismo universal, desquiciada, aturdida y espantada como en el caos del vacío. (98-99)

While this passage reflects sadness over the destruction of the Incan empire, it implies an intention or a logic behind the conquest. Only through this clash between cultures would Peru witness “la aparición de una nacionalidad moderna, engendrada por los elementos simpáticos de dos razas llenas de bellas cualidades y de nobles tradiciones” (99).

As these passages demonstrate, Edgardo’s reading of history ultimately yields to an exaltation of the mestizo as the manifestation of a modern, unified Peru. For their part,

⁶² As Sara Castro-Klarén explains in “The Nation in Ruins: Archaeology and the Rise of the Nation,” the act of evoking the pre-Columbian permitted “a mapping of the nation that reconfigures territory by privileging forgotten or even forbidden sites of memory” (164).

while indigenous peoples constitute a source of national pride, in the novel they remain isolated from mainstream society by culture and geographic distance. By contrast, Clorinda Matto de Turner, in her novel *Aves sin nido*, envisions a new, inclusive national model that takes into account the nation's marginalized sectors. In the preface to the novel, Matto de Turner reveals that her primary intention in her novel is to “mejorar la condición de los pueblos chicos del Perú” (2). As opposed to *Edgardo*, in which the indigenous community is detached from mainstream society, Matto de Turner writes this national sector into the nation by incorporating them into the white, creole family.

Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido*: Inclusive Models of Family and Nation

In *Aves sin nido*, Matto de Turner tells the story of Lucía and Fernando Marín, two young spouses who have recently relocated to Kíllac, a rural town in Peru's Andean region. At the beginning of the novel, Marcela Yupanqui, a local indigenous woman, desperately entreats Lucía Marín to help pay off her family's steep debts to the collector. Marcela's fear for the wellbeing of her family sparks the interest of Lucía, who soon discovers that the civil authorities participate in the abuses of Kíllac's indigenous population. The corrupt town priest, Padre Pascual, also benefits from indigenous oppression through the practice of *mita*, that is, obligatory service to the ecclesiastical and civil authorities that was established during the colonial era. According to Marcela Yupanqui, many women who perform *mita* in the church become victims of the sexual advances of Padre Pascual. This libidinous priest, rankled by Lucía's interference in local affairs, attempts to rid himself of these meddling foreigners by organizing an attack on

their home. The Maríns escape unharmed thanks to the governor's perceptive and kind wife, Petronila Pancorbo, and her son, Manuel, but Marcela Yupanqui and her husband Juan perish in the skirmish.

While assisting the dying Marcela, Lucía promises to adopt her soon-to-be orphaned daughters, Margarita and Rosalía. During her final moments, Marcela confides in Lucía that Margarita is actually the daughter of the former parish priest, and later bishop, Don Pedro Miranda, who took advantage of Marcela when she was performing her obligatory services to the church. Lucía agrees to keep the story of Margarita's biological father a secret. Once the two Yupanqui girls are installed in the Marín household, the governor's son Manuel Pancorbo, now a close family friend, falls in love with Margarita. When he petitions the hand of Margarita, however, Manuel explains that his real biological father is not the governor Sebastián Pancorbo, as the townspeople believe, but that he is actually Don Pedro Miranda. Hearing this news, Lucía reveals the secret that Marcela Yupanqui entrusted her with before she died, that Margarita is also the daughter of this former parish priest. It is thus discovered that Manuel and Margarita are half-siblings, and the novel ends with an impassioned lament about the wretched fate of these two "aves sin nido." Like several nineteenth-century Spanish American writers, Matto de Turner uses the incest theme in order to advance her agenda of social reform. In the tragic story of the prohibited love between Margarita and Manuel, Matto de Turner highlights the abuses committed in rural areas by representatives of the church, who wield excessive power over their indigenous parishioners.⁶³

⁶³ Incestuous desire was a common motif in European romantic literature, and we can see instances of this in the works of Chateaubriand, Friedrich Schiller, Byron, and Shelly (Thorslev

In *Aves sin nido*, the Marín family comprises the ideal model for the Peruvian nation. Fernando Marín is a highly prosperous man with ties to the mining industry, while Lucía, his young and educated wife, embodies domestic virtue. As Antonio Cornejo Polar observes in his introduction to the English translation of the novel, the value system and lifestyle of the Maríns are described against the order of the local gentry. The family of Fernando and Lucía Marín is thus:

presented in the text by means of an accumulation of virtues that are set, in what can come to be a very meticulous comparison, against the vices of the ‘gentry.’ What emerges from this process is an extremely idealized image: ever untainted by even the slightest fault, the Maríns are cultured, generous, brave, amiable, thoroughly decent...the Maríns see the destiny of Peru in terms of a degree of industrialization, in the area of mining, and of a flourishing foreign trade, naturally linked to the sale of minerals.

(xxxii)

The family’s function as a model for the Peruvian nation is also reflected in the literary representation of their home as a space of culture. As we learn in Chapter 5 of Part I, the dining room is tastefully decorated with elegant prints of still life, a charming cedar sideboard complete with tiny mirrors, and an impeccable table service. For its part, the

42). However, nineteenth-century Spanish American writers commonly adopted the incest motif in order to shed light on social abuses or disorders. This theme appears, for example, in *Cumandá: ó, Un drama entre salvajes* (1877), by the Ecuadorian writer Juan León Mera, and in *Cecilia Valdés* (1882), by the Cuban writer Cirilo Villaverde. In *Cumandá*, the near incestual relationship between Cumandá and her biological brother, Carlos Orozco, is tacitly attributed to their father’s cruelty toward the surrounding indigenous populations. In *Cecilia Valdés*, the incestuous relationship between the white creole Leonardo Gamboa and his *mulata* half-sister, Cecilia Valdés, dramatizes the anomalies that arise in a society marked by vast social inequalities.

living room boasts several conveniences and amenities available only to people of a certain economic class, such as a chessboard and roulette tables to entertain guests.

The Marín home resembles the villa of the eponymous heroine of José Mármol's *Amalia* in the sense that it constitutes a space of culture and refinement in the midst of a hostile and lawless environment. Also, like in *Amalia*, Matto de Turner utilizes the home as the stage on which the forces of civilization and barbarism dispute for power.⁶⁴

At the same time, however, Matto de Turner presents the domestic space as a site of cultural *mestizaje*, in which indigenous traditions coexist and mingle with those of the Europeanized elite (something unimaginable in the Eurocentric *Amalia*). In this way, Matto de Turner challenges the prevailing ethnocentricity of her time by recognizing certain aspects of Andean culture that were largely excluded from historical and political visibility.⁶⁵ In her unique depiction of the Maríns' home, Matto de Turner characterizes the presence of indigenous elements within the domestic space as a sign of cultural richness as opposed to cultural fragmentation or backwardness.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Chapter Sixteen, in which the Maríns' home becomes the target of the violent attack orchestrated by Padre Pascual, symbolically plays out barbarism's attack on the civilized space of the home. Awakened by the sound of stones and bullets being pelted against the walls, the vulnerable Lucía and Fernando leave their nuptial bed only to find an inebriated mob clamoring outside their home: "Lucía y don Fernando abandonaron el lecho de descanso, cubiertos con sus escasas ropas de dormir y lo poco que tomaron al paso para huir o caer en manos de sus implacables sacrificadores, para encontrar muerte cruel y temprana en medio de esa muchedumbre ebria de alcohol y de ira" (46).

⁶⁵ Much of Matto de Turner's literary production, from her *tradiciones*, to her legends, to her articles, was dedicated to affirming local Andean culture. Significantly, in her *Tradiciones cuzqueñas*, inspired by Ricardo Palma's famous *Tradiciones peruanas*, Matto de Turner shifts focus away from Lima in order to privilege the way of life—past and present—of the nation's Andean zone.

⁶⁶ As Dora Sales Salvador points out, Matto de Turner's efforts to fuse aspects of Andean culture with that of the elite anticipates the stance of later writers such as José María Arguedas. Referring

As Jesús Cosamalón Aguilar explains in “Entre la discriminación y la integración. La servidumbre doméstica y la construcción del mestizaje en Lima del siglo XIX” (2011), the introduction of domestic servants of indigenous, African, and Chinese descent produced significant cultural exchanges and fostered relationships across ethnic lines in nineteenth-century Peru. Thus, he asserts: “el espacio doméstico, privado, se convirtió en uno de los elementos trascendentales en la elaboración del mestizaje cultural” (143). The prevalence of multi-ethnic servantry, according to Cosamalón Aguilar, made the kitchen a primary locus of cultural exchange. As he notes:

No es difícil pensar que los criados, indígenas y africanos, introdujeron en las cocinas los gustos y alimentos que conocían. El control de los patrones tiene un cierto límite en ese nivel, pues la escasez o ausencia de algunos productos europeos y la abundancia de los locales facilitaron el mestizaje culinario. Hay una larga lista de potajes que celebran este encuentro, pero cuyo origen no es elevado ni de alta alcurnia. (150)

One of the forms in which Matto de Turner explores the theme of cultural fusion in the domestic space is precisely through her presentation of regional dishes, which often prompts footnotes in which the author identifies local ingredients conceivably unknown to urban readers. Matto de Turner emphasizes the importance of regional culture at a time

to *Aves sin nido*, she notes that: “Estos pormenores relativos a la cultura tradicional...[crean] un lazo potencial capaz de superar las barreras. Este elemento ambiental, conjuntamente con las muchas palabras quechuas que aparecen en el texto, constituye la cultura popular como posible fuerza unificadora para la sociedad peruana, y en este sentido se puede afirmar que en cierto modo Clorinda consigue, así, anticipar algunos aspectos del retrato, desde luego mucho más amplio y elocuente, que posteriormente se haría de la cultura popular andina en la obra de José María Arguedas.”

when most Peruvians of European descent devalued products, cultural expressions, and practices that did not bear a definitively European stamp. As Denegri notes, the adoption of Europe as the ideal model for the Peruvian nation led to a repression of items as varied as “los tejidos y vinos producidos en el país, hasta las más fundamentales expresiones culturales de la cocina, la vestimenta, el baile y la música” (152).

The novel’s most poignant example of cultural mixing, however, comes with the adoption of the ethnic Other into the domestic space. Matto de Turner takes advantage of the imaginative possibilities of the family and the domestic space in order to forge a legitimate space for indigenous peoples, predisposing readers to view the adopted Yupanqui girls as integrated constituents of Peruvian society. The family’s role as a homogenizing instrument of society emerges in the text when Lucía Marín takes on the role of godmother to Margarita, the eldest daughter of the indigenous couple, Marcela and Juan Yupanqui. The proud parents cheerfully discuss the way Margarita will improve under the kindhearted instruction of Lucía Marín, who will teach her sewing and knitting and will even dress her goddaughter according to the fashion of the elites. As Marcela exclaims: “Qué linda estará nuestra Margarita cuando sea la ahijada de la señorocha Lucía, ¿eh?” (48). However, the untimely death of Marcela and Juan Yupanqui bring Lucía and Fernando to adopt the orphaned Margarita and Rosalía. As Lucía mercifully informs the dying mother: “¡Tus hijas no son las aves sin nido; ésta es su casa; yo seré su madre...!” (67). Effectively, Matto de Turner makes the girls *familiar* to readers by representing them as a legitimate part of the Marín family and by describing the familial bonds that form between Margarita, Rosalía, and their adoptive parents.

Like in Eduarda Mansilla's *El médico de San Luis*, the act of adoption establishes an opportunity for the writer to discuss of the benefits of improving female education. The Marín home becomes the space in which Margarita and Rosalía Yupanqui acquire the knowledge, culture, and mannerisms of the dominant class. Furthermore, like in *El médico*, in which the poor, rustic Aguedita is tutored by the knowledgeable Englishman, it is Manuel, the Europeanized law student educated in the city, who takes the reins of Margarita's education. In the following scene, Margarita proudly shows Manuel the progress she has made since his last visit to the Marín residence, all this to the proud satisfaction of Lucía. As Margarita informs him:

-Bien, Manuel; ya conozco todas las letras del tablero—contestó la niña, sonriendo de contento.

-¡Bravísimo!

-Parece broma, pero cada día me siento más satisfecha de mi ahijada, ¿no?—dijo Lucía mirando a la huérfana.

-¿A ver? Quiero someterte a examen—dijo Manuel, tomando la caja. Y vaciando las fichas comenzó a escoger letras, enseñándoselas a Margarita.

(83-84)

Throughout the scenes of education in the novel, Matto de Turner highlights the supposed meekness and compliance of Peruvian females and their receptivity to education. As she observes, “la mujer peruana es dócil y virtuosa por regla general” (19). A few pages later, she emphasizes this point by noting that: “la mujer, por regla general, es un diamante en bruto, y al hombre y a la educación les toca convertirle en brillante, dándole los quilates a satisfacción” (30). These observations are validated as Margarita is changes into a

dignified *señorita*. By the end of the novel, Margarita, “casi totalmente transformada” and dressed in the same style of clothing as her adoptive mother, could easily pass as a member of the nation’s creole elite (71). At the same time, the bourgeois home becomes a site of cultural loss, in which the two young girls progressively abandon the knowledge, culture, and mannerisms that mark them as “Other” in order to assume the attributes of the dominant class. In this way, while the novel seeks to redeem the indigenous population, it insists upon the need to modify this national sector in order to incorporate it into the nation-family. Also, like in *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación*, it is the mestizo, not the indigenous individual, who is ultimately hailed as a symbol of the Peruvian nation.

From the beginning of the novel, Matto de Turner carefully links the fourteen-year-old Margarita with the fate of the Peruvian nation. For example, the first meeting between Lucía Marín and the eldest Yupanqui girl prompts the following observation from the narrator:

Aquella muchacha era portento de belleza y de vivacidad, que desde el primer momento preocupó a Lucía, haciendo nacer en ella la curiosidad de conocer de cerca al padre, pues su belleza era el trasunto de esa mezcla del español y la peruana que ha producido hermosuras notables en el país.

(19)

In a twist that conforms to a pattern common to many nineteenth-century Spanish American novels, it is discovered that Margarita Yupanqui (who throughout the novel is said to bear the mark of a superior being) turns out to have creole blood, making her only

half indigenous, or mestiza. In this way, it is the creole of mixed blood, rather than the fully indigenous individual, who is imagined as a symbol of the Peruvian nation.⁶⁷

The Educated Republican Mother as Leader of the Nation-Family in *Aves sin nido*

a la rehabilitación de la mujer va asociado el progreso de los pueblos, la unificación de las razas, la regularidad en las evoluciones de la especie humana. La misericordia de Jesús, que levantó del fango a la Magdalena, no es simplemente un símbolo religioso, sino una ley impuesta al desarrollo moral y material de las naciones. Si se quiere fortalecer y elevar a los hombres, es necesario fortalecer y elevar a las mujeres.

—Mariano Amézaga (46)

Besides an indictment of the fallen state of Peru's indigenous peoples, *Aves sin nido* constitutes an impassioned case in favor of female education. Matto de Turner's construction of female protagonists in the novel attests to the ways in which women of a certain education and upbringing can serve as instruments of civilization and progress. At the same time, Matto de Turner couches her progressive ideas in idealized images of wives and mothers. For her part, Lucía ardently fulfills the household duties, which include sewing, planning meals, managing household expenses, and providing a safe haven for Fernando. Lucía's proficiency in household tasks constitutes an important deflecting mechanism in the novel. As Denegri explains:

male intellectuals often approved of women's erudition, but only as a supplement to the latter's domestic skills and viewed education and

⁶⁷ Similarly, as I discuss in Chapter 3, it is the creole of mixed blood who comes to symbolize the future of the Cuban nation in Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's foundational novel *Sab* (1841).

critical thinking as ways to make women smarter and more apt homemakers, as well as better role models for the future generations of Peruvians. (82-83)

The novels also plays up the goodness of mothers, their compassion, and their willingness to sacrifice personal happiness for others in several narrative digressions. Referring to Petronila's unconditional love for her son, Manuel, the narrator praises "aquel suspiro tierno que en su vago murmurío dice: Amor de madre, sacrificio de mujer" (94). In another scene between this mother and son, Manuel reflects upon the curative effects that maternal love can have on individuals, exclaiming:

¡Bendita las madres! Quien no ha sentido los mimos y las caricias de su madre, ni recibido los besos de la que nos llevó en su seno, ¡oh!, no sabe lo que es amor. (59)

However, at the same time that Matto de Turner presents a rather traditional nation-family in her novel, she draws on inherited ideas about women and the family in order to leverage her argument in favor of expanding their role in society. For example, she calls attention to women's exquisite sensitivity and generosity in order to argue in favor of female charity, an activity that permitted their movement beyond the walls of the home.

The discourse of charity was popularized in nineteenth-century Peru not only through novels (female charity comprises a central element, for example, in the novels of Luis Benjamín Cisneros) but also in non-fictional texts. We can see this, for example, in José Arnaldo Márquez's essay "Condición de la mujer y el niño en los Estados Unidos del Norte," which was read at the second of Juana Manuela Gorriti's *Veladas* by Ernesto

Plasencia on 26 July 1876. In his essay, Márquez argues that women's particular strengths of mercy, patience, and charity allow them to make unique contributions to the public sphere. Using North American society as a model, he writes that:

donde quiera [sic] que hay una miseria ó un infortunio que remediar; [la mujer] sostiene y fomenta las ferias para el alivio del pobre: enseña y socorre á los niños en las escuelas dominicales: su solicitud escudriña todos los rincones de la sociedad para descubrir desgracias para socorrer, males que combatir, esperanzas que sostener, y es en todos sentidos digna del amor y renonocimiento de los hombres. (64)

Similarly, throughout *Aves sin nido*, Matto de Turner shows how Lucía's sensitivity—her “corazón de paloma”—improves the situation of Killac's indigenous population. Not only does Lucía come to sympathize with the suffering Other—which in and of itself is a breath of fresh air in the culture of indifference that reigns in the small town—, she also actively advocates on behalf of the persecuted Yupanqui family. Breaking entirely from the passive role of the “angel” who defers to her husband in all things unrelated to the household, Lucía individually presents the case of Juan Yupanqui before the town governor and priest. While her attempts to succor this family are ultimately foiled by the obstinacy and greed of these two men, this scene draws an important parallel between women and national reconstruction. It is wives and mothers, as opposed to the governor and the priest, who are represented as the true upholders of national morality.

However, Matto de Turner emphasizes that it is only educated women who are capable of intervening constructively in national life. Matto de Turner's approach to the this theme in *Aves sin nido* reflects the influence that Mariano Amézaga, a Peruvian

priest, educator, and advocate of women's rights, exercised on her thinking. Amézaga was a firm adherent to the tenets of Positivism, and, like many thinkers of his time, viewed science and its application through education as a panacea for the ills of society. This is demonstrated in several of his articles published in *El Nacional* between 1869 and 1870. In these articles, Amézaga highlights the innumerable benefits that the education of Peruvian men *and* women would yield to the nation, among them: “la abolición de las castas, la homogeneidad de la población, la unidad del idioma” as well as “la formación de los ciudadanos” (9).⁶⁸ However, Amézaga carefully stipulates that education must also be extended to Peru's female citizens in order to realize these goals. As he shrewdly observes, no amount of instruction can modify the early lessons that children receive from their mothers: “¿Quién es el que ha podido extirpar las nociones, los hábitos, las inclinaciones y aún las preocupaciones que adquirió en el seno maternal?” (47).

Similarly, Matto de Turner argues that neglecting female education is harmful not only to women but to the entire nation-family. The narrator describes, for example, how the act of confining women to the domestic space produces weak and idle women who are incapable of contributing to the nation:

acordémonos de esas infelices mujeres hostigadas en los misterios del hogar por los celos infundados; gastadas por la glotonería de los maridos; reducidas a respirar aire débil y tomar alimento escaso, y al punto tendremos a la vista la infeliz mujer displicente, pálida, ojerosa, en cuya

⁶⁸ Furthermore, Amézaga claimed that the establishment of schools would bring about: “la purificación de las costumbres, la disminución de la criminalidad, la supresión del fanatismo, el arraigo de las libertades, la destrucción de los instintos de revuelta, la normalización de las instituciones y la consolidación de la república” (9).

mente cruzan pensamientos siempre tristes, y cuya voluntad de acción duerme el letárgico sueño del desmayo. (100)

In contrast to the above image of the dejected, impotent woman, Lucía Marín—who represents the enlightened, Peruvian woman—unites society through her intelligence and her perceptiveness. Lucía’s solid education allows her to explore such issues as the social condition of indigenous peoples and the unjust institutions that remained from the colony. Later, when her somewhat progressive ideas meet with the inveterate racism of Padre Pascual and the governor, she takes these men to task for their own role in these abuses.⁶⁹ In an ironic turn of events, she reminds both men (one of whom is a priest) that “La caridad es ley del corazón” (13). Matto de Turner thus selectively makes use of the discourses about women’s “angelic” nature and their capacity to sympathize with others in order to debunk the myth that educated, active women constituted a threat to national morality.

Similarly, the novel’s representation of Petronila, the governor’s wife, emphasizes the benefic influence that wives can exert over wayward husbands. Doña Petronila, “el tipo de la serrana de provincia” graced with “un alma bonachona,” actively seeks to inculcate a sense of civic virtue in her husband, whose ignorance and weak character leaves him susceptible to corruptive influences. Because her husband is the governor of Kíllac, Petronila’s leading role in the family confers her with an indirect yet powerful influence over public affairs. When a local caudillo begins to pay visits to her husband,

⁶⁹ As Sebastián Pancorbo pronounces: “sepa usted, señorita, que la costumbre es ley, y que nadie nos sacará de nuestras costumbres,” and he belittles Juan Yupanque by referring to him as “el pícaro indio” (13).

the concerned Petronila tries to restore domestic order and bring Sebastián back to the path of virtue and minimize the dangerous influence of the abusive caudillo.

Significantly, Matto de Turner capitalizes on the nuances of humor in order to underscore the outmoded and illogical nature of arguments against women's participation in the public sphere. The military caudillo, angry upon discovering how Petronila contests his influence over the governor, heatedly remarks: "¡Bonita va la cosa! Llévese usted de lloros de mujeres, y veremos cómo anda la patria" (86). Inflecting this dialogue with blatantly misogynistic overtones and placing it in the mouth of a violent, backward military caudillo, Matto de Turner ironizes the way in which some men feel threatened by the power wives exert over husbands.

This scene is reminiscent of Eduarda Mansilla's *El médico de San Luis*, in which the governor's wife Martina informally takes up the reigns of governorship due to her husband's flagrant disregard for social justice. Like Mansilla, while Matto de Turner ostensibly abides by patriarchal codes in her novel, she also underscores how women can influence the public sphere through their marital relationship. Matto de Turner thus demonstrates that women who took on responsibilities outside of the home did not compromise their virtue; on the contrary, applying their hypothetically feminine and maternal strengths more amply contributed to a more ethical, modern nation-family. Through her representation of Lucía Marín and Petronila Pancorbo, Matto de Turner even suggests transgressively that, in certain ways, women were more fitted for the public sphere than men. In conclusion, unlike Cisneros, who presents female subordination as a foundation for familial and national wellbeing, the key to national regeneration in *Aves*

sin nido lies in the female-guided family, which serves as a modernizing and homogenizing agent of society.

In the following chapter, I will discuss the case of Cuba, a nation not yet independent, to examine how authors still living in a Spanish colony expressed their desire for an independent Cuba through the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces (which, in nineteenth-century Cuba, often included slaves). Depictions of families allowed Cuban writers to reinforce the notion of a distinctive Cuban community in the context of the struggle for national definition. Furthermore, writers frequently made recourse to literary representations of the family in order to allegorize specific aspects of Cuba's socio-historical reality under debate by contemporary Cuban intellectuals, among them, independence, abolitionism, and the place of women in society.

Chapter 3

The Family and Domestic Spaces as Sites of Nation Building in the Nineteenth-Century Cuban Novel

Introduction

In the preceding two chapters, I analyzed how several nineteenth-century Spanish American writers focalized issues that they perceived as impediments to the progress of the new emerging nations through the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces. Examining the task of nation building in Cuba, however, a nation not yet independent, illuminates sharp contrasts when considered alongside examples in Argentina and Peru. The end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century constituted a time of radical redefinition for the island of Cuba, during which it was transformed from an underdeveloped imperial outpost into Spain's richest colonial possession. When the successful slave insurrection in Saint-Domingue brought sugar plantations on the French portion of Hispaniola to a halt, Cuba seized the opportunity to become the primary producer of this important commodity.⁷⁰ The prosperity of the sugar industry precipitated a rapid process of modernization that saw imports from Europe and

⁷⁰ The slave insurrection on the neighboring island lasted between 1791 and 1803. In 1804, freedom fighter Jean-Jacques Dessalines renamed Saint-Domingue Haiti and declared freedom from France, making Haiti the first independent nation of Latin America.

the introduction of new technology to the island such as steam machinery and the railway.⁷¹

As Roberto Marte explains in *Cuba y la República Dominicana: Transición económica en el Caribe del siglo XIX* (1988), Cuba's transformation into a plantation society required a thorough reorganization of the land in the western and central regions of the island. Much of this area, previously portioned into *latifundios* for cattle ranches and small farms, was cleared and divided to make room for the vast, modern sugar mills (Marte 18). The sugar boom also promoted the growth of cities and stimulated urban planification, particularly in Havana, which witnessed the emergence of “un novedoso ritual de vida comunitaria en paseos, ‘promenades’, [y] boulevards que conforman el escenario apropiado a la extroversión cortesana” (46).⁷² With Cuba's rise to economic power, wealthy *habaneros* found themselves privy to an influx of overseas goods and foreign visitors, many of whom remarked upon the opulent lifestyle led by the city's leading creoles.⁷³

However, Cuba's situation was highly problematic, for while it kept pace with some of the most advanced European nations in terms of industrialization and material

⁷¹ In fact, Cuba saw the construction of its first railway system in 1837, before any of the other territories of Spanish America, and even before Spain itself.

⁷² As Marte also notes, the signature style of the mansions in Old Havana—a rich synthesis of Baroque and Neoclassical styles—dates back to this period and serves as visible testament to the wealth issuing from the booming sugar economy (46-47).

⁷³ For examples of foreigners' responses to the lavish lifestyle led by the island's aristocracy, see Ismael Sarmiento Ramírez's “Vestido y calzado de la población cubana en el siglo XIX” (2000). In his article, Sarmiento Ramírez argues that the economic prosperity resulting from the sugar industry, the access to imports, and the presence of foreign visitors flaunting the new styles from abroad imparted onto the islanders a psychology of compulsive consumerism. See also Knight's 1977 article “The Social Structure of Cuban Slave Society in the Nineteenth Century” (263).

progress, it was founded upon the forced labor of slaves, who were abducted from Africa and brought to work on the modern, massive sugar plantations cropping up on the island. When the Crown perceived Cuba's potential to replace Saint-Domingue as the world's primary sugar producer, it responded quickly by lifting the restrictions on the slave trade.⁷⁴ The Declaration of Free Trade in Slaves, passed in 1789, designated specific ports through which an unlimited number of slaves could enter; among these was Cuba's port city of Havana. The elimination of the slave restrictions invigorated the slave trade and triggered an unprecedented rise in the importation of slaves to the island. While it is difficult to quantify the number of slaves entering Cuba, in *Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Cuba* (2012), historian Sarah Franklin suggests that an estimated 300,000 slaves were imported between 1790 and 1820—three times the number that entered in the past three centuries combined (8).

The changes produced by Cuba's transition into a plantation society resonated throughout society but tended to benefit a privileged, tight-knit group of creole planters, who depended upon relations with Spain to preserve their political and economic dominance. Franklin describes the growing influence of this group in the following way:

the development of the sugar economy was closely tied to Havana's nobility, which was itself closely tied to the peninsular economy. At its uppermost reaches, society grew increasingly aligned with the interests of the sugar producers, and old elites continued to exercise tremendous

⁷⁴ Until the end of the eighteenth century, Spanish commercial policy had kept the influence of Cuban planters in check by enforcing steep prices and requiring purchase licenses in order to import slaves, a situation that contributed to mounting creole frustration with the Crown (Franklin 6-7).

influence in society. They dominated the *cabildo* (municipal government) and were invested both in urban and rural Cuba. They married among themselves; they were the O’Farrills, the Arangos, the Santa Cruzes, the Calvos, and many others. (8-9)

This group solidified its hegemony through the establishment of institutions like the Real Consulado de Agricultura y Comercio and the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, both of which served the interests of the planter class. Among the items on their agenda were the liberalization of trade, the importation of machinery such as windmills and presses, and, most importantly, the preservation of the slave trade. As Max Henríquez Ureña explains in *Panorama histórico de la literatura cubana* (1962), the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, which in many ways served as the ideological arm of the Real Consulado de Agricultura y Comercio, disseminated its ideas through the newspapers and used its influence to suppress any dissident voices.⁷⁵

As Franklin Knight observes, with the phenomenally high mortality rate and low birth rate for Cuba’s slaves, planters depended on the continued trafficking of slaves for sugar production (264). At the same time, however, the growing number of blacks on the island brought changes that alarmed white Cubans. With blacks eventually outnumbering whites in the third decade of the nineteenth century, many feared that their culture would be overpowered by the growing African influence. As Enrique Patterson puts it in “Cuba: Discursos sobre la identidad” (1996): “El dilema (yo diría agónico) de la sacarocracia es que necesita a los negros y, a la vez, percibe su identidad en peligro por la presencia de

⁷⁵ From 1793, the Sociedad Económica controlled the *Papel Periódico*, whose name was changed in 1806 to *El Aviso*, and, in 1910, to *Diario de la Habana* (Max Henríquez Ureña 89-90).

éstos” (51). With the chilling example of Saint-Domingue looming within recent memory, many white Cubans believed that an overthrow by blacks would become a reality in Cuba if their numbers continued to swell. This fear was substantiated by a number of rebellions on the island, the most memorable being the Aponte Conspiracy of 1812, a unified movement among blacks and *mulatos* whose ultimate goal was to dismantle the slave system.

The rapidly changing situation in Cuba is perhaps best exemplified by the figure of Francisco de Arango y Parreño (1765-1837). A prominent member of the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, Arango y Parreño initially figured among the staunchest advocates of invigorating the slave trade to stimulate the production of sugar.⁷⁶ However, as the rising number of blacks produced visible changes in the ethnic and racial makeup of the country, Arango y Parreño directed his efforts toward *eliminating* Cuba’s black population. As he stated ominously in 1826: “Cuba no puede tener completa seguridad si no es *blanqueando* a sus negros” (Qtd. in Patterson 50; emphasis in the original).⁷⁷ In the context of the rising number of slaves entering the island, many white Cubans came to view the island’s relationship with Spain as the only guarantee against dilution or revolution by freed and enslaved blacks. Furthermore, as Ada Ferrer explains in *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (1999), Spanish authorities

⁷⁶ Arango y Parreño’s early ideas in favor of the slave trade are expressed in his *Discurso sobre la agricultura de La Habana y modos de fomentarla*, which was published in Madrid in 1793.

⁷⁷ As we can infer from this quotation, Arango y Parreño viewed racial mixing not as an equitable synthesis between two races and cultures but rather as a manner of progressively diluting, and finally eliminating, a demographic that was perceived as a threat to national identity and safety; as I explain later, some of Cuba’s prominent Reformists, a group of enlightened creoles who desired greater political liberties and social change in Cuba, devised similar plans to rid Cuba of its non-white population.

and creoles with vested interests in plantation society cleverly invoked white paranoia over the hypothetical “Africanization of Cuba” in order to deny the possibility of Cuban independence:

In this context of slavery and division, the colonial state and many influential white creoles asserted that to risk expelling Spain was to invite a more horrible fate. Cuba, they said, would either be Spanish or it would be African; it would be Spanish or it would be another Haiti. For those with the power to decide: Cuba would remain a Spanish colony. (2)

As indicated by the above quotation, fear over the “Africanization of Cuba” provided a powerful justification for colonial rule by Spain. However, in addition to disseminating these pervasive, negrophobic discourses, Spanish authorities feverishly sought to isolate its valuable colony from ideas that might spark a desire for independence through a strict system of censorship. In this way, during the period when most of the Spanish American mainland was engaged in the revolutionary struggle against Spain, Cuba acquired the moniker of “the ever faithful isle.”

Elements of Subversion in the “Ever Faithful Isle”

Despite concerted efforts to suppress subversive thought and activity on the island, however, fissures began to appear in the colonial regime. Provinces located in the eastern and central areas of the island, for example, where slavery and sugar did not form the base of the economy, proved particularly resistant to colonial rule. As historians have established, the isolation from the sugar industry gave rise to a particular culture in places

like Puerto Príncipe (present-day Camagüey), the town in which Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda sets her anti-slavery novel *Sab* (1841). Unlike sugar-dependent provinces like Havana, in which “proslavers resorted to more oppressive measures to control the ever-increasing black and slave population, often imprisoning, whipping, or killing them” (Luis 13), the cattle-ranching town of Puerto Príncipe saw the development of a patriarchal form of slavery. As historian José Novoa Betancourt explains:

La hacienda comunera vinculada a la esclavitud patriarcal precapitalista propició un clima social espiritual plenamente en ruptura con el mundo plantacionista y más cercano a los paradigmas de la modernidad y la revolución antiescalvista y de liberación nacional. (37)

With their long-standing resentment toward the political and economic dominance of Havana,⁷⁸ and their isolation from the sugar industry, areas like Puerto Príncipe were characterized by a greater receptiveness to anti-colonial discourses. According to Benítez Rojo, “Esto ayuda a explicar el hecho de que sólo los criollos de las provincias orientales y centrales participaran en las luchas por la independencia” (36).⁷⁹

However, resistance to the colonial situation also developed in Havana as a group of enlightened creoles, known as the *reformistas*, or Reformists, expressed their desire for

⁷⁸ In *La luz perenne: La cultura en Puerto Príncipe (1514-1898)* (2013), Luis Álvarez notes that this town: “se veía, de una parte, sometida a las limitaciones del asfixiante comercio monopólico impuesto por España a sus colonias, a lo cual se agregaba la circunstancia de que, en el marco de la isla, solo La Habana era ciudad favorecida y autorizada para el comercio con la Flota” (103).

⁷⁹ Benítez Rojo explains in *La isla que se repite: El Caribe y la perspectiva posmoderna* (1989) that colonial resistance on the northern coast of the island dated all the way back to the sixteenth century, when settlers flouted Spain’s monopoly on trade in order to take full advantage of the profitable leather industry. In order to increase their profit margins, many ranchers entered into illegal trade with willing European merchants, rather than transporting their wares to Havana for shipment to Spain, as the colonial trade policy required.

greater political liberty and social change in Cuba. While they were by no means monolith in their thinking, the Reformists agreed that Cuba's salvation lay in eradicating the slave trade and in education reform. Thinkers such as José Agustín Caballero (1762-1835), Félix Varela (1788-1853), and José de la Luz y Caballero (1800-1862) consistently sought to improve the state of Cuban education, which stagnated under the vigilant eye of Spanish authorities.⁸⁰ From their positions as Philosophy Chairs at the Seminario de San Carlos in Havana, José Agustín Caballero and Varela leveled an attack on Scholasticism and introduced their students to the empiricist and rationalist theories of the age.⁸¹

This mission would later be taken up by the illustrious humanist and patron of the arts, Domingo Del Monte (1804-1853), who worked tirelessly to improve the content and quality of instruction on the island.⁸² Like the Reformists, Del Monte's interest in raising the intellectual capacities of Cuban youth was tied to concerns over the political future of the island. Young creoles, the majority of whom received a poor education at the hands

⁸⁰ Through close control over the curriculum, Spanish authorities sought to omit potentially dangerous ideas and to uphold the tenets of Scholasticism, which played a central role in preserving colonial rule. See Max Henríquez Ureña (89-96).

⁸¹ José Agustín Caballero's nephew, Antonio de la Luz y Caballero, described his uncle's contributions to education reform in the following way: "fue entre nosotros el que descargó los primeros golpes al coloso de escolasticismo, que después acabó de derrocar y pulverizar en la misma arena el Hércules de sus discípulos con su robusta maza; Caballero fue el primero que hizo resonar en nuestras aulas las doctrinas de los Locke y los Condillac, de los Verulamios y los Newtones; Caballero fue el primero que habló a sus alumnos sobre experimentos y física experimental" (Qtd. in Max Henríquez Ureña 95-96).

⁸² In his celebrated treatise, *Informe sobre el estado actual de la enseñanza primaria en la Isla de Cuba en 1836, su costo, y mejoras de que es susceptible*, Del Monte outlined the pernicious effects that the slave system had on Cuban society on both an educational and moral level (Andioc Torres xix).

of unqualified teachers, would be incapable of ruling the island should the colonial government falter. Education reform was thus implicitly tied to the project of preparing Cubans for political independence. As Leopoldo Zea observes:

Todos ellos están animados de la misma preocupación: educar y dar a los cubanos una serie de ideas que les permita estar listos para alcanzar la independencia en la primera oportunidad que se les ofrezca. (51)

The Reformists also directed their efforts toward eradicating the slave trade, a system that, they contended, had deleterious consequences not only for slaves themselves but for Cuban society as a whole. At the same time, it is important to note that these thinkers were not driven solely by humanitarian motives. Like many white Cubans of their time, the Reformists were influenced by scientific notions of racial inferiority, and they formulated various projects in order to suppress Cuba's growing African influence.⁸³ José Antonio Saco (1797-1879), for his part, proposed to rid Cuba of its non-white population by forcibly transferring all blacks living on the island, slaves and freedmen, back to Africa and substituting them with salaried European workers.

The Reformists' efforts in the struggle for abolition gained support from foreign powers, which "were rapidly dismantling their socioeconomic South Atlantic system, and [which] were not enthusiastic that the Spanish should succeed in rebuilding it" (Knight 259). Britain, which ended the slave trade in 1807 and increasingly viewed emancipation as the inevitable next step, exerted the greatest pressure on this front. It was due to British

⁸³ Religious discourse was also useful in justifying slavery and the slave trade in Cuba, where pro-slavers often drew on Christian discourse in order to characterize slavery as a redemptive practice that introduced slaves to religion (Lorna Williams 7-9). For European views on race, see Snait Gissis's 2011 "Visualizing 'Race' in the Eighteenth Century."

influence, for example, that Spain signed a treaty to legally end the slave trade in 1817. However, British abolitionists continued to pressure the Spanish Crown, since the colonial government encouraged slave trafficking in practice. As a result of pressures deriving from within and without the island, Spanish authorities and pro-slavers adopted new measures of repression in order to safeguard the colonial regime. As Lorna Williams explains, by the third decade of the nineteenth century:

Cuba was in a virtual state of siege as the colonial government sought to insulate the island's residents from the 'scandalous' ideas of political independence that were then circulating on the Spanish American mainland. Not only were content restrictions imposed on all local publications, but also few outlets existed for Cuban writers to voice their concerns (2)

However, in the face of heightened political repression, a young group of Cuban creole writers took up the project of imagining a national literature and expressing their desire for an independent political identity.

The Havana Literary Circle and the Genesis of a Cuban National Literature

While the island remained a Spanish colony until 1902, Cuban writers participated—albeit with limitations, care, and circumspection—in the spirit of Romanticism that swept over Spanish America during the nineteenth century. As Rafael Ocasio has demonstrated in *Afro-Cuban Costumbrismo: From Plantations to the Slums* (2012), the writers of the *cuadros de costumbres*, the predominant literary mode of the

era, not only documented the Cuban landscape but also the idiosyncrasies of Cuban culture in affirmation of the fact that there was a uniquely *Cuban* way of being and thinking. The neoclassicist/romantic Domingo Del Monte played a crucial role in the foundation of a national Cuban literature, encouraging writers to create an abolitionist literature that conveyed their repudiation for the slave system as well as veil their arguments in favor of political and cultural emancipation from Spain. Proscribed from carrying out his literary aspirations from within the system, Del Monte took up the task of nurturing the emerging national literature and identity through his famous tertulias, held in his imposing mansion in Havana during the mid-thirties.⁸⁴ As Roberto González Echevarría explains in *Cuban Fiestas* (2010), these tertulias constituted a locus of cultural activity, in which writers self-consciously participated in the construction of Cuban literature and identity:

Writers in the Del Monte group were Romantics, the counterparts of those who belonged to the Asociación de Mayo in Buenos Aires, the founders of Argentine literature. As such, they had a passionate interest in Cuba's natural world and in the idiosyncrasies of their homeland, particularly of the countryside, as well as in its history, legends, and customs, especially those of rural people and the urban poor—the folk. They pondered and probed the relationship between the characteristics of the Cuban natural

⁸⁴ Convinced that Cuban culture was fundamentally different than Spanish culture, Del Monte formally petitioned for a Chair for the Humanities. While the Crown gave its permission, the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País denied Del Monte's petition. As Lorna Williams points out, this owed, no doubt, to Del Monte's public dissatisfaction with the colonial regime and with captain-general Miguel Tacón, who took increasingly repressive measures to suppress dissident thought and activity on the island (Williams 5-7).

world and society and the possibility of creating a Cuban literature and art to express their essences. (48)

At the same time, the works that were produced as a result of the tertulias had a specific political agenda—to eradicate the slave system, which was seen as a precondition to political independence. According to Del Monte and his adepts, a modern, principled society could never be built upon such a barbaric and inhumane practice. Del Monte and his contemporaries drew from Montesquieu the notion that slavery debased the slave as well as the master. As Montesquieu wrote in Book 15 of *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748):

The state of slavery is in its own nature bad. It is neither useful to the master nor to the slave; not to the slave, because he can do nothing through a motive of virtue; nor to the master, because *by having an unlimited authority over his slaves, he insensibly accustoms himself to the want of all moral virtues, and from thence on becomes fierce, hasty, severe, choleric, voluptuous, and cruel.* (235; my emphasis)

In order to challenge the slave system, which had so many deleterious effects for the nation of Cuba, Del Monte commissioned a number of abolitionist texts that were to form part of an “anti-slavery portfolio” compiled by Richard Madden, superintendent of Liberated Africans and judge of the Mixed Court. Among the texts produced in conjunction with Del Monte’s initiatives for publication in Britain were Juan Francisco Manzano’s *Autobiografía de un esclavo* (1835), Félix Tanco y Bosmeniel’s *Petrona y Rosalía* (1838), Anselmo Suárez y Romero’s *Francisco, el ingenio o las delicias del campo* (1839), and Cirilo Villaverde’s *Cecilia Valdés* (1839/1882).

In *Francisco, el ingenio o las delicias del campo* (1839), which I analyze in the following pages, Anselmo Suárez y Romero (1818-1878) offers an in-depth view of nineteenth-century Cuban plantation society, emphasizing that slavery not only corrupted the lives of slaves themselves but of all those with ties to the plantation. As the narrator observes early in the novel:

parece que la esclavitud ha esparcido por nuestra atmósfera un veneno que aniquila las ideas más filantrópicas, y que sólo deja en su rastro el odio y el desprecio hácia la raza de las gentes de color. (15)

In his novel, Suárez y Romero adopts the creole, slave-owning family as a microcosm of the nation through which he takes inventory of the vices afflicting the island of Cuba and presents them to the reader. Among the anomalies highlighted in the novel are the decay of family values, the deplorable state of education on the island, and the racial conflicts inherent in a slave-driven, colonial society. To illuminate the causes of this moral and intellectual deterioration, the narrator offers a panorama of the childhood and adolescence of the young creole protagonist, Ricardo Mendizábal, describing his early exposure to plantation life, his faulty education, and his mother's failure to comprehend the destructiveness of such an unscrupulous upbringing. These scenes reveal that, as opposed to an aberration, Ricardo is the logical product of a vulgar education and a disordered family life.

As I argue, considering the privileged space that education held in the minds of the *delmontinos*, it comes as no surprise that Suárez y Romero links Ricardo's downfall

to his poor schooling.⁸⁵ What is striking about his treatment of education in the novel, however, is the way he attributes this failure to the figure of the mother. Following the pattern set by Del Monte and the intellectuals in his circle, Suárez y Romero consistently links the fallen state of Cuban society to the creole mother. A letter from fellow writer José Zacarías González del Valle to Suárez y Romero regarding his novel *Francisco* emphasizes the influence that this discourse of the undisciplined creole mother had at the time of the novel's composition. Referring to the creole mother depicted in the novel, González del Valle urges Suárez y Romero to “strip her of the colours of goodness with which you overloaded her portrait, so that there will not be a huge contrast between her character and her actions” (Qtd. in Williams “Francisco” 14-15). An analysis of *Francisco* and its treatment of the Cuban family demonstrates that he followed this advice.⁸⁶ Spoiling her first-born son and prompting his moral and intellectual deterioration, the mother represented in *Francisco* fails to foster the type of family that would be able to lead an independent, Cuban nation.

***Sab* and the Representation of the Idealized Nation-Family**

While Suárez y Romero traces social disorder back to the domestic space and represents the Cuban creole mother as the primary carrier of familial—and, by extension,

⁸⁵ I discuss the privileged place that education held, both for Del Monte and his predecessors, the Reformists, later in this chapter.

⁸⁶ Other anti-slavery novelists followed this model as well, including Félix Tanco y Bosmeniel in his novel *Petrona y Rosalía* (1838) and Antonio Zambrana y Vázquez in his novel *El negro Francisco* (1875). However, the figure of the indisciplined white mother is most fully developed in Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdés* (1882).

national—disorder, in her anti-slavery novel *Sab* (1841), Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda presents variants on the Cuban anti-slavery novel that have direct implications for the representation of women and their role in the nation. Gómez de Avellaneda stands as a pioneer in the field of Cuban anti-slavery literature, crafting her story of slavery without the influence and support available to writers living in Havana and with few literary models to follow.⁸⁷ In *Sab*, she actively engages the family and the domestic space as a framework through which she imagines a moral national community, in which slavery is less hierarchical and women have a voice not only in their own destinies, but in the future of the island itself. Adopting as the novel's scapegoat an avaricious English family that comes to plunder the island and exploit its inhabitants, Gómez de Avellaneda reframes national crisis as a penetration from without, allowing her to deflect blame for slavery and gender inequality away from the creole family and onto a foreign Other. However, before moving on to my analysis of the two novels, it is necessary to contextualize the peculiar forms that gender and race assumed in nineteenth-century Cuban literature.

Gender and Race in Nineteenth-Century Cuban Literature

Like in most regions of Spanish America, women on the island of Cuba inhabited a precarious position in society, at once praised for their sacred mission as wives and mothers while at the same time restricted by the increasing pressure toward domesticity.

⁸⁷ As Edith L. Kelly notes, the first draft of Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdés* did not appear until 1839, after Gómez de Avellaneda had already completed *Sab*, and it was not until a decade later that Harriet Beecher Stowe gave her panorama of slavery in the southern states beginning with the first installment of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1851 (307).

According to Sarah Franklin in *Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Cuba* (2012), maintaining traditional roles for women and upholding the institutions of marriage and family was crucial to the preservation of the colonial order. As she explains, the paradigm of the Angel of the Hearth was particularly useful in justifying women's ancillary place in society. We can see how this image—and the manner in which the unrealistic expectations it set—contributed to undermining women's autonomy in the following passage from an 1861 article in the literary journal *Cuba Literaria*. Adopting the form of a letter addressed to a woman of the upper class, the anonymous author of the article writes:

Créame [usted], Señora, ser madre no consiste únicamente en dar á luz de cuando en cuando un hijo, y en atender á la mayordomía, como quien dice, de la casa. Ser madre es tener el deber de formar el corazon [sic] y el espíritu de sus hijos: ó con otras palabras, de educarlos. *La que no cumple este deber, no es madre*; la que lo delega en otras personas, abdica su misión, sin reflexionar quizas [sic] hasta qué punto, pudo ser ésta delegable. (63)⁸⁸

As this excerpt demonstrates, Cuban mothers were not valued simply for their biological ability to reproduce; rather, they were seen as sculptors of the hearts, minds, and bodies of future generations. At the same time, the writer condemns those who neglect their calling duties by charging the care of their children to others, relentlessly affirming that “*La que no cumple este deber, no es madre*” (63).

⁸⁸ This article is entitled “Dos esquelas y una Primera Carta.”

We can also see instances of this double-edged discourse among the members of Del Monte's literary circle. Domingo Del Monte, for example, frequently impugned mothers for what he saw as the fallen state of Cuban society. According to Suárez y Romero, Del Monte saw the debilitated state of Cubans as deriving largely from:

nuestras mujeres, en la pasión por el juego, en la costumbre de darnos á criar á nodrizas brutales y corrompidas, en la holgazana á que nos arrastra el tener siempre al rededor [sic] esclavos á quienes mandar,...y en el mismo amor de las madres, que temblando de continuo porque á sus hijos separados de ellas no les acontezcan desgracias, apenas les permiten moverse libremente dentro del grande ámbito donde tiene que agitarse la tumultuosa vida de los hombres. (xviii; my emphasis)⁸⁹

Consistent with this line of thinking, the novels written for Madden's anti-slavery portfolio attribute crisis to the vices and lack of discipline of white Cuban women. Evelyn Picón Garfield has called attention to the misogynist discourse that runs through the *delmonte* novels in her article "Sab y la narrativa anti-esclavista de las Américas" (2014), observing that "se exagera la inmoralidad de la madre blanca, su violencia física y su hipocresía para condenar en ella la suma degradación moral de la sociedad esclavista en el seno del hogar" (169).⁹⁰

⁸⁹ This quotation comes from Suárez y Romero's prologue to the complete works of Ramón de Palma.

⁹⁰ As I argue in my discussion of *Sab*, however, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda does not adhere to the gendered terms of this discourse; instead, she adopts a foreign Other as the scapegoat onto which she projects the greater part of responsibility for the slave system.

One of the purposes behind female domesticity, from the perspective of white males, was to guarantee the “limpieza de sangre” of the family. Controlling female sexuality guaranteed that the family name—and inheritance—would be perpetuated along white lines. At the same time, however, the strict treatment of sexuality did not extend to men. As Sarah Rosell explains:

un hombre blanco puede tener una relación con una mulata o negra y después casarse con una blanca, pero una mujer blanca una vez que ha tenido una relación interracial no se puede casar con un hombre blanco.

(39)

This blatant double standard also calls attention to another peculiar aspect of society in colonial Cuba, where oppression based on race joined that of gender and class. As Sarah Rosell points out, “No se puede hablar de la marginación de la mujer en términos generales sin especificar una jerarquía de opresión que comenzaría en la mujer criolla, blanca de clase alta, y terminaría en la mujer negra esclava” (38). While relations between white men and white women were hierarchical, those between white men and non-white women were premised on a double, and oftentimes a triple oppression based on gender, race, and class. With black and *mulata* women occupying positions within the domestic space as wet nurses, nannies, and servants, opportunities for such imbalanced relationships presented themselves frequently.

As studies by critics like Sara Rosell, Jill Netchinski, and Stacey Schlauf demonstrate, the figure of the *mulato/a* was adopted by many nineteenth-century Cuban writers as a manner of examining the contradictions afflicting the nation. Writers of the time period were fascinated with this figure; however, the implications surrounding the

appearance of the *mulato* in the nineteenth-century varied by author and text. While free *mulatas* are often portrayed trying to make a connection with a white man that could help her own situation and that of her future children (such as in *Cecilia Valdés*), the enslaved *mulata* is often portrayed as the victim of her master's sexual desire, such as in *Francisco*. As Rosell notes, in both cases, the situation:

convierte a la mujer de raza negra en un objeto sexual al igual que sus antepasadas esclavas, quienes también estaban destinadas a satisfacer las necesidades sexuales del hombre blanco. (44-45)

Writers also explored the complicated and often oppressive race relations that took place in Cuba through the trope of the “hermanos de leche,” that is, the relationship between two individuals who shared the same wet nurse. As Claudette Williams observes in “Cuban Anti-slavery Narrative in a Postcolonial Light: Anselmo Suárez y Romero’s *Francisco*” (2006), this was not an uncommon scenario among upper-class families in Cuba. As she explains:

Various travel writers who visited Havana during the nineteenth century remarked on the lack of distinction between the house-slave children and the children of their masters, especially given the prevalence of slave women who served as wet nurses for white babies. (4)

The quasi-fraternal bond that unites master and slave serves to underscore the anomalies produced within a slave-driven society. The theme of incest culminates in Cirilo Villaverde’s *Cecilia Valdés*, in which the beautiful *mulata* of unknown parentage pursues a white creole who turns out to be her half-brother. As Jill Netchinski explains in

Engendering a Cuban Literature: Nineteenth-Century Anti-slavery Narrative (Manzano, Suárez y Romero, Gómez de Avellaneda, A. Zambrana) (1986):

Writers of the period illustrate the new kinds of relationships born of this system: of the corrupt power of supremacy, the suffocating pressure of victimization, the frustrated dignity of the rebellious...One aspect along, the incest that is destined in a society that could enslave its own brothers, generates a genealogical law-system that is in itself an impulse to narrate.

(132)

Through their depiction of incest and violence within the domestic space, writers of the anti-slavery novels express the extent to which slavery corrupts Cuban society. A central motif running through several anti-slavery novels is the discourse of the ignorant and debased white creole male. Without the proper upbringing at the hands of a virtuous mother, these males are rendered incapable of becoming future leaders of an independent Cuba.

Anselmo Suárez y Romero's *Francisco*: Corroded Families and Unstable Domestic Spaces as Metaphors of National Crisis

Suárez y Romero had the opportunity to view plantation life first-hand between 1838 and 1839, when economic problems compelled his family to relocate to a sugar plantation in Güines, in the province of Havana. As his epistolary correspondence from this time period demonstrates, Suárez y Romero's experience on the plantation conflicted

with his concerns for the slaves and the terrible conditions under which they worked.⁹¹

However, as he explained in a letter to Del Monte, much of this experience would serve as the material for his anti-slavery novel:

[Usted] me encargó una novela donde los sucesos fueran entre blancos y negros y desde que la comencé, me ha entrado tal afición [sic]...por estudiar las costumbres que nacen de la esclavitud, costumbres raras y variadas á lo infinito, que no me pesa, antes me agrada mi estancia aquí para acopiar noticias y tela (339)

Two important points shine forth in this passage, the first being Suárez y Romero's keen eye for observation, a talent that would lead him to go on as one of Cuba's most eminent *costumbrista* writers. More importantly for our purposes, however, this excerpt highlights his conviction that the institution of slavery had a determining impact on the Cuban national character. Like his fellow *costumbristas*, Suárez y Romero believed that slavery generated a particular set of habits and customs that could be empirically observed, documented, and later conveyed to readers textually.

As critics have noted, many of the narrative emplotments of Suárez y Romero's *Francisco* were inspired by the *Autobiografía de un esclavo* (1835) by Juan Francisco

⁹¹ As Rafael Ocasio explains in *Afro-Cuban Costumbrismo: From Plantations to the Slums* (2012), both the *costumbrista* articles and the letters written about the plantation reflect the writer's sympathy for the plight of slaves. These documents also indict the nature of materialism and progress in Cuba, which had become progress in the wrong direction. In a letter to Del Monte in 1853, Suárez y Romero outlines how the new modern machinery, which increased the efficiency of the plantation, effectively made life worse for all those employed in it. As he writes: "The deafening and civilizing steam moves the hammers of the mills, and the foot once placed on the infinite paths of progress, has to walk along it without stopping" (Qtd. in Ocasio 37).

Manzano, the slave-poet who came to form a part of Del Monte's tertulias.⁹² Anselmo Suárez y Romero, who was tasked with editing the original manuscript of the *Autobiografía*, was a great admirer of the narrative. One of the attributes that particularly attracted Suárez y Romero is how Manzano avoided directly attacking Cuban white society, allowing the experiences he related to speak for themselves. In a letter to Del Monte dated August 20 1839, Suárez y Romero wrote:

Ya se ve! esa historia fue escrita sin pretensiones de lucir, sin exclamaciones [sic] que picaran el amor propio de los blancos, en toda ella no se ve mas [sic] que la pura y limpia verdad. ¡Qué escenas tan domésticas, tan propias de nuestra vida privada! cómo corrije Manzano solo con la fuerza de los hechos la tiranía [sic] de los amos! (391)

However, while he admired Manzano's mode of narration, Suárez y Romero takes a more unambiguous approach to the troubles afflicting the nation in *Francisco*, typically driving the lessons of his novel home through long-winded narrative digressions. The moralizing posture of the text has been the object of critical reproach since the novel's composition, by Del Monte as well as contemporary critics; however, I prefer to interpret these portions of the novel as Suárez y Romero's efforts to fill what he perceived as the gaps

⁹² In the *Autobiografía*, Manzano describes his early childhood under the ownership of his kindhearted first master, the elderly Beatriz de Justiz, under whom he served as a highly skilled tailor. He then relates how, following the death of this benign master, he became slave to the cruel Marchioness de Prado Ameno. Recalling how this second master would send him to the stocks where he endured cold, hunger, and thirst, he later describes his unjust transfer to the sugar plantation, at which point his narration documents some of the bleakest aspects of the slave system.

and silences in the *Autobiografía*.⁹³ An educated member of white Cuban society, Suárez y Romero had the authority to broach certain topics that Manzano, a runaway slave of mixed race, was proscribed from addressing.⁹⁴

In his novel, *Francisco*, Suárez y Romero narrates the story of the widowed Señora Mendizábal, her only son Ricardo, and two unhappy slaves who serve under them, Francisco, a stagecoach driver, and the *mulata* Dorotea, Señora Mendizábal's favorite house slave and Ricardo's "hermana de leche." Francisco and Dorotea fall in love, and the two slaves request permission to legitimate their relationship through marriage. However, Señora Mendizábal, for whom domestic propriety dictates "que siempre triunfassen los blancos de los negros," arbitrarily opposes the match and orders them to terminate their relationship (23). The slaves continue their affair in secret, a situation that is discovered when Dorotea becomes pregnant. Enraged by her slaves' disobedience, Señora Mendizábal strips them of their positions in the household, hiring Dorotea out as a laundress and sending Francisco to perform the grueling work of field

⁹³ Domingo Del Monte himself characterized the moralizing posture of the novel element as a flaw in the young writer's style, maintaining that the events themselves should be sufficient to cause shame in readers and convince them to change their values and way of life. González del Valle summarizes Del Monte's position in the following way: "the message or political principle that dominates your work, should emanate from it naturally, without being signaled or announced at every turn. If your novel is to serve the purpose of mending our ways, it must be true, it must be Cuban and so full of indisputable fact that the mere sight of the picture will cause one to abhor it" (Qtd. in Williams *Francisco* 32).

⁹⁴ The possible explanations behind the absence of more explicit criticism in Manzano's narrative are multiple: not only did his position as a slave strip him of the authority to moralize about white Cuban society, but expressing inconformity with the dominant white culture would have been counterintuitive for Manzano, who sought to forge a legitimate place for himself in the minds of his (white) readers. Another factor in Manzano's relatively delicate approach to certain themes and his rather docile tone is his fragile position as a runaway slave. As William Luis explains, Manzano utilizes his text as a channel through which he professes his innocence and justifies his act of running away to the reader (88).

slave on the family's sugar plantation. She later forgives Dorotea and restores her to the position of handmaid, at which point the beautiful *mulata* becomes victim of the amorous advances of her "hermano de leche." Enraged by the *mulata*'s preference for a black slave over himself, Ricardo progressively increases Francisco's agony on the plantation until Dorotea capitulates. In order to save her beloved, Dorotea gives herself to Ricardo; however, when the noble Francisco learns of her sacrifice, he commits suicide by hanging himself, and Dorotea dies shortly thereafter.

The Slave-Owner's Home as a Cradle of Vice

In Europe, remember, this was a time of Hugo, Balzac, Zola: the family chronicle had become current as a general metaphor for the lives and fates of history. The Cuban anti-slavery works capture the conflicts of the nation in its birth-throes as a political entity and a people of complex origin. How would the family chronicle metaphor work in a culture permeated with the twisted realities of slavery?

—Jill Netchinski (132)

In his bleak story of white tyranny, Suárez y Romero highlights the hardships suffered by slaves on the plantations, including their sixteen-hour workdays, the poor conditions of the *barracón*, or slave quarters, and the brutal punishments devised by the overseer and slave drivers to keep them in line. The scenes of slaves suffering on the plantation frequently give way to anguished outbursts from the narrator, who utilizes the pathos of these situations to activate the reader's sympathy for slaves. Describing the sad melodies sung by the slaves, the narrator relates that "es necesario no ser hombre para oír [sic] esos cantares, y no saltársele á [sic] uno las lágrimas" (31). However, the scenes of

slave abuse within the domestic space are, in several ways, even more vital to the novel than those that document the plantation. In these scenes, Suárez y Romero reveals that the slave-owner's home—like the plantation itself—is a contaminated space from which virtue and propriety have long vanished. While not comparable in *scale*, it is not difficult to recognize the parallels between Señora Mendizábal's abusive treatment of the blacks and *mulatos* of her household and Ricardo's brutal treatment of the slaves on the sugar plantation.

Francisco depicts the landed Cuban family—a potential school of virtue, freedom, and patriotic sentiment—as a cradle in which the maladies afflicting the nation take root and propagate. Over the course of the novel there emerges an image of Ricardo and Señora Mendizábal as a family denaturalized by the system of slavery, a notion that is bolstered by the confusing relationships engendered within the domestic space. Turning a keen sociological eye to the anomalous relationships formed within the domestic space of the landed family, Suárez y Romero presents a society in which even the most basic, “natural” social ties—those of the family—were perverted by the slave system. We can most readily witness the “unnatural” character of the Cuban family through Señora Mendizábal's merciless punishment Francisco and Dorotea, slaves raised within her home who looked upon her as a maternal figure. As we learn, Francisco is an African-born slave who was taken from his native land and transported to Cuba. Here, Señora Mendizábal “lo sacó chiquito del barracon [sic],” later preparing him to become the family's *calesero*, or stagecoach driver (12). The narrator illustrates that the mistress valued Francisco above her other male slaves, noting how “le fue muy fácil a la señora Mendizábal amoldarlo a su talante, y mucho más a causa de su carácter humilde; lo

apreciaba por consiguiente sobre los otros y lo distinguía” (42). As Francisco later explains to Pedro, an elderly slave, he felt almost like a son to his mistress, a situation that left him all the more devastated when he was sent to the plantation. As he exclaims with sadness: “¿Ella no me crió, no me hizo bautizar? Yo la queria [sic] por eso, por eso me dolia [sic] su sequeidad” (64).

However, it is the figure of Dorotea, the *mulata* slave, who serves as the ultimate expression of the aberrations engendered by the slave system. Dorotea highlights the vulnerable position of female slaves, who were marginalized not only based on their color and status but also on their gender. In the second half of the novel, the reader witnesses as Ricardo attempts to buy the sexual favors of his female slave. He makes effusive guarantees to Dorotea, promising to purchase her freedom and that of her infant daughter, to set her up in her own house, and even to provide her with personal slaves. The situation portrayed in the novel is only conceivable in the context of a society where an enormous distance separated the wealthy, prominent white men from female slaves, for whom manumission would surely have posed a primary goal. Despite the attraction that this image must have held, however, Dorotea refuses Ricardo’s offer. With a strength unanticipated in the otherwise demure Dorotea, she bravely asserts her right over her own body and heart:

Yo soy su esclava, Niño, yo soy una pobre mulata, y Sumerced es blanco, y mi amo. Sumerced me puede mandar meter en el cepo, y que me den un bocabajo, y hasta matarme, si le parece; pero su merced no podrá nunca quitarme la vergüenza. ¡Ah, niño, la cara se me está cayendo con lo que Sumerced acaba de decirme! ¿Vivir yo así con Sumerced, sólo por ser

libre, y comer y verirme bien? No, Señor, Niño, Dorotea tiene este pellejo; pero sabe lo que es la vergüenza. (121)

Once again, Ricardo learns the hard lesson that his wealth cannot purchase Dorotea's reciprocation. However, what he cannot purchase with his money he obtains by torturing Francisco, which forces Dorotea to capitulate.

The assortment of family ties that bind Dorotea to the Mendizábals renders the abuses she suffers all the more shocking. Like Francisco, Dorotea was raised within the Mendizábal household alongside Ricardo. Throughout the novel, the narrator emphasizes Señora Mendizábal's almost maternal affection for the *mulata*, describing Dorotea as "la niña de sus ojos" (9). However, Dorotea's position within the family is further complicated, since she and Ricardo both shared the same wet nurse (Dorotea's own mother, one of the Mendizábal family's slaves). Despite the closeness of the relationship between the two, however, they are divided by race and class. As Ricardo remarks cruelly to Dorotea's repeated rejections: "La culpa no la tienes tú, sino yo, que me he rebajado á enamorar á una mulata, como si fuera blanca" (124-125). Ricardo's near-incestuous desire for Dorotea, a person linked to himself by bonds of family but over whom he wields almost undisputed control, constitutes another angle from which the writer attacks the slave system.

As William Luis explains in *Literary Bondage: Slavery in Cuban Narrative* (1990), by demonstrating the hardships suffered by these slaves, Suárez y Romero challenged one of the dominant discourses of his time period, which was that domestic slaves led a relatively easy life. As he explains:

House slaves and rural slaves were known to the distinguished members of the Del Monte group. The contrast in the reader's mind between the two would force him to realize that the protagonist, a house slave, was not any better off than a rural one and was subjected to the same intensive labor as his counterpart. (44)

For example, the stagecoach driver, Francisco's role in the novel, was a typical figure in Cuban society that appeared frequently in the articles of customs. In these sketches, he is frequently depicted as a privileged slave due to the relatively "light" nature of his duties.⁹⁵ The fact that this slave occupied a less physically demanding role than many other slaves and was often dressed in fashionable clothing contributed to reinforcing this impression. However, Suárez y Romero reveals the fallacy of the "privileged slave" pointing out how, despite his valued position and the lavishness of his appearance, Francisco is sent to the sugar plantation. Claudette Williams has also examined this subversive dimension in *Francisco*, which effectively refutes the discourse of the privileged slave. As she perceptively observes:

the illustrious slave mistress' manipulation of the mind and trifling with the emotions of the house slaves [are] only more sophisticated than the crudely sadistic physical torture used to control the field slaves by the mayoral, the lowlier white overseer and the contramayoral, the black slave

⁹⁵ In the article titled "El calesero," for example, the *costumbrista* writer José Triay discusses the various duties and typical habits of this social type. Triay also observes that the stagecoach driver was generally raised in his master's house from birth, and he was responsible for driving and taking care of the family's stagecoach, one of the most ostensible displays of wealth in colonial Cuba.

driver. In the house the control functions at a less perceptible cultural level and includes the education of the slave, the imposition of ‘white’ attire and the granting of certain social and economic privileges. (4)

Suárez y Romero thus reveals that the slave-owner’s home—like the plantation itself—constitutes a space in which wealth, race, and status confer corruptive power to white Cubans over non-whites and slaves.

Suárez y Romero ironizes on the pro-slavery discourse of the privileged slave through the figure of Ricardo, who seeks to defend his mother by calling attention to the relative ease of his job as stagecoach driver. As he states: “Limpiar el quitrín y los arreos, cuidar el caballo, poner la volante de Corpus a San Blando. ¿Era esto ser amo tirano y sanguinario” (37-38). Ricardo also refers to Francisco’s lavish attire as proof of his privilege, stating that:

un negro que se ha vestido como un príncipe, el buen calzón, la buena camisa, los buenos zapatos; que siempre tenía que gastar, porque cada rato se le daba, que la peseta, que los cuatro reales, que el peso. (37)

Absent from Ricardo’s overview, of course, is the obvious fact that the slave’s uniform was a function of his master’s (and not his own) wealth. Depicting the cruelty to which Dorotea and Francisco are subjected, Suárez y Romero drives home his message that slavery of any type was at odds with a modern, moral society.

Like in Calderón de la Barca’s famous play *La vida es sueño*, in which Prince Segismundo acts like a brutal tyrant upon his release from the tower, where he has been chained and made to wear animal skins, Ricardo expects his every whim to be satisfied and thus sadistically turns on Dorotea and Francisco when these do not act in accordance

with his desires. Perhaps it is coincidental, or perhaps it is a result of Suárez y Romero's contemporaneous reading Calderón de la Barca's works, that we could easily imagine Ricardo Mendizábal echoing the words of his famous hero: "A mí/todo eso me causa enfado./Nada me parece justo/en siendo contra mi gusto" (II 430-433). In addition to supporting the anti-slavery initiative, Suárez y Romero's bitter critique of the situation of slaves in Cuba provides a powerful metaphor for social injustice on any level.

It is important to recall that *Francisco* was produced within a time of intensified political and social repression, when the Spanish authorities adopted extreme measures in order to suffocate any dissident thought on the island. A quotation from Richard Henry Dana in *To Cuba and Back* (1859) attests to the steep rise in censorship on the island in the thirties. During this period, he notes:

vestiges of anything approaching to [sic] popular assemblies, juntas, a jury, independent tribunals, a right of voting, or a right to bear arms, have vanished from the island...The power of banishing, without a charge made, or a trial, or even a record, but on the mere will of the Captain-General, persons whose presence he thinks, or professes to think, prejudicial to the government, whatever their condition, rank, or office, has been frequently exercised and hangs at all hours over the head of every Cuban. (Qtd. in Schulman 356-357)

Suárez y Romero's depiction of the *Francisco* and *Dorotea* suffering under the brutal treatment of their white owners, on the one hand, expresses his frustration with Cuba's wealthy creoles, who did not share his ideal for a slavery-free nation, thus trading national integrity for a dubious wealth. However, through his attack on slavery, he also

tacitly advances an argument in favor of greater political and cultural emancipation from Spain. Emphasizing slavery as a violation of natural law, Suárez y Romero gives expression to a powerful metaphor of Cuba as a nation agonizing beneath the brutal control of an illegitimate ruler.

Anselmo Suárez y Romero traces the causes of social decay to early family life, observing how the lack of appropriate role models and the abundance of pernicious examples within the family unit contributed to corrupting members of society during their formative years. Significantly, during one of the numerous scenes documenting the sadistic torture of Francisco on the plantation, the narrator takes a moment to inquire into the origins of Ricardo Mendizábal's almost studied contempt for slaves and non-whites:

¿Pero de dónde provenia [sic], que siendo de tan esclarecida cuna y de tantas riquezas, abrigase sentimientos tan mezquinos? ¿Qué crímenes ó faltas cometió el calesero contra [Ricardo]? (53)

Suárez y Romero's *Francisco* anticipates some of the strategies Sarmiento later employs in *Facundo* (1845), in which tableaux of domestic life have an exegetic function and serve to "explain" the factors behind national crisis. The parallels between *Facundo* and *Francisco* multiply when we note that Suárez y Romero explicitly links Ricardo Mendizábal's degeneration to the complete sovereignty he enjoys over overseers and slaves on the sugar plantation. This experience, he notes, imparts onto Ricardo the treacherous philosophy of "might is right."

As we learn, Ricardo's early exposure to plantation life, during which he witnesses the absolute power wielded by whites over black slaves, undermines his respect for justice and awakens him to the tremendous scope of his power. We thus read how:

Apénas estuvo [Ricardo] en capacidad para dirigir las fincas del campo, cuando las comenzó á frecuentar. Allí encontró una porcion [sic] de personas, los esclavos, los mayores, los mayordomos todos sujetos, que más que ménos, a su imperio, y obedientes á sus órdenes; allí desplegó, respecto á los operarios, una soberbia sin límites, y en cuanto á los negros, la crueldad que el roce con los guajiros y su falta de cultura y de moral, habian de acarrear por precisa consecuencia. (55)

This passage reveals how the plantation hierarchy endows Ricardo with an inflated sense of his own importance. It also scrutinizes how his prolonged contact with the various social types that populated the plantation—the overseers, the slave drivers, and the peasant laborers, *los guajiros* (represented here in a particularly unfavorable light)—further contributes to perverting the boy during his early, formative years. The criticism of the uncultured *guajiros* and their nasty treatment of the slaves emerges again in the novel's description of the boiler house:

Una vez que salió Ricardo del trapiche, y que fué á examinar, segun [sic] costumbre, el azúcar de la casa de calderas, se volvió el mayoral hácia los negros, y con una alegría [sic] muy propia de un guajiro que odia á los hombre de color, descargó furioso cuatro ó cinco cuerazos sobre cada uno de los desgraciados que trabajaban allí; quizás este castigo dimanaba, no sólo del carácter naturalmente irascivo de Don Antonio, sino tambien [sic] del aliento que le prestaba el amo de aquellos siervos, manifestándole su opinion [sic] respecto á las consideraciones que se les debian [sic]. (13)

Ricardo's contact with the administrators of the plantation exacerbates his already negative view of blacks and slaves and teaches him the art of controlling and manipulating slaves through terror and violence.

The Place of the Mother in *Francisco*

According to the sections describing Ricardo Mendizábal's adolescence, another determining factor behind his depraved character was his almost non-existent schooling at the hands of unprepared teachers. In this section, Ricardo's faulty education is explicitly tied to the mother. As the narrator explains, Ricardo does not apply himself to the education that Señora Mendizábal's wealth can purchase:

porque si bien lo puso en los estudios, y le pagó a maestros que descollaban por su pericia, y le compró cuantos libros le pedían [sic], el muchacho no hallaba gusto en oír [sic] las lecciones de los unos y de los otros; repugnancia favorecida por su madre, *mujer incapaz de mortificarlo en nada, y que disculpaba su conducta diciendo: dejémoslo disfrutar ahora, quizás le aflijan luego las desgracias; frases de labios bien intencionados, pero que en realidad se equivocaban.* (54; my emphasis)

Taking up Del Monte's invective against the dangers of maternal indulgence almost verbatim, Suárez y Romero links the lagging level of education on the island to the creole mother.

Señora Mendizábal is thus revealed to be the principal transmitter of the "las costumbres desarregladas" so typified by Ricardo (55). Even before his disturbing visits

to the plantation had the occasion to corrupt Ricardo, the foundations of his racist ideology were already laid. Emphasizing the manner in which ideas and attitudes get passed down from mothers to their children, the narrator explains how Ricardo's racism stems from Señora Mendizábal herself:

Los mismos pensamientos de Ricardo acerca del origen y naturaleza de los negros, suponiéndolos descendientes de animales, bullian [sic] en su alma; elemento que la hubiera arrastrado infaliblemente á las torpes acciones de su hijo, no habiéndose opuesto su sexo, y cierto fondo de buenas intenciones. (16)

Like his counterpart, Felix Tanco y Bosmeniel, Suárez y Romero ultimately traces the racism and the issues of authority problematized in the novel back to the mother. As Evelyn Picón Garfield perceptively observes, both writers:

caracterizan a los padres e hijos blancos de las familias habaneras, nobles y ricas, como lascivos seductores de esclavas negras y mulatas. Los hijos, en particular, son libertinos crueles, viciados por costumbres de ocio aprendidas en el lugar. Sin embargo, la culpa de la corrupción del hijo no se atribuye al padre, a pesar de que el hijo pisa las huellas paternas en su búsqueda de la gratificación sexual, sino sobre la madre, víctima expiatoria del sistema de esclavitud regido por los hombres. (167)

Suárez y Romero draws on the notion, made prevalent during the Enlightenment, that children imbibed certain qualities through the act of breastfeeding. Going back yet another generation, the narrator explains how Señora Mendizábal herself was primed

from youth to demand absolute obedience from social inferiors. In the following passage, the narrator emphasizes how such attitudes are passed down matrilineally:

ya por haber mamado con la leche ideas de orgullo y de grandeza, la aristocracia de los criollos ricos y fijodalgos, le exigia [sic] un respeto profundo y una obediencia ilimitada...se irritaba en extremo cuando se oponían á sus gustos ó caprichos. Desde que abrió sus ojos empezó á mandar, y la costumbre de ser obedecida destruyó la paciencia que acaso hubiera mostrado con otra crianza. (16; my emphasis)

Suárez y Romero also highlights Señora Mendizábal's exaggerated indulgence as the root cause of the problems that plague the family and Cuban society in general. Later, he widens the charge to include all mothers born on the island of Cuba, asserting that: "es constante que las madres aventajan aquí en eso [el amor hacia los hijos] á las de otros países; circunstancias que contribuyeron á la perdicion [sic] de Ricardo" (54). In his "typography," the narrator notes that the chaotic extremes of Cuban mothers:

nos obliga á decir que semejante cariño las domina demasiado en la crianza de sus hijos, que á veces lo entienden mal. La buena criolla no pudo eximirse de caer en un defecto casi comun [sic], y dimanado, es cierto, de la educacion [sic] que ellas propias alcanzan. Pensando que el avenirse complaciente á todos los gustos de su niño..., fué amontonando poco á poco en su alma las semillas lamentables que habian de brotar con el transcurso de los años pésimos frutos. (54)

This passage calls attention to the double-edged nature of treatment of women in Cuba in the nineteenth century. On the one hand, the discourse of mothers as shapers of future

generations ascribed women a central place in the nation-building project. On the other, mothers were frequently impugned for the ills that educated creoles perceived on the island. According to the perspective presented in the novel, unless the figure of the undisciplined mother were replaced with an enlightened mother who took up the sacred task of forming future citizens for the Cuban nation, the nation would continue on its downward trajectory of decadence.

Throughout *Francisco*, Suárez y Romero's criticism of the type of society that developed under Spanish colonial rule implicitly looks forward to a distant, desired future in which Cuban creoles would be the legitimate rulers of the island. However, the emergence of this utopian future would depend on the education of women, who alone can foster a nation of independent thinking, moral, creole males. The importance of the mother to the future of the nation is also an essential, although obscured, theme in the anti-slavery novel *Sab*, by Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda. However, as I will discuss, *Sab* is free from the pejorative image of the abusive, ignorant mother and the debased family that we see in *Francisco*. Instead, Gómez de Avellaneda portrays Cuba from the perspective of the *patria chica*, Puerto Príncipe, a small town yet uncorrupted by the massive sugar mills cropping up on the western portions of the island. However, before moving on to my analysis of the novel, I will briefly discuss Gómez de Avellaneda's unique, and often debated, place within Cuban letters.

Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab*: The Collapse of the Ideal Cuban Nation-Family

Born in Puerto Príncipe, Cuba, but living primarily in Spain from the age of twenty-two, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (1814-1873) presents a particularly enigmatic case for the study of Cuban national literature in its initial, embryonic stages. The daughter of a Cuban creole mother and a Spanish-born father, Gómez de Avellaneda often touted the hybrid nature of her identity.⁹⁶ Throughout the writer's time living in Spain until the present moment, however, voices have questioned her place within the cultural and literary traditions of Cuba, asserting that her connections with Spain, her years away from the island, and her popularity within Madrid's literary society rendered her more Spanish than Cuban. In the time following the writer's death in 1873, however, several renowned figures have challenged this narrative in order to acknowledge Gómez de Avellaneda as a founding voice of Cuban national literature, among them Cuban expatriate *par excellence*, José Martí.⁹⁷

More than half a century later, in response to a renewed debate over Gómez de Avellaneda's *cubanía*, poet and novelist Dulce María Loynaz spearheaded a project to vindicate Gómez de Avellaneda and reinstate her into the nation's cultural and literary

⁹⁶ Gómez de Avellaneda's mother, Francisca de Arteaga y Betancourt, was a creole from Puerto Príncipe. Her father, Manuel Gomez de Avellaneda, was born in Constantina, a town near Seville. For more on Gómez de Avellaneda's hybridity, see Carmen Bravo-Villasante's 1967 study *Una vida romántica: Gómez de Avellaneda* (pp. 111-112).

⁹⁷ In an 1891 article in New York's *El Porvenir*, Martí praised his teacher, Rafael María Mendive, who defended Gómez de Avellaneda against what he (Mendive) referred to as "hispanófobos y literatos de enaguas" who sought to deny "la gloria cubana a Gómez de Avellaneda" (Qtd. in Prado Mas 11).

history.⁹⁸ In 1953, Loynaz organized a symposium in Camagüey pertinently titled “La Avellaneda, una cubana universal.” There, she hailed Gómez de Avellaneda as a paragon of Cuban letters, affirming that: “la Avellaneda es una cubana universal. Lleva la gracia de las Antillas—transparencia de aire, mimo de sol—a su modo de ser y escribir” (Qtd. in García Yero 280). While Loynaz’s mission to name the Teatro Nacional after Gómez de Avellaneda and to have the writer’s remains transported from Seville to Camagüey have yet to be accomplished, her project to commemorate Gómez de Avellaneda as one of the island’s foundational writers is sustained by critics including Luisa Campuzano, Luis Álvarez, and Olga García Yero.⁹⁹

Following Loynaz’s example, these critics affirm that Gómez de Avellaneda never turned her back on Cuba, but rather that she continued to stress the importance of her Cuban roots throughout her lifetime.¹⁰⁰ We can see clear signs of Gómez de Avellaneda’s latent *cubanía* reflected in her prologue to *Viaje a la Habana* (1844), the travel book by her fellow Cuban writer, the Countess of Merlín. At one moment in the

⁹⁸ This time, the polemic was triggered when someone suggested that Havana’s recently constructed theater, located in what is now the Plaza de la Revolución, should be named in Gómez de Avellaneda’s honor. While her dramatic works are considered among her finest artistic achievements, several voices refused to baptize the theater in her name, claiming that neither she nor her works were sufficiently Cuban to receive such a distinction. See Roberto Méndez Martínez’s article from *Radio Habana*, “Gómez de Avellaneda y Dulce María Loynaz” (2014).

⁹⁹ For more on the difficulties that stalled the transfer of Gómez de Avellaneda’s remains to Cuba, see Nydia Sarabia’s 2014 article “Dulce María Loynaz. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: La gran desdénada” (4).

¹⁰⁰ As García Yero notes in “Tula Avellaneda: Espacios centrípeto y centrífugo,” for example, Gómez de Avellaneda remained connected with Cuba and the events taking place on the island through an active epistolary correspondence that she maintained with relatives on her mother’s side (286).

prologue, Gómez de Avellaneda describes the alienation experienced by those who must leave their native land and countrymen for foreign horizons, affirming that:

Es fácil hacerse comprender por aquellos de quienes es uno largo tiempo conocido; pero el extranjero necesita explicarse. Faltan la ternura que adivina y la costumbre que enseña. El extranjero es interpretado antes de ser conocido. (65)¹⁰¹

Conversely, she highlights the role that birthplace and cohabitation play in forging a sense of community between individuals. Establishing an analogy between national belonging and family ties, she adopts the family as the context in which she fosters the ideal of a united national community:

Así como en las familias hay lazos de unión, entre los que comenzaron la vida bajo un mismo cielo, hay simpatías que en vano se quisieran destruir: hay unos mismos hábitos, y con corta diferencia una misma manera de ver y de sentir. (65)

Contrasting the supposedly familial closeness shared by the compatriots of her beloved island with the experience of expatriation—an experience that left profound marks on the lives of both the Countess and herself—Gómez de Avellaneda establishes a crucial connection with fellow Cubans based on native origins. Significantly, the family provides

¹⁰¹ Another text frequently cited by critics to emphasize Gómez de Avellaneda's affiliation as a Cuban writer is her indignant reaction in 1867 upon being excluded from José Fornaris's anthology of Cuban poets based on her long time residence in Spain. In response, Gómez de Avellaneda penned a letter to Francisco de Frías, the director of Havana's newspaper *El Siglo*, in which she wrote that: "Tales acusaciones...sólo debían hacer reír [sic] a quien como yo ha hecho gala en muchas de sus composiciones de tener por patria la de Heredia...y tantos otros verdaderos poetas, con cuya fraternidad me honro...a quien como yo, en fin, sabe que su mayor gloria consiste en haber sido distinguida como escritora cubana" (Qtd. in Rodríguez Núñez 93).

the framework through which she describes the intimate ties between compatriots that, she asserts, can never be dissolved (“en vano se quisieran destruir”). The correlations between family ties, origins, and national identity also pervade her anti-slavery novel *Sab* (1841), in which the stunning depiction of the Cuban landscape and the inventory of local customs, manners, and social types all point definitively to “el reconocimiento de una personalidad nacional a los cubanos” (Álvarez 241).

In *Sab*, Gómez de Avellaneda relates the story of a patriarchal, yet loving, slave-owning family in Puerto Príncipe composed of the widower Carlos B., his daughter Carlota, his son Eugenio, and four younger daughters whose names are not revealed. Also residing within the domestic space are Teresa, Carlota’s poor and illegitimate cousin, and a *mulato* slave named Sab, the son of a black female slave and, it is suspected, Carlos B.’s deceased brother. Fettered by his inferior status as a slave of mixed blood, Sab consecrates his life to cultivating a secret love for his young mistress Carlota; she, however, falls in love with Enrique Otway, an English merchant who schemes to marry into the local oligarchy. Carlota’s plans to marry the foreign upstart incur the wrath of her extended family, who rescind on a promised inheritance. Upon discovering the loss of Carlota’s inheritance, Enrique resolves to break off his engagement unannounced and leave the island. The solution comes in the form of Sab’s providential winning lottery ticket, which he secretly exchanges with Carlota in order to retain Enrique and save his mistress from heartbreak. Upon restoring Carlota’s wealth, an act by which Sab unwittingly delivers her to an utterly unhappy marriage, Sab dies as a result of physical and moral exhaustion. We learn that Enrique, now in full possession of the family’s fortune, forsakes Carlota’s younger siblings to a life of poverty and dedicates himself almost

entirely to augmenting his wealth. Sab's heroic, martyr-like acts are only discovered to Carlota five years later, when, unhappily married to Enrique, she goes to the convent to visit her dying cousin. Here, Teresa gives Carlota Sab's passionate deathbed letter, in which he declares his love for Carlota and reveals the noble sacrifices he made for her.

In her novel, Gómez de Avellaneda's presents a number of distinct, yet interrelated, story lines. On the one hand, she offers the account of a slave who has the boldness—or even the audacity—to fall in love with his white owner; on the other, she tells the story of an idyllic family torn asunder by an Englishman hunting for a lucrative love match; finally, she offers a portrayal of Puerto Príncipe as a utopia that falls victim to the positivist forces embodied by this foreigner, who threatens to destroy Cuba's benign social fabric. While I will seek to tease out each of the narrative threads that composes *Sab*, what emerges most immediately in the novel is a tender attachment to the land of Puerto Príncipe, its people, and its customs. Borrowing amply from Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul and Virginia* (1788), Gómez de Avellaneda idealizes the landscape and inhabitants of Puerto Príncipe in order to render a nostalgic portrait of the island as an earthly paradise. Like the bountiful island of Mauritius depicted by the French writer, *Sab*'s narrator describes the abundance that characterizes the “país privilegiado” of Cuba, its “campos vírgenes,” its “joven naturaleza,” and its “vigorosa y lozana vegetación” (102). As the expiring Teresa expresses to Carlota in her last moments:

Porque hemos sido felices, Carlota, en nacer en un suelo virgen, bajo un cielo magnífico, en no vivir en el seno de una naturaleza raquílica, sino rodeadas de todas las grandes obras de Dios, que nos han enseñado a conocerle y amarle. (262)

This excerpt, in which Teresa evokes the natural beauty and spiritual purity of the island, is representative of *Sab*'s overall representation of Puerto Príncipe as a space in which people inhabit an earlier, and thus happier, stage in their evolution. Isolated from the imposing plantations, railways, and other elements of modern industrialization that defaced the landscape in areas driven by the sugar industry, the inhabitants of Puerto Príncipe are represented living harmoniously within the novel's sentimentally rendered tropical setting.

In her allegory of the clash between Carlos B.'s benevolent Cuban family and the materialist Otways, men who are "pegados a la tierra y alimentados de positivismo," Gómez de Avellaneda offers an anxious and decidedly critical response to the island's transition from a regional economy to a capitalist economy based on the production of sugar (*Sab* 260).¹⁰² In this tragic scenario of modernization, the debased Englishmen embody an ethos of competition and acquisition that threatens the local customs and values of Puerto Príncipe. As I explained in my introductory chapter, the nativist discourse of "us" versus "them" provided a valuable strategy for nation building in nineteenth-century Spanish America; however, *Sab* deviates in its deployment of this discourse in that, while most Spanish American thinkers and writers adopted Spain as the imagined enemy against which they constructed the concept of a united "us," in *Sab*, this

¹⁰² Enrique Otway's entrance to Puerto Príncipe by the nearby port of Nuevitas, which eventually linked the town to the other regions of the island, implicitly connects this foreigner to the expansion of the sugar economy throughout different regions of Cuba. See Elda E. Cento Gómez's "Para una historia de Puerto Príncipe" (27-40).

function is performed by Britain.¹⁰³

Several circumstances, both political and personal, made Britain an appropriate target of criticism in Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab*. Significantly, the novel was composed during the era when British exploration and colonial enterprise were on the rise; the occupation of Havana in 1762, for example, was a reminder of the danger that Britain's thirst for territorial expansion posed to Cuban political and cultural integrity. Perhaps a more immediate factor in Gómez de Avellaneda's adoption of Britain as opposed to Spain as the primary target of criticism in the novel, however, is that she was writing for a Spanish audience. Publishing the work in Spain ruled out the possibility of representing the strained ties between colony and metropole, especially as the novel was written by a female colonial writer. As Luis Álvarez observes: "Ella sabe que está diciendo eso en la España isabelina en donde no hay libertad de expresión y, sobre todo, que habla una cubana que sabe que en su patria no hay libertad" (238). Criticizing the Spanish nation would have also proved problematic for Gómez de Avellaneda considering her personal identification with Spain. As Carmen Bravo-Villasante observes, Gómez de Avellaneda: "Políticamente ama al pueblo, y al mismo tiempo reverencia a su majestad; se siente hija de Cuba y de España a la vez" (112). By adopting Britain as the imagined Other against which she weaves a tapestry of uniquely Cuban

¹⁰³ For example, novels like Nataniel Aguirre's *Juan de la Rosa* (1843) and Bartolomé Mitre's *Soledad* (1847) look back to the recent wars against Spain in order to foster a sense of patriotic duty in readers. Novels like *Jicoténcal* (1826), attributed to Félix Varela, and *Enriquillo* (1882), by Manuel de Jesús Galván, probe the depths of the Spanish American archive in order to construct a story of national origins, making recourse to documents like the *cartas de relación*, chronicals, and other first-hand accounts of the conquest and colonization of Spanish America. In each of these examples, Spain serves as the Other against which a sense of nationhood is both constructed and reinforced.

customs and values, Gómez de Avellaneda participates in the process of nation building at the same time that she honors her Spanish identity.

Gómez de Avellaneda develops the dichotomy of the English foreigners versus the Cuban family from the very beginning of *Sab*, which opens as Enrique Otway makes his way across the countryside to his fiancé's home. In this scene, the narrator calls attention to the breathtaking landscape of Puerto Príncipe, where the tropical climate and the vast expanses of untamed land yield beautiful, Edenic vistas. However, in the midst of the stunning, virginal landscape that offers itself up to the eyes of the newcomer and Sab, who serves as his temporary guide, Enrique's attention is absorbed by his attempts to estimate the value of the land. Eager to calculate the dowry he may expect to receive upon his marriage to Carlota, Enrique steers the topic of conversation to the family's yearly harvest, observing impertinently to Sab that "Esta finca debe producir mucho a su dueño" (105). Enrique thus manifests the primary motive behind his engagement to Carlota, a sign that is not lost on the superior, noble-minded Sab. The novel later traces Enrique's mercantile vision of the world back to his father, Jorge Otway, who surpasses Enrique both in the extent of his greed and his ruthless drive to acquire wealth. Once a lowly *buhonero* (peddler), Jorge steadily worked his way up through the ranks of society, even converting to Catholicism in order to become more attractive to the island's inhabitants.

Gómez de Avellaneda sets her contrastive analysis between the Otways and Carlos's family firmly within the Romantic paradigm that spurns materialism and privileges sentiment. The principles and beliefs of the Englishmen, "almas vulgares" who believe that everything, from land, to friendship, to marriage can be quantified, emerge

not only as foreign but wholly irreconcilable with the values of Carlos's family members, "almas superiores... privilegiadas para el sentimiento" (*Sab* 133). Carlos's family constitutes a reservoir of deep sympathy and compassion for the suffering of others, a situation that is poignantly demonstrated when Sab and Teresa each refuse to accept the winning lottery ticket for themselves in order to save Carlota. Sab, recognizing that Enrique aims to wed Puerto Príncipe's wealthiest woman, offers Teresa the ticket in the hopes that Otway's shallow, fickle nature will be revealed to Carlota. However, Teresa refuses Sab's lottery ticket—an act that would have provided her with a dowry sufficient to attract the attentions of Enrique (whom she secretly loves)—in order to protect Carlota from disillusionment.

Carlos, the patriarch of this idyllic family, is equally impervious to the temptations of wealth, preferring the sweetness of domestic life and the cultivation of sentiment to overseeing the family properties. In counterdistinction to Jorge Otway, a brutish, oppressive father who is tone-deaf to the nuances of family sentiment, Carlos's brand of parenting falls more in line with Rousseau's concept of the affective, loving family. As the narrator of *Sab* explains indulgently, Carlos's inability to defend the family fortune and provide for his children in no way reflects a lack of paternal affection. On the contrary, Carlos:

Amaba a sus hijos y había amado a su esposa con todo el calor y la ternura de una alma sensible aunque apática. Hubiera dado su vida por cada uno de aquellos objetos queridos, pero por la utilidad de estos mismos no hubiera podido imponerse el deber de una vida activa y agitada. (125)

Carlos's lack of pragmatism and his bumbling hopelessness as a businessman even come

to assume certain noble implications when considered alongside the novel's overall rejection of the new capitalist values.¹⁰⁴

The lax nature of this *pater familias* and his loving, permissive mode of parenting contribute to a more egalitarian model for the future national community. As opposed to a locus of female oppression, the home constitutes a space in which daughters have access to culture and are even permitted to marry for love. As Catherine Davies observes, Gómez de Avellaneda's representation of the household as a space of greater female freedom reflects a characteristic feature of eighteenth-century Puerto Príncipe, where women had an integral role not only in the home but in the various *sociedades* and *liceos* that formed part of the town's rich cultural life. As Davies explains:

The family and the home, then, was the focus of education, political discussion and networking for women. In addition to the family there were public institutions established by local worthies (not the state) for recreation and educational purposes. These were also places in which political culture was made available to women. (436)

For her part, Carlota receives a splendid education within the domestic space, not only reading the requisite religious texts but also literature by authors including Shakespeare,

¹⁰⁴ As the narrator describes Carlos's willingness to part with his wealth in the following manner: "Desprendiéndose con resignación y filosofía de un caudal...No se quejó a nadie, acaso por pereza, acaso por cierto orgullo compatible con la más perfecta bondad; pero el golpe hirió de lleno su corazón paternal. Alegróse entonces interiormente de tener asegurada la suerte de Carlota, y no vio en Enrique al hijo del buhonero sino al único heredero de una casa fuerte del país" (125).

Chateaubriand, and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre.¹⁰⁵ Carlos's high regard for his eldest daughter frees Carlota from an unpleasant situation that men and women of the upper classes often faced upon reaching a marriageable age. As opposed to those fathers like Jorge Otway, who viewed their children as pawns in a competition to amass greater fortune and perpetuate the family name, Carlos "Jamás había ambicionado para su hija un marido de alta posición social o de inmensos caudales: limitábase a desearle uno que la hiciese feliz" (123).¹⁰⁶ Gómez de Avellaneda thus constructs the Cuban nation-family as a space of greater equality and mutual respect—important components of a united, moral national community.

At the same time, however, Carlos's romantic detachment from reality constitutes one of the root causes of the family's collapse. According to the perspective presented in the novel, Carlos represents the failure of the creole elite to uphold its position as Cuba's legitimate leaders. As the narrator explains, the prominent creoles of the island, contented with their wealth, "abandonan a la codicia y actividad de los europeos todos los ramos de agricultura, comercio e industria, con los cuales se levantan en corto número de años innumerables familias" (119). Despite Carlos's heartfelt desire for Carlota to be happy in

¹⁰⁵ French literature was easily procured members of the town's elite, and Gomez de Avellaneda herself was well read in the works of Voltaire, Rousseau, Madame de Staël, and George Sand before her departure from the island.

¹⁰⁶ This dimension of the novel echoes Gómez de Avellaneda's own experience with an arranged marriage in Cuba. In a letter to Ignacio de Cepeda, the Spaniard with whom she maintained a long and stormy romance, Gómez de Avellaneda relates that her family agreed that she would marry a distant relative. However, when she recognized the absence of love in the match, Gómez de Avellaneda boldly called off the arranged marriage. Like in *Sab*, defying the family will stripped Gómez de Avellaneda of a hefty inheritance. The writer explores this theme more closely in her second novel, *Dos mujeres* (1842), which critiques the practice of arranged marriage and emphasizes the need to democratize the familial bonds that subjugated children to their parents, restricting their freedom and undermining their autonomy.

her marriage, his indolent nature means that “no se ocupó mucho, sin embargo, en estudiar a Enrique para conocer si era capaz de lograrlo” (123). It is due to this failure to “read” Enrique that Carlota—an analogue for the Cuban nation—finds herself at the mercy of foreigners who threaten the island’s economic and moral integrity.

Gómez de Avellaneda’s alternative approach to nation building reverses the gendered terms of the anti-slavery novels by the *delmontinos*. As opposed to a rich, ignorant, creole mother, *Sab* presents foreign opportunists and ineffectual creole males as the catalysts for tragedy. As Picón Garfield explains:

La víctima expiatoria [en *Sab*]...no es la madre cubana ni su hogar, sino el ámbito público, materialista y patriarcal, refractado en el privado.

Mediante el relato de un amor imposible, la autora ficcionaliza la intervención y explotación foráneas de la economía cubana por los europeos quienes codician una Cuba de abundancia agrícola, comercial e industrial. (171)

In *Sab*’s allegory of the fall of the Cuban nation-family, the ascent of this unscrupulous, materialistic social group from abroad is tied implicitly to the premature death of the angelic, socially-minded mother. Without this prudent figure to preside over the domestic space and guide her children, the nation-family becomes vulnerable to what is represented in the novel as the treacherous incursions from abroad.

Absent and Symbolic Maternal Figures in *Sab*

While Gómez de Avellaneda does not give direct representation to the mother of the nation-family in *Sab*, her presence is evoked through the collective memory as a source of cohesion, benevolence, and guidance. The premature loss of Señora B. as a result of a mysterious illness not only affects her husband and children, it leaves the outside members of her family bereft as well.¹⁰⁷ Teresa, Carlota's distant cousin, is particularly affected by the passing of this compassionate woman, as it was Señora B. who welcomed her into the family. Teresa, who lost her biological mother at birth, entered the world an unwanted creature, deprived of maternal comfort and degraded by her status as an illegitimate child. As we read:

Hija natural de un pariente lejano de la esposa de don Carlos, [Teresa] perdió a su madre al nacer, y había vivido con su padre, hombre libertino que la abandonó enteramente al orgullo y la dureza de una madrastra que la aborrecía. (116)

Teresa's situation improves, however, under the loving protection of Señora B., who welcomes the young girl into the family. As Teresa reflects sadly to Carlota at the beginning of the novel: "ambas debemos llorar eternamente una pérdida que nos privó, a ti de la mejor de las madres, a mí, pobre huérfana desvalida, de mi única protectora" (114).

¹⁰⁷ Carlota discusses the loss of Señora B. with Teresa at the beginning of the novel, recalling that "Cuatro años han corrido después que habitó con nosotras esta casa. Aquí lucieron para ella los últimos días de felicidad y de vida. Pocos transcurrieron desde que dejamos esta hacienda y volvimos a la ciudad, cuando la atacó la mortal dolencia que la condujo prematuramente al sepulcro" (114).

Señora B.'s intercession on behalf of the suffering Other also renders Sab's condition more bearable. As Sab relates to Enrique as they make their way to the Bellavista plantation at the beginning of the novel: "[Carlos B.] Casóse algún tiempo después con una mujer... ¡un ángel! y me llevó consigo" (110). Recalling his early, pleasant years with the kindly family, Sab goes on to explain that he and Carlota were raised virtually as brother and sister, spending their childhood under the same roof, reading the same books, and playing the same games:

Seis años tenía yo cuando mecía la cuna de la señorita Carlota, fruto primero de aquel feliz matrimonio. Más tarde fui el compañero de sus juegos y estudios, porque hija única por espacio de cinco años, su inocente corazón no medía la distancia que nos separaba y me concedía el cariño de un hermano. (110)

The female-guided family envisioned in *Sab* fulfills a vital social function for the nation. Like Lucía Marín in Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido*, Señora B.'s role as a benevolent protector transforms the white, creole household into a space of inclusion, where the nation's displaced members may seek refuge (at least partially) from social injustice. This maternal figure constitutes the base of Gómez de Avellaneda's idealized nation-family and emphasizes the virtue and equality as essential components of the future national community. However, while the mother's presence provides cohesion and a sense of direction to the family, her absence brings about a fragmentation within the home. Under the indolent care of her father, Carlota remains "impunemente pueril" and unknowledgeable about the world, a situation that fuels her misguided idealization of Enrique Otway (259). "Sin otra guía que su corazón ignorante y crédulo," Carlota unites

her fate with this deceitful foreigner and sacrifices the autonomy she previously enjoyed within her idyllic home (227).

With Enrique's incorporation into the family, Carlota not only surrenders control of her family's wealth, she also forfeits her goal of eradicating the hated practice of slavery on her family's lands.¹⁰⁸ Once Enrique secures his hold over Carlota, we learn, he treats his wife "como a un niño caprichoso...La acariciaba, la prodigaba tiernas palabras y concluía por reírse de su indignación" (260). Enrique also assumes full control of her assets and refuses to share any with her impoverished siblings, despite his promise to Carlota's father to serve as their protector and despite Carlota's own moving petitions. As the narrator reveals: "Enrique encontró absurda la demanda de su mujer y la trató como fantasía de una niña que no conoce aún sus propios intereses" (260).

As critics have indicated, absent mothers, unmarried women, and fruitless marriages set *Sab* apart from most nineteenth-century foundational Spanish American novels. Teresa, a victim of unrequited love, renounces the world and only finds solace within the protective walls of a convent. The unhappy union between Carlota and Enrique, childless after five years, also bodes poorly for the future of the Cuban nation. Along with the premature death of the noble slave himself, the dismal fates of the women in *Sab* suggest the impossibility of forging a nation through an alliance between creoles

¹⁰⁸ Before her departure to Cubitas, Carlota muses optimistically: "Cuando yo sea la esposa de Enrique...ningún infeliz respirará a mi lado el aire emponzoñado de la esclavitud. Daremos libertad a todos nuestros negros. ¿Qué importa ser menos ricos? ¿Seremos por eso menos dichosos? Una choza con Enrique es bastante para mí, y para él no habrá riqueza preferible a mi gratitud y amor" (146-147). Carlota's ethical imaginings are rife with dramatic irony, for, as the reader knows well, the man with whom she wishes to share this charming life embodies the very ruthlessness and materialism she loathes.

and foreign powers.¹⁰⁹ Instead, as Adriana Méndez Rodenas observes in “Mujer, nación y otredad en Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda” (1997), mother figures, both biological and archetypal, reflect the importance of local culture and reinforce the need to establish the future Cuban nation through non-violent means. In addition to the memory of Señora B., *Sab* presents the mysterious Martina, a woman who claims descent from one of the island’s original chieftains, as a symbolic, archetypal mother figure. The family pays a visit to Martina on its journey to the subterranean caves of Cubitas, an excursion that takes on the significance of a journey to the very origins of Cuba itself. As Sab relates to the rest of the travelers (Carlos’s family and Enrique), Martina is revered within the community for “su grande [sic] experiencia, sus conocimientos en medicina de los que sacan tanta utilidad, y...sus sempiternos cuentos de vampiros y aparecidos” (167). Brimming with stories of the distant past, Martina constitutes a living archive through which collective memory is preserved.

The family’s visit to Martina and the mysterious caves of Cubitas plumbs the mythic foundations of the island and symbolically reunites the discrete components of Cuban culture. Martina, “madre metafórica de la raza original,” represents the original inhabitants of the island who were virtually obliterated during the conquest of the Americas, while Carlos’s family represents Cuba’s European inheritance (Méndez 174). Sab, the son of an enslaved princess from the Congo and a white Cuban creole who was raised within the master’s household, represents the fusion between the island’s African

¹⁰⁹ As Rogelia Lily Ibarra observes, *Sab* diverges from the national projects of intellectuals like José Antonio Saco and Domingo Del Monte, “whose reformist solution for the growth of the black population was that Cuba be ‘whitened’ through a sustained immigration of cheap labor of European origin” (388).

and European components. This cultural and biological crisscrossing intensifies when we discover Martina's role as Sab's adoptive mother, a situation that links the slave to the long-deceased chieftain of the region, Camagüey. It is therefore the noble-blooded Sab, in whom the multiple constituents of the island have been united and blended together through *mestizaje*, who represents a utopian, hybridized model for the Cuban national community.

The family's trip to Cubitas offers a momentary glimpse of future community in which socially imposed barriers have fallen away to reveal a nation premised on cultural unity and equality. Carlos's invitation to Sab and Martina to join the rest of the family at the table to share in the banquet reinforces this vision of an egalitarian, united Cuban community. As Benítez Rojo explains in *La isla que se repite*, this desire to unite the nation through peaceful means comprises a perennial theme within Cuban discourse:

Este deseo continuó repitiéndose en Cuba durante la etapa de apogeo de lo criollo y debe haber contribuido en mucho a la formación del deseo de nacionalidad, ya que hablaba de una patria justa para todos y portaba un proyecto utópico de coexistencia que compensaba la fragmentaria, inestable y conflictiva identidad antillana. (Qtd. in Méndez 176)

For her part, Méndez observes that “Esta imagen multifacética, transculturadora de la nacionalidad...anula, al menos provisionalmente, las tensiones raciales y sociales expuestas en la obra” (175).

Gómez de Avellaneda reinforces this moral, egalitarian vision for the future Cuban nation through her treatment of slavery and female oppression, which I will analyze in the following pages. Using Sab as a mouthpiece, she aggressively defends the

concept of freedom as a natural and divinely ordained right. Sab's lengthy epistle to Teresa reproaches society for its deceitful and hypocritical violation of this law through its participation in slavery and the oppression of women. Attending to the polyphonic nature of the novel, I will also explore how the anti-slavery discourse is tempered by the existence of alternate, competing discourses.

Slavery and Female Oppression as Obstacles to a United Nation-Family in *Sab*

¿El gran jefe de esta gran familia humana, habrá establecido diferentes leyes para los que nacen con la tez negra y la tez blanca? ¿No tienen todos las mismas necesidades, las mismas pasiones, los mismos defectos?

—Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (265)

In “*Sab: la novela y el prefacio*” (2014), Luisa Campuzano proposes that Sab's letter should be read as an epilogue in which Gómez de Avellaneda presents those ideas that necessitated the novel's carefully constructed preface (187). In the preface, the author downplays *Sab*'s transgressive dimensions by presenting the novel as a naïve product of adolescence. As she writes:

Tres años ha dormido esta novelita en el fondo de su papelera: léida después por algunas personas inteligentes que la han juzgado con benevolencia y habiéndose interesado muchos amigos de la autora en poseer un ejemplo de ella, se determina a imprimirla...la publica sin ningún género de pretensiones. (97)

The self-effacing nature of the prologue may have provided sanction against censorship in Spain; however, it did not prevent the novel's prohibition from Cuba, where the censors banned the novel for its "doctrinas subversivas del sistema de esclavitud de esta Isla y contrarias a la moral y buenas costumbres" (Qtd. in Servera 48). Furthermore, while Gómez de Avellaneda was able to publish the novel in Spain, her family members were so alarmed by its attack on slavery and marriage that they attempted to buy up all of the copies in order to limit its circulation (Scott xxiii). Considering the stir that the novel caused, it is not surprising that Gómez de Avellaneda adopted strategies in order to distance herself from its subversive content. In addition to her prologue, Gómez de Avellaneda masks her voice by presenting the most subversive ideas in *Sab* as the ideas of the novel's eponymous hero.

The attack on slavery develops at the beginning of the novel, when Enrique converses with Sab on their way to Bellavista. Sab depicts the inhuman conditions suffered by plantation slaves for Enrique, describing how these unfortunate individuals work in the fields from morning to sundown, at which time they move to the boiler room and labor before a scorching fire through the night. After a few meager hours of rest, the slaves begin the infernal cycle again. As Sab exclaims:

¡Ah! sí; es un cruel espectáculo la vista de la humanidad degradada, de hombres convertidos en brutos, que llevan en su frente la marca de la esclavitud y en su alma la desesperación del infierno. (106)

Sab's depiction of the cruel life led by field slaves and his heartfelt lament are intended, ostensibly, to arouse sympathy in readers for the plight of slaves. The anti-slavery discourse takes on more programmatic features in Sab's letter to Teresa. In this lengthy

epistle, which bears the marks of Enlightenment thought, Sab affirms that God has invested him with a soul and with the capacity for virtue and love (169).¹¹⁰ He then reasons that all those who support the institution of slavery, which comes between Sab and “el destino que la providencia [le] había señalado,” are in violation of divine law (269). Sab concludes his ethical/philosophical digression with an ominous warning, as he advises that these men “son los que deben temer al presentarse delante de Dios” (270).

This passage, which echoes the famous words of Antonio de Montesinos, the Dominican friar who accused Spanish authorities for relentlessly exploiting the indigenous population in 1511, constitutes an intrepid attack for any writer, but particularly for a female writer.¹¹¹ Furthermore, unlike the members of the Del Monte circle, who were writing with the goal of publishing abroad in England, Gómez de Avellaneda leveled her challenge of the status quo in Spain itself, where expectations of female domesticity are considered to have been more rigorous than in the writer’s native Puerto Príncipe.¹¹² While this situation necessarily limited the extent to which the writer could critique the laws and customs of society, it is nonetheless necessary to recognize that in *Sab*, unlike the *delmonte* novels, the most immediate threat to Cuban is not so

¹¹⁰ As Edith Kelly observes, the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau exercised substantial influence over Gómez de Avellaneda during the time that she composed *Sab* (307); Campuzano observes that Gómez de Avellaneda attacks the subaltern position of slaves and women “desde una perspectiva ideo-estética de documentada filiación iluminista y romántica (186).

¹¹¹ In his sermon, Montesinos declared: “todos estáis en pecado mortal y en él vivís y morís por la crueldad y tiranía que usáis con estas inocentes gentes” (Qtd. in Pedro Henríquez Ureña 20).

¹¹² As Bridget Aldaraca explains in *El Ángel del Hogar: Galdos and the Ideology of Domesticity in Spain* (1991), nineteenth-century Spain adopted conservative attitudes toward the family and marriage, as the middle classes saw these institutions as primary means of securing its hegemony and safeguards against the threat of revolution.

much slavery itself as the triumphant conquest of the sugar industry and the concomitant influx of foreign newcomers and greedy capitalists who exploit the island's riches and its people. The scathing criticism of foreign invaders that runs through *Sab* comes to rival—and, to a certain extent, destabilize—the novel's attack on slavery, effectively distancing the creole, slave-owning family from the very institution that produces its wealth. As José Gomariz suggests in “Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y la intelectualidad reformista cubana: Raza, blanqueamiento e identidad cultural en *Sab*” (2009), the novel's idealized representation of Carlos, “el estereotipo del amo bueno,” constitutes one of several deflecting mechanisms by which Gómez de Avellaneda protects white dominant culture at the same time that she attacks the institution of slavery (109).

The representation of the common field slave in *Sab* follows a similar pattern of attack and retreat, simultaneously acknowledging and suppressing the more violent, shocking scenes of slavery. As several critics have observed, after Sab offers up his devastating portrait of plantation life at the beginning of the novel, the field slaves come to occupy a rather shadowy existence in the rest of the novel.¹¹³ Instead, narrative attention focused on Sab, the exceptional, cultured slave. Besides being brought up in the master's house, a situation that gave him access to education, Sab inherits noble blood from three sides, being the fruit of a union between a Cuban patrician and an African princess, as well as the adopted son of Martina, descended from an indigenous chieftain. Sab's privileged position as overseer on the family's plantation also means that, while he

¹¹³ Claudette Williams has written on this element of *Sab*, avering that the field slaves “are no more than a phantom presence in the novel, putting in only momentary appearances to shore up their owners' liberal image and to deflect the focus from their own status as exploited labourers producing wealth for their owners' consumption” (160).

sympathizes with the plight of his fellow slaves, he is also responsible for preserving their situation of hardship.

The unresolved tensions embedded within *Sab*'s engagement of slavery and race have favored a number of interpretations by critics over the years. A general tendency within scholarship on the novel has been to privilege one interpretation to the exclusion of other possible readings. For his part, Gomariz reads the novel's tempered critique of slavery as evidence of the author's fundamental conservatism. Some critics who interpret the novel as an early example of feminist thought have also downplayed the novel's anti-slavery dimension. In "Symbiosis Between Slavery and Feminism in Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab*" (1997), Brígida Pastor rather uncritically affirms that, for Gómez de Avellaneda, "slavery was nothing more than a metaphor to convey her feminism, her prime and sole message in *Sab*" (187).

These interpretations fail to account for the ambivalence that lies at the center of most nineteenth-century abolitionist narratives. As Debbie Lee reminds us in *Slavery and the Romantic Imagination* (2002), nineteenth-century engagements of race and slavery, even those with openly anti-slavery agendas, usually wavered between "complicity, resistance, or anxiety" (2). Bearing this in mind, my own reading of *Sab*'s intervention into the debate on slavery is most analogous with Claudette Williams's "Cuban Anti-slavery Narrative Through Postcolonial Eyes: Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab*" (2008). Exploring *Sab* as an example of a polyphonic novel, Williams proposes that:

Avellaneda [sic] is at one and the same time a maverick and a conformist.

She is a maverick among her peers based on her vision of the struggle of the slaves as the continuation of the anti-colonial struggle of Cuba's

indigenous population, and her staking out a national(ist) claim for the Afro-Cuban slave, but she is a conformist in her unwillingness to conceive of slave rebellion and in her subliminal defence of slave-owner privilege. In true Bakhtinian fashion, insidious endorsement of the system of slavery coexists with anti-slavery ideas in an unresolved tension. (173-174)

As Williams observes, the novel's moments of complicity with the slave system does not render it a product of conservative ideology. Rather, the constellation of overlapping and often opposing discourses in *Sab* makes it impossible to categorize it, as past critics have attempted to do, as univocally abolitionist, feminist, or conservative.

Furthermore, while opposing discourses oftentimes work to destabilize the novel's anti-slavery discourse, its argument in favor of women supports a more democratic vision for the national community than that presented by the *delmontinos*.¹¹⁴

As María Albin explains in *Género, poesía y esfera pública: Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y la tradición romántica* (2002), Gómez de Avellaneda drew on the ideas of Montesquieu in order to level her two-fold attack on the arbitrary laws and customs of society. As Albin explains:

La filosofía política de Montesquieu ejerció una gran influencia en el pensamiento y la obra de Gómez de Avellaneda, en particular en lo que se refiere a la posición que se le adjudica a la mujer y al esclavo en la

¹¹⁴ Reiterating the opinions quoted by Benítez Rojo in “¿Cómo narrar una nación,” Albin writes that “Al respecto Benítez-Rojo advierte que hay que tener en cuenta que el proyecto nacional de la escritora resulta ‘más democrático y amplio’ que el programa del círculo de Delmonte [sic], pues...Gómez de Avellaneda formula un alegato en favor de la reivindicación de la igualdad para la mujer” (46).

sociedad colonial y metropolitana. La escritora adopta una posición de condena a la esclavitud similar a la del pensador francés en su novela *Sab* (45)

Placing her indictment of patriarchy in the mouth of the *mulato* slave, Gómez de Avellaneda boldly penned the now-famous words:

¡Oh!, ¡las mujeres! ¡Pobres y ciegas víctimas! Como los esclavos, ellas arrastran pacientemente su cadena y bajan la cabeza bajo el yugo de las leyes humanas...El esclavo, al menos, puede cambiar de amo, puede esperar que, juntando oro, comprará algún día su libertad, pero la mujer, cuando levanta sus manos enflaquecidas y su frente ultrajada para pedir libertad, oye al monstruo de voz sepulcral que le grita: “En la Tumba.” (227)

According to Campuzano, these ideas about the position of women in society that “constituyen uno de los momentos más subversivos y transgresores de toda la literatura del siglo XIX” (187). Sab’s letter thus reinforces a fundamental theme within the novel—that the ideal Cuban nation-family constitutes a space in which relationships do not bestow certain individuals with the power to rule of others, but rather one based on equal rights and mutual respect. While the prospect of a nation founded on harmony and equality vanishes upon Carlota’s union with Enrique, Gómez de Avellaneda’s vision of the Cuban national community as an amalgam of the multiple racial and social constituents would remain a touchstone of national discourse.

A comparative analysis of Anselmo Suárez y Romero’s *Francisco* and Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda’s *Sab* reveals that both writers make recourse to the literary

representation of the family and domestic spaces in order to voice their concerns about Cuban society and its future. Suárez y Romero's representation of the creole family fulfills an expository function, permitting the writer to "explain" the damaging effects that the slave system, poor education, and maternal incompetence had on the macro-level of Cuban society. His portrait of the disorderly creole family reflects the widely held concern about preparing young Cuban men for their future role as citizens. Suárez y Romero's aspirations for cultural and political autonomy are also insinuated through the figure of the slave protagonist struggling under the domination of a cruel and illegitimate ruler, which allegorizes the colonial situation. Similarly, the depiction of slavery in *Sab* provides a rich metaphor for different forms of political and social injustice. However, unlike the writers of the Del Monte circle, Gómez de Avellaneda makes use of the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces in order to insert an intrepid indictment of the position of women in society. By drawing direct parallels between these two social elements, she indicates that slaves and women alike are victims of socially imposed hierarchies and presents an agenda of racial and gender equality as integral components of a united, moral Cuban nation-family.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, I have explored the dynamic way that nineteenth-century writers from Spanish America drew on the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces as a framework through which they outlined their ambitious, oftentimes utopian models for the emergent Spanish American societies. In their promotion of generous and enlightened creole families, writers sought to forge a new national identity, to eradicate traces of the colonial past, and to construct a new model of society that was in accordance with republican values. However, a comparative reading of novels from three different geographical zones—the Southern Cone, the Andean region, and the Caribbean—also reveals several significant points of divergence. Writers from Peru and Cuba, for example, tended to imagine national harmony through *mestizo* heroes and heroines that fuse the different national components of the nation together and through families that incorporate indigenous and African elements into the domestic space. At the same time that writers imagined a national community in which distinct classes, genders, and races met on more equal footing, however, they tended to downplay or dilute indigenous or African cultural markers that might threaten the dominant European values. In an observation about nineteenth-century Mexican thinkers but which is equally applicable to the Peruvian context, for example, Julia Tuñón observes that:

En el contexto del gobierno liberal imperan las ideas de progreso, ley y razón, y se expresa el propósito de incorporar a los indios al proceso civilizador que se pone en marcha de acuerdo con un criterio evolucionista

donde el indígena, como tal, no tiene cabida. Liberales y conservadores participan de esta concepción, lo que muestra otro de los rasgos comunes que uniforman a los bandos aparentemente contrarios. (24)

Thus, writers continued to imagine their multi-ethnic families in a manner that was consistent with their faith in progress, reason, and science.

By comparing male-authored and female-authored novels in each of my chapters, I have shown that women addressed many of the same themes as did men did in their novels. Like men, women shared the dominant faith in progress, which, in the nineteenth century, was used to refer to wealthy and developed nations. They also coincided with men in their self-conscious creation of national agendas, which included goals like expanding the modernizing process to rural areas and shaping a national identity for the new citizens. Also, like their male counterparts, female writers demonstrated concern for the plight of the disenfranchised and problematized the uneven nature of the dominant nation-building project. At the same time, defense of the displaced members of the nation become more marked in texts by female writers. To understand this difference, it is necessary to bear in mind that women in nineteenth-century Spanish America, like their counterparts in Europe and North America, experienced the nation in different ways than men of their time period. As Bonnie Frederick observes in her study of men and women writers of Argentina's Generation '80:

Because they were women, they led very different lives, which in turn produced a distinct narrative voice. Even when they shared a common theme with the male writers, they could not help interpreting the issues in terms of how it [sic] affected women. (282)

It is likely that women's place within the home, and their heightened contact with domestic servants of mixed background produced heightened sympathy for the nation's Others. As Aguilar observes of colonial and post-independence Peru:

La servidumbre fue siempre un espacio de encuentro dados los diversos orígenes de los trabajadores. Desde el principio, este tipo de trabajo produjo la coincidencia, en el mismo lugar, de indios, mestizos, españoles, castas y negros.
(150)

This situation provided white, creole women an opportunity to compare different forms of subjugation based on race, class, and ethnicity with gender oppression and to desire a national community purged not only of its deep class and racial inequalities but also of the power imbalance between male and female citizens. At the same time, I have shown how focusing on the nation's Others allowed female writers to veil subversive arguments in favor of greater female rights.¹¹⁵

The examination of the literary representation of the family and domestic spaces in nineteenth-century Argentine, Peruvian, and Cuban novels also reveals how the cultural models adopted by many writers tended to favor certain members of the "national family" while neglecting or even excluding others. While female writers typically constructed more tolerant nation-families in their novels, they frequently fell into the trap of paternalism by identifying adoption, charity, and tutoring as viable means

¹¹⁵ In this way, I subscribe to the belief that the principle factors behind differences in writing by men and women are social and cultural forces. As Elaine Showalter observes in "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (1981): "A theory based on a model of women's culture can provide, I believe, a more complete and satisfying way to talk about the specificity and difference of women's writing than theories based in biology, linguistics, or psychoanalysis" (197).

of peacefully integrating the lower classes, slaves, and non-white peoples into the national community. In each of the novels studied in these chapter, the white, Europeanized creole family—a representation of the Spanish American minority—emerges as the driving force behind the new national community and the legitimate educator and leader of the nation's majority.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ In this way, the families depicted by nineteenth-century Spanish American writers reflect what Ángel Rama describes in *La ciudad letrada* (1984) as the lettered elite's unique ability to rearrange itself and maintain its authority in the midst of vast social change.

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Vita
Bonnie Loder

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Candidate, The Pennsylvania State University** 05/2015
Dissertation Title: *Framing the Nation: The Family as a Model for Nation Building in the Nineteenth-Century Spanish American Novel*
Committee: Julia Cuervo-Hewitt (Chair), Mary E. Barnard, Thomas O. Beebee,
Fernando Operé, Guadalupe Martí-Peña
- M.A., Spanish American Literature, The Pennsylvania State University** 05/2010
- B.A., Spanish & English, Washington College, Chestertown, MD** 05/2006

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Graduate Instructor** Spring 2009 – Present
Penn State University, Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese
- Visiting Instructor** Summer 2010
Bucknell University, Department of Spanish, Lewisburg, PA

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Tableaux of Family Tragedy: Rethinking Suffering in Tomás Rivera’s *...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*.” Imagining Latino/a Studies: Past, Present, & Future. Panel Title: “Reading Publics, Pedagogy, and Challenging Genre in Latino/a Literature.” Chicago, IL. (July 2014)
- “Rhetorical Trappings: Fashioning the Body in Nineteenth-Century Cuba.” Midwest Modern Language Association Convention. Panel Title: “Body Work.” Milwaukee, WI. (November 2013)
- “Madness in Elena Garro’s *Los recuerdos del porvenir*.” Carolina Conference on Romance Literatures. Panel Title: “Espejos mexicanos entre pasado y presente: lenguaje, memoria, y ambigüedad.” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Chapel Hill, NC. (March 2012)

INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SPECIALIZED STUDY

- Embedded Course for Penn State Undergraduates Summer 2015
El Centro de Estudios Martianos, Havana, Cuba
Professor Assistant
- Study Abroad Program for Penn State Undergraduates Summer 2015
Universidad Iberoamericana, Puebla, Mexico
Graduate Assistant
- El Centro de Estudios Martianos, Havana, Cuba Summer 2014
Dissertation Research
- El Colegio de Jalisco, Zapopan, Mexico Summer 2009
Language and Culture of Náhuatl
- Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, Madrid, Spain Spring 2005
University Semester Abroad