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José Martí's "Nuestra América mestiza" versus Rubén Darío's "Unión Latina": A Comparison of Race Rhetoric and Foundational Thinking

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In his 1898 essay, "El triunfo de Calibán," Rubén Darío recounts his initial, firsthand impression of "esos *yankees*" during his 1893 visit to the United States, one of three brief trips he would make to New York City in a lifetime lived largely abroad (404). Darío recalls the North Americans pushing and shoving animalistically, hunting the dollar, and chasing an ideal bound by the stock market and the factory. Anguish and oppression were the dominant emotions he felt:

> Y los he visto a esos yankees, en sus abrumadoras ciudades de hierro y piedra y las horas que entre ellos he vivido las he pasado con una vaga *angustia*. Parecíame sentir la *opresión* de una montaña, sentía respirar en un país de cíclopes, comedores de carne cruda, herreros bestiales, habitadores de casas de mastodontes. Colorados, pesados, groseros, van por sus calles empujándose y rozándose animalmente, a la caza del dollar. El ideal de esos calibanes está circunscrito a la bolsa y a la fábrica. ("El triunfo" 404, emphasis added)

This initial trip to New York City did have one memorable highlight, however, which occurred on May 24, 1893, when Darío met José Martí. Darío describes their sole encounter in Harman Hall: "en un cuarto lleno de luz, me encontré entre los brazos de un hombre pequeño de cuerpo, rostro de iluminado, voz dulce y dominadora al mismo tiempo y me decía esta única palabra: ¡Hijo!" (*Obras completas* I, 99). Darío speaks reverently of Martí in "El triunfo de Calibán," calling him "el padre de Cuba libre" and

praising his "alma [. . .] previsora" (406). Darío also recalls the ways in which Martí "no cesó nunca de predicar a *las naciones de su sangre* que tuviesen cuidado con aquellos hombres de rapiña, que no mirasen en *esos acercamientos y cosas panamericanas*, sino la añagaza y la trampa de los comerciantes de la *yankería*," and asks the provocative question: "¿Qué diría hoy el cubano al ver que su color de ayuda para la ansiada Perla, el monstruo se la traga con ostra y todo?" ("El triunfo" 406, emphasis added). Clearly referencing Martí's famous claim with regard to the United States—"Viví en el monstruo, y le conozco las entrañas"—, Darío positions himself as the heir to Martí's thinking, the ideological "hijo" of "el padre de Cuba libre" ("Carta a Manuel Mercado").[1] Moreover, he seemingly answers his own question by suggesting that Martí would say ("diría") exactly what he himself says in this essay, namely that Americans and Europeans of the "Latin race" should join together and prepare "la defensa" against the United States and Great Britain (Darío, "El triunfo" 409).

What interests me about Darío's "El triunfo de Calibán" is its obvious indebtedness to Martí on the one hand, and its radical departure from Martí's views on the construction of "nuestra América mestiza" on the other. In the comparison that follows, I examine various ideological differences that separate Darío's call for "la Unión latina" in "El triunfo de Calibán" with Martí's vision of "nuestra América" in his famous 1891 essay of that name. I argue that Darío's use of the term "la Unión latina" strives to foster a Pan-Latin identity that links the Latin American region to its "Latin" ancestry in Europe and pits them against the United States and Britain, while Martí's call for a unified continent and a Pan-Hispanic-American[2] ideal aims to distance the burgeoning Latin American nations from *both* their European forebears and the giant nation to the north. Thus, despite Darío's apparent desire to establish himself as heir to Martí's lifelong struggle for Latin American regional autonomy, careful readers of Martí would undoubtedly recognize the fact that the Cuban freedom fighter did not—and would not—trace "las naciones de su sangre" back to Europe in general or Spain in particular, as Darío does, precisely because his vision was Pan-Hispanic American as opposed to Pan-Latin ("El triunfo" 406). Darío and Martí espouse

[1] Martí makes this statement in a letter to Manuel Mercado dated May 18, 1895. This declaration can be interpreted either to mean simply that Martí knew the United States' inner workings well as a result of his direct familiarity with that nation over fifteen years of exile there, or that Martí considered the U.S.'s need for aggrandizement and its threat of annexation to be monstruous.

[2] I employ the term "Pan-Hispanic American" to describe Martí's stance and to differentiate it from the notion of "Pan-American," namely because the latter term is frequently understood by Latin Americans to encompass only "North American" interests and aims.

strikingly different viewpoints with regard to race and origin and to colonialism and imperialism, and this is precisely what the ensuing comparison of these authors and their specific texts aims to demonstrate.

Although my focus will be primarily on the distinctions between these two authors, it is worth considering that scholars have frequently noted the influence of Martí on Darío. Osvaldo Bazil purports that "[s]in Martí no hay Rubén" (481). Juan Ramón Jiménez insists that "Darío le debía mucho [a Martí]" (32). Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi writes that Darío's ideas contain, "sin dudas, la huella de Martí" (25). Alberto Gutiérrez de la Solana agrees that "la huella de la prosa martiana quedó plasmada en la prosa [de Darío]" (14). Max Henríquez Ureña likewise contends that "la huella de Martí se encuentra a cada paso, persistente y multiforme, en la prosa de Darío" (102). Alejandro González Acosta notes also that "[l]a presencia martiana en Darío fue sobradamente evidente y confesada en múltiples ocasiones" (188).

In spite of the striking similarities in the comments cited above, scholars often diverge with regard to the question of whether Martí's influence on Darío was strictly aesthetic and formal or whether it was also political and ideological. According to Gutiérrez de la Solana, for example, "Rubén Darío, que era antes que nada un poeta de excepcional sensibilidad, lloró más la muerte del Martí hombre de letras y de pensamiento que la del Martí político. Lamentó su pérdida para la Humanidad, para el porvenir de América, para el Arte" (22). González Acosta, on the other hand, disagrees with the notion that Darío was only aesthetically indebted to Martí and argues instead that the Nicaraguan *modernista*, "amante de princesas hermosas y remotas, de palacios exquisitos y de todo el refinamiento de un auténtico *connaisseur*, también mostró—faceta poco conocida y demasiadas veces hurtada—un sentimiento especial hacia los Estados Unidos" that parallels Martí's concern with "la peligrosa cercanía e inquietante voracidad de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica y su explícito interés en engullir a las jóvenes repúblicas" (175). Ivan A. Schulman and Manuel Pedro González in their book-length study *Martí, Darío y el modernismo* locate an important evolution in the changing influence of Martí on Darío. "Hacia el final de su vida," they contend, "las menciones de Martí [en la obra de Darío] no desaparecen; pero, en lugar del modelo artístico que le había fascinado durante su juventud y en los años de plena madurez, ahora será el del apóstol, del defensor de la libertad cubana y continental el que lo atrae" (Schulman and González 216). There are certainly works such as Darío's *Prosa política* that recognize the contributions of Martí "en ambos campos"—the political and the poetic, as Darío insists that the Cuban freedom fighter possesses "las virtudes más altas del patriotismo

libertador y las dotes más puras de la oratoria, de la poesía y de la prosa caudales." Poetic and patriotic, aesthetically pure and socially-engaged—Darío praises Martí's combination of the spheres of art and life. Similarly, when speaking of Martí's death, Darío insists that Martí gave "su vida preciosa para la Humanidad y para el Arte y para el verdadero triunfo futuro de América," thereby emphasizing the aesthetic and the sociopolitical ("José Martí" 13). Despite Darío's praise of Martí's "patriotismo heroico" and of his vision of "el verdadero triunfo futuro de América," however, the Nicaraguan poet espouses significantly different political views than his Cuban precursor, and it is to these differences that I shall now turn ("José Martí" 57, 13).

I. Martí's "nuestra América mestiza"

In his call for the unification and preparation of "nuestra América mestiza," the Cuban liberator predicts that "los hombres nuevos americanos" will bring about "la unión tácita y urgente del alma continental" ("Nuestra América" 387, 390, 393). This combination of the terms "mestiz[o]," "nuevos americanos," "union," and "alma continental" invites a detailed consideration of Martí's views on race and origin as they relate to conceptions of identity and autonomy for the Latin American region. Martí staunchly declares in "Nuestra América" that "[n]o hay odio de razas, porque no hay razas" (392). He elaborates on this notion in his 1893 essay "Mi raza," when he argues:

> El hombre no tiene ningún derecho especial porque pertenezca a una raza o a otra: dígase hombre, y ya se dicen todos los derechos. El negro, por negro, no es inferior ni superior a ningún otro hombre; peca por redundante el blanco que dice: "Mi raza"; peca por redundante el negro que dice: "Mi raza". Todo lo que divide a los hombres, todo lo que especifica, aparta o acorrala es un pecado contra la humanidad.

Using a strikingly similar rhetoric in his 1894 essay "La verdad sobre los Estados Unidos," Martí tackles the subject of the "Latin" and "Anglo-Saxon" races. "No hay razas," he argues again,

> no hay más que modificaciones diversas del hombre, en los detalles de hábito y forma que no les cambian lo idéntico y esencial, según las condiciones de clima e historia en que viva [. . . ;] el egoísta sajón y el egoísta latino, el sajón generoso o el latino generoso, el latino burómano o el burómano sajón: de virtudes y defectos son capaces por igual latinos y sajones.

In all three passages cited here, Martí aims to erase racial distinctions, even if he is willing to allow for differences based on character and circumstance. His substitution of "negro" and "blanco" in the former essays with "sajón" and "latino" in the latter

essay points to an interesting development in his colorblind or anti-race theory, which involves anti-foundational or anti-origin thinking as well.

It is worth asking whether Martí wants to transcend racial categorization and division for its inherent humanism or for the sake of uniting diverse colonial Cubans against their oppressors. In "Fuentes y raíces del pensamiento antimperialista de José Martí," Juan Marinello contends that Martí's defense of unity, liberty, and justice involves both "[l]a apasionada defensa del indio americano" and "[el] ataque al prejuicio racial" (9, 11). Marinello outlines the life experiences that led Martí to reject racial oppression both for its inherent dehumanization and for being an instrument of colonialism and imperialism:

> En sus años mozos—México, Gautemala . . . —, le nació el amor doloroso de las gentes indígenas y mestizas de su América. En su isla natal y en el andar presuroso de sus días penúltimos, conoció la vida subalterna, cercada de prejuicios, exclusiones de desvíos, del negro antillano. Cuando en su rica madurez neoyorquina ofrece Martí el contorno y la entraña de la realidad estadounidense, le acompaña, en el recuerdo desvelado, la imagen de sus países agredidos, con sus minorías rapaces y sus mayorías miserables. (7-8)

Yet contemporary scholars—clearly influenced by recent developments in the field of critical race theory—increasingly tend to critique Martí for his color-blind position and his anti-race thinking, finding suspect motives beneath the seemingly humanitarian surface. Let us pause here to summarize the leading arguments in this regard, since they will prove crucial to flushing out the similarities and differences between Martí and Darío in terms of their conceptions and treatment of race and origin thinking.

In "Hybridity as Political Strategy in the Southern Chronicles of José Martí," Britton W. Newman offers an "analysis of race" in Martí's Southern chronicles and his famous essays "Nuestra América" and "Mi raza" (545). Newman argues that "the Southern chronicles are part of a conscious strategy to modernize Cuban society through racial integration, a strategy that draws upon a particular conceptualization of hybridity," whereas "Nuestra América" and "Mi raza" assert that "race does not exist" and that the "superficial difference" of skin color "does not speak to any difference in the essence of people" (546-47). Newman rightly interprets Martí's "desire for a race-blind society in Cuba" in the later essays as part of his "goal of achieving independence" insofar as "unity around a common purpose is the supreme goal" (560, 547). Yet such "human mixing," Newman argues, is "more of a cultural hybridity, a coming together on equal footing, than a genetic mixture" or "miscegenation" (548). Hoping to "resolve divisions by erasing race," Martí "builds an image—a fiction, we might say—of

hybridity" that in no way suggests "genetic intermingling to form a single race" (547, 559, 560). This is significant for our purposes, then, because it suggests a cultural "mestizaje" rather than a racial one.

Kevin Meehan and Paul B. Miller make a similar argument in "Martí, Schomburg y la cuestión racial en las Américas." They insist that Martí espouses a concept of identity that was "mestiza, multicultural o híbrida," but also explain that although "los afroamericanos forman parte de su comunidad imaginada en 'Nuestra América', [. . .] la articulación tiende a marginar su negritud" (Meehan and Miller 73). Not only did Martí aim to transcend "las divisiones raciales a través de un discurso de humanismo universal," but his "panamericanismo," Meehan and Miller assert, is marked by the apparent absence of "panafricanismo" insofar as "Martí escogió la palabra 'mestizo', no 'mulato' para describir la hibridez cultural de 'Nuestra América'"—pointing to a notion of "unificación cultural" instead of "solidaridad [racial]" (77, 81).

Jorge Camacho, in "'Signo de propiedad': etnografía, raza y reconocimiento en José Martí," locates "dos momentos en la obra de Martí: uno de alrededor de 1886 en que publica este artículo sobre el terremoto de Charleston, y otro posterior, de la década de 1890, cuando publica sus ensayos más famosos" (77). Camacho argues that the former moment reveals Martí's support of "los discursos fuertes de la ciencia decimonónica sobre la raza, la herencia y la psicología de los negros," specifically his traditional beliefs "en las diferencias raciales, en la superioridad de una de ellas, en el poder que ejerce el calor sobre la sangre de los negros, y en la fuerza fatal de la herencia africana" ("Signo", 77, 82-83). He then argues that while the latter moment marked by his famous essays purportedly aims to combat "todo tipo de racismo" and to present Martí's "posición anti-racista," the truth is that "ese 'segundo momento' coincide con su preparación de la guerra de independencia en Cuba y por tanto siempre cabe la sospecha de que el cubano no solo no dejó de pensar de esta forma, sino que su silencio sobre las diferencias raciales tenía un fin estratégico" (82, 77-8). Camacho thus suggests that Martí's anti-race and anti-racist viewpoint in "Nuestra América" and "Mi raza" "fue solo producto de un ardid político para ganarse a los negros en vista de la guerra independentista, predicar un país posible después de la guerra, y lograr los objetivos políticos que él perseguía en una Cuba postcolonial" (82).

That which Newman terms "a fiction" and Camacho terms "a political ruse" ("ardid político") is also deemed "problematic" by Charles Hatfield, who likewise argues in "The Limits of 'Nuestra América'" that Martí "came to believe that anti-

racism was essential to the success of the independence movement" and that the "repudiation of race" was also "necessary inasmuch as Cuba's struggle for independence was hampered by the failure to reconcile Cuba's multiracial population to the idea of a Cuban nation" (193, 194). According to Hatfield, Martí "produces a concept of culture" to take "the place of race" insofar as his "historically determined concept of culture depends on race" and "exchanges racial normativity for cultural normativity grounded in biological race" (193). Hatfield sums up Martí's "new way of framing difference":

> Martí's new language of national identity [. . .] denies the very grounds on which the question of Cuba's racial composition might be posed in favor of an all-inclusive *Cubanidad* constituted not by identity (black or white or mulatto) but instead by ideology (what you believe and whether or not you support Cuba's cause for independence). By making *Cubanidad* the only meaningful identity, and by making the substance of the identity purely a matter of ideology, Martí effectively disempowered the racial fears that had impeded a unified multiracial Cuban independence movement. (194-95)

Thus, "[b]y recasting the struggle for independence as a conflict of ideologies and not identities," Martí replaces "bodies with ideologies" in the "constitution of identity" (195). Miguel Gualdrón Ramírez makes a similar claim in "Resistance and Expanse in Nuestra América: José Martí, with Éduard Glissant and Gloria Anzaldúa," when he states that Martí establishes a "unity" based not "on a myth of collective kinship," but rather "the construction of a notion of shared collectivity that does not come from the common identity of its peoples, but perhaps from a shared experience of domination" (24, 15).

In "Undoing 'Race': Martí's Historical Predicament," Ofelia Schutte rightly notes that "Martí's position on race" has led to "two kinds of concerns" from contemporary critics (101). The first criticism, Schutte explains, is centered around the idea that "Martí's position is due to sheer political motivations, in which case they see it as instrumental reasoning aimed at gaining political power" and thus lacking "a clear philosophical foundation" (101). The second critique posits that Martí did not recognize that "racial distinctions are necessary to overcome racism and that any view requiring the elimination of such distinctions is racist in itself," since "rejecting the idea of race [. . .] worsen[s] rather than improve[s] the path to social justice" (102, 105). Still, Schutte locates a significant component to Martí's anti-race rhetoric insofar as he "tears to pieces one of the key premises of colonial rule, namely, the notion of race as a category of social classification used to legitimate the colonizers' supremacy over indigenous and African-descendant populations, whose labor they exploited through

slavery and other dehumanizing social mechanisms" (103). She thus celebrates the ways in which "Martí exposed Eurocentrism along with the category of race as a non-natural, artificial way of thinking that needed to be overridden" (105).

To summarize the shared line of argumentation found in the scholars cited in the previous five paragraphs, the anti-race and anti-racist rhetoric behind Martí's call for "Nuestra América mestiza" is fueled by his desire for unification and his pragmatic need for "la marcha unida" in the fight for Cuban independence from Spain ("Nuestra América" 388). Martí's ideal subject is indeed an amalgamation of the three oppressed groups—"El indio [. . .] El negro [. . .] El campesino"—who together must fight for the colony's independence from Spain and for the region's autonomy with regard to both Europe and the United States ("Nuestra América" 389). This idea of a "shared collectivity"—based not on origin, lineage, or race, but rather on the communal experience of colonial oppression and the common culture of hybridity—links Martí's anti-race rhetoric with his anti-foundationalist rhetoric, and is a key step in what Hatfield calls Martí's desire "to build a distinct, autochthonous national culture" (201).

I now wish to examine how Martí's rhetorical efforts to overlook the actual origins of peoples of indigenous, European, and African descent—which he achieves by erasing race in terms of blacks and whites and erasing origin in terms of Latins and Anglo-Saxons—is exactly what allows him to posit an autonomous and autochthonous identity for the "mestizo" Latin American region. Upon eradicating race as a defining factor and eliminating any real or true origin, Martí goes on to create a myth of autochthony that is linked to the goal of autonomy and integrated into both an anti-colonial and anti-imperial discourse.[3] Consider Martí's description of the construction of "la civilización americana" in "Los códigos nuevos" (1877):

> Interrumpida por la conquista la obra natural y majestuosa de la civilización americana, se creó con el advenimiento de los europeos un pueblo extraño, no español, porque la savia nueva rechaza el cuerpo viejo; no indígena, porque se ha sufrido la ingerencia de una civilización devastora, dos palabras que, siendo un antagonismo, constituyen un proceso; se creó un pueblo mestizo en la forma que, con la reconquista de su libertad, desenvuelve y restaura su alma propia. (98)

Martí goes on to refer to the mestizo people as "nosotros" and as "una raza original," ending with the exclamation: "¡Al fin se es americano en América!" ("Los códigos" 98,

[3] See Laura Lomas' "'El negro es tan capaz como el blanco': José Martí, 'Pachín' Marín, Lucy Parsons, and the Politics of Late Nineteenth-Century Latinidad" for an analysis of how "anti-racism became an ethos of organized, self-conscious Hispanic Caribbean migrant communities" (302).

102). Neither indigenous nor Spanish in origin, Martí's American "race" or "people" is "original" insofar as the hybrid identity is purported as new, native, natural, and autochthonous, even if it is the direct product of conquest, migration, slavery, miscegenation, etc.

Martí re-envisions his America not as a land of imported or misplaced ideas, but rather as an autochthonous and autonomous region. Throughout "Nuestra América," he critiques his Latin American contemporaries for being "una máscara, con los calzones de Inglaterra, el chaleco parisiense, el chaquetón de Norteamérica y la montera de España," thus showing equal preoccupation with European and North American influences ("Nuestra América" 391-92, 389). Martí insists that the region suffers as a result of "leyes heredadas de cuatro siglos de práctica libre en los Estados Unidos, de diecinueve siglos de monarquía en Francia" (384). Imitation of any kind is rejected by Martí—be it from Europe or the United States—, namely on account of his conviction that "el buen gobernante en América no es el que sabe cómo se gobierna el alemán o el francés, sino el que sabe con qué elementos está hecho su país" (384-85). Gerard Aching rightly asserts that for Martí, "the region's 'enigma' arises [. . .] because political, commercial, and intellectual leaders in the new republics locate the modern in European and North American metropolises and compulsively imitate the epistemologies, theories, policies, fashion, art, and literature that 'originate' there" (151). Martí disdains the region's reliance on goods manufactured abroad, its dependence on ideas generated overseas, and its penchant for imitation of the foreign.

Martí's call for an authentic and autochthonous regional identity in terms of self-governance and politics is coupled with a desire for cultural independence as well. Martí argues that "[n]i el libro europeo, ni el libro yanqui, daban la clave del enigma hispanoamericano," but only serve to stunt the region's growth as a result of "la importación excesiva de las ideas y fórmulas ajenas" ("Nuestra América" 389, 388). In "La verdad sobre los Estados Unidos," Martí complains of what he terms "yanquimanía" and laments that for so many Latin Americans there does not seem to be "elegancia mayor que la de beberle al extranjero los pantalones y las ideas." According to Martí, it is up to the younger generation ("[l]os jóvenes de América") to realize that "se imita demasiado" and that "la salvación está en crear" ("Nuestra América" 390). For this reason, he prescribes the following changes for his America: "La universidad europea ha de ceder a la universidad americana. La historia de América, de los incas acá, ha de enseñarse al dedillo, aunque no se enseñe la de los arcontes de Grecia. Nuestra Grecia es preferible a la Grecia que no es nuestra. Nos es más necesaria.

Los políticos nacionales han de reemplazar a los políticos exóticos" (386). Only then, he explains, will the thought and the ideas begin to come from "América" (390). In yet another instance in "Nuestra América," Martí further comments on the proper relation between the local and the foreign when he demands: "Injértese en nuestras Repúblicas el mundo; pero el tronco ha de ser el de nuestras Repúblicas" (386). The core, the center, the origin need to be local and autochthonous, not foreign or exotic. Martí also praises the triumph of nature and the natural man: "el libro importado ha sido vencido en América por el hombre natural. Los hombres naturales han vencido a los letrados artificiales. El mestizo autóctono ha vencido al criollo exótico. No hay batalla entre la civilización y la barbarie, sino entre la falsa erudición y la naturaleza" (385). Here he identifies the natural man with the "native" or "autochthonous" *mestizo* who triumphs over the "alien" or "exotic," pure-blooded *criollo*. This is possible specifically because the natural man possesses local knowledge and serves to negate the "false erudition" that led leaders such as Sarmiento to define the progress of the Latin American region in terms of a struggle between civilization and barbarism, between European cosmopolitanism and Latin American backwardness.

The origin of Martí's "América" begins with hybridity and originates in Latin America. Yet whereas Martí refuses to acknowledge differences between blacks and whites or between Latins and Anglo-Saxons, he does admit difference when he juxtaposes two distinct groups in "Honduras y los extranjeros," an essay published in *Patria* on December 15, 1894. Namely, a contrast between "dos pueblos [. . .] de alma muy diversa por los orígenes, antecedentes y costumbres, y sólo semejantes en la identidad fundamental humana. De un lado está nuestra América, y todos sus pueblos son de una naturaleza, y de cuna parecida o igual, e igual mezcla imperante, de la otra parte está la América que no es nuestra" (qtd. in Estrade 601). The idea of "cuna parecida o igual" establishes a common origin or lineage for Martí's América; the birth from this "cradle" originates with the mixing, not beforehand, and thus removes Europe or Africa as the foundation, and recasts "nuestra América" as the birthplace. Unlike his previous desire to eliminate racial differences in "Nuestra América," "Mi raza," and "La verdad sobre los Estados Unidos," Martí here insists on fundamental differences between "our America" and the other America that is not ours: the former "es aquel que da hombres generosos y mujeres puras," while the latter "es aquel en que una riqueza desigual y desenfrenada produce hombres crudos y sórdidos, y mujeres venales y egoístas" (qtd. in Estrade 601). Martí wants simultaneously to free Cuba from the fetters of Spanish rule and to prevent U.S. annexation of the island. He thus

considers all overseas alliances—either with Spain or with the United States—an impediment to independence and to both national and regional autonomy. In "José Martí: Del anticolonialismo al antimperialismo," Roberto Fernández Retamar calls Martí "el primer antiimperialista cabal de nuestras tierras," and insists that on account of "aquel nuevo capítulo de la Guerra independentista," Martí "ya no podría enfrentarse sólo al destartalado colonialismo español, sino también, inevitablemente, al naciente imperialismo estadounidense" (2, 5). Similarly, in "Forma y pensamiento en José Martí," Fernández Retamar explains how Martí worked to prepare "una guerra en Cuba que sería tanto contra el arcaico Imperio español como contra el flamante Imperio estadounidense" (36). Given his position against both Spain and the U.S., Martí warns in "Nuestra América": "Estos tiempos no son para acostarse con el pañuelo en la cabeza, sino con las armas en la almohada, [. . .] las armas del juicio, que vencen a las otras" (382). These weapons of justice will be essential for "la marcha unida" in which the oppressed inhabitants of Cuba (blacks, whites, and natives) "hace[n] una causa común, para afianzar el sistema opuesto a los intereses y hábitos de mando de los opresores" (388). Ultimately, then, Martí's anti-race and anti-origin rhetoric is tied to both his anti-colonial and anti-imperial missions.[4]

II. Darío's "Unión latina"

In what may at first appear to be very similar discourse, Darío speaks of "la Unión latina" and insists that "la raza nuestra debiera unirse" against the United States, a nation that looks at its southern neighbors "como a seres inferiores" ("El triunfo" 407, 408, 405). Yet Darío aims to affirm a unified identity via the reconnection of the Latin American region with its European—i.e., Latin, not Anglo-Saxon—roots. When calling for those of "nuestra raza" to prepare the defense against U.S. aggression and annexation, Darío offers a curious picture of that collective race insofar as he focuses primarily on its European ancestry (405). For him, it is *our race*, not *our America*. The Nicaraguan poet makes several references to blood ties and "la sangre latina," purporting that "las naciones de su sangre" share "la oleada de sangre" that connects Latin America to its Latin roots in Europe (404, 405, 407). Martí too mentions "la sangre natural del país" that runs "por las venas," although his essay speaks of the shared blood of new American men ("Nuestra América" 390). A similar distinction

[4] For more on Martí's views on race, see Anne Fountain's *José Martí, the United States, and Race*, especially Chapter 2: "Martí and Race, an Overview."

between these two thinkers occurs when Darío mentions "la antigua semilla [de Europa, que] se fecunda, y prepara en la savia vital, la futura grandeza de nuestra raza" ("El triunfo" 408). Martí also speaks of a seed and its future offshoots in his essay, but his is "la semilla de la América nueva" which is American rather than European, new rather than old ("Nuestra América" 393). Darío does not trace his ancient seed back to the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas nor to the exogenous Africans who now populate the region, but rather to the European continent. In this section, I will examine Darío's ideas on race and origin as well as his anti-imperial (but not anti-colonial) rhetoric.

It is certainly revealing that Darío, in "Palabras liminares," the prologue to *Prosas profanas* (1896), reflects: "¿Hay en mi sangre alguna gota de sangre de África, o de indio chorotega o nagrandano? Pudiera ser, a despecho de mis manos de marqués: más he aquí que veréis en mis versos princesas, reyes, cosas imperiales, visiones de países lejanos o imposibles: ¡qué queréis!, yo detesto la vida y el tiempo en que me tocó nacer" (48). As Gerard Aching notes in his reading of this famous passage, Darío uses aristocratic imaginary to show his preference for "cosmopolitanism over Spanish American autochthony" (153). He also manages to evade the issue of his own racial ancestry altogether, which is a recurrent strategy in Darío's writing.

According to Jorge Camacho in "José Martí y Rubén Darío ante la anexión de los territorios indígenas en Argentina y Nicaragua," Darío "trataba de alejarse de estas realidades mestizas, indígenas o mulatas" y "veía con marcada ansiedad la heterogeneidad racial del continente" (12). Thus, whereas Martí's anti-race rhetoric coincides with his anti-foundationalist rhetoric and functions together as part of his call for an autonomous and autochthonous "mestizo" nation and region, Darío ignores the reality of racial hybridity in favor of a whitening ideology that replaces nativeness and blackness. In "El triunfo de Calibán," Darío uses the notion of a "Latin race" as a unifying factor that allows him to exclude two of the three oppressed racial groups that Martí hopes to unite in his common cause, namely the natives and the blacks. (No doubt, Darío would also exclude "los campesinos," given his elitist and cosmopolitan attitude, his Sarmiento-inspired position on the need to urbanize and modernize the "barbaric" or "backward" countryside.) Marcelo Sanhueza agrees that Darío, with his "lugar de enunciación eurocentrado," shows "un significativo silencio sobre las culturas subalternizadas (pueblos originarios y afrodescendientes principalmente) que conforman el continente americano" (303, 314). Darío's version of Latin American genealogy as European in origin—and not indigenous, autochthonous, or mestizo—

thus originates on the opposite side of the Atlantic. In "La intervención de Estados Unidos en la guerra de Cuba: La lectura panlatinista de Rubén Darío," José María Martínez explains that Darío's "filoespañolismo" combined with his "panlatinismo" lead him to propose "el sentimiento de fraternidad entre las naciones latina de ambos lados del Atlántico" and to promote "una unidad más intensa entre las naciones heredadas de la tradición grecolatina (Grecia, Italia, Francia, España, Portugal y los países iberoamericanos), cimentada en sus comunes vínculos biológicos y culturales" (195-197).

Curiously enough, Darío finds justification and support for his definition of the Latin race via recourse to Martí: "[Y]o que he sido partidario de Cuba libre, siquiera fuese por acompañar en su sueño a tanto soñador y en su heroísmo a tanto mártir [es decir, a Martí], soy amigo de España en el instante en que la miro agredida por un enemigo brutal, que lleva como enseña la violencia, la fuerza y la injusticia" ("El triunfo" 409). Pitting himself against the United States (and, to a lesser extent, its former empire Great Britain), Darío first expresses his desire to accompany Martí in the fight for a free Cuba, but then offers an explanation for his seemingly contradictory friendship with Spain, something Martí himself rejected. In addition to being "amigo de España," Darío further suggests that France too should "estar de parte de España" in a united front of the Latin races against the United States and Great Britain, so as to prevent the day in which "los Estados Unidos e Inglaterra sean dueños del mundo" ("El triunfo" 409, 407, 408). We see additional evidence of Darío's desire to include France as well as Italy in his conception of the Latin race when he discusses his reaction to the three speakers at "el Congreso panamericano" held at La Victoria Theater in Buenos Aires under the sponsorship of the *Club Español* on May 2, 1898 ("El triunfo" 405). Darío names "tres hombres representativos de *nuestra raza*" that filled his soul with happiness when they protested "la agresión del *yankee* contra la hidalga y hoy agobiada España" and communicated "la urgencia de trabajar y luchar porque *la Unión latina* no siga siendo una fatamorgana del reino de Utopía" (405, 407, emphasis added). These representatives of three great nations of the "raza latina" include the Argentine Roque Saenz Peña, the Frenchman Paul Groussac, and the Italian José Tarnassi (407). Through Darío's praise of these men and their common cause, we see evidence of González Acosta's rightful claim that "el ánimo latinoamericano de Darío [. . .] convivió parejamente con su europeísmo fervoroso" (188-9). Thus, while Darío may call himself "un hijo de América," it is equally significant that he considers himself "un nieto de España" ("Los cisnes" 119). In 1882, Martí too had proudly declared himself "hijo de

América" and, in a letter to Fausto Teodoro de Aldrey, he reiterates the notion—"De América soy hijo: a ella me debo"—but he would have staunchly rejected the label "nieto de España," despite his actual lineage (*Epistolario* 72).

Whereas Darío, in "El crepúsculo de España," explains that his "simpatías han estado de parte de esa ilustre monarquía empobrecida y caída," namely Spain, and that his "antipatías de parte de esa democracia rubicunda, que abusa de su cuerpo apoplético y de su ciclópeo apetito," namely the United States, Martí would see dangers for his "América" as originating in and stemming from both Spain and the United States (167). Martí felt that the time had come for the Latin American region to declare its "segunda independencia" from the United States, which he terms "la América europea" (qtd. in Estrade 591). Darío, however, would not use the adjective European in conjunction with the United States; he wants only this second independence insofar as the ties to Europe are not merely acceptable, but actually desirable to him. For Darío, "la diferencia y el contraste [son] entre lo sajón y lo latino, entre Nueva York y París," which is quite different from Martí's rejection of both European and North American influence (González Acosta 195). In contradistinction to Martí, Darío also promotes the imitation and emulation of the European sources from which Latin American writers might take their inspiration. He insists that the Spanish nation that he defends "se llama Hidalguía, Ideal, Nobleza; se llama Cervantes, Quevedo, Góngora, Gracián, Velázquez; se llama el Cid, Loyola, Isabel; se llama la Hija de Roma, la Hermana de Francia, la Madre de América" ("El triunfo" 409). This complex statement links national and literary identity at the same time that it once again highlights the importance of "Latin" roots in Spain, Italy, and France, the mother-nations of the American subcontinent. According to Darío, it is the United States that copies: "En el arte, en la ciencia, todo lo imitan y lo contrahacen" (405). The contradiction inherent in he himself advocating the imitation of the greatness of Spain, France, and Italy seemingly goes unnoticed by Darío, who contends in his eulogistic essay "José Martí": "Somos [los americanos] muy pobres . . . Tan pobres, que nuestros espíritus, si no viniese el alimento extranjero, se morirán de hambre" (11). The perceived need for this "alimento extranjero" is exactly what troubles Martí, even if it is what Darío promotes in an essay named after him.

Darío remains caught up in the Sarmiento-inspired struggle between civilization and barbarism, although he puts this dichotomy to use in two distinct ways. Darío echoes Sarmiento's pro-immigrant and pro-whitening strategies when he argues in "Páginas de honor" that his native Nicaragua lacks "progreso hispanoamericano" on

account of "razones étnicas y geográficas [. . .] y por falta de esa transfusión inmigratoria que en otras naciones ha realizado prodigios" (qtd. in Camacho, "José Martí y Rubén Darío" 11). According to Miguel Gomes in "Raza y fantasía: Las ficciones del positivismo," Darío divulges "muchas de las opiniones de la raciología en boga" across Latin America at the time, which included the notions that "un blanqueamiento normativo" would lead to "progreso" and that "lo no blanco o lo no suficientemente blanqueado era fuente de horror" (56, 42, 62). Víctor Manuel Ramos agrees in "Rubén Darío: las repúblicas americanas" that Darío "[c]onsidera que nuestros países deben ser colonizados por migrantes, sobre todo procedentes de Europa, porque cree que ellos traerán a nuestros países el desarrollo cultural y económico" (166). This same idea is present in "El triunfo de Calibán" when Darío longs for "un vasto soplo cosmopolita" to come from Europe to the Americas "que ayudará a vigorizar la selva propia" (408). According to Darío, then, it is the European metropolis that will invigorate the American jungle and help the fledgling nations to thrive. He unmistakably prefers "erudition" to "nature," in direct contrast to Martí.

Darío also employs the civilization-barbarism binary in a new way in "El triunfo de Calibán." To further demonstrate his predilection for (Latin) Europe and his disdain for the (Saxon) United States, Darío employs a metaphor based on the antipodal characters from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as his essay's title suggests.[5] He reinforces an animalistic or barbaric image of the United States throughout the essay, likening the aggressive and threatening nation to "búfalos de dientes de plata," "enormes niños salvajes," "la gran Bestia," "estupendos gorilas colorados," and "monstruo[s]" that possess "mandíbulas de boa [. . .] tentáculos de ferrocarriles, brazos de hierro, bocas absorbentes" ("El triunfo" 404-409). He also uses beastly descriptions in his characterization of New York City as "la sanguínea, la ciclópea, la monstruosa, la tormentosa, la irresistible capital del cheque" ("Prólogo de Rubén Darío"). Darío

[5] "El triunfo de Calibán" was first published on May 20, 1898, in the Buenos Aires periodical *El Tiempo* and then again on October 1, 1898, in the Caracas newspaper *El Cojo Ilustrado*. On May 2, 1898, at an event Darío attended at La Victoria Theater in Buenos Aires, Paul Groussac discussed "el espíritu *yankee* del cuerpo informe y 'calibanesco'" (qtd. in Jáuregui 442). Although Darío's essay may have been inspired by Groussac's comment, it is important to note that Darío made reference to Caliban four years earlier in his prologue to *Edgar Allan Poe. Poemas* in which he states that "Calibán reina en la isla de Manhattan, en San Francisco, en Boston, en Washington, en todo el país." Darío's "El triunfo de Calibán" was likely inspired by Ernest Ranon's 1878 essay "Caliban." Finally, Darío's essay predates by two years the Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó's 1900 publication *Ariel*, which revisits the Ariel/Caliban dichotomy to represent in a similar manner the extremes of a "spiritual" Latin America vis-à-vis a "material" United States.

critiques the United States—the enemy, the barbarian, the figure of Caliban—for its voracious hunger and materialism as well as for its bullying and destructive ways. Placing himself in the position of Miranda, he exclaims: "¡Miranda preferirá siempre a Ariel; Miranda es la gracia del espíritu; y todas las montañas de piedras, de hierros, de oros y de tocinos, no bastarán para que mi alma latina se prostituya a Calibán!" ("El triunfo" 409). To associate or align oneself with the mountains, rocks, and minerals—all symbols of nature, albeit in a potentially exploitable form—is akin to prostitution for Darío. He prefers culture over nature, the spiritual over the material, the civilized over the barbaric, which is why he insists: "No, no puedo estar de parte de ellos, no puedo estar por el triunfo de Calibán" ("El triunfo" 405). Caliban, as Carlos Fernando Hudson accurately explains in "Tras la pista de Próspero: Americanismo y antinorteamericanismo en el modernismo latinoamericano," is the name chosen to designate the oppressor: "Calibán simboliza el utilitarianismo, el materialismo, el sensualismo. No sólo está en el gobierno norteamericano, está en todo lo norteamericano." Darío also makes reference to Caliban in his essay on "Edgar Allan Poe" from the series *Los raros*. In his reading of that work, Carlos Jáuregui explains that for Darío:

> el yankee es el monstruo Calibán, un ser moralmente inferior que sucumbe al vicio de la bebida, y que reemplaza la razón con la fuerza, en contraste con Ariel que representa las alturas del espíritu; la bestia encarna el materialismo, una forma satánica del mal [. . .] vinculada al modelo norteamericano cuyas ciudades son emblemáticas de la 'civilización bárbara' (oxímoron que conjuga los extremos de la proposición de Sarmiento); Miranda aparece como un eterno femenino virginal/maternal que extiende sus brazos al idealismo "latino": y por último, las excepciones confirman la regla: Poe y Lanier (quien "se salva por la gota latina que brilla en su nombre") se baten contra—y existen a pesar de—un medio corrupto que ha quebrado la aristocracia del espíritu. (444)

It becomes clear that Sarmiento's civilization-barbarism binary finds new meaning in Darío's thinking, since Darío revises the application of these two terms: barbarism aptly describes the United States, while civilization captures the Latin nations of Spain, France, and Italy as well as their budding Latin American offspring. This distinction is further echoed in Darío's "Todo el vuelo," wherein he pits North American "Naturaleza" (i.e. barbarism) against "esa cosa tan francesa que aquí se llama buen gusto" (i.e. civilization) (*Obras completas* II, 677). If North America is civilized, Darío seems to suggest that it has a barbaric civilization that lacks refinement, high culture, and good taste.

Such divergent views between these two thinkers can be attributed in part to the fact that Darío's travels and residences throughout Europe and the Americas contrast in fundamental ways with Martí's prolonged exile from his native Cuba. Their differing positions may also be accounted for by Darío's enthusiastic participation in the literary movement of Latin American *modernismo*, with its promotion of aristocratic and aesthetic ideas from Europe, especially Paris, and an emphasis on form over content, in contrast to Martí's ambivalent attitude toward the *modernistas*' project of elitist, escapist, and largely apolitical poetics. Yet Darío's divergence stems also from the changing political climate between the United States, Spain, and Cuba between 1891 and 1898, the critical period which separates both essays. The threat of U.S. annexation of Cuba during the Spanish-American War clearly fuels much of Darío's pro-Spain rhetoric and partially explains the differences between his views and those that Martí expressed seven years earlier in "Nuestra América." It is important to remember that Darío writes "El triunfo de Calibán" in May of 1898, a month after the onset of the Spanish-American War. Whereas Martí dies fighting for Cuba's independence from Spain in 1895, Darío faces what he sees as an either/or solution to the conflict on the island: either to side with Spain and maintain colonial status for Cuba or to support the United States' intervention in, and likely annexation of, the island. Choosing the former option, Darío praises Spain and demonizes the United States. Jeff Browitt notes that Darío, "more than any other notable intellectual or artistic figure[,] was the first to change his attitude towards Spain on the political level due to the greater threat presented to Latin American integrity by the United States in a phase of aggressive expansionism" (123-24). It is significant, then, that Darío's anti-imperialist stance is not necessarily anti-colonial; he laments simultaneously the emergence of the United States as a new imperial power and the decadence of Spain as an old imperial power. In *España contemporánea* (1901), for example, Darío writes: "voy a España en una nave latina [. . .]. De nuevo en marcha, y hacia el país maternal que el alma americana—americanoespañola—ha de saludar siempre con respeto, ha de querer con cariño hondo. Porque si ya no es la antigua poderosa, la dominadora imperial, amarla el doble; y si está herida, tender a ella mucho más." This notion of an "American-Spanish" soul may place "americano" before "española," but it still advocates love, respect, and deep affection for the colonial power.

It is important to note also that the Nicaraguan poet's anti-North American stance can be traced back to an earlier work written just one year after Martí's "Nuestra América." In "Por el lado del Norte," Darío writes in March of 1892:

> Por el lado del Norte está el peligro. Por el lado del Norte es por donde anida el águila hostil. Desconfiemos, hermanos de América, desconfiamos de esos hombres de ojos azules que no nos hablan sino cuando tienen la trampa puesta. El país monstruoso y babilónico no nos quiere bien. *Si es que un día, en fiestas y pompas, nos panamericaniza y nos banquetea, ello tiene por causa un estupendo humbug. El tío Samuel es el poder legítimo de Barnum. "América para los americanos" no reza con nosotros: América para el hombre de la larga pera, del chaleco estrellado y de los pantalones a rayas* [. . .]. *Mas las dos razas jamás confraternizarán. Ellos los hijos de puritanos, los retoños del grande árbol británico, nos desdeñan en nombre de rostbeaf y del bifsteak. La raza latina para ellos es absolutamente nula.* (qtd. in Schmigalle 16-17, emphasis added)

Already we see here the use of beastly descriptions for the United States. More importantly, Darío's message in this essay mimics that of "El triunfo de Calibán" insofar as he suggests the existence of two races: one comprised of "los hijos de puritanos" and the other made of up "la raza latina." When speaking to his "hermanos de América," Darío warns that the famous slogan of Monroe—"América para los americanos"—does not include a concern for those of the Latin race and thus cautions against any faith in "la frase de Monroe" or in the pretext of Pan-American unity ("José Martí" 18).

Thus, it becomes clear that Darío's call for "la Unión latina" differs considerably from Martí's vision of "nuestra América mestiza." Jáuregui rightfully points out the overarching disparity between Martí and Darío in the two essays under consideration here, when he notes: "De la pluma de Martí obtuvo Darío el material de una lectura intensa de los Estados Unidos [. . .], pero su defensa de España en las condiciones de ese momento era un alegato contra Cuba y contra la herencia política de Martí, pese a los *golpes de pecho* al final del texto" (446). Jáuregui explains further that "la simpatía de Darío por la causa martiana es apenas sentimental," since "Darío lamenta el surgimiento del nuevo imperio, es cierto, pero no deja de llorar el fin del anterior" (447). Indeed, Darío aims to save the lost empire by uniting the Latin races and creating a trans-Atlantic union whose primary task is to prepare "la defensa" against the United States by joining those of "la raza sentimental," bringing about its "renacimiento," and proving that "[e]l sol no nos ha abandonado" ("El triunfo" 409, 408). Martí, to the contrary, longs for the end of Spanish rule and European influence as well as the curtailment of U.S. aggression and dominance, and thus calls for the ideological and political merger of all Latin Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or class status, to fight for the region's freedom and autonomy. In "Oda de Bartolomé Mitre," Darío uses the following phrase: "la América nuestra de sangre latina." This differs considerably from Martí's description of "nuestra América mestiza." With its

anti-race, anti-origin, anti-colonial, and anti-imperial message, Martí's "Nuestra América" is in direct contrast to Darío's preference for a single race (white or whitened) and origin (the Latin nations of Europe and Latin America) in the pro-colonial although still anti-imperial rhetoric of "El triunfo de Calibán."

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