

## Tracing the Ideological Line: Philosophies of the Argentine Nation from Sarmiento to Martínez Estrada

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“De eso se trata, de ser o no ser *salvaje*” (Sarmiento, *Facundo* 42).

“El triunfo del cosmopolitismo y del individualismo no puede ser sino un retardo para la civilización” (Rojas, *Blasón de plata* 155).

“La barbarie era una época, el pasado, el campo, el ejército montonero y el administrador de estancia en la Hacienda pública: la civilización era la historia, el futuro, la ciudad, la industria, la educación, la tabla fundamental del valor de las cosas. De la civilización se hizo un programa y de la barbarie se hizo un tabú” (Mártinez Estrada, *Radiografía* 345-46).

To be or not to be, as Hamlet’s line goes, is not enough. One must decide, if one *is*, what to be, how to be, where to be, who to be. This may be a decision arrived at by reason, or one based on emotions; in either case, choice or recognition of identity is made. For Domingo Faustino Sarmiento the matter was simplified, as his words above indicate, regarding the question of whether or not to be a “savage.” Yet the apparently simple dichotomy embodied in Sarmiento’s modification of Shakespeare’s phrase was of more than a little significance. To be savage or not informed not only Sarmiento’s personal philosophy, but also his vision for the Argentine nation as well as the long lasting conflict between the Federalist and Unitarian parties in the post-independence territory that would become Argentina.

In broader terms, to be or not to be savage or civilized has pitted opposed versions of nation and nationalism—ethnic versus civic—against each other since liberals’ first

attempts to create an Argentine state following the May revolution of 1810.<sup>1</sup> In order for Argentina to become a strong, civilized nation, thought Sarmiento and his fellow enlightened Unitarians, the savage Federalists, a party which included wealthy landowners and their followers (often illiterate gauchos who participated in montoneras for food, money, clothing, or were inspired by charismatic caudillos), must be educated in proper ways or eradicated.<sup>2</sup> The Federalists, for their part, also viewed their Unitarian enemies as savages. As the Argentine historian Tulio Halperín Donghi has pointed out, official Federalist documents during Juan Manuel de Rosas's years as governor of Buenos Aires (1829-32; 1835-52) carried at the top, in red letters, phrases along the lines of "Death to the savage, filthy, cowardly Unitarians."<sup>3</sup> More than just philosophical ruminations and lofty ideas with which elites infused tireless doctrines, to be savage or not had concrete consequences on the minds, hearts, and bodies of ordinary citizens. In

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<sup>1</sup> Whether to base the idea of the Argentine nation on citizenship and civic responsibilities or ethnicity and tradition has been at the center of debate on Argentine identity and the nature of the Argentine polity at least since Bernardino Rivadavia and fellow liberals attempted, unsuccessfully, to take the reins of the new republic of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata in the early 1820s. For more on this phase of the invention of nation and state, see Shumway 1-23; 81-111, and Tulio Halperín Donghi's "Argentine Counterpoint: Rise of the Nation, Rise of the State" in the forthcoming *Beyond Imagined Communities: Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, eds. John Charles Chasteen and Sara Castro-Klarén.

<sup>2</sup> Montoneras were groups of gauchos that formed at the call of a charismatic leader to fight against a rival caudillo and his company of gauchos or against soldiers acting on behalf of the state. For a look at the motivations that inspired gauchos to participate in montoneras, see Ariel de la Fuente's *Children of Facundo*, especially 94-112, and his "'Gauchos', 'montoneros' y 'montoneras'" in *Caudillismos Rioplatenses: nuevas miradas a un viejo problema*, eds. Noemí Goldman and Ricardo Salvatore. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, 1998) 267-92. John Charles Chasteen takes an innovative and exciting approach to the study of the emotional bonds between caudillos and their followers in his *Heroes on Horseback: A Life and Times of the Last Gaucho Caudillos*.

<sup>3</sup> Readers familiar with José Mármol's *Amalia*, for example, will recall the many instances Rosas and company use such words when speaking or writing about Unitarians.

short, to be or not to be savage was a question of national importance precisely because it concerned collective, national identity. It was a question that, as the writers' discussed here illustrate, set the stage for battles between opposed, often inverted, ideologies that from Sarmiento on would have a direct impact on the future national community.<sup>4</sup>

Like most ideologies, the liberal philosophy of the nation that Unitarians advocated had its mirror image, which surfaced in the mid-nineteenth century and again in the late 1890s and early 1900s, thanks in part to Ricardo Rojas. The early years of the twentieth century in Argentina were fertile ground for the spread of *nativism*, an ideology that set itself against *cosmopolitanism* and its liberal representatives. Rojas, Manuel Gálvez, Leopoldo Lugones, and others, sought to reinvigorate a “national spirit or soul” based on territory, ethnicity—Spanish and indigenous heritage—and traditions, embodied most purely in the figure of the gaucho. As Rojas' take on civilization shows, nativists inverted the liberal project, thus unknowingly paving the way for both Ezequiel Martínez Estrada's philosophy of the nation as well as more extreme right-wing conceptions of state, nation, and nationalism that fueled and followed the 1930 *golpe de estado*.

Martínez Estrada's words above, published close to a century after Sarmiento's *Facundo*, hint at the critical viewpoint he takes in *Radiografía de la Pampa*. Martínez Estrada no longer asks the question of whether or not to be savage in the same sense; that is, to be savage for him is to ignore truth, to deny “reality” in hopes of creating a better one. Put differently, Martínez Estrada criticizes the materialism that has characterized the

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<sup>4</sup> By inverted ideology I mean the mirror image of an ideology, where all the things deemed bad, negative or not ideal by one ideology are made into ideals and things that are good and positive by another ideology that follows on the heels of previous ones. In essence, reactionary ideologies, and those people who elaborate them, often take up the principles of those ideologies they oppose, spin them around, and present them in a negative light in hopes of strengthening their own case.

Argentine community experience since the 1860s. The reality of this experience must be ignored in order to return to the more spiritual, humanistic qualities associated with the nation, qualities deemed savage by late nineteenth-century liberals such as those who made up the so-called *generación del 80*. Following this line of thought, he elaborates a philosophy of the nation that is diametrically opposed to that which Sarmiento developed in the mid to late nineteenth century, but not necessarily sympathetic to the nativists' emphasis on "Argentine" tradition or Lugones' militant nationalist doctrines.

What unites Sarmiento, nativists and Martínez Estrada is that their philosophies are born out of concern for the same well-known dichotomy—civilization | barbarism—and that the ideological positions they defend are closely connected, through both the integration of this dichotomy in their visions of Argentina and in their reactions to previous or other ideologies for making the nation. More specifically, Sarmiento, Rojas, Gálvez, Lugones and Martínez Estrada deal with this dichotomy as it relates to the nineteenth-century phenomenon of *caudillismo*, the formation of collective identity and a national community, and, hence, the "condition" of the nation. Who should constitute the nation? What traditions and symbols represent the "national soul"? What vision is there for the future of Argentina? Must *caudillismo* and its twentieth-century variants be accepted as an obstacle of sorts to *progress* or tolerated as an essential part of Argentine identity? All of the writers mentioned deal with questions such as these in the elaboration of their philosophies of the nation.

While these philosophies undergo significant changes over the 100 years spanning from Sarmiento to Martínez Estrada, they are nonetheless intimately linked by the relationships of competing ideologies that were deployed during the years in question. In

nineteenth-century Argentina, for example, this point played out on many occasions, from the Mazorca's persecution of Unitarians in the 1840s to the efforts of Bartolomé Mitre and Sarmiento to do away with "gaucho blood" and the indigenous population in the 1860s and 70s. Ideologues from both the Unitarian and Federalist camps qualified enemies as savage or barbaric in such a way that served as a pivot point on which the one ideology could easily spin and mirror the other. Nativists and cosmopolitans saw each other in the same light in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, each group claiming that the other's plans for Argentina would lead down the wrong road. The nationalists that gained a foothold in the 1930s took the ideological reaction to the liberal project to another level, bringing military force (which liberals after Rosas made much use of to implement their national vision) back into the game. Either way the coin landed, on one ideological side or the other, the somewhat abstract philosophical differences in the idea of nation worked through the state and had concrete results for those envisioned in or excluded from the national community. My aim here is to provide an overall picture of the changing visions of and for the nation, expressed clearly in the works and words of the men I discuss, in relation to the dominant ideologies deployed during these years.

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In his recent *Children of Facundo* Ariel de la Fuente writes that Juan Facundo Quiroga's rule was "a foundational experience that began a decades-long tradition of caudillo and gaucho mobilizations, most of them on behalf of Federalism" (2). The phenomenon of *caudillismo* was part of the process of militarization of society that, as Halperín Donghi argues, occurred after independence as a result of the inability of the state to form stable institutions (*Politics, Economics, & Society* 377-402). Caudillos and

wealthy families forged their ties with political power in the 1820s, often by making state officials their clients in both the interior and Buenos Aires. Facundo was one of the wealthiest of these caudillos who made a name for himself during this period, and he was followed by Juan Manuel de Rosas, named governor of Buenos Aires in 1829. Aside from the fact that Rosas' coming to power marked the beginning of what many authors have identified as a "dark" period in Rioplatense history, it signaled that *caudillismo*, embodied in the figure of Rosas, now *officially* held the reins to the state. Thanks to Sarmiento's reflections and legacy, notes de la Fuente, Argentina provides the "classic example" of a phenomenon that was "the most significant form of political leadership in nineteenth-century Latin America [...]" (3). It is against the backdrop of *caudillismo*, during the rule of Rosas, that Sarmiento writes *Facundo*, elaborating his philosophy of the nation. Little did he know in 1845 that *Facundo* would become one of the most influential and widely read texts on the national character throughout all of nineteenth-century Latin America.<sup>5</sup>

Though Sarmiento studies the life of Facundo Quiroga in *Facundo*, his real target, so to say, is Rosas. "Rosas, falso corazón helado, espíritu calculador, que hace el mal sin pasión y organiza lentamente el despotismo con toda la inteligencia de un Maquiavelo" (37) is creating a savage nation, one whose intellectuals are in exile and one in which any form of opposition is quashed. What is so dangerous, claims Sarmiento in a series of rhetorical questions, is that Rosas is not an isolated case or an aberration. He is "por el

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<sup>5</sup> Sarmiento, however, was certain that his ideas would continue to survive, long past his death, which he relates in the epigraph of earlier editions and in the "Advertencia al lector" in the words "on ne tue point les idées" [one can never kill ideas] (32). Sarmiento had scrawled these words in charcoal on the walls of a public bath, for which he was subsequently punished. For a closer look at the context of the epigraph, see Roberto González Echevarría's "A Lost World Rediscovered: Sarmiento's *Facundo*."

contrario, una manifestación social: es una fórmula de una manera de ser de un pueblo” (42). Barbarism, in Sarmiento speak, is becoming *the* defining characteristic of national identity. Esteban Echeverría hinted at this idea in “El matadero,” depicting the crowd as savages awaiting the spoils of the slaughter at a Buenos Aires slaughterhouse. The solution to the problem of the savage national character is, in the Unitarians’ eyes, to modernize, civilize, educate, and populate the country with well-mannered citizens.<sup>6</sup>

For Sarmiento, the architect of the public education system in Argentina, education was crucial to realizing what he imagined for the nation: a republic, in historian Natalio Botana’s words, of civic humanism. “The dream consisted of a republic capable of instilling virtue in its members by means of public education, the exercise of political freedom, and the distribution of small agricultural plots” (Botana 111). Sarmiento’s plans for education aimed to produce (in the sense of manufacture or turn out) good citizens who would be productive, self-disciplined, participate to a certain extent in the political sphere, and, in some cases, enjoy private property. Such citizens would form the backbone of the new, civilized republic of Argentina, where liberalism could flourish without any further hassles from those pesky Federalists.

Similar to the endings in many romantic novels of the nineteenth century, things turned out differently from the vision Sarmiento imagined of the dream republic. As Halperín Donghi points out, despite Sarmiento’s vision of education for all citizens, he still held the firm belief that “enlightenment and intelligence [the precious domain of a small group] have the right to govern [...]” (“Sarmiento’s Place” 26). In a word, Sarmiento’s ideals for the nation did not coincide with “the Argentine reality of incessant

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<sup>6</sup> These well-mannered citizens would, hopefully, come from Non-Iberian Western Europe first and then perhaps the U.S.

combat, regional fragmentations, and the resistance of the caudillos [...],” at least not before the 1860s (Botana 108).

While Sarmiento makes the case in *Facundo* that caudillos must be eradicated from Argentina in order for the nation to become a *modern* nation, it is not until after the battle of Pavón, in 1861, that the liberal elites are in a position to put this philosophy into practice. They do so not just through education and the construction of new disciplinary state institutions but also with cold violence. During Bartolomé Mitre’s presidency (1862-68), the liberal state literally waged war against caudillos and their followers, in spite of the fact that, as Sarmiento put it, “Facundo Quiroga [and by extension other gauchos and caudillos] [...] es el tipo más ingenuo del carácter de la guerra civil de la República Argentina; es la figura más americana que la revolución presenta” (46).

This reverence for the gaucho, though expressed by one of the most prominent liberal intellectuals in Argentine history, did not represent popular political sentiment among those in positions to voice and make audible their ideas for the nation during the initial stages of liberal rule.<sup>7</sup> The figure of the gaucho, however, acquired new cultural meanings in the 1880s, in large part due to the (negative) reactions to the massive numbers of immigrants arriving to Buenos Aires and other provinces. In “Making Sense of Modernity: Changing Attitudes toward the Immigrant and the Gaucho in Turn-Of-The-

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<sup>7</sup> The period of liberal rule, which spans roughly from Mitre’s term in office in the 1860s to the election of Hipólito Irigoyen as president in 1916, encompasses the presidency of Julio A. Roca, who served two terms and who, as Nicolás Avellaneda’s Minister of War, led “La campaña al desierto” in 1879-80 against the indigenous populations in Argentina. Near the end of the 1870s, the gaucho took on an extremely positive, benevolent character in Eduardo Gutiérrez’s *folletines* relating the life and trials of figures like Juan Moreira and Hormiga Negra. Their stories of persecution at the hands of a corrupt justice system inspired certain feelings of sympathy with the “noble gaucho.” These feelings are sometimes called *moreirismo*.



Century Argentina,” Jeane Delaney focuses on the gaucho as *the* new national symbol and the immigrant as the source of national ailments. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, modernization and urbanization, initiated in the liberal period and supported by the conservative president Julio Roca, had profound effects on both elite and popular attitudes toward the nation.<sup>8</sup> Delaney argues that the inflow of immigrants, coupled with the new financial connections to Great Britain and the ways in which modernization occurred, provoked the widespread belief that the “path to national renewal lay in a return to the values of the Argentine gaucho or cowboy” (“Making Sense” 435). Intellectuals such as Ricardo Rojas, Manuel Gálvez, and Leopoldo Lugones subscribed to nativist nationalism, and espoused values that were in direct contrast to those of liberal nationalism or cosmopolitanism in vogue from Mitre’s term in office in the 1860s up to the turn of the century. These intellectuals wrote and gave public speeches outlining and promoting new national myths that, as Delaney points out, “were created by inverting the old” (“Making Sense” 446).

According to Carlos Altamirano and Beatriz Sarlo, the most significant reaction to the generation of 1880 and the liberal state program spearheaded by Sarmiento, Mitre, Avellaneda and others, was manifest in the debate about “*identidad nacional*” and the development of “*cultural nationalism*,” most notably in the writings of Rojas, Gálvez, and others who were active in intellectual circles in the early 1900s (72). As writing became a viable profession toward the end of the century, and as literacy rates began to increase, a

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<sup>8</sup> Delaney defines modernization as “the nexus of changes that includes technological innovation, economic rationalization, demographic change, the bureaucratization of the state, and the triumph of science [...]” (“Making Sense of Modernity” 434). These changes were essential components of neocolonialism and talking points for *cosmopolitans*. These same things constituted points of contention for nativists.

split formed between intellectual and political elites. “Having lost their traditional status as shapers of national affairs, many early twentieth-century intellectuals sought to establish a new role for themselves as the guardians of authentic Argentine cultural traditions and values” (Delaney, “Making Sense” 439). These intellectuals were more than just guardians, though; they were also inventors. In addition to the “problems” of modernization and immigration, intellectuals and politicians alike worried about the tensions generated with Argentina’s entrance into the capitalist world economy: labor strikes, protests, the spread of socialist ideas, the possibility of anarchy, and so on.<sup>9</sup> A glance at the numerous anarchist, communist and labor-issues-oriented newspaper and magazine titles of the 1890s reveals a surge in popular discourse concerned with the make-up of the nation and the growing immigrant workforce. Faced with these questions and in the aftermath of the Spanish-American war of 1898, intellectuals like Rojas and Gálvez set out to find, redefine or reinvent the “*alma nacional*.”

If the *alma nacional* for liberal elites hailed from the civilized city and was dressed in European garb, nativists saw it as a rural gaucho, with roots in both “Argentine land” and Spanish heritage. Hispanism—pride in Spanish heritage—and “*el mito de la raza nacional*” became important players on the ideological scene at the turn of the century. In effect, the Spanish-American war “provoked condemnations of ‘materialism,’

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<sup>9</sup> For liberal intellectuals immigration was a key component of their civilizing project, which “incluía la inmigración como medio no solo [sic] de poblar el desierto, sino también de borrar los hábitos que se identificaban con el *caudillismo* y la barbarie rural. Se trataba de crear ‘desde arriba’ la sociedad civil que debería convertirse en el soporte de un Estado nacional moderno de tipo capitalista” (Altamirano and Sarlo 76). Barbero and Devoto note that between 1880 and 1910 more than four million immigrants arrived to Argentina, counting for nearly 30% of the national population, in comparison to immigrants making up 14.5 % of the population in the U.S. during this time (15-16). In 1910 the number of strikes reached 298 (Barbero and Devoto 17), which resulted, according to Rojas and Gálvez, from the “immigrant problem.”

which to these observers [Latin Americans in general as well as Argentine intellectuals] the United States embodied, along with renewed sympathy and a sense of fraternity with Spain [...].” The resulting formulation aligned the Hispanic and the Spiritual against the Anglo-Saxon and the Material (Rock, “Intellectual Precursors” 273). Although as early as 1881 even one of immigration’s greatest advocates—Sarmiento himself—was critical of immigrants’ behavior and how they were or were not fitting into Argentine Society, it was not until the late 1890s that intellectuals began producing writings that focused on the problems of the “national soul” and ways to heal the nation (Rock, “Intellectual Precursors” 276).

Such writings not only were up against liberal ideals for Argentina, but also confronted the work of a handful of thinkers who believed wholeheartedly in science and scientism.<sup>10</sup> These supporters of scientism and scientific racism, prevalent in this period, drew heavily on Herbert Spencer’s brand of social Darwinism and the French social psychologist Gustave Le Bon’s concept of raciology and its ties to the “alma nacional.”<sup>11</sup>

Le Bon wrote in *The Psychology of Peoples* that

close examination reveals that the majority of individuals of a given race have a number of common psychological traits which are as stable as the anatomical traits that permit us to classify species. Like these traits, psychological characteristics are regularly and faithfully reproduced through heredity. This

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<sup>10</sup> “Nativist” or “nationalist” critics of liberal elites and the liberal program for building the nation associated positivism with the liberal “científicos,” people who ignored the true roots of the nation. Indeed, positivism was one of the liberals’ guiding philosophies. According to Martin Stabb, the “revolt against scientism” and against the científicos meant “a clear rejection of the notion that natural science could be the sole indicator of ethical, political, or aesthetic routes for man to follow [...].” (35).

<sup>11</sup> According to Eduardo Zimmerman, “In late nineteenth-century Argentina, the combination of diverse social interpretations of Darwinian biology and the optimism derived from Spencer’s widely accepted law of progress provided an intellectual foundation for the period of expansion, creating a true ‘ideology of progress’” (28).

aggregate ... constitutes what may justifiably be called the national character (quoted in Stabb 14).

Agustín Alvarez, Carlos Octavio Bunge, and José Ingenieros, to name just a few of the Argentine thinkers who adopted Le Bon's ideas, conceived of society as "a living, growing organism, and thus subject to disease which might inhibit normal development" (Stabb 13). As one can imagine, undesired immigrants and the traces of *caudillismo* were the causes of Argentina and the continent's illnesses for Alvarez, Bunge, and Ingenieros, and the arrival of (white) European immigrants was the best way to "cure" the nation.<sup>12</sup> For Ricardo Rojas, Manuel Gálvez, and Leopoldo Lugones, setting Argentina back on track meant exactly the opposite: halting immigration and understanding *caudillismo* as part of the nation's history that deserves praise.

While the so-called racial question did not reflect the ethnic / racial situation in Argentina at the turn of the century, "certain intellectual and scientific currents, plus factors particular to Argentina (along with the immigration, swift economic expansion and material progress, and a growing concern with the national identity)," explains Eduardo Zimmermann, "provided an appropriate ground for the development of an Argentine racial language" (45). Rojas and other nativists could not escape using this racial language in their efforts to imagine the nation.<sup>13</sup> If for the cosmopolitans European stock was needed to improve the "native blood," the nativists advocated the other side of

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<sup>12</sup> See Martin Stabb's *In Quest of Identity* 12-33 for an analysis of selected essays of Alvarez, Bunge, and Ingenieros. Zimmerman discusses these authors' ideas as well as those of others in "Racial Ideas and Social Reform" 29-33.

<sup>13</sup> Rojas, Gálvez, and other intellectuals writing around the *centenario* (the centenary celebration of the May 1810 revolution) are referred to in many ways: "traditionalists," in David Rock's words, "cultural nationalists" according to Earl Glauert and Jeane Delaney, and "nativists" by other literary scholars and historians. I use the term nativist, for it seems to be the most appropriate and least confusing.

the coin, claiming that European immigrants were diluting the true racial make-up of the nation. Rojas and Gálvez “tended to concentrate on the cultural incompatibilities of certain ‘races’ and the Argentine Indo-Hispanic heritage, disregarding the modern, progressive and ‘scientific’ approach of the liberal intelligentsia” (Zimmerman 25). What resulted from their work was the flowering of nativism or, as Earl Glauert identifies it, cultural nationalism.

Glauert maintains that cultural nationalism, the nativist vision for the nation, had its public debut, so to say, with the articles criticizing cosmopolitanism Ricardo Rojas and Emilio Becher published in the newspaper *La Nación* in 1906. According to Glauert, Rojas elaborated a sort of cultural nationalism based on ideas of Johann Gottfried von Herder, who put forth three component parts of this type of nationalism. First, there must be a *volk*, that is, an authentic group of people inhabiting a given territory. Second came the *volkgeist*—the collective spirit of the people. Lastly, the *volk* and *volkgeist* combined to fulfill the *kulturauftrag* or national destiny. These components are present in the themes that characterized nationalism in early twentieth-century Argentina, many of which Rojas was instrumental in promoting: “the necessity of nationalizing education, the rehabilitation of the Spanish and Indian heritages, the importance of the study of folklore, the importance of the provinces in the life of the nation, the cult of the gaucho, and the cult of the ‘spirit of May’” (Glauert 4). Many of these ideas came out in 1909 in Rojas’ *La restauración nacionalista*, where he argued that Argentina lacked spiritual unity—what made political unity possible in European countries—due to immigration and the increasing (racial) heterogeneity of the population. The solution was to implement a

program to restore the nation through public education, thus bringing the national destiny back into sight.

The following year marked the centenary anniversary of the May revolution and saw significant developments in the nativist vision of the nation.<sup>14</sup> As Altamirano and Sarlo maintain, a moral crisis emerged at the time of the *centenario*, revolving around three principal themes: the racial constitution of the nation, the critique, at the heart of arielismo, of the materialist / utilitarian / mercantilist spirit, and the level of participation in the political process (114). Around this same period “Martín Fierro” was becoming increasingly popular, thanks in large part to figures like Rojas and Gálvez. In 1913 the magazine “Nosotros” published the results of a survey on the “value” of “Martín Fierro.” The questions aimed to answer whether or not the poem could be considered *the* national epic. Gálvez, Bunge, and others seemed to think so (Altamirano and Sarlo 109). While Rojas and Lugones did not participate in the survey, they gave public speeches that highlighted the symbolic national character and value of “Martín Fierro.” At the Odeón theatre in 1913, with president Roque Saénz Peña and his cabinet members present, Lugones pronounced “la obra de Hernández como el poema épico de la Argentina, insertándolo en una prestigiosa genealogía literaria que se remontaba a la *Iliada*” (Altamirano and Sarlo 110). Rojas followed suit with the speech he made to inaugurate the professorship of Argentine literature in the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras: “el *Martín Fierro* es para los argentinos lo que la *Chanson de Roland* para los franceses y el *Cantar*

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<sup>14</sup> In *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930* Beatriz Sarlo discusses how the process of modernization and changes in the urban landscape of Buenos Aires affected how many understood what nation meant. “No se habla de otra cosa en muchos de los ensayos producidos alrededor del Centenario [...] El impacto de la transformación no era sólo ideológico; los cambios eran un hecho irreversible y la inmigración ya casi había concluido su tarea de convertir a Buenos Aires en una ciudad de mezcla” (245).

*de Mio Cid* para los españoles, es decir el poema épico nacional” (Altamirano and Sarlo 110).<sup>15</sup>

All this to illustrate the extent to which nativists sought to promote an alternative vision of Argentina. That “cosmopolitan forces” threatened the essence and traditions of Argentina, and the fear that the nation was not following its national destiny, argues Jeane Delaney, “served to invert Sarmiento's nineteenth-century civilisation / barbarism dichotomy and to replace it with a new dichotomy that pitted the authentic or invisible Argentina against the visible, or unauthentic Argentina” (“Imagining” 657). In other words, this meant setting Buenos Aires and materialism against the interior provinces, truly representative of the nation. As David Rock demonstrates in “Intellectual Precursors of Conservative Nationalism in Argentina, 1900-1927,” “Rojas too conflated ‘national character’ with federalism and its political leaders. That age of ‘barbarism’ [...] that ‘has been so reviled by our historians... was the most genuine source of our character’” (280). Rojas continues, stating that Rosas and the pampas or Facundo and the mountains were more closely related than any liberal and “the country they sought to govern” (quoted in Rock 280).

The “early” Rojas, dating roughly from the publication of *La restauración nacionalista* (1909) to the early 1920s sought to develop “un nacionalismo particular, democrático, laico, no tradicionalista ni xenófobo, que propone una síntesis armónica entre lo antiguo y lo nuevo, entre lo nacional y lo extranjero, entre lo indígena y lo hispánico” (Barbero and Devoto 21). The national “kit” that held nations together in

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<sup>15</sup> Rojas expresses the same idea in his *Historia de la literatura argentina*: “El *Martín Fierro* llega, por su unidad y por su asunto, a ser para la nación argentina algo muy análogo a lo que es para la nación francesa la *Chanson de Roland* y el *Cantar de Mio* para la nación española” (55).

Europe—consisting in part of language, race, and literature—was lacking in Argentina, and it was up to national (university) education to disseminate a unifying national spirit (Rojas, *Historia* 27). Ironically in line with Hippolyte Taine’s idea of the national community based on race, moment, and environment, Rojas elaborated his *indianismo*.<sup>16</sup> The logic of *indianismo*, he writes, “es que la tierra forja la raza; ésta revela un espíritu local a través del hombre; y aquella fuerza ‘divina’ de los elementos primordiales, llega a manifestarse en un tipo nacional de cultura” (*Historia* 57).<sup>17</sup>

The inseparable quality of the relation between *tierra* and national culture or collective identity forms one of the central arguments of *Blasón de plata*. For Rojas, civilization consists of ideas—its abstract quality—and concrete realities (*hechos*). While many intellectuals have attributed civilization to thinkers, models of development, or industrialization that came from Europe or the U.S., civilization owes its success in Argentina to “Argentine progress,” “Argentine order,” “Argentine salaries,” and so on (Rojas, *Blasón* 150-51). Put differently, whatever success the “civilizing” process has had in Argentina, it is thanks to the national territory, which allows for a national spirit to form that in turn becomes an essential part of all cultural practices and products, material and aesthetic.<sup>18</sup> As one of the leaders of cultural nationalism, in Delaney and Glauert’s words, or nativism, Rojas’ philosophy of the nation would not be complete without

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<sup>16</sup> As one of nineteenth-century France’s principal advocates of positivism, Taine promoted ideas that cosmopolitan elites in Latin America clung to, not in line with Rojas’ emphasis on the value of Argentine traditions.

<sup>17</sup> Sarmiento saw a similar relationship between land and identity, between national territory and national culture. After all, it was the environment of the Pampa that formed the gaucho (Kirkpatrick and Masiello 8).

<sup>18</sup> Martin Stabb comments that Rojas’ emphasis on the defining power of the land is more about liberating than constraining or limiting, in the sense of geographical determinism. Being close to nature and understanding the forces of the land lead to Argentine authenticity, that very quality cosmopolitans lack (62-63).



taking into account the state of immigration at the beginning of the century. Addressing “foreigners” who think they can invest in Argentina and leave with their finished products or work in Argentina without participating in the national community, Rojas proclaims, “¡No luchéis contra nuestra raza, enemigos! ¡No os obstinéis contra nuestra vida, extranjeros! ¡Todo ha de ser argentino sobre la tierra argentina!” (*Blasón* 152). Both Manuel Gálvez and Leopoldo Lugones expressed similar, if not stronger, sentiments.

One year after the first publication of Rojas’ *La restauración nacionalista* Manuel Gálvez published *El diario de Gabriel Quiroga*. Gálvez suggests that spiritual life of and in the nation ended with the “advenimiento de la época materialista y transitoria que vamos atravesando” (in Barbero and Devoto 30).<sup>19</sup> “Ideas nacionalistas” no longer exist, in part due to liberalism, and in part due to immigration and the heterogeneous quality of Argentine society. As a result, the “alma colectiva” that inspired writers like Sarmiento, Mitre, and José Hernández must be found or created again.<sup>20</sup> Getting spiritual life back in Argentina requires educating citizens, studying what Argentine collective identity should be, and, most importantly, “Argentinizing.” In a twist of Alberdi’s catch-phrase “gobernar es poblar,” Gálvez writes “En la hora presente, gobernar es argentinizar” (in Barbero and Devoto 32). Argentinizing, in essence, encompassed a revaluing of “traditions” and “heritage”—historical, ethnic, cultural, and political.

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<sup>19</sup> In addition to providing historical and textual analyses of certain nationalists’ work, Barbero and Devoto’s *Los nacionalistas* contains selections from major works by Rojas, Gálvez and others.

<sup>20</sup> It is interesting to note that Gálvez mentions liberals with Hernández, given their desire to bring Europe to Argentina—one of the principal reasons for Gálvez’s attack on cosmopolitanism. He later points out that while Sarmiento was outwardly liberal, he was really a true Federalist at heart (in Barbero and Devoto 31).

This appreciation for heritage comes out in the dedication of *El solar de la raza*: “A la memoria de mis antepasados españoles; a los hijos de Hispania, que contribuyen con su trabajo a edificar la grandeza de mi patria [...] la España que es para nosotros, los argentinos, la casa solariega y blasonada que debemos amar” (11). The conflict between spiritualism and materialism again informs the work: “Al escribir *El solar de la raza*,” notes Gálvez, “sólo he querido mostrar a los argentinos—tan materialistas, tan preocupados de las cosechas, de las lanas y del valor del suelo—, algunos ejemplos de espiritualismo” (9-10). And this spiritualism should be understood not only in order to be more aware of the nation’s past, but also to aid in tracing a philosophical, spiritual, and political path for its future.

The national vision that Leopoldo Lugones developed in the 1920s and 1930s took the vision of the nation in extreme directions, far to the right, in terms of the political spectrum, of where Rojas and Gálvez saw themselves. *La grande argentina*, which Lugones calls “un acto de fe in la Patria,” was published shortly before the military golpe of 1930 and regroups some of Lugones’ early thoughts on the philosophy of the nation (23). These thoughts spring first from the notion of nation as a natural reality (144). This goes beyond Benedict Anderson’s statement that everyone pertains to a nation or has nationality;<sup>21</sup> for Lugones, nationality is natural. Yet this natural reality can and must be shaped by those people who represent it. Immigration policy is one way to form the nation, according to Lugones, and Argentina’s immigration policy should be based on the potential productivity and racial character of each immigrant (*La grande* 142). “La inmigración proletaria y aventurera,” notes Lugones, “sobrecarga asimismo

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<sup>21</sup> See Anderson 3-7.

nuestra población urbana, aumentando artificialmente los elementos sectarios y el servicio doméstico que de ningún modo nos conviene fomentar” (*La grande* 143). In short, immigration policy comes down to “hacer la patria con la gente que nos convenga [...]” (*La grande* 145).<sup>22</sup>

Other means for shaping the nation reveal Lugones’ militant side and sympathy with fascist policies in the making in Europe during the 1920s and 30s. In *La patria fuerte*, a collection of articles that first appeared in the newspaper *La Nación* and were later published in January 1930 for the “Biblioteca del Oficial,” i.e., military official, Lugones comments on the “corrupt” state of national institutions.<sup>23</sup> “Hogar y escuela,” he writes in the preface, “oficina y taller, hállanse contaminados por la propaganda disolvente, de origen y hasta de subvención extranjeros que enseñan la negación del deber y el menosprecio de la Patria” (*Patria* 7). The way to cleanse the nation of these polluting elements is through “disciplina militar” which must be instilled in citizens and guide the behavior of the state. “La disciplina militar es, en efecto, la sistematización del espíritu de sacrificio: y bajo este concepto, la religión de la Patria [...] Socialmente hablando, la disciplina militar es la civilización de la fuerza; y con ello, un precioso elemento de cultura; puesto que este resultado espiritual consiste en la formación de la

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<sup>22</sup> For a good summary of Lugones’ early formulations for the future of the nation, see “La hora del destino” in *La grande argentina*, 208-14.

<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of the preface Lugones states that the “subcomisión de instrucción del Círculo Militar, al cual tengo el honor de pertenecer [...]” has asked him to collect some of the articles published in *La Nación* as an expression of the “reacción patriótica que impone el estado social de nuestro país” (7). It is important to keep in mind that Lugones was a captain in the National Guard and that this collection of articles and speeches had the goal of uplifting that supposed true patriotic fervor in the hearts of citizens and soldiers, in a time of growing resentment of all things “foreign.” Furthermore, the book carried the stamp of approval of the Comisión Protectora de Bibliotecas Populares de la República Argentina, which suggests that it was part of many public library collections and was considered to be of certain didactic value.

conciencia” (*Patria* 7-8).<sup>24</sup> The “hora del destino” that Lugones refers to in the earlier *La grande argentina* has now become the “hora de la espada,” an explicit call to arms to “save” the nation. He was not advocating, however, for just anyone to take up arms; rather, it was the duty of the military, the most noble embodiment of the “alma colectiva” to take control of the state and, hence, the future of the country.

In “Advertencia patriótica,” the introduction to *Política revolucionaria*, written some eight months after the September golpe of 1930 (discussed below),<sup>25</sup> Lugones claims that “las armas de la Nación salváronla por cuenta propia, y su jefe la gobierna de igual modo. Mucho mejor, desde luego, que los predilectos del sufragio universal durante dieciséis años” (*Antología* 464). It is in this collection of articles that Lugones clearly presents his “doctrine” for the nation: granting control of all governmental positions to the military, eliminating “el extranjero pernicioso” who collaborated with the masses to spread communism, which entails destruction, and letting the 1930 revolution run its course, so to say, to prepare the country for a “better” future. According to Lugones, the “work” the revolution promised consisted of “administración reorganizada; crédito sano; extirpación de agitadores extranjeros; restablecimiento moral y material de la disciplina; defensa económica y militar bien planeada [...]” On top of these changes, the revolution must give birth to an “órgano indispensable, [that is] un partido conservador fundado en

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<sup>24</sup> Lugones’ praise of the armed forces and military discipline is further expressed in statements such as: “Nada hay más alto que las armas de la nación; y por esto les concierne la custodia de la bandera [...] El ciudadano completo se define por el soldado. De tal suerte, la oficialidad que desempeña los comandos de ese ejército posee el honor más alto de la República: privilegio moral que compensa el sacrificio permanente de la disciplina” (*Patria* 8).

<sup>25</sup> Barbero and Devoto bring to light that “Lugones había sido redactor del manifiesto revolucionario que el general Uriburu se proponía dirigir a la nación el 6 de setiembre [sic] y que fuera modificado, antes de ser hecho público, por el citado teniente coronel” (45).

las realidades económicas y sociales del país, lo que es decir nacional de suyo”

(*Antología* 466). Lugones’ philosophy of nation found a follower in Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, though he was not an advocate of Lugones’ style of militarism.

Not quite 100 years after Sarmiento first published *Facundo*, Martínez Estrada finished his *Radiografía de la Pampa* (1933). Like Sarmiento, Martínez Estrada was born in the interior and later made his way to the capital. Like Sarmiento, Martínez Estrada thought of himself as a sort of prophet in and of the desert (Cvitanovic 331). And like Sarmiento, Rojas, Gálvez and Lugones, in many of his writings Martínez Estrada deals with the relation of the civilization | barbarism duality to collective, national identity. As Peter Earle puts it, “La cuestión obsesionante de Martínez Estrada—muy del siglo veinte por toda Latinoamérica—es la de una irresuelta identidad cultural” (461).

Dinko Cvitanovic stresses the influence Sarmiento’s work had on Martínez Estrada’s writing and thinking: “Sarmiento es el punto de partida para Martínez Estrada, Sarmiento va y viene por su obra, de manera expresa o tácita” (332). In this respect, Martínez Estrada’s reflections on the nation and its collective identities, most notable in *Radiografía*, stem not only from shared concerns with Sarmiento but from what the “gaucho de la prensa” wrote, too. While *Radiografía* has in common with *Facundo* a diagnostic quality, identifying and describing “los males de la sociedad argentina,” it extends the argument further, for, in Earle’s words, *Radiografía* is also a search for the future of the nation (463). That is, Martínez Estrada attempts to diagnose what ails Argentina and to provide a forward looking perspective, albeit one that shows a world vision that speaks more to his disappointment with the present than to his optimism for the future. He shared a vision of the future of the nation with his close friend, Lugones.

Comparing their motivations for writing, Martínez Estrada comments: “Mi caso puede ser comparado con el de Lugones, por homología y simetría. El es el autor de la grande Argentina; yo de la pobre Argentina... Cada cual propuso una terapéutica: él, una heroica y con espada; yo, una psicoanalítica y con cilicio” (quoted in Cvitanovic 331).

Martínez Estrada’s philosophy of the nation is rooted in the Argentina of the late 1920s and early 1930s, a period that saw the fall of a weak liberal state to “strongman” figures (this time in military uniforms) who could impose order, and world economic crises that hit hard in Argentina.<sup>26</sup> In September of 1930 a group of “military officers and civilian aristocrats,” led by general José Uriburu, ousted president Hipólito Yrigoyen, establishing a provisional military government (Skidmore and Smith 83). Uriburu’s power passed to Augustín Justo in 1932, a “motor de la restauración conservadora que tuvo lugar durante buena parte de la década del treinta [...]” (Cvitanovic 341). The program of this restored conservative power, which Lugones longed to see in place, eventually led to popular support for Juan Domingo Perón to become president in 1946. Curiously, Perón was part of the group that led the 1930 golpe de estado. Internal problems with Yrigoyen’s government and effects of the 1929 crash were not the only factors that allowed for the 1930 golpe. Since 1928, notes Cvitanovic, “se venía gestando en la Argentina una corriente de pensamiento nacionalista de derecha, en diversos

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<sup>26</sup> Electoral reforms, instituted by then conservative president Roque Sáenz Peña, led to the election of the Radical party candidate Hipólito Yrigoyen in 1916. Radicals remained in control of the presidency up to 1930. The 1929 stock market crash had negative economic consequences in Argentina in the following years, though according to Skidmore and Smith, “Argentina was not hit as soon or as hard as some other countries” (83). On September 6, 1930 general José F. Uriburu led a golpe de estado that removed Yrigoyen and put in place a provisional military government. For a more in-depth look at the years leading up to the 1930 golpe, see Skidmore and Smith, 79-88, Cvitanovic, 339-42, 205-272 in Halperín Donghi’s *Vida y muerte de la república verdadera*, and Rock’s “From the First World War to 1930,” 139-72.

aspectos paralela a las de los europeos,” which we saw notably with Lugones (340). And while Uriburu only counted a minority of the military on his side going into the golpe, it was a relatively easy takeover, for once Irigoyen was out of the picture, the *Irigoyenistas* no longer felt obliged to back him (Rock, “From the First World War” 172). It is in this context of economic depression, political instability, rising right-wing nationalism and military takeover that Martínez Estrada began developing his vision of and for Argentina.

In the section of *Radiografía de la pampa* entitled “Civilización y barbarie” he writes both against a “false” reality and for the discovery and recovery of a “true” reality, one that allows for the existence of “barbarism.” To clarify these abstract concepts: the Argentine nation and state were built by what Martínez Estrada calls “creadores de ficciones” (253). These fictions are the myths liberals employed to create official, national culture in the years following the battle of Pavón. They are, like all myths and traditions, exclusive, leaving out, in the case of Argentina, those who were not considered welcome in the new national community. In this vein, “Sarmiento fué el primero de los que alzaron puentes sobre la realidad [...]” (*Radiografía* 253), bridges on which to construct a “false” reality. The nation as Sarmiento understood it, and ultimately aimed to shape it through policies, denied the truth and sought to cover it making “guerra a la guerra, oponiendo el libro a la tacuara; la imprenta a la montonera, el frac al chiripá; a los ímpetus del instinto y de la inspiración del baquiano y del payador y a los vicios endémicos del campo abierto, la perseverancia, la paciencia y el cálculo” (253). In short, where Sarmiento and liberals’ philosophy of the nation was fatally flawed, according to Martínez Estrada, was

in its failure to recognize that civilization and barbarism are inseparable, one and the same thing (*Radiografía* 256).<sup>27</sup>

Based on the notion that “barbarism” is indeed part of “civilization” and thus part of the nation, Martínez Estrada suggests that the state is responsible for incorporating both the *frac* and the *chiripá*, the *imprensa* and the *montonera*, and so on, into the community of the nation.<sup>28</sup> The lack of will of the state to include values of groups deemed uncivilized in the conception of the nation constitutes one of the main illnesses that the nation suffers—hence its “sickly” character—and remains a theme that is present in Martínez Estrada’s work up to his last days.

In a speech to the *Sociedad Argentina de Escritores* in 1942, Martínez Estrada touches on this character and shares his disappointment with the reality Argentines have been living since the early 1930s. Since then, he remarks, “no veo que haya mejorado el clima sombrío en que la inteligencia debate su trémula orfandad. Desde aquellos días [...] ningún cambio favorable hubo que pudiera inclinarme a una más indulgente interpretación de nuestra realidad” (*Cuadrante* 76). The barbarism outlined in

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<sup>27</sup> Martínez Estrada maintained an ambivalent attitude toward Sarmiento, Rivadavia, Nicolás Avellaneda, and other liberal elites. On the one hand he criticizes them for their efforts to build a nation that left crucial elements of Argentine society out of the puzzle. On the other hand, he holds them in certain esteem as intellectuals who put their ideas into action, and as leaders who were much better for Argentina, despite their flaws, than those who were in power in the 1930s—twentieth-century *caudillos*, for Martínez Estrada.

<sup>28</sup> This idea is problematic insofar as it assumes that the state is capable of “imagining” the feeling “nation,” or that the state can create the sentiments of identity associated with the national community. The state no doubt has the power to shape collective identity, to promote or not certain types of nationalism, and to establish parameters for the development of the political nation. Yet how nationalism affects collective, national identity is not so clear, for it requires an assessment of how citizens “feel” the nation or national identity, of how they incorporate or reject certain aspects of the national project. In short, the collective identity promoted by the state is not synonymous with the collective identity with which people feel and associate.



*Radiografía de la pampa* combined with what he saw to be the growing importance of materialism at the expense of traditional values.<sup>29</sup> It is up to citizens, he thought, and, more importantly, intellectuals who are willing to make thought into action. Their job is to fight against those “fuerzas de la barbarie, que también bajo formas apócrifas de la civilización flagelan al hemisterio norte [sic], y como combatientes que sois contra cuantos enemigos haya de la belleza, el bien, la verdad y la justicia, estad alertas y prevenidos” (*Cuadrante* 76-77). Martínez Estrada’s distaste for the ultra-conservative governments of the 1930s would become exacerbated with Juan Domingo Perón’s time in office.

Speaking some fourteen years later at a dinner in the *Club Universitario de Bahía Blanca*, Martínez Estrada again diagnosed the ills of the nation, this time relating them to his own health problems.<sup>30</sup> “Mi situación,” he relates, “es muy semejante a la de Job y en lugar de discurrir sobre el bien y el mal, di en cavilar sobre mi país. Pues así como yo padecía de una enfermedad chica, él padecía de una enfermedad grande” (*Cuadrante* 82). According to Martínez Estrada, this sickness was the conservative governments of the 1930s and peronismo that followed, and he tries to understand the causes for both his and

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<sup>29</sup> Martínez Estrada develops his critique of materialism in *Análisis funcional de la cultura*, first published in 1960. In this essay he elaborates on the loss of humanistic values that plagues “occidental technologically developed states.” Argentina is not exempt from this criticism, even though its economy was in decline in the 1950s. On the contrary, like other occidental states, he claims, the Argentine state has committed the mistake of substituting economic gain for “humanistic values” that bond human societies together and allow for the formation of “true” realities, “true” cities, “true” nations. As a result, he concludes, Argentine culture is moving toward barbarism. See 46-68 in particular.

<sup>30</sup> He suffered from a sort of psychological breakdown in the early 1950s. Many scholars suggest this was brought on by his strong aversion to Perón, whom he qualified as “un castigo de Dios” (*Cuadrante* 83). For more of his thoughts on Perón and peronismo during this period see *Cuadrante* 131-36.

the nation's diseases. He continues: "si yo pude haber cometido alguna falta pequeña, él la habría cometido inmensa. Yo y mi país estábamos enfermos" (*Cuadrante* 82).

The theme of the degenerate nation that has lost touch with its values is present in other essays of *Cuadrante del pampero*. Writing to "the people" in "Palabras preliminares a mi pueblo," he laments: "Te han comprado porque te has vendido. Te han ofrecido dinero a cambio de tu dignidad y cambiaste el tesoro de tu primogenitura (la de Mayo) por un asado y taba" (*Cuadrante* 138). The solution to this problem is, as one can imagine, to revive the spirit, traditions, and values corrupted by greed and the glories of technological evolution. "Cuando vuelvas con humildad y coraje al hogar paterno," admonishes Martínez Estrada, "recobrarás el patrimonio que te han robado y te recobrarás tú mismo. Entonces estarás en tu patria y serás lo que debes ser" (*Cuadrante* 139). Yet returning to such things is no simple task, for it implies recapturing meanings from those twentieth-century caudillos.

These "godos [...] disfrazados con chiripá y botas de potro [...]," that is, the conservatives of the 1930s and Perón, have turned patriotism and expressions of love for country into mere rhetorical devices, devoid of real meaning, and appropriated those symbols of "Argentineness" for the sake of mere self promotion (*Cuadrante* 149). Thanks to the words of an article by Bernardo de Monteagudo, entitled "Patriotismo" and published in 1811, Martínez Estrada has been able to see this unjust use of patriotism, and claims he has a renewed sense of what it means to be a patriot and patriotic.<sup>31</sup> He argues that Monteagudo, like Moreno and other patriots, are "exiles" in a land where

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<sup>31</sup> Real patriots for Martínez Estrada include Mariano Moreno, Berdardino Rivadavia, José de San Martín, Esteban Echeverría and, of course, Bernardo de Monteagudo. All of these figures, he argues, are in exile, waiting for the current caudillos in power to take leave so their legacy may return to Argentina.

sacred words such as “patria,” “honor,” and “pueblo” have been profaned. Martínez Estrada’s aim is thus to reinvest these words, as well as the realities to which they refer, with meaning.

Despite the apparently consistent philosophy of nation expressed by Martínez Estrada, his political allegiances changed numerous times over the course of his life and writing career. The French historian Fernand Braudel compared these changes to the changing national experience in Argentina during the first half of the twentieth century: “L’Argentine de Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, c’est Ezequiel Martínez Estrada lui-même” (quoted in Sigal 349).<sup>32</sup> Philosophies of the nation, likewise, experienced significant developments during this period, though we would be at a loss to understand these philosophies without going back to the liberal visions of the land of silver in the nineteenth century.

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Hamlet’s monologue is ultimately about whether or not to take action to shape the future of one’s identity. Whatever decision Hamlet reaches—ultimately to act in the face of conscience that “does make cowards of us all”—will affect both his identity and that of others in the community. He must, in essence, decide how to be and who to be. The authors discussed here struggle with the same questions, though unlike Hamlet they are dealing with the added weight of pertaining to a nation and the meaning of national identity. Their ideas on collective national identity inform their philosophies of the Argentine nation, and vice versa.

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<sup>32</sup> “The Argentina of Ezequiel Martínez Estrada is Ezequiel Martínez Estrada himself.”

A nation is a concept or an idea before it becomes a reality.<sup>33</sup> In Argentina, as in the rest of nineteenth-century Latin America, states—and the elites who were responsible for making the wheels turn—made nations. In contrast to the formation of nations in Europe and the U.S. where a sense of national community preceded the establishment of strong state institutions, the Argentine state faced the task of forming a national community according to its vision of the nation. Authors of such visions in the nineteenth century, like Sarmiento and Mitre, were writers as well as policy makers. The ideas they expounded on in their writings were closely linked to state projects and informed or were informed by dominant ideologies. While the turn of the century saw the professionalization of writing and a separation of the author from the statesman, and while Gálvez, Rojas, Lugones and Martínez Estrada did not serve as presidents, their visions of the nation nonetheless had profound impacts on the course policies for the nation would follow in the first half of the twentieth century.

Rojas' ideas shaped the nation through education, specifically university education. Lugones made his words felt in military and literary circles. Martínez Estrada, like Rojas, was involved in university education and served in various diplomatic positions. From Sarmiento to Martínez Estrada and beyond, the philosophies of nation of the intellectuals and writers we have looked at here became real or were put into practice to one degree or another by means of the power they had to imagine and shape state institutions and projects, most significantly those concerned with developing and maintaining the national community. Their musings on collective national identity played out beyond the pages of the books they wrote, as would be the case with the populist

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<sup>33</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, among other scholars of nationalism, makes this point in *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (9).

visions of Juan Perón. The nationalist ideologies developed in the works of Gálvez and Lugones certainly informed strands of peronism, and would surface again in the doctrine of national security and policies of a “pure” nation free from the evils of communism in the 1970s and 80s.

The 100 years separating Sarmiento from Martínez Estrada saw the rise of the liberal state in Argentina as well as its fall in the early twentieth century to reactionary nationalism. As we have seen, these years were a period in which numerous visions / philosophies of the nation emerged. For Sarmiento and liberal elites, *caudillismo* embodied all that stood in the way for the development of the nation. *Caudillismo*, in essence, epitomized barbarism. On the other hand, for Rojas, Gálvez, Lugones, and Martínez Estrada *caudillismo* was a key part of Argentine history and identity and must be accepted as such rather than discounted or denied. While Rojas and Gálvez understood this to mean a philosophy of nation that revalues the gaucho and Spanish and indigenous heritages, Lugones’ philosophy of the nation sought to justify an extreme right nationalism and the military golpe of 1930. Despite the differences in these philosophies of the nation, Sarmiento, Rojas, Gálvez, Lugones, and Martínez Estrada all deal with questions of “essence”: what and who makes “our” nation; how do we define our national values and on what do we base them; how do these things participate in the construction of our national identity, and so on. These questions are more than mere subjects for intellectuals to ponder in notebooks on rainy evenings. These “literary” considerations shape ideologies and attitudes, and thus have real, tangible consequences for the lives of those who make up the Argentine national community.

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