"Somos una raza privilegiada:" Anthropology, Race, and Nation in the Literature of the River Plate, 1870-2010

Ashley Elizabeth Kerr
Charlottesville, Virginia

Master of Arts in Spanish, University of Virginia, 2009
Bachelor of Arts in Latin American Studies, Middlebury College, 2006

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Abstract

This study examines the ways in which ethnographic and anthropological theories of race arise and evolve in the literature of the River Plate (travel literature, the novel, poetry, scientific discourse), ca. 1870-2010, through the prism of critical gender and race theory. Beyond presenting potential solutions to the *cuestión del indio*, concepts such as prehistory, degeneration, evolution, and miscegenation enabled positive representations of the *criollo* that directly addressed criticisms emanating from both within and outside of the region. Thus, ethnography and anthropology were fundamental to the forging of national, group, and individual identities. The authors studied in the first three chapters are canonical, forgotten, and best-sellers in turn, including Lucio V. Mansilla, Juan Zorrilla de San Martín, Eduardo L. Holmberg, Francisco "Perito" Moreno, Vicente Fidel López, and Clemente Onelli. Although their focuses were distinct, as a whole these texts work to laud the Creole as fit, fertile, and White, while erasing the Indian from the nation due to their alleged innate, or racial, inferiority.

The fourth and final chapter is devoted to contemporary romance novels by Florencia Bonelli and Gloria Casañas that aim to subvert and/or repurpose the concepts and ideologies analyzed in the first three chapters. Given their immense popularity both in Argentina and abroad, these novels exercise an influence over the racial imaginary of contemporary Argentinians that the older texts do not. In spite of their authors' good intentions, these twenty-first century racial projects reveal that older, discriminatory models of indigeneity and Whiteness continue to structure even neoliberal narratives that explicitly reject the past. Indeed, these bestsellers closely resemble their predecessors in their racial suppositions and characterizations of both Indians and *criollos*.

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Introduction

In 2004 and 2005, the Argentine Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo carried out the first nationwide study of indigenous peoples, 135 years after the completion of the first general census (Giubellino). The count, which identified 402,921 *indígenas* belonging to 22 communities,[1] prompted surprise among the population of Buenos Aires (Giubellino) and sarcasm among the leaders of indigenous movements: the Mexican journal *Ojarasca* reported the story with the title, "*Descubren* en Argentina que aún hay indios." The results of the census and the reactions it provoked reveal an important aspect of present-day Argentine racial identity: although the country has a larger (relative and absolute) population of Indians than Brazil, it is most frequently depicted as a White, European country (Gordillo and Hirsch 6). As described by a phrase apocryphally attributed to Octavio Paz and proudly adopted by popular culture, "Los argentinos son italianos que hablan español y se creen franceses." How, then, can we explain the discord between the obvious past and current presence of Indians in the Argentine territory and the continued insistence on the non-indigenous, European ancestry of the general population? Historians, sociologists, economists, and writers have all attempted to answer this question, attributing the invisibilization of the Indian (as termed by Gordillo and Hirsch) to everything from market forces (Stahler-Sholk, Vanden, and Kuecker) to the legacy of colonialism (vom Hau and Wilde). In this study, I examine texts published roughly between 1870 and 1910 by authors from both shores of the Río de la Plata in order to argue that science, particularly the fields of anthropology and ethnography, was a fundamental factor in the elaboration of River Plate racial identities. I then turn to three

[1] David Rock estimates the number of Indians in the River Plate at the time of the Conquest at 750,000 or less (1).

novels published in the twenty-first century in order to analyze the legacy of this nation-building period on present-day understandings of race, racism, and identity in the River Plate.

The history of River Plate science has emerged from the shadows of the periphery in the last few decades, attracting the attention of both historians and literary critics. Departing from the useful but rather uncritical works of historians such as José Babini, Marcelo Montserrat, Thomas Glick, and Fernando Mañé Garzón, Ruth Hill, Jans Andermann, Irina Podgorny, Pedro Navarro Floria, and Mónica Quijada have enriched our knowledge base by tying historiography to issues of race, human rights, nationalism, and government-sponsored genocide. Andermann and Podgorny have published numerous excellent articles and books focusing on the history of the Museo de la Plata, located just outside of Buenos Aires in the provincial capital. Founded by Francisco Moreno in 1888, the museum and the practices carried out by its scientists played a crucial role in controlling and creating the national imaginary (Andermann, *The Optic* 55). Mónica Quijada and Pedro Navarro Floria have focused on how science was used to include or exclude the Indians from citizenship, while Ruth Hill has elucidated the methods and aims of what she calls "New World Aryanism" ("Ariana"). Despite this increased critical attention, there is much work still to be done, particularly from a literary criticism perspective. The specific rhetorical strategies used to carry out projects of racial representation and the spread of scientific discourse into non-traditionally scientific arenas (poems, romance novels) are underdeveloped areas. In this study, I examine a diverse group of texts by Lucio V. Mansilla (1831-1913), Juan Zorrilla de San Martín (1855-1931), Eduardo L. Holmberg (1852-1937), Francisco P. Moreno (1852-

1919), Vicente Fidel López (1815-1903), Clemente Onelli (1864-1924), Florencia Bonelli (1971-), and Gloria V. Casañas (1964-). Some of these texts are canonical, others are virtually unknown. They cross genres, centuries, and national borders, yet all are fruitful spaces in which to analyze the various ways in which literature and science interacted – and continue to interact – to exclude or limit the possibilities of River Plate indigenous populations while shoring up national prestige as inscribed in the language of Whiteness, Europeanness, and civilization.

Indians in the River Plate, 1516-1885

From the time the first Europeans set foot in the River Plate territory around 1516, both they and the autochthonous inhabitants of the area had to develop strategies for dealing with and speaking about each other. During the Colonial period, relations oscillated between tension and peaceful coexistence. Many Indian tribes participated in the protection of the River Plate during the British invasions of 1806-7 (Martínez Sarasola 153) and took the side of the Argentine *criollos* during the wars of Independence. Following a line of thought established during the era of the Viceroyalties, the 1819 Constitution established that the Indians in all the provinces were "hombres perfectamente libres en igualdad de derechos a todos los ciudadanos que las pueblan" (Martínez Sarasola 381). Nonetheless, alliances were continually shifting, both between specific tribes and between those tribes and the governments in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Friendly relations one day could quickly devolve into violence the next. In Uruguay, the Indians were not very successful in their attempts to defend their culture and their lives. The largest native tribe, the Charrúas, effectively disappeared around

1831, just a few years after Uruguay emerged as an independent nation (Mañe Garzón, *Historia* 268).

After Argentine independence in 1816, civil war and division characterized the country for many decades. Despite internal strife, managing relations with the native tribes living uncomfortably close to the center of Buenos Aires remained a priority. Juan Manuel de Rosas, governor of Buenos Aires from 1829-1852 (excepting late 1832 to early 1835), was familiar with the conditions on the frontier and elements of Indian life due to his years running his family's *estancia* some 30 miles southeast of the capital. It was here that he brought the son of the great *cacique* Painé, captured in a raid. This teen, baptized and given the name Mariano Rosas, would later escape and become one of the most powerful *caciques* of the region. He will be an important figure in the literature examined in this study. During 1833-34, Rosas used his knowledge to organize an expedition to Tierra Adentro that resulted in the advancement of the internal frontier, the rescue of many captives, and the surrender of several important Indian communities (Mases 35-36). Rosas also negotiated treaties with the various Indian tribes, imposing obligations such as obedience, the implementation of agriculture, the admittance of priests, and military service in exchange for "gifts" of food, livestock, money, and clothing (Martínez Sarasola 262). However, funds were scarce and payments were frequently delayed or bypassed entirely (Jones 39).

Official government policies with regard to the Indians during the period encompassing the rest of Rosas's rule until approximately the end of the Guerra de la Triple Alianza in 1870 were characterized by this combination carrot and stick approach. Treaties such as the one Lucio V. Mansilla attempted to negotiate with the Ranqueles

were made and broken, and elite leaders studied the pampas and debated the best plan for more forceful military action. Meanwhile, the relationship between Indians and *cristianos* was a "juego de vivén intenso y devastador entre los malones y los contramalones…ataque y revancha; penetración y rápido desquite" (Viñas 98). There were periods of "devastadoras incursiones indígenas sobre pueblos" that led to a loss of life and property, similar excursions of the military to the *toldos* (Mases 30), and reciprocal practices of captivity of women and prisoners of war (Operé 102). For instance, during 1875 4,000 Indians crossed the frontier and stole 300,000 heads of cattle, killed 500 *cristianos*, and took 300 captives (Siegrist de Gentile and Martín 49). Nonetheless, these violent relations occurred parallel to processes of biological and cultural *mestizaje* and mutual commerce that brought the supposed enemies together.

After the unification of Argentina – marked by the 1862 election of Bartolomé Mitre as the first president of the Republic (Rock 125) – and the end of the Guerra de la Triple Alianza in 1870, both of which had occupied the attention of the military and treasury, interest in resolving the *cuestión de indios* intensified. The *Generación del 80*, thoroughly soaked in positivist thought (see next section), worked to develop the ideology and tactics necessary to ensure the continued expansion and modernization of the nation. Engineers and experts such as Alfred Ebelot, Jordán Wisocky, Adolfo Doering, and Manuel Olascoaga were hired to scrutinize the land and people of the desert, preparing the way for the Argentine occupation of Indian territories (R. Arce 15). During the 1870s, every military column that crossed the desert traveled in the company of an engineer charged with mapping and measuring every inch of the pampas (Siegrist de Gentile and Martín 59). In 1875, Adolfo Alsina, Domingo F. Sarmiento's vice

president (1868-1874) and Nicolás Avellaneda's Minister of War (1874-1877), proposed the creation of a two meter deep trench along the frontier, designed to stop the passage of thieving Indians and their stolen livestock between Buenos Aires and Tierra Adentro (Martínez Sarasola 268).[2] This defensive tactic, sharply criticized by the likes of Estanislao Zeballos, Santiago Arcos, and Julio Roca, fell by the wayside with Alsina's death in 1877. The new Minister of War, Julio Roca, "rep[itió] el itinerario seguido por Juan Manuel de Rosas en 1833" (Viñas 15), cutting across now-populated lands and using military aggression to force the Indians to submit, so as to extend the frontier to the Río Negro (Martínez Sarasola 276).[3] A rapid series of attacks in April and May 1879 effectively destroyed the majority of the Indian communities (Martínez Sarasola 278), capturing or killing the *caciques* and transporting women and children to Buenos Aires to be distributed as farm workers or domestic servants (Mases 62). The official end of the campaign against the Indians came in January 1885 when the *cacique* of much of western Patagonia, Sayhueque, turned himself in (Martínez Sarasola 287). It would still be a few years until the northern regions of the country, particularly the Chaco, were completely under the control of the national government. Nonetheless, at this point debate over the Indians mostly shifted from discussion of military tactics to questions of what to do with the reduced Indians now lacking leadership, land, and the means for self-sufficiency.

At the same time that the previously-mentioned events were occurring, Argentina was going through a number of profound changes at the social and economic levels. The population was growing quickly, exploding from 1.1 million inhabitants in 1857 to 3.3

[2] Alsina proposed a slow advance on the frontier and argued that "el plan del Poder Ejecutivo es contra el desierto para poblarlo y no contra los indios para destruirlos" (qtd. in Martínez Sarasola 268).
[3] The desire to expand the internal frontier to the Río Negro, located over 550 miles south of Buenos Aires, first emerged in the 1770s (Siegrist de Gentile and Martín 44).

million in 1890 (Rock 132). Much of this growth can be attributed to a burst of immigration: between 1871 and 1914 5.9 million immigrants arrived in Argentina, 3.1 million of whom stayed and established lives in the River Plate (Rock 141). Many of these immigrants settled in Buenos Aires, where concerns multiplied about hygiene, safety, and national identity (Nouzeilles, *Ficciones* 45). Foreign investment propelled the growth of industry in the 1870s and 1880s, and railroads began to crisscross the interior of the country (Rock 146). Distant points slowly became more accessible, increasing the desire to definitively expel the Indians and occupy the potentially fruitful lands. Exportation rose, multiplying the demand for resources and pulling in large sums of money (Rock 153). In fact, in 1909 there were only seven countries in the world that were more prosperous than Argentina (Glaeser) and the expression "riche comme un Argentin" could be heard in French until the 1930s (Rock xxii).

The Indian conflicts and changing fortunes of the nations of the River Plate contributed to a focus on national identity in which intellectual elites tried to make sense of history and define their nations in comparison to the established countries of Europe and North America. Coming off of years of internal strife and with still-shifting internal and external borders, the River Plate nation builders had to find ways to discriminate between those they wanted to form part of the nation and those they wished to exclude. They also needed to create cohesion among the disparate groups living in their territories. One of the most important methods for the elaboration of these new ideas of nation was through literature, including newspaper articles, political treatises, poems, anthems, novels, and academic papers. In his now-classic study, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson argues that the nation is in fact an "imagined political community" created by

narratives of nationalism that allow people that have never met each other to feel a "deep, horizontal comradeship" and sense of belonging (6-7). The printed word is a fundamental part of this process.

Marxist philosopher Etienne Balibar similarly stresses the importance of the narrative form in the shaping of the nation, arguing that:

> The history of nations, beginning with our own, is always presented to us in the form of a narrative which attributes to these entities the continuity of a subject. The formation of the nation thus appears as the fulfillment of a 'project' stretching over centuries, in which there are different stages and moments of coming to self-awareness, which the prejudices of the various historians will portray as more or less decisive. (86)

Thus, the imagined communities of nation are inserted into a diachronic perspective and naturalized, as this retrospective telling of the story always depicts them as destined to exist in their final (current) form. Balibar also adds an important element to the analysis of national formation: race. He asserts that nationalism and racism go hand-in-hand (37), as the production of difference justifies the solidification of (imagined) national borders through practices of elimination or oppression of those posited as Other and thus separate from the nation (39). This raises an important point: the intense racialization of the Indian in the nineteenth-century River Plate reflects an often unstated inverse need to define whiteness. That is, we can view the desire to define the Other as a characteristic of the struggle to define the (white/European/modern) newly consolidated nations.

In recent years, Hispanists have built upon and corrected Anderson and Balibar's theories with regard to the specific contexts of Spain and Spanish America. Tamar

Herzog's book, *Defining Nations* (2003), argues that Anderson and historians like him rely too much on "present-day perceptions" in studying the early modern period (2), leading to an erroneous focus on the political and legal foundations of the nation. Her research shows that in early-modern Iberia the community of natives actually emerged as the result of distinctions drawn between those who integrated and took on the rights and duties of belonging and those who were unwilling to do so (1). Similarly, the essays gathered in John Charles Chasteen and Sara Castro-Klaren's edited volume, *Beyond Imagined Communities* (2003), show that while Anderson's focus on print culture is of some value in studying Spanish America, his analysis of the region leaves aside important factors such as "economic, political, and military concerns arising after 1810" in the creation of the new nations (Chasteen xx). The essays of *Beyond Imagined Communities* highlight the complexity of national formation in the Latin American context. Together, these two texts are highly useful complements to the work of earlier scholars of nationalism and inform my analysis of nation, anthropology, and race in the nineteenth-century River Plate.

Local and Global Processes of Science

While much of human history has been characterized by a strong desire to understand the natural world, the nineteenth century was marked by an intensity and breadth of scientific activity never before seen. Clearly-defined disciplines were created, the work of the naturalist was professionalized through the formation of scientific institutions and publications, and grand theories of the natural laws governing the world were identified. While many of the best-known developments originated in Western Europe, scientific fervor was present around the world, including in seemingly peripheral

countries. The River Plate played a double role in the development of the natural sciences of the time: first as fertile territory for the explorations of foreign scientists such as Alexander von Humboldt, Charles Darwin, and Francis Bond Head; and second, as a place of much autochthonous scientific experimentation and innovation, particularly from the 1860s to about 1910. As the elite of the River Plate tried to form the history, traditions, and people of their territory into usable national identities, they frequently turned to the language and ideas of science. As Nancy Leys Stepan has argued, "…science was widely recognized as essential to Western material and cultural authority – to the very definition of modernity and civilization" (*"The Hour"* 40), and it is therefore not surprising that the elites of newly-formed nations would look to this discourse in order to legitimate and shape themselves into modern states equal to those of Europe. Of course, *science* is a broad term, encompassing many disciplines and approaches. Many of these were of use to the River Plate nation builders including medicine (J. Rodríguez, Nouzeilles), psychiatry (Piva), and physics (Hurtado de Mendoza). Perhaps the most influential branches – and those on which I focus here – were the budding fields of anthropology and ethnography. Classic studies of scientific racism, such as those of George Stocking, Marvin Harris, and Ernst Mayr, provide a useful foundation for studying the period but are often too reductive spatially (excluding peripheral producers of science) or temporally (viewing scientific racism as a specific moment with concrete beginning and end points). It is my aim to simultaneously expand and refine our understanding of the relationship between anthropology and ethnography and race and racism in Spanish America. Before entering into the specifics of these areas and their objects of study, it is important to quickly describe two larger systems and

philosophies of science that influenced thought within the subsectors: positivism and evolutionary theory.

Auguste Comte's *Course in Positive Philosophy*, published in several volumes, systematized the scientific disciplines and laid out the fundamentals of positivism. According to this conception, as civilizations develop, the human mind passes through three conditions: the Theological, which attributes phenomena to supernatural beings; the Metaphysical, which sees abstract forces inherent in all beings; and the Scientific, or Positive, in which the mind gives up the "vain search after Absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe, and the causes of phenomena" and instead seeks to use reasoning and observation to explain the laws to which all phenomena are subjected (Comte, *Course* 1: 2). The focus of science, therefore, should be to identify these laws through careful observation and reduce them to the smallest possible number, highlighting the connections of resemblance and succession between them (Comte, *Course* 1: 5-6). Comte's philosophy, like many works of the time, was not conceived as a mere intellectual exercise but instead as an important tool for the regeneration and bettering of society. In *A General View of Positivism* he proclaims, "When the [positivist] spirit is rightly understood, we find that it leads at once to an object far higher than that of satisfying our scientific curiosity; the object, namely, of organizing human life" (64). Positivism could replace Catholicism as religion, and through its focus on the development of order and progress bring about a better social state which would emphasize the collective over the individual (Comte, *A General* 69).

Positivism was hugely influential in Spanish America, guiding the desires and actions of the governing elites. The influence of Comte can be seen in nineteenth-century

essays and political treatises, as well as on the Brazilian flag that proclaims the country's motto of "Ordem e Progresso." Herbert Spencer's work tying positivism to the social sciences was fundamental in spreading the theory through the Americas (Guglielmini 83). The River Plate was no exception, mired in the grips of a "positivismo irradiante, porque de la filosofía extendió su influencia a vastos sectores de la cultura: sociología, política, pedagogía, psicología, economía, etc., inspirando, en base a sus principios, toda una concepción del mundo y de la vida" (Manganiello 119). To River Plate intellectuals, positivism meant that careful study and appropriate actions could guide their young nations to and even beyond European levels of greatness. Unfortunately for the Indians, it also meant that the chaos and barbarism associated with them would need to be eradicated as the nation progressed. Thus, positivism was fundamental to River Plate intellectuals' understanding of the world and particularly the *cuestión de indios*.

Another system that greatly affected thought both in scientific fields and outside of them was evolutionary theory, also known as transformism. The idea that organisms could evolve over time was not a new idea in the nineteenth century, but rather gained popularity and fixity. At the beginning of the period, evolutionary thought existed as a mass of theories rather than a unified trend, as no one knew exactly how heredity worked (Wade, *Race, Nature* 47). One of the most influential figures was Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, a French naturalist who developed and propagated the ancient theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. According to this theory, physical changes acquired by parents could be inherited by their children (Wade, *Race, Nature* 53): the environment affected the genetic material passed from one generation to the next (Wade, *Race, Nature* 59). Thus, programs of hygiene and education could improve the health and culture of not just

the subjects of these programs, but also that of successive generations. This optimistic outlook on heredity, which left room for the positive effects of nurture to interact with the effects of nature, was hugely popular in Spanish America and continued to be so even after it fell from favor in much of Europe (Stepan, *"The Hour"* 83).[4]

Competing and eventually replacing Lamarck's theory of soft inheritance was the theory of natural selection expounded by Darwin in *On the Origin of Species* (1859). Darwin's theory, in its most elemental explanation, argued that the great mechanism of nature was natural selection. Organisms were found to vary continually, even if just slightly. Those organisms whose variations best equipped them to survive in the habitat in which they lived would thrive and reproduce, while those that did not possess those variations would die out. Over time, the variations that promoted survival would be preserved in the original organisms' progeny, propelling the species to ever-higher levels of fitness and adaptation. Life was therefore a struggle for space and resources. This theory implied a conflictive view of the world and denied a greater plan of unity or progress inspired by some divine being, leaving change and evolution up to random variation (Novoa and Levine 8). While Darwin limited his discussion, at least originally, to plants and animals, others were quick to investigate the ways in which his postulations could be applied to the various races of mankind. One of the most influential proponents of using evolutionary theory to study mankind was Herbert Spencer, who greatly popularized the field in Spanish America (Graham 2). Darwin himself addressed the topic in 1871 with *The Descent of Man*.

[4] The doctrine of soft inheritance was most successfully challenged by the work of the German biologist August Weismann, who demonstrated that genetic material ("germ plasm") is constant and unaffected by environment.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Darwinism began to make inroads into the River Plate intellectual sphere, augmenting and competing with earlier theories of transformism. Marcelo Montserrat traces the arrival of *On the Origin of Species* in the River Plate to William Henry Hudson, an Argentine of English descent (786). Other early readers included Javier Muñiz and Domingo F. Sarmiento in Argentina, and Manuel Otero and members of the Rural Society in Uruguay (Mañé Garzón, *Un siglo* 72). While the intellectuals mentioned above and others supported Darwinian evolution, others, particularly those professing the Catholic faith, decried it. In Argentina, the Catholic leader José Manuel Estrada and the director of the Museo Público, Hermann Burmeister, led the charge against Darwinism. In Uruguay, Mariano Soler[5] was one of the most outspoken critics of the theory. The primary opposition to Darwinism often rested on religious grounds, but this did not mean that its detractors were naïve or anti-intellectuals. In fact, they often used scientific theories to form their arguments. In *El genesis de nuestra raza*, José Manuel Estrada addresses the opposition, saying "No os pido que respetéis la Biblia, pero respetad la ciencia y respetad la historia…respetad siquiera a los maestros de la ciencia" (32). He then relies on sources such as Georges Cuvier, Georges Louis-Le Clerc, Comte de Buffon, Charles Lyell, and Alexander von Humboldt in his arguments against evolution and for a divine, unitary origin. Hermann Burmeister took a different and less overtly religious tack, declaring Darwinism invalid due to a lack of scientific evidence.[6] This stance, it must be recognized, takes advantage of the very

[5] A well-known religious figure, in 1891 Soler became the first Archbishop of Montevideo.
[6] "Con todo, debemos confesar que no podemos otorgar una fuerza demostrativa a los argumentos de Darwin y sus partidarios, y que sería mejor dejar de lado esta cuestión como inaccesible a la experiencia…Me parece pues inútil para la ciencia empírica, imaginar concepciones hipotéticas sobre este problema y perderse en controversias sin salida posible en cuanto a su probabilidad" (qtd. in Montserrat 788).

salient fact that the long-term chronology of evolutionary change makes it incredibly difficult or even impossible to demonstrate empirically. Both sides of the debate were vociferous and made their opinions known in speeches, newspaper articles, books, and pamphlets. By 1880, Darwinian language and concepts had infiltrated fields from politics to psychology to literature, and consequently "it is likely that most of the literate public had formed some sort of opinion on the meaning of the new science" (Novoa and Levine 84).

The rise of evolutionary theory is intimately tied to the disciplinary emergence of anthropology in the mid-nineteenth century (Barnard 15). Referring to the study of man, *anthropology* as such dated back to ancient times (Topinard 1). In the nineteenth century its aims and methods were refined and it became professionalized as a discipline. In Argentina and Uruguay, numerous societies were founded to further the study of mankind, and personal collections gave birth to national museums displaying the artifacts and remains of the various human populations of the world. Although still in flux, the discipline focused on mankind as a whole – anthropology proper – and the various subgroupings or races of man. The latter study is generally referred to as *ethnography* or *ethnology*, although nineteenth-century scientists were not always in agreement as to what each of the terms denoted (Topinard 8). Following the example of the particular authors I study, I will use the term *ethnography*. Like most of the other natural and social sciences, anthropology and ethnography were profoundly affected by the tenets of positivism, evolution, and inheritance I have outlined above.

Before delving into the details of the debates shaping the study of mankind in the nineteenth century, I wish to insert a theoretical concern. The French anthropologist Paul

Topinard insisted that anthropology was more capable than any other science of "exercising an influence on our social organizations" (11). I would like to add that, conversely, the methods and observations of anthropology were profoundly affected by the context in which they were developed. Science does not exist in a vacuum nor is it the objective transcription of facts in the world. Rather, it is a "fight to *construct* reality" that thus reflects the social conditions in which the scientific fact was created (Latour and Woolgar 243). Speaking of ethnographies, James Clifford has shown how scientific writing is determined by social milieus, rhetorical expression, institutional tradition, the bounds of the genre, questions of politics, and the historical moment (6). All of these factors, as well as the complex practices of perception (Merleau-Ponty, Alcoff), intervene between observation and record, such that it is not reality that is produced by "ethnographic fictions" (Clifford 6)[7] but particular representations of reality. Furthermore, scientific fact cannot be seen as simply out there or neutral, but rather as a "productive force, generating knowledge and practices that shape the world in which we live" (Stepan, *"The Hour"* 11). Anthropology is profoundly political, intimately tied to "a vision of what we are, what our society is and can be" (Gellner ix). Throughout this study, I will repeatedly highlight the ways in which the anthropological or ethnographic "facts" presented by European, American, and specifically River Plate authors both responded to and shaped the contexts in which they were produced.

The fields of anthropology and ethnography were fundamental to questions of national identity and the resolution of the Indian problem due to their focus on race. In Spanish America in the eighteenth century, what we would today consider race was based

[7] Clifford Geertz has similarly explored the rhetoric of ethnography, concluding that "ethnographies tend to look at least as much like romances as they do like lab reports" (8).

on ideas of culture and often was elaborated around the term *casta*, which Ruth Hill defines as "not biology: it was a cluster of somatic, economic, linguistic, geographical, and other circumstances that varied from parish to parish, from town to town, and from person to person" (*Hierarchy* 200). In the nineteenth century, race came into its own and was increasingly defined in terms of biology. Anthropologists and ethnographers looked to quantify and record every aspect of the different races and their relations to each other. The origins of mankind, the number of races, the mechanisms of racial change, the possibilities each race had, and the consequences of racial mixing were brought under scrutiny. In Europe and North America, many scientists answered these questions in ways that ensured the lauding of the White races they belonged to and the continued oppression of the so-called lower races. This *scientific racism* used the methods and questions listed above to insist on the classification of races as absolutely and biologically different, the hierarchical ordering of these races, the belief that outer features were signs of inner qualities such as intelligence, the belief that these traits could be inherited, and the assertion that racial differences were so great as to be practically unbridgeable (Jacobson 32). From this perspective, lower races such as the American Indians were destined to forever flounder or disappear altogether due to natural and inescapable flaws in their biology, which could in turn be seen in their lower levels of culture and civilization. In Spanish America, as I have indicated, many intellectuals agreed with these assertions, or parts of them, especially with regard to Blacks and Indians. However, they found themselves in an impossible situation when the same scientific racism they used to justify the extermination of the natives also represented them and the other (often *mestizo*) *criollos* of the region as inferior to the Whites of Europe and North America. In this study

I examine the ways in which the River Plate intellectuals negotiated this sticky situation. I also elaborate the rhetorical strategies they used in order to make science serve the complex needs of the nation.

As my treatment of the above topics has suggested, it is important to remember that although most histories of science locate the anthropological debates and their authors in Europe and North America, they were also present in Spanish America. Spanish American intellectuals read foreign journals and corresponded with their counterparts further north and across the Atlantic. They did not just passively receive the ideas of the center, but were rather part of a periphery that nonetheless contributed to the center's intellectual production. Scholars such as Francisco P. Moreno and Vicente Fidel López published articles in the major anthropological journals of Europe (Quijada, "América" 320), where they were well-received. They also discussed their findings with luminaries such as Paul Topinard and Paul Broca and developed influential theories based on the peculiarities of their region and its history. River Plate intellectuals did find European theories useful for understanding the indigenous tribes and formulating and justifying policies of extermination, subjugation, or defense. At the same time, however, their observations at home and on the pampas prompted them to develop their own answers to the big questions about mankind. These theories strengthened, challenged, or even developed independently of European theories about race. The fact that the Argentine authors published, presented, and dialogued with scholars in Europe and North America proves they were an integral, if now overlooked, part of a global knowledge machine. Consequently, Spanish American science in the nineteenth century must be viewed in relation to both its local and global contexts.

Race, Then and Now

I have now laid out the historical context of both science and Indian relations in which the texts I study were developed; it remains to briefly discuss the theoretical position from which I approach the thorny topic of race. Although the scientists of the nineteenth-century worked to formulate race as a biological category, and thus natural, like many twenty-first century theorists I choose to view race as a socially-constructed category with no basis in biological reality. However, as Ian Hacking has convincingly demonstrated, just because something is a social construction does not mean that it does not have meaning or consequences (11). As a social construct, "race is *neither* biologically real *nor* nonexistent" (Yancy, *Black* 34). Race may not be "real," but it can still affect self-image, behavior, interpersonal interaction, and the ways in which we "assess each other morally, aesthetically, and ontologically" (Yancy, *Black* 34). Thus, biological race's fictional character does not mean that it has no reference in the real world.

Further complicating matters is the fact that in recent years cognitive scientists like Scott Atran, Douglas Medin, Susan Gelman, Lawrence Hirschfeld, and Francisco Gil-White have demonstrated that human beings have a tendency to believe that things have essences that make them what they are. I will examine the complicated concept of essence more in Chapter One, but, in short, I follow the definition of Gelman and Hirschfeld. For them, an essence is a nonvisible part or quality that is inherent, difficult to remove, passed on from parent to child, and has casual implications including authenticity and identity (427). Gelman and Hirschfeld's studies and those of Francisco Gil-White have shown that in terms of race, human beings tend to locate the responsible

essence in ancestry, making race a biological category (Gil-White, "Are Ethnic" 516). Thus, even though it has been shown that biological race is an illusion, human beings still believe and act as though racial essences exist (Gelman and Hirschfeld 405).

Nineteenth-century science was immersed in a quest for identifying the essence of race and understanding the implications this essence had for the possibilities of races and the nations they populated. In the River Plate, the races of most interest were the Indians, perceived as a stumbling block to future progress, and the *criollos* themselves, occupying a middle ground between peripheral Other and Europe. In the literature of the period, these tensions – Indians, race, nation, science – mutually interacted to form complex articulations of identity and policy prescription. Building on the work of previously-mentioned critics and particularly Michael Omi and Howard Winant's idea of *racial formation*, I view the texts I study as racial formations in which "social, economic, and political forces determine the context and importance of racial categories, and [in] which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings" (61). Thus, the racial representations in these works are closely tied to their context and had profound effects for the treatment of people and distribution of resources. As demonstrated by the work of Ruth Hill ("Between"), this concept and others from the field of Critical Race Theory can provide a useful framework for approaching the Spanish American nineteenth century.

I also draw from the field of Critical Whiteness Theory in my analysis of Spanish American texts. Emerging with the general field of Critical Race Studies, Whiteness theory proposes that like Black, Indian, or other "minority" identities, *White* must also be analyzed as a political and cultural position that is neither neutral nor natural. Cheryl Harris, Robert Young, Richard Dyer, David Roediger, George Yancy, Matthew Frye

Jacobson, Linda Martín Alcoff, and many others have contributed to making visible the historical and political history of the category of *White*, the ways in which White privilege is formed and enacted at the individual and structural levels, and the methods by which the fiction of White identity is sustained.[8] These studies bring new awareness and critical focus to a racial category once seen as a neutral norm unable to be dissected in the same ways as other identities. At present, Whiteness theory has only infrequently been used in conjunction with the Spanish American context, but the work of Lisa Surwillo, Ruth Hill, and Galen Joseph has shown that it can be an effective approach for analyzing texts and phenomena in the region, both today and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. My study aims to complement these texts and demonstrate how River Plate intellectuals of the late nineteenth century created and narrated the scientific "evidence" for the assertion that Argentina and Uruguay were White nations. In doing so, I hope to amplify our current understanding of Whiteness by presenting a context with conditions and institutions different from those in the United States.

Narrating the Nation: Scientifically-Informed Racial Foundations in the River Plate

In the following chapters I will look at a variety of racial projects influenced by science and found in texts published between 1870 and 2010 by Argentine and Uruguayan authors. The first three chapters look specifically at texts published before 1910, and thus belonging to the nineteenth-century intellectual milieu. It must be remembered that the roles of writer, scientist, and politician were often fulfilled by the same person, such that "coinciden prácticas científicas, o de ensayo teórico, con el ejercicio de responsabilidades políticas y administrativas" (Quijada, *Ancestros* 1). Of the

[8] For an excellent overview of many of the directions of Critical Whiteness Theory, see *Critical White Studies*, edited by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic.

authors I study, Mansilla, Sarmiento, Zorrilla, and López all exercised political positions in their respective countries. Those who did not – Holmberg, Onelli, and Moreno – had many friends in politics and were all working with official government sponsorship for much of their careers. Thus, the close relationship between science and politics described by Woolgar, Latour, and Stepan is intensified in the context of the nineteenth-century River Plate.

The texts I include in the first three chapters are not only united chronologically, but also thematically and through the personal connections of the authors. Many belonged to the so-called Generación del '80, and even those that are not traditionally included were members of the same societies and intellectual circles.[9] These connections are indirectly manifested in the texts through similar ideas and philosophies, and more directly through mentions of one another and to shared external references. Speaking of the 1880s, Miguel Cané insisted "Todos estábamos ahí," when referring to the fact that nearly everyone of a certain sphere of society shared the intertwined experiences of going to the frontier and then participating in the cultural production of the intellectual elite (Viñas 227). As such, the texts I have chosen can be viewed as a cross section of the late nineteenth-century River Plate, a society where divisions between disciplines and professions were frequently mitigated by shared experience and the united opposition of the *civilizados* to the barbarous masses. The twenty-first century texts I examine in the fourth chapter are at a chronological and generic distance from those of the first three chapters. Published over a century later, Bonelli and Casañas's novels are romances whose primary function is to titillate, not teach. Nonetheless, they absolutely should be

[9] Moreno was Holmberg's cousin, corresponded with Mansilla, quoted López, and worked closely with Onelli at the Museo de la Plata and on the Comisión de Límites.

included in a study such as this due to the profound influence of the nineteenth-century texts on them and the racial formations they project.

The number of texts I could have included in this study was enormous: anthropology and questions of racial identity have cast a long shadow over River Plate intellectual history. In the nineteenth century I could have included the work of Estanislao Zeballos, Florentino Ameghino, Leopoldo Lugones, or more of the works of Domingo F. Sarmiento. In the twentieth/twenty-first centuries, the novels of Cristina Loza and María Rosa Lojo would have contributed to my thesis. In the end, I chose the authors included here because I believe them to be exemplary and because their texts, spanning canonical and less-so works, clearly represent several of what I believe to be the most important aspects of the racial production of the era.

In Chapter One I begin with what may be the most well-known text included in this study: Lucio V. Mansilla's *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*. As a military man, politician, and intellectual/writer, Mansilla perfectly embodies the confluence of factors contributing to the racialization of the Argentine Indian in the late nineteenth century. Originally published as a series of letters directed to his Chilean friend Santiago Arcos and printed in the national newspaper *La Tribuna*, *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* appeared as a stand-alone book at the end of 1870. In it, Mansilla relates the details of an 18-day expedition he led from Río Cuarto in the province of Córdoba to the encampments of the Ranquel *cacique* Mariano Rosas in Leuvucó. In the text, Mansilla states that he undertook the journey in order to ratify a peace treaty with the Ranqueles; Silvia Fernández has proven that Mansilla went to the *toldos* at least partially to avoid facing court martial for the improper execution of a deserter (370). The resulting record

of his journey crosses generic boundaries and frustrates expectations, presenting a web of travel writing, philosophical digressions, fireside stories, and political recommendations. After observing the Ranqueles for 18 days, Mansilla leaves with a new respect for the "barbarians" of the pampas and the certainty that although they must be subdued in order to better the nation, they should not be exterminated.

The few critics who have studied *Una excursión* through the lens of science have tended to view it as an attempt to contradict and correct the work of Argentine armchair ethnographers, particularly Domingo F. Sarmiento and his determinist *civilización y barbarie* dichotomy. This reading, suggested by Carlos Alonso, Andrew Brown, and María Rosa Lojo, argues that Mansilla relies on the authority of first-hand experience to collapse the gap between civilization and barbarism and defend the Ranqueles against those that called for their extermination. In this chapter I refine and amply this interpretation in three ways. First, I propose that the category of *Indians* was not a fixed concept in the nineteenth century, but rather the product of a shifting and often contradictory web of discourses. To speak of Mansilla's defense of the Indians, therefore, requires a prior understanding of the complexity of this category. I argue that throughout the text he creates *Indian* as a term and fills it with specific meanings through his word choice and portrayals of the people of Tierra Adentro. In the second part, I view Mansilla's ethnographic conclusions in a larger context, particularly that of American and European ethnographic tracts. I argue that *Una excursión* is more than a reaction to Sarmiento. Rather, it is a summation and sorting of numerous racial expressions both current and ancient, local and global. Thus, it reveals the nature and extent of the participation of Argentine intellectuals in the shaping of the discipline of anthropology

and concept of race. In the third section I depart from all existing criticism and affirm that despite its title, *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* is as much about Whiteness as it is about the Indian. While lacking the ethnographic observations Mansilla makes of the Ranqueles, the text clearly advances a racial formation that takes into account both Indians and *criollos*. Thus, the text must be considered not only in regard to local conditions but also as a reaction to a global manifestation of scientific racism that represented the *mestizo* American *criollo* as of questionable fitness for self-government or even continued existence.

In order to elaborate this racial vision, Mansilla interacts with the global debates over the origin and nature of the races of mankind: were all races different varieties of the human species, or were they different species themselves? At its most basic, *race* for nineteenth-century anthropologists was "synonymous with the natural divisions of the human group, however remote the period at which they were constituted" (Topinard 9). However, the nature of those divisions was problematic. At the root of the question was the problem of how to define *species*[10] and how to apply this concept to humankind. Some scientists, called monogenists, believed that all of the races had a single origin and that variability was caused by external circumstances or sexual crossing (Topinard 15). All humans were thus one species and the different races were only varieties. This fact, depending on one's definition of *species*, usually meant that the races shared some common characteristics and were able to reproduce with each other. This opinion was compatible with the Christian story of Genesis, but was also supported by scientists such as James Prichard of Great Britain, who used empirical observation to prove the single

[10] The history of the concept of *species* is incredibly complex, spanning thousands of years and encompassing a dizzying array of definitions (Wilkins 2). I will treat it rather superficially in order to avoid long digressions that would derail the exposition of my argument.

origin of mankind. The other camp, known as polygenists, believed that the races were different species with distinct origins and could not be fundamentally changed by external factors (Topinard 15). Important polygenists included Louis Agassiz, Samuel Morton, Josiah Nott, George Gliddon, and Robert Knox. Although monogenism was the traditionally orthodox approach, by about 1850 the polygenist opinion had become the dominant theory in Europe and North America (Wade, *Race, Nature* 60).

Even monogenists admitted that there were clear and seemingly fundamental differences between the races that needed to be explained in some way. These differences were seen as absolutely natural, profound, and fixed (Stepan, *The Idea* xx). Parting from the ancient idea of the Great Chain of Being, whereby "nature produced living things in a great and continuous ladder, each rung of the ladder being separated from the next by almost imperceptible differences" (Stepan, *The Idea* 6), nineteenth-century scientists used comparative anatomy and other forms of empirical evidence to rank the races of mankind. Although positions on this chain varied, Blacks and Indians were always located closer to the beasts at the bottom while the White races crowned the very top of the scale. In Chapter One, I demonstrate that *Una excursión* is a carefully-developed racial formation that responds to these debates over the nature and possibilities of the various races of the world. To support this analysis, I turn to Atran, Gelman, Hirschfeld, and Gil-White's work on essentialism as well as the careful studies of visibility and perception by Linda Martín Alcoff and Matthew Fry Jacobson.

In Chapter Two, I study two poems written after the end of General Julio Roca's Conquista del Desierto: Juan Zorrilla de San Martín's *Tabaré* (1888) and Eduardo Holmberg's *Lin-Calél* (1910). At first glance it may seem unproductive to put these

poems into contact. The two texts were written over twenty years apart and Zorrilla de San Martín writes about Uruguay while Holmberg focuses on his native Argentina. Additionally, *Tabaré* was well-received by the elite and the general public and quickly reached canonical status. In his correspondence with Zorrilla, the great Spanish writer Miguel de Unamuno admits to having read *Tabaré* several times and opines, "es para mi gusto el mejor poema americano en lengua española" (Visca 23). Even today, over a century after its original publication, the poem is common grade school material in Uruguay (García Méndez 15)[11] and appears on many graduate program reading lists in the United States. *Lin-Calél*, in contrast, has never been the subject of a critical study, appearing only in lists of Holmberg's collected works without further commentary.[12] However, Holmberg's *oeuvre* in general is currently enjoying a surge in popularity as demonstrated by the increase in critical texts about him and re-editions of his works.[13] It is an auspicious time to examine *Lin-Calél*, particularly with regard to the scientific theories more explicitly addressed in other Holmberg texts. Finally, and most importantly for this study, *Tabaré* was written by a zealous Catholic while *Lin-Calél* is the child of a well-known scientist and professor about whom it has been said, "fue el encargado de diseminar las ideas de Darwin en la Argentina; indudablemente sus escritos, artículos y conferencias así lo testimonian" (Marún 16). This chapter builds on existing scholarship

[11] The name *Tabaré* has even escaped the bounds of the page and become a common brand name. Uruguayan critic Javier García Méndez writes, "Recuerdo que los cuadernos de escuela de mi infancia eran de la marca *Tabaré* y que su carátula mostraba a un joven agonizante vestido de aborigen" (15).

[12] In its operatic form, first conceived by Víctor Mercante in 1924, Holmberg's poem has reached Argentine audiences as recently as June 2010, when it was performed in the Teatro del Libertador in Córdoba ("Lin-Calél"). I would argue that the poem has fallen by the wayside because, quite frankly, it is not very enjoyable to read. A one-act opera is a much more efficient approach to Holmberg's thesis.

[13] Works which discuss Holmberg's life and activities include *La piedra del escándalo* (2008), *From Man to Ape. Darwinism in Argentina, 1870-1920* (2010), and *Una gloria silenciosa: dos siglos de ciencia en la Argentina* (2010). Texts by Holmberg which have been published or reedited with critical studies relatively recently include: *Olimpio Pitango de Monalia* (1994), *Filigranas de cera y otros textos* (2000), *El tipo más original* (2001), *Eduardo L. Holmberg. Cuarenta y tres años de obras manuscritas e inéditas (1872-1915)* (2002), *Dos partidos en lucha. Fantasía científica* (2005), and *Viaje a Misiones* (2012).

by placing a canonical work in a new context – that of the scientific debates over the origins and future of the races of Latin America – and in relation to another text that has been largely ignored.

Despite the apparent differences in the texts' genesis, *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* share many features. Both poems were written in Buenos Aires,[14] and in the eras in which the poems are set both countries were part of the unified viceroyalty of Peru (and later Río de la Plata). Both are (very) long poems with simultaneously epic and elegiac tones, both are titled for their *mestizo* protagonists, and both explore the conflict between White and Indian society in the River Plate through war and romance. Additionally, both end with deaths, although I will argue later that the different circumstances of these deaths are revealing. In *Tabaré*, the eponymous protagonist is a blue-eyed child born of the relationship between an Indian *cacique* and his Spanish captive. She is a pious woman who dies shortly after baptizing her son in the Catholic faith. Tabaré is raised with his father's Charrúa tribe, although he is distinguished by his coloring and a certain mysterious air about him. The events narrated in the poem are triggered when the Spanish attempt to found San Salvador a second time. Tabaré falls in love with Blanca, the younger sister of the Spanish military captain Don Gonzalo, and for this he is expulsed from the town. The forest is no longer welcoming to him either and he wanders feverishly until fainting on his mother's grave. Later, the Charrúas raid San Salvador and Blanca is taken captive by the violent *cacique* Yamandú. Tabaré kills Yamandú with his bare hands, rescues Blanca, and returns her to her brother, who kills Tabaré because he believes him to be the kidnapper.

[14] "Une tres grande partie du 'Tabaré' fut écrite en exil, ainsi que la fin du poeme (écrite en Argentine)" (Anido 173).

Lin-Calél tells a similar story of conflict between cultures but with a more concerted effort to show the Indian perspective. The poem begins with a conference amongst all the Indian tribes in which they debate the impending battle with the blood-thirsty Spanish. A witch's prophecy and the wisdom of the elders determine that the only possible path to victory is for the middle-aged *cacique* Auca-Lonco to marry Lin-Calél, the inordinately beautiful daughter of the *cacique* of another tribe and a Christian captive. Reukenám, a young warrior, is sent to announce the prophecy, buy Lin-Calél from her father, and escort her home where she will be the "Reina del Pehuenche andino" (58). On the journey, Reukenám and Lin-Calél fall in love. In Holmberg's poem the amorous relationship is between a *mestiza* and an Indian, as opposed to Zorrilla de San Martín's *mestizo*-Spaniard relationship, but the pairing ends equally tragically as Reukenám commits suicide by jumping off a cliff when he discovers that Lin-Calél believes in the Christian God. Throughout the text, Holmberg includes valuations of indigenous culture and criticism of the Spanish actions during the Conquest. Thus, Fernando Operé, one of the few critics to mention this work, situates it in the context of the development of *indigenista* literature as "un poema póstumo y precursor. Cierra el ciclo por el que la literatura justificó actos militares conducentes a empujar las tribus fronterizas hacia un irreconocible sur e inicia un ciclo de literatura indigenista marcada por un mal asimilado sentido de culpa" (255).

In this chapter I examine how and to what effect Zorrilla and Holmberg incorporate the debates over degeneration versus progression and the advisability of racial mixing into their poems. For nineteenth-century anthropologists, related to the question of origins was the problem of the direction and mechanisms of racial change. As

Topinard explained, "Whether we accept the modern doctrine [Darwinism] or not, it is undeniable that Man, by a certain method of high breeding and well-managed crossing, is capable of being changed in successive generations, in his physical as well as his moral character. According to the modes adopted, he will go on either degenerating or improving" (12). Topinard's assertion points to several of the central positions held with regard to racial change. Some argued that inferior races had been subject to processes of degeneration due to biological, moral, or environmental causes. Others believed that all races possessed the ability to progress from a state of savagery to barbarism and finally to civilization, but that some had not progressed as far as others. The development of Darwinian evolution added another element to the idea of racial change by showing that inferior races were those unfavored by selection and thus destined to become extinct (Novoa 220).

In *Tabaré*, the fervently Catholic Zorrilla insists that the Indian is a degenerate being that had fallen from God's grace and was thus destined to disappear. As a committed supporter of evolution, in *Lin-Calél* Holmberg depicts the Indian as the loser in the struggle for life, an organism inherently weaker and thus destined to become extinct. Although their understandings of race and racial change are diametrically opposite, both Holmberg and Zorrilla arrive at the conclusion that the pure Indian had no place in the future of the River Plate.

Another debate which greatly shaped the poetics of *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* was the question of the desirability of miscegenation. This topic was addressed comprehensively by Paul Broca in his 1864 tract, *On the Phenomena of Hybridity in the Genus Homo*. Here, he studied interracial sexual relations in order to determine if all human races were

eugenistic together (that is, their offspring were completely fertile) or if certain crossings were entirely sterile (agenesic) or mostly or partially so (dysgenesic or paragenesic). Scientists were also interested in determining the strength, vitality, and intelligence of the mixed-race offspring. Broca concluded that all human races were to some degree eugenistic, although there were crossings that were significantly less productive (15). Arthur de Gobineau, Robert Knox, George Gliddon, and Josiah Nott all argued that racial mixing could have disastrous results for a given population. For example, Robert Knox claimed that the *mestizo* was "a monstrosity of nature - there is no place for such a family: no such race exists on the earth, however closely affiliated the parents may be" (88).

This question was particularly interesting to Spanish American intellectuals, as centuries of sexual relations between the Spanish conquerors and the native populations had created a large *mestizo* population. Some felt they needed to "answer negative European racial mythologies about hybridization and degeneration with mythologies of their own" that positively represented the *mestizo* as vigorous and fertile (Stepan, *"The Hour"* 138). Others such as Andrés Bello, Alcides Arguedas, Carlos Bunge, and Domingo F. Sarmiento were strongly against *mestizaje* and attributed many of the ills plaguing the region to the mixed ancestry of its people. Holmberg and Zorrilla also engaged with the debate over the *mestizo* and his or her role in the racial composition of the nation. Using the plot element of interracial romance, Zorrilla shows the *mestizo* to be as unviable as the Indian, while Holmberg's *mestiza* protagonist, Lin-Calél, is exceptionally strong, beautiful, and smart. Overall, Zorrilla's poem advances a vision of

Uruguay as a purely Spanish, Catholic country, while Holmberg chooses to depict the *mestizo* as the base of a strong and productive nation.

In addition to close readings of the poems and principle European and American scientific tracts, in this chapter I rely on several important texts written about the United States Indian experience. Among these, the most useful is Brian Dippie's work on the vanishing Indian. Dippie identifies a North American literary tradition of presenting the Indians as "a vanishing race; they have been wasting away since the day the white man arrived, diminishing in vitality and numbers until, in some not too distant future, no red men will be left on the face of the earth" (xi). The North American context was clearly not identical to the South American one, yet I feel justified in using Dippie's hypothesis as a frame for Zorrilla and Holmberg's texts. In the late nineteenth century, Argentina sent representatives north to study United States Indian policy with an eye to implementing similar strategies in the region (Jones 41). Furthermore, the texts I study demonstrate many similar themes and tropes, legitimizing the careful cross-hemispheric use of certain ideas.

Chapter Three looks at how the concept of prehistory was invented in the River Plate and the role it played in nineteenth-century racial formations. Departing from the extremely helpful studies of Podgorny, Quijada, Andermann, and Hill, I examine texts by Francisco P. Moreno, Vicente Fidel López, and Clemente Onelli, focusing particularly on how their understandings of American prehistory influenced their representations and treatment of contemporary Indians. Until geology proved that the earth and its formations had been around for nearly inconceivable amounts of time, most people assumed that human history as recorded by writing (starting with the Bible) was the extent of human

life on earth. The development of geology by Charles Lyell and others, as well as the discovery of the first fossil humans, pushed back the beginning of time to very remote epochs. Scientists and intellectuals then had to find ways to fill in this gaping hole in human knowledge. John Lubbock, Edward Tylor, and Lyell, among others, began to investigate in Europe.

In Argentina, Francisco Moreno, the founder of the Museo de La Plata and an explorer of Patagonia, played a fundamental role in the creation of prehistory through his writings and actions. In *Viaje a la Patagonia Austral* (1876) and a series of speeches and articles, he argues that theories of continental drift and animal migration suggest that humankind could have originated in Patagonia, not Asia or Europe as commonly claimed. Over the years, prehistoric man then migrated around the world to Europe where he evolved and formed the great civilizations of antiquity. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the descendents of primitive man returned to the Americas as Spanish conquistadors. In the meantime, the prehistoric men who had stayed in South America had not evolved, such that the Indians the Spanish encountered were literally the prehistoric ones. Thus, Moreno is able to create a prehistory that glorifies the Argentine territory while legitimizing the Spanish conquest and justifying the extermination or forced assimilation of the prehistoric remnants that were the contemporary Indians. This *petrificación del Otro* (Andermann) was literally brought to life (or death) in his incorporation of the *caciques* Foyel and Inacayal in the Museo de la Plata, first as living specimens and later as skeletons.

In a series of articles published in *La Revista de Buenos Aires* from 1865 to 1869 and the Parisian-published book *Les races aryennes du Peroú* (1871), Vicente Fidel

López constructs a similar glorious prehistory for Argentina. Instead of relying on the observation of Indians in the field or the archaeological remnants of the past, López finds the signs of prehistory in the language and customs of the Quechua of Peru and Northern Argentina. Using a series of rhetorical strategies to appropriate this peripheral Indian community for the Argentine nation, López argues that the indigenous people of the region belong to the same race as the great civilizations of antiquity – the Pelasgians. He employs a series of philological comparisons between Quechua and Greek, Sanskrit, and other ancient languages to prove the cultural and biological connection between these far-flung tribes. This prehistory lauds the ancient Indian, but like Moreno, López glosses over the problems of the contemporary Indian. In his *Manual de la historia argentina* he erases the Indian from the nation, once again privileging European races at the expense of the contemporary natives.

Finally, I offer Clemente Onelli's 1904 *Trepando los Andes* as a counterpoint to the racial formations of Moreno and López. Almost completely overlooked by critics, Onelli's text offers a contrasting use of the concept of prehistory. Onelli was an Italian immigrant to Argentina who was taken under Moreno's wing. He eventually explored Patagonia several times and participated in the resolution of the border dispute between Argentina and Chile. *Trepando los Andes*, the travelogue of one his expeditions, was a very popular book in the Spanish-speaking world. In the newspaper *La Nación*, Rubén Darío wrote that "Onelli era sabidor, estudioso y poeta" and Leopoldo Lugones insisted that "no siempre es posible dar con naturalistas como ese admirable Onelli" ("A Clemente Onelli"). Additionally, Miguel Cané wrote to Onelli that "Acabo de leer su libro, uno de los que mayor goce intimo y profundo me ha causado, entre las

publicaciones entre nosotros" (*Letter*). Although today Onelli and *Trepando los Andes* are almost completely forgotten, both author and text made an impact on the nineteenth-century intellectual elite of Spanish America.

Like Moreno, Onelli sees the signs of prehistory throughout Patagonia: old bones, broken ceramics, well-worn paths, and arrowheads. However, whereas for Moreno these artifacts were the basis of a glorious national (pre)history, Onelli saw them as little more than refuse. In *Trepando los Andes* he directly contradicts the formulations of Moreno and López, arguing that the Argentine Indians were not destined to remain in a prehistoric state. If they were at the time, it was because the government had not done enough to protect and encourage them. For Onelli, the Indian race had as much potential – if not more – than the European settlers populating Patagonia. Thus, his text dialogues critically with the texts of his mentor, Moreno, and others that had called for the extermination of the Indian. Together, these three texts demonstrate that like *Indian*, *prehistory* was a concept that needed to be negotiated and took into account local realities, global theories, and personal preferences.

In Chapter Four I leave the nineteenth century behind and look at three romance novels published by Argentine authors between 2005 and 2010. Despite the temporal gap and profound generic shift, these texts have much in common with the earlier texts I study. Florencia Bonelli's *Indias blancas* and its sequel, *La vuelta del ranquel* (both published in 2005), and Gloria Casañas's *La maestra de la laguna* build upon, correct, and ultimately reaffirm the representations of the Indian and *mestizo* developed in the nineteenth-century texts.

Indias blancas tells the parallel stories of two pairs of star-crossed lovers: Laura Escalante and Nahueltruz Guor, and her aunt Blanca Montes and Nahueltruz's father, Mariano Rosas. In the novel's present (1871), Laura travels from Buenos Aires to Córdoba to care for her sick brother, the missionary Agustín. There, she falls in love with Nahueltruz Guor, the son of the *cacique* of the Ranquel Indians. Their love grows clandestinely until a jealous servant helps the evil Coronel Racedo discover their secret affair. Racedo and his assistant attack Nahueltruz, resulting in the death of Racedo and the desperate flight of Nahueltruz. The story ends with Laura being forced to marry a family friend, Julián Riglos. At the same time, the reader is submerged in the past when Laura receives a poncho, a locket, and a diary written by Blanca Montes, her father's first wife and Agustín's mother. Fragments from the diary are interspersed with the main story. Married to a cruel man, Blanca is taken captive by Mariano Rosas after visiting the ranch of Juan Manuel de Rosas. Although their early encounters are characterized by hate and rape, over time they fall in love and she gives birth to Nahueltruz Guor. After being rescued from the *toldos* by her uncle, Blanca suffers in Córdoba until she receives the news that her Indian husband and son are alive. She returns to the *toldos* and lives there happily until her premature death from tuberculosis.

La vuelta del ranquel picks up the story of *Indias blancas* six years after Nahueltruz has fled and Laura has married against her will. Her husband Riglos has since died and Laura has entered into an affair with General Roca, who is on the verge of undertaking the final expedition to the desert. Laura's peace is disrupted when one Lorenzo Rosas arrives from France with Laura's aunt's stepson and his family, for Rosas is none other than Nahueltruz, cleaned up and polished after a six-year stay in Europe.

Now with short hair, perfect command of multiple languages, wealth from a successful horse breeding business, and a publication on Petrarch, he becomes the darling of the Buenos Aires social circle. Tension and hatred simmer between him and Laura, especially once rumors swirl about her possible affair with Roca. Most of the text deals with the back and forth between them, as Laura is trapped between loving representatives of the victor and the conquered. Nahueltruz and Laura have a terrible falling out that lasts until the jealous servant of *Indias blancas*, Loretana, reappears to tell Nahueltruz the truth about the events in Río Cuarto. The two lovers reunite, Laura gives birth to Nahueltruz's son, they get married, and live happily ever after on a plantation Nahueltruz buys to house and give work to his people.

Finally, Casañas's *La maestra de la laguna* relates the story of Elizabeth O'Connor, a strong-willed Bostonian who travels to Argentina to become a teacher in one of Sarmiento's newly-opened "escuelas normales." A mean trick by a jealous woman sends her to a remote and uncivilized place in the South, Mar Chiquita, where she manages to teach a group of Indian children despite a total lack of resources. There, her path repeatedly crosses with that of Francisco Peña y Balarce, a formerly wealthy, upper-class Argentine escaping from the revelation that he is a bastard and from a mysterious disease that causes severe pain attacks that leave him temporarily blind. They begin a tumultuous love-hate relationship that ends with him taking her virginity during a terrible storm on Christmas. The story continues to develop the misunderstandings and missteps of the unusual pair until they are attacked by an Indian *malón* on their way across the pampas. The attack is led by Jim Morris, the mysterious man (and North American Indian) that Elizabeth had met on the ship to Buenos Aires. Jim assaults the caravan in

order to take revenge on Doctor Nancy, a French doctor who had murdered Jim's father and brother and taken their skulls to display in his museum. In the aftermath, their friend Julián is missing and presumed dead, Francisco survives, and Elizabeth is taken captive by Jim. Eventually she escapes from him and it is revealed that she is pregnant by Francisco. She returns to the Zaldívar family ranch and marries Francisco despite continued tension. Later, he is captured by Indians in the tense lead up to the battle at San Carlos in which the great *cacique* Calfucurá would be defeated. It turns out that either Calfucurá or another *cacique* is Francisco's real father: his mother was taken captive and impregnated soon after she was married. Francisco is actually a *mestizo*, a fact that explains some of his mysterious qualities and his Indian eyes. In the end, Francisco and Elizabeth are rescued, they realize how much they love each other, and everyone lives happily ever after, except the Indians who have been defeated.

All three of these novels critically revisit the practices and thought of the nineteenth-century scientific institutions. They condemn the practice of robbing Indian tombs for bones and artifacts, show the negative effects science had on local indigenous tribes, and powerfully decry the role museums like the Museo de la Plata played in the oppression and extermination of the native people. They also raise questions about the nature of race, showing how racial identity is contextual, relational, and performative. In this way, the novels support the social movements that since the 1990s have worked in Argentina to return museum-stored Indian bones to their tribes and win recognition, dignity, and legal rights for the indigenous people still living in the region. At the same time, however, Bonelli and Casañas's novels perpetuate much of the racial thinking developed during the late nineteenth century. They continue to rely on stereotype and

notions of biological essence to characterize their protagonists. They also defend some of the primary participants in the ideation and realization of the military submission of the Indian tribes, including Domingo Sarmiento and Julio Roca. Finally, the settings of the novels and important changes to historical fact contribute to a general trend in these romances whereby the Indian can only be included in the nation if he is whitened and assimilated to the point of becoming invisible. Anyone who chooses to remain an Indian is relegated to the past and denied a place in the nation's future. Thus, these twenty-first romances preserve much of the discriminatory racial thinking of the nineteenth-century, a particularly troubling development considering their immense popularity both in Argentina and abroad.

A Quick Word About Words

As my dissertation shows, words are powerful, especially when they are used to categorize people and assign them traits and destinies. From the first contact between Europeans and the native peoples of the Americas, labels shaped the expectations and dealings between the groups. The umbrella term *Indian* united large groups of disparate peoples, effectively establishing an entire continent of people as Other and therefore different from the self, regardless of their customs, beliefs, or behaviors (Berkhofer 3). Although derived from a geographical misunderstanding and lacking any correspondence to reality, the label lingers today, especially as the Spanish *indio*. I also use the term *criollo* to mean the non-Indian inhabitants of the River Plate territories, departing from its original meaning of someone born in the Americas of Spanish parents. Thus, in my usage - derived from Mansilla's - the *criollo* can be a *mestizo*. Throughout this study, I work to expose the meanings and assumptions hidden in terms such as *race*, *Indian*, *criollo*, and

White, showing how they are intimately tied to historical circumstances and societal preferences. Despite this deconstruction of the terms, it will be noted that I continue to use them throughout this study. I do so not because I believe that they are the most valid, but rather to use a vocabulary consistent with that of the texts I study and that will facilitate my readers' comprehension of my arguments.

Chapter One. "Somos una raza privilegiada:" Racial Defenses of the Indian and *Criollo* in Lucio V. Mansilla's *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the issue of what to do with the native peoples of the pampas thoroughly occupied the attention of the Argentine elite. As the young nation looked to secure its borders, foment loyal citizens, and grow economically, the Indian loomed large as an obstacle to the achievement of these goals. Potential solutions and harsh debate swirled through cafés, newspaper offices, intellectual societies, and even the chambers of Congress. Despite the overwhelming consensus that the *cuestión de indios* needed to be resolved, there was little agreement on who the Indian was, apart from his or her antagonistic role as Other. Some proclaimed him or her a full Argentine citizen, others a being completely antithetical to the forms of civil society and thus worthy of extinction. Still others held both positions at the same time. Lucio Victorio Mansilla's *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* (1870) is a fecund site for exploring the role of the anthropological sciences in the shaping of the many representations of the Indian and the determination of possible courses of action. In this chapter I highlight three interrelated aspects of *Una excursión*, each of which illustrate key features of Mansilla's thought and the general Argentine intellectual milieu. In the first part of the chapter I examine the classificatory terms in the text in order to determine which specific system(s) Mansilla uses to isolate the Ranqueles as a racial group distinct from others living in the Argentine territory. I argue that in doing so he draws from a huge web of discourses – old and new, theoretical and empirical, global and local, religious and scientific – that highlight the instability of both race and racial categorizations in the mid-1800s. In the second section I examine how Mansilla inserts the Ranqueles into the

global debates on monogenism versus polygenism and racial determinism. I propose that the great scientific questions of the nineteenth century had specific importance in the Argentine context where the physical immediacy of the Indian created a reciprocal relationship between scientific theory and political action. Finally, I turn accepted readings of *Una excursión* on their head and argue that the text is as much a defense of the *mestizo criollo* as it is of the Ranqueles. By tracing the various racial projects Mansilla develops over the seventy letters of *Una excursión* I open the text to new readings and complicate our understanding of the history of science and the development of the concept of race in the River Plate.

Una excursión a los indios ranqueles was an immensely popular text at the time of its publication and in the following years (Guglielmini 113). This popularity makes possible the argument I have laid out in the previous paragraph: although many may have disagreed with Mansilla's specific conclusions, the text can still be considered representative of generalized attitudes towards scientific theory and its practical applications in the River Plate region. One of the most outstanding characteristics of *Una excursión* is this attempt to locate it within a global scientific discourse, especially with regard to questions of race, ethnicity, and human development arising from the crystallization of the disciplines of anthropology and ethnography.[15] Several critics have

[15] There exists debate over the origins and exact delineations between the closely-related disciplines of anthropology, archeology, ethnography, and ethnology. Paul Topinard's text *L'Anthopologie*, originally published in French in 1876 and translated into English in 1877, asserts that "The word *Anthopology* is of ancient date, and has always signified the study of Man," (1) but that recent developments have professionalized and brought together this study as a discipline. Historians of science agree, stating that in the mid-nineteenth century the discipline of anthropology grew in importance and institutionalization (Honigmann 113). The work of John Lubbock, as expounded in *Prehistoric Times, as Illustrated by Ancient Remains and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages* (1865) and *The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man* (1870), embodies and develops these trends. Mansilla, therefore, is writing during the early stages of this global process and before anthropology is truly institutionalized in Argentina, a moment whose arrival can perhaps be marked by the speeches in favor of the discipline by

noted Mansilla's scientific pretensions and judged them to be quite successful. For instance, Eva Gillies assigns Mansilla a precursive role: "It [*Una excursión*] is, for one thing, a remarkably competent ethnography of the Ranqueles as they were in 1870. Mansilla was writing a few years before Morgan, Tylor, Frazer, and the other founding fathers of modern anthropology, yet his voracious intellectual curiosity led him to ask an ethnographer's questions" (xxxv-xxxvi). This view of *Una excursión* praises the ethnographic work of the text, particularly the data that Mansilla collects with regard to the Indian language, marriage customs, and governmental practices. Other critics have productively analyzed the text as a response to Domingo F. Sarmiento's *civilización-barbarie* dualism.[16] Thus far no one has seriously considered Mansilla's text in wider dialogue with the primary European and American theories about racial differences and destinies. This chapter expands the context in which we read *Una excursión*, viewing the text as a key touchstone between earlier and later texts and a mediator between received theories from Europe and North America and the local realities of the Argentine frontier.

Defining the Indian: Experience, Essentialism, and Ethnography

Throughout *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*, Mansilla repeatedly claims that the purpose of his observations of the Ranqueles is to facilitate the ideation and realization of governmental policies. He undertakes the journey to Leuvucó due to "el deseo de ver con mis propios ojos ese mundo que llaman Tierra Adentro, para estudiar sus usos y costumbres, sus necesidades, sus ideas, su religión, su lengua, e inspeccionar yo mismo el terreno por donde alguna vez quizá tendrán que marchar las fuerzas que

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Francisco P. Moreno to the Sociedad Científica Argentina between 1881 and 1882 or the founding of the Museo Etnográfico by Juan Ambrosetti in 1904.

[16] These scholars include Andrew Brown, Roberto González Echeverría, Carlos Alonso, María Rosa Lojo, Carlos Nallim, and Julio Ramos.

están bajo mis órdenes" (7). By the late nineteenth century, it was clear to military leaders that knowledge of the pampas and the mundane details of everyday Indian life could prove essential in ensuring military success. In order to successfully reach the Indians, the soldiers needed to know where to find water, the safest paths to take, and the climatic conditions they would encounter (Siegrist de Gentile and Martín 129). In order to make appropriate political decisions, elites needed to know the qualities and customs of the nation's populace. In fact, in *Una excursión* Mansilla laments that thus far the government (exemplified by Sarmiento's armchair ethnography) had not made a concerted effort to objectively observe the realities of the pampas (62). Thus, one of the primary projects of Mansilla's text is to identify, define, and mark the Ranqueles as a distinct racial group. This definition would then serve not only to further the ethnographic study of the types of mankind but also to dictate national policies with regard to the Indians.

In order to create the Ranqueles as object of ethnographic study, Mansilla must identify features that differentiate them from the other inhabitants of the River Plate region. This *something*, often called an *essence*, has been shown to be a fundamental part of human cognitive processes around the world. Human beings have a tendency to classify natural kinds (both plant and animal) into groups at approximately the level of the scientific rank of species (Atran and Medin, *The Native* 21). In order to do so, they rely on the concept of essence. This term has taken on many meanings in its long history in Western thought; I follow Gelman and Hirschfeld and define an essence as a non-visible part or substance that is inherent, difficult to remove, transferable from parent to child, and which has causal implications including identity (427). This mental structure

allows us to group seemingly disparate beings and make predictions about their nature and behavior. Essentialist thought, therefore, functions as a survival strategy for facing the chaos of the natural world (Gelman and Hirschfeld 438).

The nineteenth-century world certainly presented its share of discontinuities and anomalies for those interested in observing and classifying the various people of the globe. Aborigines living in far-flung lands were being studied for the first time, imperial powers looked to cement their control over vast swaths of humanity, and new nations such as those in Spanish America were faced with the conundrum of how to turn territories populated by people of every color and custom into cohesive communities. Science, the nineteenth-century voice of truth, stepped in to lend a helping hand. People were grouped, categorizations were formed, and races were inserted into hierarchical structures that differentiated between superior races with excellent potential and inferior races doomed to stagnation or extinction. This scientific racism was generally based on a biological understanding of race: that is to say, the essence that made each race distinct was thought to be found in the realms of descent and biology. Consequently, racial types appeared to be natural, discrete, and very difficult or impossible to change (Wade, *Race and Ethnicity* 10).[17]

The standard understanding of the history of science suggests that the idea of race as a biological phenomenon arose in the nineteenth century and quickly subsumed other ways of thinking about human kinds. As I will argue below, Mansilla absolutely relies on a biological/typological understanding of race in order to define and understand the Ranqueles. However, this is not the only discourse that he uses. Although he posits

[17] Interestingly, Francisco Gil-White has shown that human beings from many cultures and geographies tend to be "cognitively predisposed to accept a biological illusion of essentialized naturalness with regard to ethnic division" ("Are Ethnic Groups" 516).

himself as a thoroughly modern scientific observer, he also turns to older, pre-racial understandings of human diversity and to disciplines that today we would consider unscientific. Mansilla's text makes obvious the fact that earlier ideas of race did not just suddenly give way to a biological concept, but that earlier forms of racial thinking were often already biological (in the terms of their time) and continued to exist side-by-side with what is traditionally understood as the biological conception of race espoused in the nineteenth century. By pinpointing his sources and the ways in which he applies them to the Argentine context we can arrive at a better understanding of Mansilla's complex treatment of the Ranqueles both in *Una excursión* and in his later career as a member of the Argentine Legislature. This trajectory reminds us that programs of classification are not merely theoretical exercises but have profound effects on people and policies (Hacking 11). My analysis will also permit a better understanding of what ethnography was and meant in the nineteenth-century River Plate by questioning the perceived hegemony of race as biology.

The classificatory terms that Mansilla uses in *Una excursión* direct our attention to particular areas in which he might be finding the essence of the native people living on the frontier. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the term *indio* is by far the most common, appearing more than 400 times in the text. To refer to this group and/or its members, Mansilla also uses *ranqueles*, *indios ranqueles*, *bárbaros*, *salvajes*, *indígenas*, *indio bárbaro*, *indiada*, and *infieles*. When speaking of the group he identifies with, Mansilla primarily uses *cristianos* but *civilizados*, *raza privilegiada*, *criollos*, and *blancos* can also be found in the text. *Civilización* appears 47 times, while *barbarie* appears only 15. As follows logically from the above, when Mansilla refers to the two groups at the same time the

most common pairing is *cristianos e indios* although "cristianos y ranqueles" (9), "civilizados y salvajes" (11), and "civilizado y bárbaro" (235) also appear. In the mid-nineteenth century these words had specific meanings derived from both the River Plate context and a long, international intellectual history of speaking of the native people that the Spanish "discovered" in the Americas. As such, they should not be viewed as mere literary choice but rather as important signals that permit us to elucidate the sources and traditions Mansilla drew upon and developed as he formulated a racialized vision of the Ranqueles for himself and his public.

Like the great racial typologists Robert Knox, Samuel Morton, George Gliddon, and Josiah Nott, Mansilla represents the Indians as a separate race united by descent and certain physical features that permit racial identification. Incredibly popular, books such as *An Inquiry into the Distinctive Characteristics of the Aboriginal Race of America* (Morton, 1842), *The Races of Men* (Knox, 1850) and *Types of Mankind* (Nott and Gliddon, 1854) described the different races in terms of their physical appearance and temperament, relying heavily on the anthropometric observations of comparative anatomists and travelers in the field. Although interspersed with long digressions, Mansilla's descriptions of the Ranqueles follow a similar pattern. Mansilla explicitly states that "Los ranqueles derivan de los araucanos, con los que mantienen relaciones de parentesco y amistad" (434). Descent becomes the preponderant condition for belonging: the child of Indians is an Indian and the child of non-Indians is, and will always be, something other than Indian. This understanding of race should be seen as tied to Mansilla's particular intellectual context and universal patterns of human thought: studies have shown that modern-day adults the world over and children as young as ten intuit

that "membership in a species category is a matter of descent" (Gil White, "Are Ethnic Groups" 525). Mansilla may have been responding to a cognitively-determined preference to locate racial essence within the realm of the biology. This fact does not make nineteenth-century scientific racism any less unfortunate, but does remind us that not every act of racialization is intentional.

Mansilla's faith in the validity of this racial type is so strong that he gives a comprehensive description of the Ranquel physiognomy:

> Tienen la frente algo estrecha, los juanetes salientes, la nariz corta y achatada, la boca grande, los labios gruesos, los ojos sensiblemente deprimidos en el ángulo externo, los cabellos abundantes y cerdosos, la barba y el bigote ralo; los órganos del oído y de la vista más desarrollados que los nuestros, la tez cobriza, a veces blancoamarillenta, la talla mediana, las espaldas anchas, los miembros fornidos. (434)

Many of these characteristics correspond to those featured in other scientific accounts as determining of race: skin color, hair type, shape and size of facial features, and physical strength. For example, J. Aitken Meigs also mentions the shape of the Indians' eyes, the prominent cheek bones, and well-developed hearing, and quotes Humboldt's assessment that there is no race on Earth "in which the forehead is so small" (334). There is no particular reason that these features should have become primary racial identifiers, but learned processes of perception ensured that scientists saw visible signs of difference where they wanted to see them (Alcoff 126). Race is both a conception and a perception, and perception is dictated by the perceiver's tradition (Jacobson 10) or "interpretive horizon" (Alcoff 95). Visibility thus became the "key to the ideological claims that race

and gender categories are natural," making constructed descriptions appear as a fundamental and valid part of the world (Alcoff 103). The message of these racial typographies is that these features are sufficient and necessary for identifying an individual as a member of a given racial group. Mansilla is consequently able to assertively classify the people he meets as different races based on their physical features, frequently using the formulaic expression "x es un(a) y" when presenting new characters in the story, with "y" being a classificatory term such as *indio, zambo, mestizo,* and *cuarterón*.[18]

Mansilla also uses the nineteenth-century science of phrenology in order to provide a complete description of the Ranqueles. First developed by the German doctor Franz Joseph Gall around 1800, phrenology posits a direct relationship between cranial features and mental phenomena (Davies 3).[19] External features of the head are considered unequivocal signs of particular mental characteristics such as hope, benevolence, musical ability, combativeness, and destructiveness. Mansilla was a devoted student of the field, even visiting the famed phrenologist Cornelius Donovan in London for a head reading (Popolizio 62).

In *Una excursión,* Mansilla uses the techniques of phrenology as a window into the psychological traits of the Ranqueles. Noses, jaw lines, head size, and cheekbones are

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[18] Of the 14 extensive descriptions that Mansilla gives, eight follow this pattern. Examples include: "A la orilla de ellos [los Andes] vivía el indio Blanco, que no es ni cacique, ni capitanejo, sino lo que los indios llaman indio gaucho" (62), "El cacique Ramón es hijo de indio y de una cristiana de la Villa de la Carlota" (99), "Epumer es el indio más temido entre los ranqueles" (158), Camargo "es lo que se llama un gaucho lindo" (240), "Era un zambo motoso" (271), and "Era un cuarterón tostado por el sol, como de cuarenta años" (275). Most of the exceptions to this rule are only exceptions because the subject's identity has already been made apparent, as in the case of Miguelito, who self-identifies himself as "Un cristiano, Miguelito" when he comes to Mansilla's aid in Mariano Rosas's *toldo*. When Mansilla describes him several chapters later, there is no need to repeat this label.

[19] Although most today would call phrenology a pseudoscience, in most of the nineteenth century it was considered an exact science and therefore should not be judged by knowledge unavailable to its practitioners at the time (Stepan, *"The Hour"* 5).

described as sure indicators of Indian character traits. He describes Mariano Rosas in the following fashion:

> [tiene] una nariz pequeña, deprimida en la punta, de abiertas ventanas, signo de desconfianza… una boca de labios delgados que casi nunca muestra los dientes, marca de astucia y crueldad; una barba aguda, unos juanetes saltados, como si la piel estuviese disecada, manifestación de valor, y unas cejas vellosas, arqueadas, entre las cuales hay siempre unas rayas perpendiculares, señal inequívoca de irascibilidad. (200)

In this passage, Mansilla's keen sense of sight and understanding of the principles of phrenology permit him to comprehend Mariano Rosas's motivations and character despite having been in his presence for only a few days. Perhaps unsurprisingly, most of the characteristics Mansilla reads in Rosas's face are negative or have the potential to turn negative, such as pride, energy, fierceness, wrath, cruelty, suspicion, and shrewdness. While we may doubt the validity of these observations, it is clear from the text that Mansilla believes that phrenology corresponds to "true biological description" with "authority on an empirical level" (Brown 70). Once again, these descriptions are not merely intellectual, but also had the potential to have political consequences. Phrenologists such as George Combe insisted that the science could be used to choose proper forms of government, write effective civil and criminal legislation, and to design programs of education: in sum, to better society (53). Mansilla too believed that the field was "destinada a cambiar en días no lejanos los destinos de la humanidad," for it provided needed insight into man's true self ("Esa cabeza" 138).[20] In this way, describing

[20] In the same article, Mansilla extolled the development of phrenology in the United States, saying "Aquel pueblo iniciador, en esto tambien pretende adelantarse a las soluciones" ("Esa cabeza" 138).

the Ranqueles in a phrenological fashion was not just a descriptive exercise but also a first necessary step in the resolution of many of the social and political problems plaguing the nation.

However, the realities of the frontier as described by Mansilla himself continually interrupt and derail the typographical and phrenological racial classification he endeavors to enact. Despite the certainty transmitted by his confident description of the Ranqueles, none of the accounts of individuals that he gives in the text correspond particularly well to this portrayal. Some Indians are small, others large, some whiter, and others darker. This contradiction marks Mansilla's text as belonging to a particular American context, for writers in Europe often did not see and speak with the very people who could undo their claims of general racial types. From today's perspective this discrepancy is not particularly surprising, as studies have repeatedly shown that there is more genetic variation within racial groups than between them (Root 736).[21] In fact, even by 1879 some scholars, including the French anthropologist Paul Topinard, questioned the reality of observable racial types due to the widespread occurrence of racial mixing. The fact that Mansilla gives the emphatic physical description in the epilogue *after* he has described the many diverse faces he sees in Leuvucó demonstrates the nineteenth-century commitment to establishing racial typologies. Just because people initially have difficulty sorting others based on physical features does not mean that they do not still classify people as essentialized natural kinds (Gil-White, "Sorting" 221). Mixed features and other difficulties may cause Mansilla to temporarily blur the boundaries between racial

[21] As early as 1950 UNESCO declared that there was no biological basis to race in its statement entitled "The Race Question."

categories, but he continues to hold on to the idea of an underlying essence that allows him to categorize people despite complications.

Mansilla's treatment of the mixed-race people he meets in Tierra Adentro further problematizes the question of a biological basis to race. Since the first landing of the conquistadores, Indians and Europeans had entered into sexual contact, populating the New World with mixed-race children. Like others, Mansilla refers to these offspring as *mestizos*. If Mansilla truly views ancestry to be the causative essence at the root of race, then all people with the same parentage should be classified in a similar fashion. However, in his description of the *mestizos* his classificatory terms are not consistent and indicate that he must be using at least one other idea of race in addition to the biological view expounded above.

In Tierra Adentro he encounters many people who have one parent who is Indian and another who is not; el *cacique* Ramón, Bustos, and the interpreter Mora are all described as having Indian fathers and Christian mothers. Bustos and Mora are classified by Mansilla as *mestizos* and *gauchos* (often used by Mansilla as a synonym for the former term). The two men frequently interact with White society, are Christian, and maintain a certain level of manners and sociability. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Mansilla extends the label of *mestizo* to them. In this way he acknowledges the European contribution to their ancestry. This categorization brings them closer to Mansilla as he often describes the *gaucho* as the base of the Argentine nation or associates it with the first person plural: "Nuestra raza es valiente y resuelta; no es el temor de la muerte lo que contiene al gaucho a veces" (64). Being labeled *mestizo* therefore implies a higher social condition and a dilution or erasure of the Indian presence in one's biology.

The case of Ramón challenges the idea that Mansilla views heredity as the source of the essence that determines racial categorization. Like Mora and Bustos, Ramón is the son of an Indian and a Christian (99) and he even looks more European than Indian (99). Yet despite his genetic and physical similarity to Mora and Bustos he is resolutely classified among the Indians and never referred to as a *mestizo*, *gaucho*, or as part of the first person plural. In representing him, Mansilla effectively erases the European part of his ancestry, resituating him as a pure Indian. While some *mestizos* in *Una excursión* are brought up and associated with their "superior" ancestors, others are pushed down into the ranks of the inferior. The fact that identical crossings between groups beget two differently-labeled and supposedly opposite types of progeny suggests that Mansilla's understanding of race cannot be wholly rooted in ancestry.

A related strategy that Mansilla uses to identify the Ranqueles is an association of race with a particular geography. While the title, *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*, has been commented upon for the choice of the word "excursión" (Rodríguez 183), I argue that the object "a los indios ranqueles" is also noteworthy. By choosing to present his journey as one to a particular people instead of the more standard place, Mansilla equates geographic borders with racial ones and makes this grouping seem as concrete and unquestionable as a town might be. The definition of the Ranqueles he gives in the first letter furthers the association between race and place: "Ya sabes que los ranqueles son esas tribus de indios araucanos, que habiendo emigrado en distintas épocas de la falda occidental de la cordillera de los Andes a la oriental, y pasado los ríos Negro y Colorado, han venido a establecerse entre el Río Quinto y el Río Colorado, al naciente del río Chalileo" (6). Here, the Indians are defined in terms of both lineage and

geography, and the opening "ya sabes" suggests that such knowledge is evident and self-explanatory. This belief in environmentalism was ancient: Hippocrates wrote of the influence of geography on humanity in *On Airs, Waters, and Places* while others of the period insisted that the Ethiopians were black due to the "heat and scorch of the Sunne" (Browne 508). In the early eighteenth century the Spanish Benedictine Benito Feijóo argued instead for the influence of the "jugos, hálitos, o efluvios de la tierra" that a people inhabited (7: 91), once again intimately tying race to geography. The frequent use of the term *indio* in Mansilla's text furthers this association. The 1869 edition of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* describes the *indio* as "El natural y originario de las Indias" ("Indio"). Looking up *originario,* we find the definition "La persona que tiene su ascendencia u origen en algún país determinado" ("Originario") while *natural* is defined as "nativo, originario de algún pueblo o reino" ("Natural"). All of these terms explicitly connect Indian-ness to a particular location. Their preponderance in *Una excursión* suggests once again that for Mansilla and the Argentine elite, racial identity was at least partially determined by geography.

In this geographical concept of race, the geographic is biological and physical frontiers determine homogenous racial groupings (Andreasen 461). Nineteenth-century scholars such as Arthur de Gobineau, Jean Louis Armand de Quatrefages, and Cornelius de Pauw worked to tighten the association between geography and race, finding empirical evidence in the Americas that each race was biologically suited to a particular place and thus unable to thrive elsewhere. Similarly, Mansilla insists upon the determinist function of the environment, proclaiming that "Cada zona, cada clima, cada tierra, da sus frutos especiales. Ni la ciencia, ni el arte, inteligentemente aplicados por el ingenio humano,

alcanzan a producir los efectos químiconaturales de la generación espontánea" (175). This statement reaffirms the importance of place in determining biology and thus race. In this respect, Mansilla's understanding of race extends both backwards and forwards in time. On one hand it builds upon ancient theories of the environment's power to determine color and type. On the other, the introduction of the idea that racial essence cannot be modified other than by the environment or "generación espontánea" fits nicely into Darwinian theories of natural selection and later understandings of the importance of genetic mutation in determining type. Unfortunately for the Indians of the nineteenth-century River Plate region, the permanence of racial essence suggests that education, government policy, and medicine can do nothing to modify race. Several of Mansilla's depictions support this hypothesis. When an Indian puts on Mansilla's gloves, he is described as looking like a monkey rather than a dandy (267). Instead of lifting him to Mansilla's level, *criollo* clothing pushes him down to a non-human level. Similarly, the Indian Achauentrú has spent large amounts of time in Río Cuarto and has perfect table manners. Nonetheless, he is still classified as an Indian and is taken hostage by Mansilla to ensure the expedition's safe passage.[22] Even if the Indian adopts "civilized" customs or changes his or her appearance, he or she will always be conceptualized as Indian and thus fundamentally different.

Despite Mansilla's search for the biological essence of the Indian, he often relies on the discourse of Christianity in order to represent the Indian as Other. Religion had been one of the most prominent elements of the Spanish American colonial enterprise since Christopher Columbus arrived under the patronage of the Catholic Kings.

[22] In his account of the expedition, Padre Moisés Alvarez writes that Achauentrú "tenía grandísimos temores, por nuestra ida cuyas consecuencias las preveía funestas, y que le tocarían a él, era indudable" (234).

Missionaries and other representatives of the Church played a fundamental role in those expeditions and for the first hundred years of Spanish presence in the Americas the settlers identified themselves with the term *cristianos* (Seed, *American* 116). Like those before him, Mansilla travels with two Franciscans, the fathers Marcos Donati and Moisés Alvarez, imbuing his mission with religious purpose. Furthermore, the oppositional term that he most frequently pairs with *indio* is *cristiano*. This coupling suggests that the term *indio* might refer not to particular geographic origins, possession of certain physical features, or descent, but rather to the condition of not accepting the doctrine of Christianity. However, it is my contention that the label *cristiano* both includes and surpasses a simple religious definition, coming to encompass a variety of features that Mansilla sees in himself and denies to the Indian Other.

The first evidence that *cristiano* might mean something more than believer comes from descriptions of the captives and those who have taken political refuge among the tribes of the pampas. In their accounts, Mansilla and the three priests in the *toldos* – Donati, Alvarez, and Burela – often express the idea that these captives are morally worse than the Indians. They attribute the deleterious introduction of alcohol among the tribes to the renegades and accuse them of murder, lust, greed, moral corruption, and a host of other sins. Mansilla actually accuses Padre Burela himself of being as immoral as the Indian populations he serves. In an epistolary battle published in *La Tribuna* at the same time that *Una excursión* appeared, Mansilla alleges that Burela went to the *toldos* to make a profit selling alcohol and calls him a "sacerdote vicioso, corrompido, especulador, falso amigo y esplotador [sic] de lo más sagrado – la Religión" ("Solicitada"). These words are harsher than any that Mansilla reserves for the so-called

savages. Nonetheless, the three priests and Mansilla continue to use the term *cristiano* to refer to the renegades and captives of the *toldos,* despite their total lack of allegiance to the principles of Christianity. *Christian,* therefore, cannot be understood as referring entirely to particular beliefs or actions.

The second sign that *cristiano* means more than *believer* is the fact that adopting Christianity is not enough for an Indian to stop being Indian. As in early modern Spain, in Mansilla's portrayal of the nineteenth-century River Plate Catholicism was a "precondition for achieving recognition as citizen or native, [but] religion was not sufficient on its own" (Herzog 9-10). There are many Indians described in *Una excursión* who were baptized and adopted the Christian faith. Despite this conversion, they are still generally referred to as *indios*. Becoming a believer is not sufficient for them to be included in the signifier *cristiano,* indicating that there are other traits required in order to merit such a label. Thus, in *Una excursión,* the marker *cristiano* is used in three different ways. First, it is used by Mansilla in the traditional religious sense, as one who accepts and believes in certain doctrines. Mariano Rosas is a *cristiano* in that he knows the tenets of Christianity from his time and education on the ranch of Juan Manuel de Rosas. At the same time, *cristiano* comes to be associated with other behaviors and attitudes such as literacy and civil obedience. Doña Fermina considers herself more Indian than Christian, despite still believing in God, because of the way she lives. This sense of Christian is used to exclude Indians that while baptized do not meet other standards that would make them more worthy of inclusion. In this case, *Christian* almost seems to represent a sort of pre-citizenship, an acknowledgement that one shares the civil characteristics necessary to productively contribute to the nation. Finally, at times *cristiano* appears to be a near-

empty marker whose only meaning is an oppositional sense of not-Indian. This includes the so-called bad Christians, who Father Alvarez chastises as little more than "bárbaros bautizados" (259). It would also explain the fact that Mansilla continues to consider Doña Fermina a Christian despite her insistence to the contrary. This aspect of *cristiano* dates back to the Reconquista when it originated as a way to differentiate between the two groups of Spaniards in the Iberian Peninsula – Old Christians and the Muslims or new converts seen as an internal enemy (Seed, *American* 117). The term *cristiano* lives on in Mansilla's text as a shortcut for defining a huge group of people in contrast to another group, a relic of an older, historically-rooted pattern of thinking.

Finally, I would argue that in *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* class is also presented as an important categorizing element. In colonial times an upper-class indigenous person would not be classified as an *indio*, for the term had the connotation of *commoner* (Wade, *Race and Ethnicity* 29). The idea of *calidad*, fundamentally important to characterization, was expressed in typically racial terms but took into account color, wealth, profession, and ideas of honor and integrity (McCaa 477). Race, therefore, was a function of both physical appearance and socioeconomic position (Seed, "Social" 574).[23] In *Una excursión*, the mass of Indians is repeatedly shown to be poor, dependent on others, and lacking the capacity to work. Mariano Rosas explains to Mansilla that "No sabemos trabajar, porque no nos han enseñado. Si fuéramos como los cristianos, seríamos ricos, pero no somos como ellos y somos pobres" (221). Rosas equates the category of Indian with a certain poor standard of living, while the non-Indian (Christian) worked and was rich. Class is thus rendered inseparable from race.

[23] Using census reports, Seed has convincingly demonstrated the close connections between occupation and racial group in Mexico City in the mid-eighteenth century.

This association is furthered through Mansilla's continual comparison and equating of the *indios* and the poor *gauchos* and *campesinos* of the Argentine countryside. *Gauchos* such as Colchao are mistaken for Indians (277) and Mansilla frequently observes similarities between the lifestyles of both groups: "En Santiago del Estero, donde lengua y costumbres tienen un sabor primitivo, los pobres hacen lo mismo que los indios" (273). Both the Indian and the poor are rendered as a prehistoric precursor separate from the modern nation. He also uses analogous language to describe the Indians and the *gauchos*. The Indians are a "raza desheredada, que roba, mata y destruye, forzada a ello por la dura ley de necesidad" (433) while "La raza de este ser desheredado que se llama gaucho, digan lo que quieran, es excelente, y como blanda cera, puede ser modelada para el bien; pero falta, triste es decirlo, la protección generosa, el cariño y la benevolencia" (231). In these quotes, Mansilla demonstrates the belief that neither group is intrinsically bad, but rather that they lack education and are forced into bad behavior by external circumstances.[24] These deficiencies are not the fault of the *indios* and *gauchos*, but rather that of educated Buenos Aires: "Quejarnos de que los indios nos asuelen, es lo mismo que quejarnos de que los gauchos sean ignorantes, viciosos, atrasados. ¿A quién la culpa, sino a nosotros mismos?" (153). As long as policies and politics isolate the poor instead of assimilating them, there is no way for them to progress. Mansilla anticipates Kipling's white man's burden: those who know and possess civilization have the duty to teach those who do not. In this way, a lack of work ethic, dirtiness, and potentially immoral customs come to define a class unified not by biology but by behavior and distance from the ideals of lettered life in Buenos Aires and Europe.

[24] This interpretation is reminiscent of the complaints of José Hernández's Martín Fierro, published just two years later.

As we have seen, Mansilla's representation of the Indian is derived from many sources, both ancient and modern, and must balance reality and theory in ways ethnographic texts written far from their subjects did not have to consider. In his attempts to classify and define the Ranqueles, therefore, he is inconsistent and often contradictory. Race seems to have quite a bit to do with descent and geography and is intimately tied to social class or economic factors. Physical features are shown to provide clues to race, but they can also betray. Christianity blurs the lines between groups but is not enough to permanently overcome divisions. Some methods of classification permit the idea of changing one's race, while others insist on permanence and the determining force of biology. Taken together, Mansilla's various conceptions of race show the ongoing processes of negotiation between older and newer understandings of race in the nineteenth-century River Plate. Despite these contradictions, we are left with the sensation that Mansilla is absolutely sure that he can identify and classify the various races of the Americas. As cognitive science has shown, even when we cannot describe an essence we will still essentialize the category, assuming the essence is there (Gil-White, "Are Ethnic Groups" 524). In *Una excursión*, Mansilla operates under this cognitive dictum. Despite relying on many fluid explanations of the racial identity of the Indian, he never questions the existence of the category of *Indian*. He may have never been able to provide an air-tight definition for the Ranqueles, unconsciously demonstrating our present-day knowledge that race is a social construct,[25] but that does not stop him from

[25] "[R]ace is not a static concept with a single sedimented meaning. Its power has consisted in its adaptive capacity to define population groups and, by extension, social agents as self and other at various historical moments. It has thus facilitated the fixing of characterizations of inclusion and exclusion, imparting to social relations an apparent specificity otherwise lacking. To be capable of this, race itself must be almost, but not quite, empty in its own connotative capacity, able to signify not so much in itself but by adopting

making pronouncements and predictions about the Indian race's future and place in Argentina. I explore these assertions in the next section.

Anthropologic Questions and Political Answers

Having examined the foundations of Mansilla's understanding of the Ranquel Indians, we can now turn to his contributions to the great anthropological debates of the time. These, in turn, influence the role(s) he sees the Ranqueles playing in the Argentine nation in the future and hence the recommendations he makes for government policy. In this analysis I build on the work of scholars who have previously discussed Mansilla's understanding of the unity of the species and racial determinism (Ramos, for example). While they have produced excellent scholarship analyzing the ways in which *Una excursión* is a reaction to Sarmiento's racial projects as expounded in *Facundo*, I wish to view the ethnographic component of the text in a global context. It is my contention that doing so permits a deeper and broader understanding of both Mansilla's influences and his notions of race, nation, and progress.

Early in *Una excursión* Mansilla makes clear that he means to proffer opinions on the debate about the unity of the human species and the fate of the different races. To do so, he engages Santiago Arcos as narratee. Born in Chile in 1822, Arcos had traveled widely through Argentina and published two texts pertaining to the Argentine Indians: "Cuestión de indios," a short essay from 1860, and the more extensive *La Plata: Étude historique*, published in Paris in 1865. In both, he advocated for an offensive war against the Indians designed to eliminate them and thus end the threat to life and property on the frontier. Mansilla invokes Arcos in an effective *conformatio* that makes the text appear

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and extending naturalized form to prevailing conceptions of social group formation at different times (Goldberg 80).

dialogical and provides authority for his opinions. In the third chapter he writes, "mis opiniones han cambiado mucho desde la época en que con tanto *furor* discutíamos, a tres mil leguas, la unidad de la especie humana, y la fatalidad histórica de las razas" (17). With this statement, Mansilla creates distance from both Arcos's expressed stance and any statements he himself had previously made. The distance created is simultaneously physical, temporal, and philosophical as Mansilla stresses geographic distance ("a tres mil leguas"), change over time ("la época en que"), and evolution in his thought ("mis opinions han cambiado"). This disjuncture allows Mansilla to begin with a clean slate and to posit both Arcos and his earlier self as an oppositional pole from which he can elaborate his current beliefs.

He goes on to explain that while he once believed that civilization was meant to battle constantly to preserve itself against barbarous human races, now he affirms, "Creo en la unidad de la especie humana" (17). This statement is repeated throughout the text in various forms, often using the metaphor of the human species as a tree ("tronco común") or as a plant that is "única en su especie" (415). The references to botany suggest that Mansilla was familiar with the work of Carl Linneaus, the founder of the taxonomic system, and consequent (often heated) efforts to define *species* as opposed to *variety*. By asserting that all the human races formed one species Mansilla also affirms a single origin and the possibility of reproduction between the different varieties (races) that composed humanity. This assertion of the single origin of humanity (monogenism) flies in the face of the polygenism espoused by luminaries such as Georges Cuvier, Louis Agassiz, Samuel Morton, and Robert Knox. They believed that the races were so distinct that they must be different species. In fact, in 1870 Mansilla's assertion of monogenism would

likely have been the minority opinion among the European and North American scientists engaging in early studies of physical anthropology (Stocking 39). Instead, Mansilla follows in the tradition of Alcides d'Orbigny in asserting a common origin for all of mankind, including the seemingly barbarous tribes of the Americas. This understanding could have profound political consequences for the Ranqueles, for it admitted a shared humanity that could potentially make space for them in the Argentine national body.

Mansilla's correspondence with Arcos has been lost, but we can make educated guesses to explain his change of heart with regard to human origins. On one hand, we have seen that Mansilla professed the Catholic faith and thus should admit a single origin for mankind. In Río Cuarto, only one block separated Mansilla's lodging at the *Comandancia de Frontera* from the Franciscan convent, and he spent quite a bit of time with the religious men who would later accompany him on his excursion (Farías 265).[26] It is possible that repeated interactions with these men led him to a different natural history of humanity. On the other hand, the clarity and force with which he makes his argument and his interest in representing himself as a scientifically-informed intellectual lead me to believe there is something more than religious fervor behind his conversion. Mansilla could have taken the path of Arthur de Gobineau, who accepted monogenism because the Bible said so despite believing that all physical evidence was to the contrary (Gobineau 133). We do know that Mansilla owned James Prichard's *The Natural History of Man* (1843) (Montero 126), one of the most forceful scientific defenses of monogenism published in the nineteenth century. Although we do not know when Mansilla read this book, Prichard's possible influence can be seen in *Una excursión*. In

[26] Mansilla and Father Donati began speaking of a joint excursion to the Ranqueles in April 1869, a full year prior (Farías 276).

the text, Prichard uses the American natives as proof of the unity of the species, writing that "The minds of these people appear to be, as to all essential principles of feeling and understanding, in harmony and in strict analogy with those of other men. Such a mind can hardly be supposed common to different species of organised beings" (513). Similarly, Mansilla finds that the Indians have similar emotions and thought processes as himself. For example, he speaks of "un instinto que es de los pueblos civilizados y de los salvajes" that leads all to know the power of feminine wiles over men (11). While we will likely never know for sure, it seems probable that Prichard's work and that of other scientific monogenists such as d'Orbigny contributed to Mansilla's personal change of heart.

In his letters to Arcos, Mansilla also argues against the prevailing European and North American belief in racial determinism. This ideology took many forms depending on time period and location, but in general it asserted that race determined every aspect of social and political life. Robert Knox wrote what could be the motto of racial determinism in 1850: "race is everything in human affairs when left to their natural course. The moral and physical characteristics of nations, as well as of individuals, depend upon race" (539). Thus, only biology could shape a society, dictating its degree of economic and cultural development. Everything, even literature, could be attributed to the functions of cellular processes.

The various forms of racial determinism also insisted that the various races were inherently and biologically unequal, and thus had unequal destinies. Some would conquer and prosper while others would never rise above the lowest levels or were doomed to extinction. Although races had been ordered hierarchically before, the nineteenth century

introduced the belief that this ranking was intimately tied to innate biological differences, thus naturalizing them (Wade, *Race and Ethnicity* 10).[27] Education, government programs, social policy, and other forms of intervention were consequently futile. Many of the scientists working in the nineteenth century held this idea so dearly that their experiments were designed to find ways to "prove" the naturalness of racial inequality in every realm of human existence – intelligence, beauty, morality, etc. (Stepan, *The Idea* xxi).[28] The resulting texts spanned decades and disciplines, and existed both pre-Darwin (Gobineau's *The Inequality of Human Races* (1853) or the work of Morton, Knox, Nott, and Gliddon) and post-Darwin in the guise of Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism and the work of Gustave LeBon and the eugenics movement.

In this literature, the American aborigines were often offered as a prime example of a lower race meant only to exist until a superior race arrived to "exterminate and supplant them" (Nott and Gliddon, *Types* 79). Examples were given to prove that no amount of effort could change their habits and convince them to adopt those of civilization. Furthermore, the inroads the American governments had made against the natives were seen as proof of the veracity of determinist predictions. Confronted by a biologically superior race, the Indians were simply "melting away from year to year" (Nott and Gliddon, *Types* 69). Mansilla directly challenges these assertions in *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*. He would have been made aware of them through conversations with fellow intellectuals, his readings of international journals, his travels in Europe, and newspaper articles that discussed positivism, Social Darwinism, and other

[27] The term "biology" was coined by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck in 1802. He used it to describe the scientific study of living organisms (Wade, *Race and Ethnicity* 10).
[28] For a fascinating critique of the science of racial determinism, see Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*.

forms of racialism in great detail.[29] In *Una excursión*, Mansilla categorically denies that it is possible to scientifically determine the destiny of any particular race. He affirms that,

> Los hechos que se han observado sobre la constitución física y las facultades intelectuales y morales de ciertas razas, son demasiado aislados para sacar de ellos consecuencias generales, cuando se trata de condenar poblaciones enteras a la muerte o la barbarie. ¿Quién puede decir cuál es el punto donde se ha de detener una raza por efecto de su propia naturaleza? (434)

Mansilla uses empiricism itself to attack the work of science, accusing ethnographers such as Sarmiento and Knox of passing judgment without having actually observed the populations they are deprecating. A series of rhetorical questions that point out the barbarous habits of ancient civilizations follows, suggesting that if they too had been studied in their own time they would also have been condemned to extinction. For example, Mansilla highlights that the Hebrews, Arabs, Romans, and Visigoths all stole women and had the custom of paying for brides (435). These practices, overlooked in the glorious chronicles of ancient civilizations, are the same ones used to decry the Indians as barbarous and unincorporable. Mansilla concludes his exposition by arguing that "Si hay algo imposible de determinar, es el grado de civilización a que llegará cada raza: y si hay alguna teoría calculada para justificar el despotismo, es la teoría de la fatalidad histórica" (434-5). Despite his earlier insistence that nothing could change the biological race imparted by geography, here Mansilla argues that biology ("su propia naturaleza") is not

[29] Louis Agassiz, James Bryce, Henry Thomas Buckle, Joseph Deniker, Count Arthur de Gobineau, Madison Grant, Ludwig Gumplowicz, Ernst Haeckel, Gustave Le Bon, Friedrich Ratzel, Ernest Renan, Herbert Spencer, and Hippolyte Taine were among the most quoted in Argentina between 1880 and 1930 (Helg 62). Mansilla wrote *Una excursión* in 1870 but was undoubtedly already aware of some of these thinkers and many others as well.

the sole determinant of progress nor do the races have limits to their development. Any claim of racial determinism should be seen as nothing more than a political maneuver.

In making this assertion, Mansilla denies the biological determinism espoused by Sarmiento in *Facundo* and continues a tradition of anti-determinism found in the work of other Latin American intellectuals. In 1806 the Peruvian physician Hipólito Unanue wrote that "En todas ellas [partes del mundo] es el hombre capaz de todo, si es ayudado por la educación y el exemplo [sic]" (97) and that all races have "la esperanza de ascender a la gloria de que es capaz el hombre" (90). Writing in the first decade of the nineteenth century Unanue was likely responding to a climate-based determinism. The Venezuelan Andrés Bello took aim at a more biological determinism in the 1830s. In "El gobierno i la sociedad" he affirmed that prosperity was derived from a number of factors, including but not limited to race. Moral and political education, geography, natural resources, and infrastructure could all play determining roles (284). For Bello, "La ley de la historia humana no es, pues, la raza," for given enough time all racial types would necessarily pass through the same stages of development (Hill, "Entre" 728). This trend would continue to express itself throughout the nineteenth century in the Latin American intellectuals' frequent preference for Lamarckian soft inheritance over Darwinian mechanisms, as Lamarckian inheritance permitted social programs, hygiene, and education to overcome the dictates of biology (Stepan, *"The Hour"* 74).

Mansilla's reference to the "grado de civilización" and Bello's assertion that every race would pass through similar stages point to one other very important intertext of nineteenth-century understandings of race: stadialism, as codified by Adam Ferguson in *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767) and diffused by numerous intellectuals

and writers including Sir Walter Scott.[30] According to this theory, human history could be divided into discrete and universal stages with particular characteristics. David Haberly has affirmed the importance of this premise for the educated people of Buenos Aires and Montevideo. He argues that for them, "[*civilización* and *barbarie*] were not simply words but familiar concepts grounded in stadialist theory, transmitted through the novels of Scott and Cooper and through the works of French historians influenced by that theory" (Haberly, "Scotland" 798). Mansilla would certainly have been part of that "best-educated" class. The presence in his library of 25 volumes of the Waverly novels and the work of one of the French historians most influenced by Ferguson, Francois Guizot (Montero 109, 120), allow us to conjecture that he would have been aware of the theses of stadialism. He would also have been exposed to a Latin American expression of this theory through his reading of Sarmiento's *Facundo*, a text whose debt to stadialism has been convincingly argued by Haberly.[31]

Mansilla uses the terms *civilizado*, *bárbaro*, and *salvaje* frequently in the text, at times maintaining that human history is a story of inexorable progress and working within the familiar definitions of stages derived from stadialism. Other times he questions the validity of those characterizations and begins to see barbarism in civilized habits and civilization among the theoretically most barbaric. Mansilla is amused to discover that Mariano Rosas is a regular reader of *La Tribuna* (59, 247), the very newspaper for which he is recording his experiences. Similarly, some Indians have excellent table manners and refuse to eat without spoons, napkins, and the other accoutrements of civilized dining (115). One of the priests who accompanied Mansilla agreed with the observation that in

[30] For more on the influence of stadialist theory on North American literature, see Dekker, chapter 3.
[31] Haberly says, "In my own view, *Facundo* was above all an ambitious attempt to write a stadialist conjectural history of Argentina" ("Scotland" 803).

many ways the Indians were no longer barbarians, believing them to be "algo más q^{e} barbaros p^{o} salvajes de ningún momo [modo]" (Álvarez 262). In a parallel fashion, Mansilla's experiences in the desert lead him to question the values of civilization: "Es indudable que la civilización tiene sus ventajas sobre la barbarie; pero no tantas como aseguran los que se dicen civilizados" (55). He describes civilization as a state of having many doctors and many ill people, having many (bad) hotels, having many lawyers and many lawsuits, etc. (55). While it is "de todas las invenciones modernas, una de las más útiles al bienestar y a los progresos del hombre," it is plagued with problems that are overlooked in the push towards ever-higher levels of culture. Thus, Mansilla begins to question the overwhelmingly positive view of progress embedded in stadialism and positivism.

The above examples may seem frivolous, but Mansilla also shows a deep appreciation for the sense of justice and fairness he observes among the Ranqueles (P. Earle 40). Mansilla is impressed by the Ranqueles system of *vuelta*, whereby an individual in need receives whatever it may be, no questions asked. In return, it is expected that eventually he or she will be able to pay the debt back, thus helping someone else (306). In his constant comparisons to his own culture Mansilla realizes that "Estos bárbaros … han establecido la ley del Evangelio, hoy por ti, mañana por mí, sin incurrir en las utopías del socialismo" (307). The Indians have established the Golden Rule, while among Christians "El que tiene hambre no come si no tiene con qué" (307). He is also impressed by the Indians' humane way of killing animals, a practice that suggests to Mansilla that they should be treated with equal care and humanity (212). In these observations we see yet other influences on Mansilla: the work of Jean-Jacques

Rousseau and the trope of the noble savage. Rousseau was one of Mansilla's preferred readings: he describes his first experience with the *Social Contract* in several of his *causeries* and frequently mentions Rousseau in *Una excursión*. In "Discourse on the Origins of Inequality" (1755), Rousseau stated that one of the identifying characteristics of primitive man was a sense of compassion manifested as "an innate repugnance at seeing a fellow-creature suffer" (73).[32] Mansilla's admiration of the Indians' methods of slaughter invokes the spirit of Rousseau. At the same time he wonders if "¿El contacto de la civilización será corruptor de la buena fe primitiva?" (413). While the Indians do have positive traits, they are also prone to drunkenness, gambling, and violence. Mansilla, like others, suggests that the Christians in the *toldos* may be responsible for introducing and propagating these destructive habits, thus turning the Indians against each other and against the *criollos* with whom they interact on the frontier.

As we have seen, Mansilla's representation of the Indians in *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* elaborates a critique of a determinist way of thinking that looked down on the Indian as an inferior race and often saw no way to modify this condition as "su raza, sus instintos, sus aptitudes no son susceptibles de asimilarse con nuestra civilización empírica" (Mansilla 414-5). Representative of the opposite tendency, Prichard had previously argued that "The [positive] example of the Peruvian nations is sufficient to solve the question, whether the American races are susceptible of civilisation [sic] and of Christianity" (442). Similarly, Mansilla affirms that even if the Indians are not currently civilized – and he has his doubts about the relative value of civilization – they possess the innate ability to participate in the universal processes of progress. He sees in them "un

[32] A brief mention of Rousseau in Eduardo Chirinos's article on *Una excursión* initially allowed me to see this connection (121).

germen fecundo que explotar en bien de la religión, de la civilización y de la humanidad" (216). This affirmation is extremely important with regard to Mansilla's historical context. If the Indian did in fact possess a "germen" of religious faith and civilization, then it would be highly immoral to follow the proposed plans of extermination. Thus, Mansilla's ethnographic project can be seen as quite literally a lifeline for the Ranquel Indians.

Through this insistence on the Indians' potential and the unity of the species, Mansilla represents the Indian as in many ways us (White, civilized people), but at an earlier stage of development. He admits that they steal property and women, sowing fear and chaos on the frontier. However, he sees parallels between the disdained Indians and the lauded civilizations of ancient times: "¿Los primeros albores de la humanidad presentan acaso otro cuadro? ¿Qué era Roma un día? Una gavilla de bandoleros, rapaces, sanguinarios, crueles, traidores. ¿Y entonces, qué tiene que decir nuestra decantada civilización?" (153). Here, Mansilla points out the irony of despising in the Indians what we ourselves once did. Thus, the Indian is classified as an "hombre de estado primitivo" (202), not fundamentally different but just less developed. This understanding of the Indian as prehistoric follows the work of John Lubbock and Charles Lyell, who argued that modern savages could be viewed as proxies for the lost prehistoric stages of our own development. This idea is expressed once again in the epilogue to *Una excursión* when Mansilla compares the barbarous past of the world's greatest civilizations with the peaks of culture that they achieved (435). If they could reach such levels, then there is no reason to say that the Indians may not similarly be the embryonic form of a future great culture. In this way, Mansilla's representation of the Indian also begins to anticipate the work on

Argentine prehistory that would be carried out by Francisco Moreno, Vicente Fidel López, and Clemente Onelli just a few years later. I will discuss this development in Chapter Three.

By recording in detail the actual customs of the Ranqueles, highlighting their positive features, and turning away from polygenism and determinism, Mansilla is able to put forth the tentative conclusion that the Indian could play a role in the future of the nation. This opinion justifies his decision to work towards establishing a peace treaty with the Ranqueles rather than attacking them in the *toldos* as his friend Santiago Arcos insisted was the ideal solution. Mansilla instead seems to be suggesting that education and humane treatment were the best options for dealing with the Indian. Following these recommended practices would be beneficial not just for the Indian but also for Argentina as a whole, for subdued and civilized Indians could form a large labor force to be exploited (58). The example of the Indian prisoners being brought to Buenos Aires and sold as sugar workers, domestic servants, or military conscripts had already begun to demonstrate the positive role that the Indian could (involuntarily) play in the construction of national industry and defense (Mases 63). Mansilla's reasoning allows for the Indian to be treated as an Argentine citizen in formation. Of course, the Indians already were legally defined as such in the 1853 Constitution, but that did not prevent the 1864 Argentine Congress from concluding that the Indians should be considered foreign enemies living in Argentine territory, thus justifying the mobilization of the National Guard in order to subdue them (Navarro Floria, "El salvaje" 365). In this way, Indian citizenship in Argentina in the nineteenth century can be approximated to colonial categories of belonging as described by Tamar Herzog. They "were not embodied in legal

definitions or in acts of authority. Instead they were generated by the ability to use rights or to be forced to comply with duties" (Herzog 4). By the nineteenth century, legal definitions had been implemented but their practical reach was severely limited by a continued focus on behaviors, locations, and attitudes.

Mansilla reiterates the Argentine status of the Ranqueles at various points through the *Excursión*. When addressing the Indian parliament he passionately exclaims, "Todos somos hijos de Dios, todos somos argentinos" (337). He asks the *criollos* in the *toldos* for confirmation then turns to the Indians and yells, "Y ustedes también son argentinos – les decía a los indios -. ¿Y si no, qué son? – les gritaba -; yo quiero saber lo que son" (338). At other times he exclaims "Vivan los indios argentinos!" (99, 148) By doing so he directly positions himself against those that would view the Indians as external enemies and thus called for their extermination. In his perspective, by virtue of legality, geography, and potential the Indians are Argentines who could one day be granted all of the associated rights and duties.

I have highlighted how Mansilla uses the discourses of ethnography, religion, and patriotism to defend the Indian against those that would exclude them from civilization, Argentina, and the future. However, it would be only a partial reading and a misleading one at that not to mention the contradictory prescriptions further elaborated in the text. Although Mansilla questions dichotomies and stadialist categories, he still continues to use their language. Even as he tells the Indians that they are all God's children he chides them as *bárbaros* (338). Additionally, he suggests that the Indians are already part of the nation but insists on calling them *indios argentinos* rather than simply *argentinos*. They are citizens with an asterisk, part of the nation but fundamentally different. As in the

1853 Constitution, the Indians are still depicted as "*outside* the Argentinean nation and Christianity" even though they are legally incorporated (Gordillo and Hirsch 19). The strength of the essentialist conception of the Indian is too strong, and each attempt to incorporate the Ranqueles is undercut by Mansilla's word choice and continued emphasis on the Ranqueles as distinct. Despite his calls for justice he writes in the epilogue that the countryside of Argentina will have a brilliant future, when and only when, "los ranqueles hayan sido exterminados o reducidos, cristianizados y civilizados" (431). Mansilla sees the Indians as productive future citizens, but only if they can completely shed their Indian identities. His strong essentialism raises doubts as to whether or not this could ever happen. Finally, it must be remembered that in describing the Indians and their territories in great detail, Mansilla was compiling the data that would be used by Julio Roca and others for future military campaigns against them (Goodrich 138). His positive assessments of the Ranqueles' way of life and behaviors would ironically be used to further their extermination.

Unfortunately and perhaps predictably, Mansilla's defense of the native tribes did not much outlive his excursion to Tierra Adentro. By 1885 he was arguing in front of the Cámara de Diputados of the National Congress that the Indians of Argentina and all of the Americas were "orgánicamente, por razones de evolución, refractarios a nuestra civilización" (Congreso Nacional Argentina 1: 503). In the same session he reminds the chamber of a phrase of his *Excursión*, "No hay peor mal que la civilización sin clemencia" (1: 503). This time, however, instead of justifying humanitarian efforts the phrase serves to introduce his denial of funds to those projects. Although his belief in mercy keeps him from directly opposing the proposed formation of Indian colonies, he is

entirely convinced that it is illusory to believe that "se va a obtener el más mínimo resultado incorporando al indio a nuestra civilización tomado del punto de vista antropológico, del punto de vista colectivo" (Congreso Nacional Argentina 1: 506). He falls back on biological determinism, now arguing for the very position he combated in *Una excursión*. There is no reason to try to educate the Indian, for he cannot learn or adapt. Finally, Mansilla makes clear the tension of the Indian being equal yet different that destabilized the narration of *Una excursión*. He calls for a special law that "establezca que un indio es sobretodo un indio, y que, sean cuales sean las razones que tuvieron nuestros padres y los legisladores para declarar que son argentinos todos los que nacen en el territorio de la República, no podemos equiparar el indio a los demás habitantes" (Congreso Nacional Argentina 1: 504). Fifteen years later Mansilla publicly declared the very same position that he wrote against in *Una excursión,* using racial determinism to exclude the Indian from property ownership, citizenship, and much-needed government assistance.

In Defense of the *Criollo*

The title of *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* and Mansilla's stated declarations in the text draw the reader's attention to his project of defining the Indians and locating their appropriate place in ethnographic discourse and the national body. In this section I propose an additional reading that I believe to be just as fundamental to the work, even if it often has been overlooked.[33] It is my contention that *Una excursión* is as much a justification of the Argentine *criollo* as it is a defense of the Ranqueles. The racial determinism that predicted extinction or permanent degradation for the Indians frequently

[33] Scholars have mentioned Mansilla's defense of the *gaucho* briefly, but primarily in the context of a contestation to Sarmiento's formulations in *Facundo*. I argue that his thesis is actually directed at a much larger audience and involves a defense of the entire country as a racial organism.

also painted a negative picture of the characteristics and potential of the mixed-blood American *criollo*. Although of pure Spanish blood himself, Mansilla saw the *mestizo* as the base of the nation, thus making the negative portrayals from Europe and North America an attack on Argentina as a whole. As he does for the Ranqueles, Mansilla uses competing ethnographic tracts and personal experience to elaborate a racial project that defends the *criollo*'s physical, moral, and intellectual faculties and argues that time and education are more powerful than biology in determining character.

In the text, the non-Indian portion of the Argentine population is as overdetermined and contradictory as the category of *Indian*. *Cristiano, blanco, argentino, mestizo, criollo, civilizado,* and *gaucho* are all used by Mansilla to refer to the group he perceives as antithetical to the Indian race. Because these terms are consistently used in binary pairs, when Mansilla destabilizes the meaning of Indian the significance of these terms is destabilized as well. Consequently, the non-Indian is similarly defined at various points in the text by biology, geography, class, and behavior. Although I recognize the constructed and contradictory nature of this representation, I must choose a term to use in my analysis. Thus, going forward I will use the term *criollo* to encompass the complex non-Indian racial identity with which Mansilla appears to identify.

Further complicating matters, Mansilla vacillates between representing himself and the Argentine nation as members of a pure European race or as mixed-blood *mestizos*. At times he associates the phrase "nuestra raza" with the Spanish (282), but more frequently he uses the first person plural when speaking of the common, mixed-race people of Argentina: "Nuestra raza es valiente y resuelta; no es el temor de la muerte lo que contiene al gaucho a veces" (64). I believe that this confusion can be explained by a

contradiction between desire and reality. Mansilla personally identifies as European: his grandparents were Spanish and he frequently traveled to or communicated with the Old World. Like most of the *porteño* elite, Mansilla would have liked to build a nation that was racially and culturally European. Europe was the gold standard that "nos da la norma en todo" (283). Nonetheless, his experiences as a military man on the frontier showed him that the vast majority of the Argentine population did not share these references or ancestry. In fact, they were usually *mestizo*, often poor, and frequently uneducated. In his speech in front of the Indian parliament, Mansilla insists that all Argentines are *mestizos* because the conquistadores did not bring women with them.[34] Thus, he recognizes that the construction of a European country in the River Plate is impossible. Positioning himself in opposition to Sarmiento and others of his generation, Mansilla ridicules the "monomania de la imitación [de Europa]" at the expense of local traditions (175)[35] and denies that immigration is the way out of Argentina's economic and political troubles. Acknowledging the realities of the region, Mansilla represents the *mestizo criollo* as the true basis of the Argentine nation. It is this race that Mansilla vehemently defends throughout *Una excursión*.

In the mid- to late nineteenth century, intellectuals in North America and Europe looked at the chaos that characterized many of the new republics in the Americas and attempted to explain it as a function of an inherent, natural racial character. Building on earlier theories of the "weakness of America" (Gerbi 3), prestigious international journals

[34] In order to appeal to the Ranqueles Mansilla actually says that this mixing means that "todos los que han nacido en esta tierra, son indios, no *gringos*" (338). This should not be taken to mean that Mansilla believes the Argentines are Indians, but rather must be viewed as a rhetorical device designed to manipulate the Ranqueles' sentiments.

[35] This disdain is quite ironic, as Mansilla had the reputation of being quite a dandy and a frequent adopter of European customs and fashion (Sosnowski xv).

published many studies that denied the Spanish American republics the ability to achieve certain levels of prosperity and development (Hill, "Entre" 723). Different authors attributed the *criollo*'s racial inferiority to distinct causes, blaming the Spanish inheritance, the Indians' racial qualities, the process of miscegenation, or the pernicious influence of the American soil for creating nations seemingly doomed to decay and destruction. The best way to quickly summarize these diverse opinions is to refer to Robert Knox's argument in *The Races of Men* (1850), for he uses all of the major currents of thought to condemn the *criollos* to certain extinction.

In *The Races of Men,* Knox first argued that the Spanish were a race "in decay, and tottering to their fall" (110) when they arrived in America. In the following centuries they had only degenerated further due to the malignant American environment (67). Similarly, the Indians were also "living on the crumbs of a past generation" at the time of the Conquest (258). Neither of the two stocks that formed the *mestizo* in America were strong to begin with, and because Knox viewed races as separate species, he believed that their offspring could not be stable or fertile. For Knox, the result of miscegenation was always a "monstrosity of nature" (88), even if it came from the crossing of superior stocks. Consequently, in order to perpetuate his or her existence the American *mestizo* had to continually mate with the Spanish, but the Spanish in the Americas were dying out due to the influence of the climate. The *mestizo* could then try to reproduce with the Indian but this race was also disappearing. Thus, he or she was doomed to disappear as well given that there would be no one left with whom to reproduce and the *mestizo* was not self-sustainable. "The Hispano-hybrid races were a disgrace to human nature" and faced certain destruction (Knox 505). These conclusions, while extreme, would be

repeated to varying degrees in the work of many nineteenth-century authors in Europe, North America, and even in South America itself. In the following section I will break down the various pieces of Knox's argument and examine how Mansilla defends the *criollo* against each of the accusations leveled against him or her.

The elite of Buenos Aires were well-aware of the attacks on the *criollo*. In 1867 Manuel Ricardo Trelles wrote an impassioned cry for a defense in *La Revista de Buenos Aires*:

> La necesidad urgente del estudio de nuestra historia, cuando no fuese reconocida por todos los hombres ilustrados, bastaría para justificar las infundadas o falsas apreciaciones que se han hecho y se hacen sobre los sucesos, llegando las observaciones hasta el estremo [sic] de anatematizar nuestra propia raza y la civilización que nos dio existencia, atribuyéndoles esclusivamente [sic] ser la causa de males que provienen de muy diferentes y variadas circunstancias. (590)

Trelles argues for a new understanding of history that goes beyond biological determinism and seeks gentler ways to explain the past and change the future of Argentina. *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* answers this call and delivers an impassioned defense of the *mestizo* and thus the Argentine nation.

For Mansilla to successfully defend the *criollo*, he must argue against the negative images of both the Indians and the Spanish and then also show that no further harm comes from the process of racial mixing. We have already seen the ways in which Mansilla paints a more positive portrait of the indigenous tribes of Argentina. Limiting the Indian-ness of Indians serves two purposes in the text. The first, as mentioned, is that it allows him to envision the Indian playing a role in the future of Argentina. Less

obviously, this representational technique also permits Mansilla to speak of the *criollo* in a more positive fashion, for the Indian provided half of the genetic material of the *mestizo*. There may have been a need to limit the power of the Indians in order to elaborate a particular view of (White) Argentina, but Mansilla also needed to laud the Indian in order to increase the value of the *criollo* relative to Europe and North America. In this way, Mansilla's description of the Indians not only serves to contradict the positivist/determinist view of race exemplified by Sarmiento but also to bolster Argentina's racial credibility around the world. While he is working with an Indian-Christian division in the context of Argentina's territorial politics, he is also confronting another space from which *criollo* America was seen as the inferior Other.

The Spanish were generally viewed more positively than the Indian given that they were part of "civilized" Europe, but once again value is relative and not absolute. Although European, the Spanish and Portuguese were often considered to be inferior to the races of Northern Europe. Nott and Gliddon identified two types of Caucasians: the biologically-inferior and darker Spanish and Portuguese and the superior, fairer Anglo-Saxons (Nott and Gliddon, *Types* 107). This inferiority was frequently explained by the Iberian Peninsula's geographic and historical ties to Africa (Torrecilla 95). The biological and cultural influence of the African Moors and the warmer climate of Southern Europe caused laziness, degeneration, and a general lack of development that was both innate and immutable.[36] The Spanish reputation was further harmed by sordid tales of the Conquest that fed into the Black Legend. Tocqueville accuses the Spanish of both incompetence and immorality, writing that they "were unable to exterminate the Indian race by those unparalleled atrocities that brand them with indelible shame, nor did they

[36]Jesús Torrecilla has traced the trope of Spanish laziness back to at least the early sixteenth century (155).

succeed even in wholly depriving it of its rights" (1: 355). Spanish actions in the Americas were seen as signs of both their immorality and their intellectual and physical inferiority, as they were unable to complete their execrable plan to eliminate the savages. Accordingly, ethnographers who held this position agreed with Robert Knox's assessment that the Spanish influence in South America was bound to end, eventually giving way to superior populations of Anglo-Saxons (Nott and Gliddon, *Types* 279-280). Like the Indian, Spanish heritage was seen as a burden, not a boon, for the development of nations and people in the Americas.

As he defends the Indians, Mansilla also defends the European portion of the Argentine racial equation. He justifies the actions of the Spanish during the Conquest by highlighting the positive role they played in leading the Indians out of barbarism. He also lists the positive things that the Spanish did for the Indians, including bringing horses, cows, and sheep to the New World (338). Without Spanish intervention, the Indians would have continued to live a very poor life in which they were "muy zonzos" (338). In Mansilla's rendering of the Conquest, the Spanish showered the Indians with gifts, women, and knowledge. Thus, he directly contradicts the defamatory rumors of the Black Legend. The Spanish are also depicted as intelligent, not incompetent, having followed a "juicioso plan" in the colonization and defense of the frontiers (9).

More subtly, throughout the text Mansilla compares aspects of the Ranquel way of life to the customs and languages of Germany, England, and France, implicating all of Europe in his narrowing of the gap between barbarians and civilized men. He establishes that the Ranquel counting system is similar to the Teutonic version, ironizing German feelings of superiority over the natives: "Bismark, el gran hombre de Estado, contaría las

águilas de las legiones vencedoras en Sadowa, lo mismo que el indio Mariano Rosas cuenta sus lanzas al regresar del malón" (130). Mariano Rosas is elevated to the position of the great German politician Bismarck, while Bismarck is similarly brought down to the level of an Indian *cacique*. Mansilla also compares the Ranqueles' manner of toasting (*yapaí*) with the English custom, "para que vean los de la colonia inglesa que en algo se parecen a los ranqueles" (157). Finally, he cheekily notes that the Ranquel word for seduction, *cancán*, and the French *can-can* are both related to "Cúpido and sus tentaciones," and suggests that "Los filólogos franceses pueden averiguar si estos vocablos se los han tomado los indios a los galos o éstos a los indios (222). The hierarchical relationship between Europe and America is upended by suggesting that Europe could have taken something positive from the Americas. While it is doubtful that Mansilla actually believed that the French and the Ranqueles were linguistically related, his rhetorical strategy is a very effective way to remind the pretentious races of Northern Europe that they too might have barbarous tendencies.

Even if he can prove that the Spanish are no worse than other Europeans in their natural habitat in the Old World, Mansilla also had to defend the *criollo* against the belief that the environment of Spanish America was harmful. In this, he participates in a centuries-long process of mediating the way that the Old World envisioned the New (see Gerbi, *The Dispute*). The Peruvian Hipólito Unanue accused the Europeans of holding just such a prejudice in the early nineteenth century, complaining that the "filósofos ultramarinos…mojaron su pincel en amargos y negros tintes para retratar a estas regiones afortunadas como a un suelo ingrato, negado a las bendiciones del Cielo, funesto albergue de sierpes, cocodrilos y otros monstruos empozados" (58). The land of the New

World, generally assumed to be tropical, was purported to have a particularly pernicious effect on members of European races unaccustomed to such heat and humidity. Consequently, Europeans in the Americas underwent "a positively *morbid degradation*," deteriorating in intelligence, morality, and physical strength (Nott 356). Even if the Spanish had been strong to begin with they would have suffered serious declines in the American territory.

The experience of the desert is frightening for Mansilla because many of his interactions present the possibility that the doom and gloom predictions of degeneration might be true. The power of the desert is a well-known trope in Argentine literature; in Echeverría's *La cautiva* the female protagonist is infused with masculine qualities and the ability to kill by her mere presence there. Mansilla similarly encounters people changed by the experience of Tierra Adentro. Doña Fermina, captive for decades, confesses to him, "vivo como india; y francamente, me parece que soy más india que cristiana, aunque creo en Dios, como que todos los días le encomiendo mis hijos y mi familia" (408). Once a part of *criollo* society, Doña Fermina had been transformed by her contact with the Indians and the desert. Renegades such as Camargo also felt loyalty towards the Indians and had adopted many of their habits, even taking Indian wives. The civilized traits of the Indians and the Indian behaviors of the captives seemed to confirm the terrifying fear that the desert did have the power to attract and change people. Mansilla's personal experiences make clear the intensity of the call of the wild: "Viviendo entre salvajes he comprendido por qué ha sido siempre más fácil pasar de la civilización a la barbarie que de la barbarie a la civilización" (84). Thus, to some degree he participates in the

pervasive Latin American concern about the power of the desert to retard or reverse projects of civilization and progress (Quijada, "Repensando" 136).

Although Mansilla acknowledges this fear, thus acknowledging some of the criticisms of the *criollo*, he expends much more time and effort on defending the Americas against the charges described above. Despite the negative changes experienced by Doña Fermina and Camargo, he still refers to them as *cristianos* or *civilizados* and sees positive qualities in them, including resignation and loyalty. Mansilla himself flirts with the adoption of barbarism, such as when he cuts his toenails at the table and eats vulgarly in order to impress his host, Mariano Rosas (271-272). The result is that "Mi compadre [Mariano Rosas] y los convidados estaban encantados. Aquel coronel cristiano parecía un indio. ¿Qué más podían ellos desear? Yo iba a ellos. Me les asimilaba. Era la conquista de la barbarie sobre la civilización" (272). It is clear, however, that this is an act designed to provoke the sympathies of the Other in order to better manipulate him. Within half a page the recently-fashioned barbarian is quoting French poets and referencing the Roman emperor Aulus Vitellius Germanicus. These actions raise the possibility that people such as Doña Fermina and Camargo were also adopting certain behaviors in order to facilitate their lives in the *toldos* and had not truly changed. Mansilla admits to the power of the savage life, but throughout the text it is clear that civilized desires and habits are generally stronger and had prevented barbarism from making inroads in Argentina.

In a complementary argument, Mansilla also insists that the Argentine land is fertile, prosperous and healthful. This defense continues the work of eighteenth-century authors writing from the Americas, including Unanue and the Spaniard Félix de Azara.

Mansilla would have certainly been aware of the work of Azara either directly or through frequent references in the *Revista de Buenos Aires*, and it would not be surprising that he knew the work of Unanue as well. He argues that the countryside around Buenos Aires is dotted with pretty ponds that provide abundant water and plenty of excellent pasture land, firewood, and shade. Should the land prove to be less healthy than expected, Mansilla believes that "Las fuerzas morales dominan constantemente las físicas y dan la explicación y la clave de los fenómenos sociales" (17), echoing Unanue's 1806 declaration that although the American environment could introduce "morosidad and pereza en los habitantes," "las causas morales pueden en ellos, no solamente contrabalancearlas; sino también destruirlas, haciéndolos tanto o más laboriosos que los moradores de las regiones frías" (83). Educational projects and the self-knowledge gained through sciences such as phrenology could create a morally solid and well-guided population in possession of the strength needed to overcome difficulties posed by geography and climate. In the eyes of Azara, Unanue, Mansilla, and others, the European charges against the American environment were likely false. Even if they were true, their determining influence was far from absolute.

The other major criticism of Spanish America and its chances for progress was the predominant role of miscegenation in the composition and growth of the new republics' populations. Mansilla's own text shows the degree to which miscegenation had shaped the Argentine human landscape. Practically all of the *caciques* that he meets in Tierra Adentro are *mestizos*, as are most of the *gauchos* and many of his own men. In his speech to the Ranqueles he depicts the history of Argentina as a continual process of racial mixture. The Spanish that came were entirely men, and so had to steal Indian

women and reproduce with them. “Es por eso,” Mansilla argues, “que les he dicho que todos los que han nacido en esta tierra, son indios, no *gringos*” (338). Although he refers to the offspring of these unions as *indios*, he is clearly speaking of the birth of the *mestizo* population. The *mestizo* therefore comes to be the racial base of the nation, stretching from colonial times to the present day.

Although Mansilla places the *mestizo* at the beginnings of Argentine history, miscegenation was seriously attacked by some European and American ethnographers in the mid-nineteenth century. Those who believed the different races to be different species thought that the product of the crossing of races would be sterile, as part of the definition of species was that organisms within the species could only reproduce with other members of the group (see Broca). The children from cross-species unions would be degenerate (Gobineau 211), “low in vitality” (Knox 566) and would lack character, expression (Agassiz 292), and physical and mental energy (Agassiz 293). On a national level, sexual mixing would lead to confusion and even “racial anarchy” (Gobineau 150), impeding progress and the establishment of stability. Mansilla attacks this criticism head on, stating point blank that “En el día parece ser un punto fuera de disputa, que la fusión de las razas mejora las condiciones de la humanidad” (434). The truth, of course, was that this thesis was far from unquestionable and many continued to sustain the opposite opinion. Nonetheless, Mansilla’s confident proclamation, general authoritative tone throughout the text, and rapid pace of narration leave little room to question his statement. As Azara did a century previously (Caponi 136), Mansilla describes *mestizos* such as Ramón as tall and strong (99), showing none of the weaknesses Agassiz would attribute to them. For Mansilla, personal experience of individual cases confirms the

general principle. Furthermore, the history of Argentina also supports Mansilla's assertions of the strength of the *mestizo*, for if the crossings were sterile or weak then it is unlikely they would have survived for over three centuries and managed to throw off the yoke of a colonial power. Decades later Mansilla would attack Sarmiento's *Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América* precisely for attributing too much influence to the repulsion and mixing of races ("Historia" 221).

For Mansilla, the result of the biological mixing of two strong races in a healthy environment is a vigorous race able to reach the highest levels of civilization. In language that evokes Alcides d'Orbigny's positive assessment of the Native Americans,[37] Mansilla writes that his countrymen do not need to eat or drink frequently and can easily withstand fatigue, rain, heat, and cold (64). Not only are they not weak but they are actually stronger and better adapted for survival than most Europeans. The *criollo* is a bastion of physical force but also possesses intelligence and the ability to learn: "Somos una raza privilegiada, sana y sólida, susceptible de todas las enseñanzas útiles y de todos los progreso adaptables a nuestro genio y a nuestra índole" (17). In this aspect the argument that Mansilla makes to defend the *criollo* is very similar to the one he uses for the Ranqueles. In *Una excursión*, neither race is inherently or biologically condemned to a lower level of life. Both are capable of learning and progressing, and if they have not done so yet it is due to a lack of positive influence and not to the pernicious effects of faulty biology.

Mansilla's depictions of the renegades and *gauchos* he meets in the *toldos* clearly reveal his belief in the innate goodness of the *criollo* and the culpability of bad

[37] "La complexion des Américains est très-vigoureuse: ils résistent aux plus rudes travaux, sont des plus sobres, et supportent longtemps la soif et la faim, sans paraitre en souffrir" (1: 137).

government in the social problems plaguing the nation. The *gauchos* are often depicted as brutal, immoral, and dirty. Their distance from the habits of polite society is so great that it leads him to question if they should even be included among civilized men, for "en el rancho de un gaucho falta todo" (217). Nonetheless, Mansilla chooses the *gaucho* as the symbol of the great autochthonous nation that could and should be founded out of the wreckage of the Argentine civil wars. In order to do so, he must demonstrate that they are not biologically bad. The episodes in which he lets the *gauchos* narrate their stories at the bonfire illustrate this point once and again. Miguelito is a fugitive living in the *toldos* to escape the long arm of the law and Crisóstomo is a rough man who disrespects both Mansilla and the priests. Mansilla does not attribute these actions to biology, however, but looks for external causes. He shows that Miguelito is only in trouble due to the seduction of women and the actions of corrupt government officials (166); Crisóstomo's problems are similarly the fault of "¡Las mujeres, señor!, que no sirven sino para perjuicio" (109).[38] Mansilla's description of the spy for the great chief Calfucurá drives home this point. An ugly quadroon, he is rude, a liar, and a bandit yet he shows compassion for one of the poor dogs of the *toldo*. This action leads Mansilla to reflect that the spy was not intrinsically evil, but had grown up in an environment that did not teach him morals or proper behavior (300). He then wonders if,

> ¿Sería yo mejor que ese hombre, me pregunté, si no supiera quién me había dado el ser; si no me hubieran educado, dirigido, aconsejado; si mi vida hubiera sido oscura, fugitiva…Si jamás hubiera vivido en sociedad, aprendiendo desde que

[38] For more on Mansilla's misogyny see María Rosa Lojo, "El indio cómo prójimo, la mujer como el 'otro' en *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*, de Lucio Victorio Mansilla."

> tuve uso de razón a confundir mi interés particular con el interés general, que es la base de nuestra moral, ¿sería yo mejor que ese hombre? (300)

Mansilla's ruminations once again suggest that the no one is born bad, but that circumstances conspire against them. If the *gaucho* still lived in a disorganized and immoral fashion and shunned discipline and work, it is not because that was all he could do but because no one had taught him otherwise. In this case, like that of the Indian, Mansilla blames civilization for not doing enough to advance the situation of the lower strata of society. Returning to a previously mentioned citation, Mansilla boldly asserts that "Quejarnos de que los indios nos asuelen, es lo mismo que quejarnos de que los gauchos sean ignorantes, viciosos, atrasados. ¿A quién la culpa, sino a nosotros mismos?" (153). With this, Mansilla completes his defense of the *criollos*, convincingly demonstrating that government and education are the primary determinants of civilization and that all the inhabitants of Argentina would be susceptible to the positive influences of these institutions if and only if those in power would pay attention to local character and take appropriate action.

Distinct from his treatment of the Indian, during the decades subsequent to the publication of *Una excursión* Mansilla would continue to defend the Argentine *criollo* publically. In the series of *causeries* published under the title *Entre Nos*, Mansilla addresses Argentina's detractors with ever more forceful conviction. For example, in "El año de 730 días" he writes against the "escuela extravagante y fatalista de los que creen en la predestinación de las razas" and complains that according to the Anglo-Saxons, "Excepto las razas del Norte…no hay grandes destinos reservados a los hijos de Sem, de Cam y de Jafet. Según ellos, *están frescos* los latinos!" (94-95, emphasis Mansilla's).

Instead, he rejects "sus orgullosas pretensiones" and says "me propongo demonstrar con breves y perfunctorias observaciones, las ventajas inmensas de nacer y vivir en las zonas tropicales" ("El año" 96). In this and other articles,[39] Mansilla makes explicit the underlying defense of the *criollo* found in the earlier *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*. Unfortunately, we have seen that Mansilla's similar understanding of the racial potential of the Indians did not last and his defense quickly gave way to aggression. In later years, he adopted the determinist attitude he had so forcefully criticized and that eventually led to multiple military campaigns that aimed to subdue or kill the Indians and take possession of the land on which they lived. Mansilla's *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* remains as a testament to his earlier attitude and the richness of the Ranquel civilization in the period before the intensification of Argentine military maneuvers against them. In the following chapter I jump forward twenty years, turning to the period after the Conquista del Desierto in order examine how the Indian was poetically incorporated or excluded from the national racial body from a perspective posterior to the era of the armed conflict.

[39] See, for example, "Nitschewo," where he affirms his confidence in the future of Argentina, denies the negative influence of the stars in the region, and proclaims the land "afortundamente habitable y cultivable, del uno al otro confín, - verdadera tierra de promisión para gentes de otras latitudes" (255).

Chapter Two. Writing the National Body: The Poetics of Racial Change and Mixing in *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél*

On February 20, 1885, the Argentine General Lorenzo Vintter sent a telegram to General Domingo Viejobueno proudly declaring, "puedo decir a V.S. que hoy no queda tribu alguna en los campos que no se halle reducida voluntaria o forzosamente" (qtd. in Mases 59). This note effectively marked the end of the armed intervention against the Indians in the central and southern territories of Argentina. Although this "accomplishment" did not mean the total extermination of the native peoples as is often supposed,[40] it did force a shift in the way in which they were conceived by the River Plate elite. When Lucio V. Mansilla wrote *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* the Indians represented a very real threat. However, by the late 1880s the physical Indian was largely reduced to an imaginary one, permitting reevaluations of the role of the native tribes in the region's past and future. Scores of arriving immigrants, accelerated processes of modernization, and the approaching anniversaries of Columbus's "discovery" of America and the independence of Argentina (1810) and Uruguay (1811-1828) further provoked discussions of national composition and identity. Juan Zorrilla de San Martín's poem *Tabaré* (1888) and Eduardo L. Holmberg's poem *Lin-Calél* (1910) are two examples of texts that retrospectively examine the Indians' legacy in order to define the racial identity of their respective nations. Nineteenth-century scientific theories of racial change – evolution and degeneration – and racial mixing are fundamental to these projects. Although the plots of both poems are very similar, divergent understandings of

[40] In *Estado y cuestión indígena* Enrique Hugo Mases has effectively demonstrated the continued persistence of the Indian after 1885 as both living being and subject of state policy. The end of the armed conflict did not entail the end of debate over what to do with the Indians, for there was still the pressing question of "cómo resolver la rápida incorporación de los indios reducidos" (59).

racial formation lead to different formulations of the ideal composition of the River Plate populations. Although incorporating competing theories – degeneration and evolution – both Zorrilla and Holmberg insist that the physical Indian has no place in the modern nations of the River Plate. However, Holmberg's Darwinian national allegory privileges the racially-mixed *mestizo* as the basis of the Spanish American populations while Zorrilla totally excludes the hybrid as an unviable monstrosity of nature.

Writing after both independence from Spain and independence from the physical and spatial constraints caused by uncontrolled indigenous populations, both Zorrilla and Holmberg use narrations of mixed-race love stories to process and productively use the racial legacy of the colonial era. In her now classic study, Doris Sommer examines a series of canonical texts that work to consolidate and define the emerging Latin American nations through tales of heterosexual love. What has gone unnoticed is the correlation between romance and science in these foundational fictions. Indeed, in *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* romance is inseparable from turn-of-the-century scientific theories about human origins and the mechanisms of racial change. The plots of the poems therefore racially found the nations through their historical settings, while at the same time framing Argentina and Uruguay as particular exemplars of a universal pattern – i.e., as the necessary outcomes of the mechanisms of God or Nature. Thus, I argue, science and poetry were allies in processes of making the sense of Spanish America's complicated racial legacy.

Degeneration, Evolution, and the Vanishing Indian

In the mid- to late nineteenth century, one of the questions that most intrigued scientists around the world was how to explain the observed inferiority of some

populations in relation to others. In his first encounter with the Fuegians of southernmost South America, Charles Darwin was shocked by the appearance of the natives. In the account of his voyage he exclaims, "I could not have believed how wide was the difference between savage and civilized man" ("The Voyage" 190). In order to explain the fact that mankind could exist at very different levels of development, scholars turned to two theories: degeneration and progressivism. According to the first stance, in the beginning all of humanity possessed "superior intelligence" (Lyell, *The Geological* 378) and high degrees of civilization. Over time, factors ranging from immorality to biology caused some groups of people to lose these superior characteristics such that present-day savages were "degenerate descendants of far superior ancestors" (Lubbock, *The Origins* 465). This hypothesis was advanced by no less than the illustrious Alexander von Humboldt, whose travels in America led him to affirm that "The barbarism which prevails through these different regions is perhaps less owing to a primitive absence of all kind of civilization, than to the effects of long degradation; for most of the hordes which we designate under the name of savages are probably the descendants of nations highly advanced in cultivation" (1: 293).

An alternate explanation for the savages' relatively low state is clearly expressed in the works of geologist Charles Lyell and anthropologist John Lubbock, both British. They argued that the history of mankind was actually a history of progression, such that from barbarous origins man "approach[es] step by step towards perfection" (Lubbock, *The Origins* 170).[41] Savages and barbarians thus participate in the same general process as superior races, but their progress has been slowed or stopped by any number of factors.

[41] Lyell admitted that the evidence for the progressive theory was far but complete, but still considered it an "indispensable hypothesis" that might be modified in the future but "will never be overthrown" (*The Geological* 405).

This theory, as we saw in Chapter One, allowed that the Indian had the potential to continue to climb the ranks of humanity, eventually reaching high levels of development. A progressive understanding of the world was often accompanied by a belief in evolution, particularly after the 1860s. While Darwin argued that the forces of Nature had no predetermined direction, many – including the very influential Herbert Spencer – combined the ideas of natural selection and progress. Thus, competition for resources in the struggle for life impelled surviving organisms to ever-higher levels of perfection.

The question of race loomed large as nineteenth-century Spanish American elites attempted to formulate cohesive identities for their often tenuously held together nations. From a mass of disparate beings had to arise a "fictive ethnicity" that produced the illusion of a group with shared history and interests (Balibar 96). These *imagined communities* (Anderson) depended on processes of symbolic and physical violence that incorporated some while excluding others. Thus, Balibar argues that nationalism and racism go hand in hand (37).[42] In nineteenth-century Argentina and Uruguay, these processes were increasingly viewed through the lens of science (Stepan, *"The Hour"* 7). Clemente Palma and Hipólito Unanue in Peru, Andrés Bello in Venezuela, and Domingo F. Sarmiento in Argentina are notable examples of the multitudes of politicians and writers who closely tied the search for national identity to the scientifically-described processes of racial determination and mixture in the Americas. Zorrilla and Holmberg, therefore, should be viewed not as exceptions but rather as manifestations of a tendency with a long history.

[42] "Racism is not an 'expression' of nationalism, but a supplement of nationalism or more precisely a supplement internal to nationalism, always in excess of it, but always indispensable to its constitution and yet always still insufficient to achieve its project" (Balibar 54).

That Zorrilla could be writing in, and responding to, a specific scientific context is a hypothesis that to the best of my knowledge has never been ventured. Most critics have firmly situated his work within the confines of late Romanticism and have viewed *Tabaré* at most as a reaction to the general processes of modernization and progress.[43] Against this prevailing critical current, I argue that the depiction of the Charrúas in *Tabaré* is intimately tied to the previously described discourse of degeneration. As a member of the intellectual elite, Zorrilla must have been well aware of the debates over the shaping of humankind and the ranking of races. He gave several speeches at José Manuel Estrada's frequent pulpit for anti-evolutionism, the Club Católico de Montevideo. Zorrilla was also well acquainted with the first Archbishop of Montevideo, Mariano Soler, who was another vociferous opponent of polygenism and evolution (Bordoli 19).

In his own public expressions, Zorrilla resolutely followed the example of Estrada and Soler and defended the monogenetic origin of humankind. In line with Catholic dogma, he argued that all of humanity descended from Adam and Eve and that racial differences illustrated the degree to which a particular group had fallen from its original perfection. As such, Zorrilla positioned himself in direct opposition to the evolutionary theories of Darwin, Spencer, Lubbock, and Lyell. In the period in which he was writing *Tabaré*, he published an article in *El Bien Público*, the Catholic newspaper he founded and directed. Written on the occasion of the death of Charles Darwin (April 19, 1882), the short essay vilifies Darwin as "uno de los principales enemigos de su [la especie humana] divino origen" ("Darwin" 47).[44] He writes that although he respects Darwin's geological work and travel writing, he cannot accept the revolutionary ideas of *On the*

[43] See Anderson Imbert, Santacruz, Anido, and Seluja Cecín.
[44] Interestingly, Zorrilla repeatedly calls Darwin a "norteamericano" in the essay.

Origin of Species and *The Descent of Man*. Darwin was a good scientist until he grew ambitious and tried to fill in the gaps in the "cadena de los seres." This effort was a grave error. As a result, Darwin fell "de la manera más deplorable, aplastando con el peso de sus errores la dignidad humana y con ella su propia gloria" ("Darwin" 48). Zorrilla's condemnation of Darwin differs from those of River Plate intellectuals such as Hermann Burmeister and José Manuel Estrada: while they fought Darwinism with data, in his article on Darwin Zorrilla relies solely on emotion and religious indignation. To conclude the essay, Zorrilla reprints five stanzas from an 1872 poem entitled "A Darwin," written by the Spanish poet Gaspar Núñez de Arce. This text sarcastically imagines a world in which humans descended from monkeys,[45] ridiculing one of the most extreme conclusions of evolutionary theory. Zorrilla sides with Núñez de Arce, elaborating a worldview that privileged the scriptural explanation of creation and rejected challenges to the divine and unified origin of mankind.

Zorrilla's anti-evolutionary stance – at once scientific, political, and moral – is central to my reading of *Tabaré*. The first canto of the poem introduces the eponymous protagonist and the Charrúa Indian tribe through a series of rhetorical questions:

> ¿Que fué esa raza que pasó sin huella?
> ¿Fue el último vestigio
> de un mundo en decadencia?
> ¿Crepúsculo sin día? ¿Noche acaso

[45] "Con meditada calma y paso a paso, / cual reclamaba el caso, / llegó a tal perfección un mono viejo; / y la vivaz materia por sí sola / le suprimió la cola, / le ensanchó el cráneo y le afeitó el pellejo" (Núñez de Arce 36).

que surgió obscura de la luz eterna? (lines 260-264)[46]

With these verses, Zorrilla introduces the theory of degeneration into the poem. Although they are presented as questions, not statements, Zorrilla never presents other explanatory systems, i.e., evolution. A few verses later, he provides the definitive answer: "En esa raza, de un excelso origen / Aún el vestigio queda" (269-270). The Charrúa did once belong to a higher rank of humanity, but are now part of "un mundo de decadencia," indicating that they have degenerated and will continue to do so. This representation of the history of the Charrúas fits perfectly into Zorrilla's Catholic worldview. Like him, the Indians had been created by God and thus had an "excelso origen." However, he had to explain how a people created in the image of God could be so barbarous and immoral. Degeneration provided the mechanism necessary to insert extremely foreign populations into a Christian conception of human history. The sixteenth-century Charrúas are but a remnant of their former glory.

Zorrilla uses the simile of light to poetically develop his exposition of the degeneration of the Indian race:

Como el toque de luz amarillento
que un sol que muere en los espacios deja.
Hay lumbre en esos ojos,
siempre huraños; fuego que encienden sólo las ideas;
mas la lumbre se extingue, y una raza,
falta de luz, se extinguirá con ella. (271-276)

[46] All references to *Tabaré* are expressed with line numbers. For *Lin-Calél* I use page numbers as no existing edition provides line numeration.

In these verses, light is associated with both Christianity – the familiar trope of the light of God – and rationality – "fuego que encienden sólo las ideas." Not coincidentally, rationality and religious potential were the two characteristics most frequently used during the Conquest era to justify policies and behaviors with regard to the native peoples. Their paganism was used to justify the Catholic Kings sovereign power over the Americas (Pagden 29), while a lack of rationality located them at a near-beast level and permitted their representation as natural slaves (Pagden 43). In *Tabaré*, the character of Doña Luz, a Spaniard whose name makes her the ultimate representation of Christian rationality, gives voice to the most extreme of these sixteenth-century opinions:

> esos salvajes
> Hombres no son; la redención Cristiana
> no alcanza a redimirlos,
> pues para ellos no fue: no tienen alma;
> no son hijos de Adán, no son Gonzalo;
> esta estirpe feroz no es raza humana. (1373-1378)

She denies that the Indians are part of God's humanity and that there is any possibility of redeeming them. Thus, there is no reason to educate or incorporate the Indians for they cannot be saved. They are "nacidos para esclavos" (2098) and nothing more. The Charrúas are not human, but beasts without a soul and without intelligence, and thus worthy of exclusion or even extermination.

The poetic voice in the poem appears to vacillate between accepting the theory of degeneration elaborated in earlier stanzas and the inhumanity of the Indians sustained by Doña Luz. The voice cries,

¡Héroes sin redención y sin historia

sin tumbas y sin lágrimas!

Indómitos luchasteis… ¿Qué habéis sido?

¿Héroes o tigres? ¿Pensamiento o rabia? (1035-1038)

The Indians may have been heroes and thus rational humans, or they may have been jaguars and thus entirely animal instinct. In the end, I believe that the poetic voice sides with the opinion that the Indians are human, or at least once were. I do not believe that Doña Luz is meant to be Zorrilla's voice in the poem: her anti-Indian opinions are often so fierce as to appear parodic. She mocks the priest for attempting to convert the Indian and maintains that the mere presence of Tabaré in town keeps her up all night. Instead, as I have argued, the words of the poetic voice indicate that the Indian once shared a divine origin but has since degenerated. Zorrilla admits that the Indians are both rational and part of the community of God's children: "Hay lumbre en esos ojos" (2730). However, it is not the bright light of day but rather the shadowy light of twilight. Thus, the Indians' humanity is destined to disappear just as surely as the sun sinks below the horizon each evening. When the light is gone the effect will be fatal – "la lumbre se extingue, y una raza, falta de luz, se extinguirá con ella" (275-276). Whereas Doña Luz insisted that the Indians had never been human, the poetic voice allows that they once were, but shows them in an inevitable slide towards bestiality and death.

The representation of the Indian characters in *Tabaré* supports the idea that the entire race had or would shortly leave the ranks of humanity. Although once part of a totally human race, when describing Tabaré the poetic voice wonders, "Extraño ser! ¿Qué raza da sus líneas / A ese organismo esbelto? / [. . .] / Esa línea es charrúa; esa

otra…humana" (1255-1256, 1259). By making *charrúa* and *humana* two discrete types on the same level of classification, Zorrilla denies the Charrúa's belonging to the human race. Charrúa is not a subcategory of the grouping *human*, but rather a separate and oppositional group. The conventions of scientific classification combine with poetic musing to extract the native people of Uruguay from the greater community of humankind.

Zorrilla's insistence that the Indian is a degenerate race that has slid down so far as to leave humanity is furthered by his animalistic physical descriptions of them. Dehumanization has long been a strategy for dealing with the unfamiliar (Pagden 17) and an effective method for rendering a particular group inferior (Balibar 57). In *Tabaré*, the Charrúa tribe roars and howls, moving and speaking (or rather, grunting) like the beasts of the forest. Zorrilla elaborates an extended comparison between the Indian and the *tigre* (jaguar) throughout the poem, prolonging a colonial characterization of the Indian into the republican period. Based on the perceived melancholy of both cats and Indians, this comparison depicts the natives as calculating, lustful, greedy, and sneaky (Hill, "Between" 285). Tabaré's father, the *cacique* and rapist Caracé, is particularly characterized by an "avidez felina" (392) seen in his actions and his "pupila[s] prolongada[s]" (910) like a cat's. His violent tendencies echo a wild beast's manner of stalking and pouncing on innocent prey. This powerful entrenched image of the feline Indian represents them as not only dangerous and untrustworthy, but also emphasizes the huge gap between the Spanish and Indians, a gap as large as that between the Spanish and the wild jaguars. The humanity of the Spaniards is never questioned and there are no comparisons between them and animals in the text (García Méndez 16). Thus, no sense of

community can be felt between the two groups. While Zorrilla's highly charged metaphorical language is quite unlike that of Lubbock, Lyell, or Humboldt, these early stanzas situate the poem firmly in the context of the debates over progression versus degeneration and the native Americans' position within (or outside of) the ranks of humanity.

As I have briefly mentioned, Zorrilla's representation of the Indians as a degenerate race also carries the implication that they will continue to degenerate until the light goes out and they become extinct. His words evoke Robert Knox's 1850 description of the American Indians as a racial group "from whom no good could come, from whom nothing could be expected; a race whose vital energies were wound up; expiring: hastening onwards also to ultimate extinction" (66-67). This theme, termed the "Vanishing Indian Hypothesis" by Brian Dippie, is one that repeated itself in North and South American literature. "The Indians, this tradition holds, are a vanishing race; they have been wasting away since the day the white man arrived, diminishing in vitality and numbers until, in some not too distant future, no red men will be left on the face of the earth" (Dippie xi). In addition to making for powerful literature, this structure was an effective way to justify the oppression and extermination of the native peoples: if they were already doomed by God or Nature to disappear, then the White man's actions only contributed to a necessary process that was already set in motion.

Figurative language and other rhetorical devices in the poem add force and emotional power to Zorrilla's version of the vanishing Indian. First, the romantic and gothic elements found in the poem – phantoms, black lyres, and spirits – intensify the finality of the Indian's degeneration. The poetic voice enters the poem by lifting up a

gravestone and stepping into it (1), traveling back to the sixteenth-century setting from a nineteenth-century context in which the Uruguayan Indians were almost totally absent physically. The difference between the external time period and inner time of the poem permits the reader to already know the outcome: the Indian would not survive. In *Tabaré*, the poetic act is not one of depicting contemporaries but rather one of the "resurrección de voces extinguidas" (Zorrilla, *Tabaré* 23). In this way, Zorrilla's poem participates in a general tendency in American literature to use the "language of ghostliness" when speaking of the Indians (Bergland 1). Demons, spirits, phantoms, and specters reinforce the vanishing Indian thesis by combining still-living characters with their future ghostly selves. Similarly, ghosts and spirits populate the pages of *Tabaré*. Tabaré himself is mistaken for a ghost or an illusion (2340) and the Indians' forest is full of spectral presences. What has yet to be noted by criticism is that this depiction in *Tabaré* is based not only on historical fact and literary convention, but is also closely tied to the discourses of progression and degeneration that had captured the attention of intellectual elites in Europe and the Americas.

The impending extinction of the Charrúas is further developed through the metaphor of the tree found throughout the poem. In the first canto Zorrilla describes the Charrúas as "Hojas perdidas de su tronco enfermo, / el remolino las arrastra enfermas" (279-280). In this metaphor, the individual leaves represent the individuals of the race which is in turn represented by the branch that supports them. In nineteenth-century Western thought, trees had many symbolic meanings derived from a variety of contexts. The tree of knowledge is central to the Christian understanding of history, and the decoration of Catholic churches often presented a heavy symbolic charge of tree imagery.

Trees were also used to depict genealogies (systems of kinship) and were adopted by nineteenth-century scientists to structure classificatory systems. Evolutionary thought shifted visual representations of mankind from the lineal Great Chain of Being to many-branched trees. Paleontologists such as Florentino Ameghino worked to fill in the gaps of these trees, establishing relations of heredity and hierarchy. Zorrilla's use of the metaphor of the tree remits to the reader to both the Catholic context of the poem and the scientific efforts to situate the various perceived races of the world into a universal explanatory system.

Viewing Zorrilla's metaphorical tree as the tree of knowledge suggests that the "hojas perdidas" are individuals that have turned away from God. The mechanism of degeneration is thus a religious one based on the power of immorality and sin. Reading the tree as a family tree, however, adds the additional meaning of a racial cause of degeneration: the Indian race as a whole is biologically faulty ("tronco enfermo" (279)) and thus the individuals are unviable. From both perspectives the entire tree is destined to die, marking the end of the Charrúas as a race and as individuals. In *Tabaré*, Zorilla uses symbolism and poetic imagery to give life to two interrelated touchstones of nineteenth-century anthropology: first, that the modern-day Indian was a degenerate relic of a prior superior civilization, and secondly, that this race was destined to disappear.[47]

The final piece of Zorrilla's depiction of the Indians' degeneration and disappearance is the figure of Tabaré himself. Tabaré is a tricky character to analyze from a racial perspective, for in the poem he is closely associated with the Indian and the *mestizo* races. At times Zorrilla emphasizes how different he is from the rest of the tribe,

[47] I separate the two theories because, as I will explain in the section on Holmberg, supporters of evolutionary and progressive theories could also subscribe to the vanishing Indian hypothesis.

while at others he calls Tabaré an *indio* and uses him as a synecdoche for the Indian race. I will examine Tabaré specifically as a *mestizo* in the next section. Here, I wish to focus on the ways in which Zorrilla collapses the differences between the *mestizo* and the Indian and uses his protagonist to represent the fate of both races.

First, the words that Zorrilla uses to describe Tabaré establish a parallel between the historical trajectory of an entire race and the personal history of the poetic protagonist. At the beginning of the poem, much emphasis is given to Tabaré's blue eyes and the ways in which he is *not* like the other Indians. He is depicted as distinct from the tribe, both physically (light skin, blue eyes) and morally (possessing emotion, sensitivity). These features cause him to live on the outskirts of the tribal area and spend large periods of time alone, spatially representing the biological and moral difference between him and the pure Charrúas. However, as the poem progresses, his European characteristics recede and he is ever more identified with the mass of Indians. Indeed, by the second book he is labeled the "indio imposible" (2223) and poetic voice pronounces, "Vedlo. Es el indio puro; es el charrúa de la frente estrecha" (2031-32).[48] In the end, Tabaré dies and is mourned as "callado para siempre, como el tiempo, / como su raza" (4690-4691). Thus, the fictional character of Tabaré undergoes a process of degeneration from baptized, blue-eyed *mestizo* to an "indio puro," just as in Zorrilla's worldview the Indians of Uruguay devolved from a noble race into the savages of the nineteenth century. Tabaré might be a *mestizo,* but he ultimately shares the identity and the destiny of the Charruás (Palau 31). The diction and character development in the poem therefore

[48] Again, as in Mansilla, the "frente estrecha" is offered as a salient characteristic of the Indian's racial identity.

create a parallelism whereby the internal representation of a fictional being closely tracks the real-life historical destiny of an entire people.

The metaphor of the tree as described above also functions at the individual level. In the first canto of the third book a personified falling leaf speaks to Tabaré as he flees through the forest. It says:

> Yo rodaré a tus pies ensangrentados,
>
> realidad de mi símbolo;
>
> el viento me ha arrancado de mi rama;
>
> a ti te empuja el viento del destino. (2643-2646)

Tabaré is the living, breathing embodiment of the lost leaf of the earlier citation. He has been lead astray, pulled from the sick branch to which he was attached by the implacable winds of destiny. Consequently, a three-part parallel is set up. The falling leaf represents Tabaré's fate – death – and the inability to control his destiny. Tabaré, in turn, is a synecdoche of the Indian race, so that the leaf's prophecy for Tabaré is extended to the entire tribe. Like the dried leaf, the Charrúas are weak and dying, and therefore at the mercy of the "raza nueva" that has arrived, like the wind, in full possession of its vigor.

As I have shown, Zorrilla's understanding of degeneracy allows the Indian to be incorporated into his strict Catholic understanding of the world (a single divine origin) while still being represented as inferior and even inhuman. His expression of the vanishing Indian thesis provides a justification for the real-life extermination of the Uruguayan Indians that eventually replaced or overwhelmed assimilation efforts. The conversations between the religious leader of the community, Padre Esteban, the military chief, Don Gonzalo, and the very anti-Indian Doña Luz recreate on a small scale the

debates over the Indians' fate that began immediately after the first landings in the Americas and continued throughout the nineteenth century. As we have seen, Doña Luz insists that the Indians cannot be redeemed by Christianity and thus are not human and can and should be eliminated. Conversely, Padre Esteban sees in Tabaré the possibility of "su estirpe redimida" (1778) and asks Don Gonzalo to help him. Gonzalo acccepts the challenge, asserting "Yo probaré, en ese hombre, si se encuentra / Capaz de redención su heroica raza" (1365-1366). Tabaré is thus transformed into a test case for the entire Charrúa nation and, by extension, all the Indians of Spanish America. In the end, his perceived lust for Blanca and failure to be converted and integrated into the town demonstrates, at least in Gonzalo and Luz's eyes, the complete impossibility of redemption for the Charrúas. Zorrilla's fictional tale provides retrospective justification for the Spaniard's failure to evangelize the Indians: the missionaries made a valiant effort but by the time of the Conquest the Indians were too far degenerated and could not be saved. Once that experiment failed it was necessary to turn to arms, resulting in the near extermination of indigenous peoples in Uruguay much prior to the time period in which Zorrilla was resurrecting their voices. In the historical context of the disappearance of the native peoples, poetics and scientific theory collide. Science provides a Romanticism-friendly storyline and Romanticism provides the language to give life and emotion to scientific theory. In *Tabaré*, the result is a compelling tale in the strong key of elegy to which so many critics and readers have been drawn.

Like Zorrilla, Eduardo L. Holmberg was an active participant in the debates over degeneration and evolution in the River Plate region. He too expressed himself upon the death of Charles Darwin, giving a speech at the Círculo Médico Argentino. Later

published as a book entitled *Carlos Roberto Darwin*, this speech demonstrates the chasm between his understanding of racial formation and Zorrilla's and anticipates many of the themes of *Lin-Calél*. Throughout his life, Holmberg worked tirelessly to institutionalize the doctrine in the River Plate. His zeal was so great that in 1875 he was accused of being an atheist and materialist when he banned religious and moral interpretations of natural phenomena from his classroom at the Escuela Normal de Profesoras (Marún 9). In *Carlos Roberto Darwin* (1882), he lays out the intellectual history of the concept of evolution, highlighting the many precursors to Darwin and those such as Haeckel and Spencer who built upon his work at a later date. The preponderance of illustrious supporters of evolution he lists leaves little room to doubt that the doctrine was quickly gaining a foothold in the continent. Like Zorrilla, he engages in not-so-gentle mockery of the opposition. He reproduces the common protestation, "<El hombre descender de monos! ¡De animales con cola! ¡Qué horrible cosa! ¡Eso es un disparate!>", then deadpans, "Pero es que no todos los monos tienen cola" (22). For Holmberg, human hubris should not get in the way of the discovery of scientific truth.

Unsurprisingly, similar ideas can be found throughout Holmberg's extensive *oeuvre*. Critics such as Giaconda Marún, Adriana Novoa, Alex Levine, Sandra Gasparini, and Leila Gómez have traced the trail of Darwinism in Holmberg's varied works from travel diaries such as *Viaje a Misiones* to the short novel *Dos partidos en lucha. Fantasía científica*. However, no one has yet analyzed the same elements in *Lin-Calél*, a text whose subject matter quite easily lends itself to a study of Holmberg's Darwinism and, more particularly, his application of scientific theory to Argentina's political and historical reality. Furthermore, Holmberg indicates in the "Notas" section of *Lin-Calél*

that he had read Zorrilla's *Tabaré* (309). It is therefore likely that *Lin-Calél* is, at least in part, an intentional effort to revise and correct Zorrilla's poem. In *Lin-Calél*, the barbarous nature of the Indians is shown to be the result of slower evolution, not degeneration from a superior culture. However, although Zorrilla and Holmberg's poems are indirectly engaged in a dramatic battle over the explanations of racial change, they arrive at the same conclusion: the death of the Indian. As in *Tabaré*, in *Lin-Calél* the extinction of the Indian nations is depicted as a sad but inevitable terminus determined by the processes of Nature.

The driving force behind the plot in *Lin-Calél* is the ever-escalating conflict between the native tribes and the Spanish in the River Plate region immediately before the declaration of independence of Argentina on May 25, 1810. Holmberg departs from standard representations of these events by valuing some characteristics of the Indian tribes and critiquing the Spaniards for their treatment of the native peoples. This does not, however, lead to a more positive image of the Conquest: to the contrary, both sides are depicted as cruel and blood-thirsty. For much of the poem, the poetic voice adopts the perspective of the Indians, allowing them to speak of the "huínca invasor" (13), "usurpador de su heredada tierra" (23), "crueles invasores / que el suelo patrio con su huella ultrajan" (44), and that "el furor del Huínca / persigue al Indio y sin piedad lo mata" (47). Even more brutally, they fight "arrancando a los senos de las madres / los párvulos que en ellos amamantan" (50), approximating the Christians to the dehumanized and animal-like behavior of the Indians in *Tabaré*. Thus, the Spanish in *Lin-Calél* appear to be just as degenerate as the Charrúas depicted by Zorrilla. However, Holmberg's Darwinian understanding of the struggle for life erases any blame that could be placed on

the Spanish for this genocide. Supporters of the theory of natural selection view life as a struggle in which organisms compete for limited resources. Those organisms with features that give them an advantage survive and reproduce, thus ensuring the continuity of traits that best adapt the organism to its particular circumstance. From Holmberg's evolutionary perspective, therefore, if the Spanish are behaving like beasts it is only because they, like all humans, are in fact animals participating like every other species in the struggle for scarce resources. Their actions are not immoral or unjust but merely the playing out of the immutable and inescapable laws of Nature. As Holmberg writes in the glossary of *Lin-calél*, "La Historia de la Conquista está llena de ejemplos de que [los españoles] fueron bien recibidos por los indígenas. Pero…había necesidad de matar y enseñar crueldades" (327).[49] In his study of Darwin, moreover, he argues that although the terms of the battle may seem unfair, the Spanish (and later Argentines) "no hacemos más que poner en juego nuestras ventajas" (Holmberg, *Carlos* 66). For Holmberg the Indian/Christian conflict is inevitable and victory will be determined not by divine mandate or moral superiority but rather by biology and the processes of Nature.

Interestingly, the voice of evolutionary theory in *Lin-Calél* is that of the Indian, not of the Spanish. Holmberg repeatedly puts the language of Darwin and Herbert Spencer, the British theorist who coined the term "the survival of the fittest," in the mouths of his Indian characters. Spencer's theories, which both supported and challenged the Darwinian strain of evolutionary thought, were extraordinarily influential in nineteenth-century Latin America (Manganiello 119). In *Lin-Calél*, the Indian warrior Reukenám gives voice to a Spencerian understanding of the world:

[49] The inclusion of a glossary explaining indigenous terms was a common practice in nineteenth-century Latin American literature. Andrés Bello, Jorge Isaacs, José María Heredia, Ricardo Palma, and Zorrilla de San Martín all used glossaries to clarify their works (Pickenhayn 34).

Esa es la ley de la vida, la lucha
por defender de la patria el sagrado
suelo en que yacen los viejos campeones
que en su defensa murieron lidiando. (145)

Again, the battles between the Spanish and the Indians are not cruel or unusual, as the Black Legend would make them seem, but rather natural processes. There is no difference between the competition between plant species for light or water and that between two human races. Life is a struggle, and the Indians and Spanish must try to exterminate each other in order to gain access to the scarce resource of land. To not fight is essentially to commit suicide.

The Indians also make pronouncements on the relative fitness of the two warring groups, admitting that they are the weaker combatant and thus predicting their own defeat. During the parliament to determine a plan of action, the cacique Numillán details the Spaniards' unsurpassable advantage:

- Las armas
del cruel invasor más eficaces
son que las nuestras . . .
[. . . . .]
mata la piedra en el combate, y el cuchillo
en mano diestra es útil como espada;
pero todo el valor de los guerreros
se esteriliza cuando silban balas. (49)

The Spanish have evolved further than the Indian in terms of culture and innovation, developing weapons against which the native tribes cannot compete. Evoking Lubbock's progressive classification of societies according to the materials of which their tools are made, Numillán insists that the Indians still straddling the Stone and Iron Ages cannot obtain victory over the technologically-superior Spanish. The struggle between the Spanish and the Indians is a battle between different time periods, a representation I will refer to further in Chapter Three. By putting the evolutionary justification for the extermination of the Indians in the Indians' mouths, Holmberg further naturalizes the process and thus, the outcome. If even uneducated Indians intuitively sense the mechanisms of evolution, then the theory must be a valid explanation of the historical moments that shaped the physical and human landscapes of Argentina.

Holmberg's understanding of life as a struggle for survival means that, once again, the Indians are destined to vanish due to their inferior fitness. As in *Tabaré*, in *Lin-Calél* the male protagonist is emblematic of the entire native race and this fate. In *Lin-Calél*, however, this synecdochal character is of pure Indian blood. While in the mountains during his escape with Lin-Calél, Reukenám sees a black bird that he takes as a maleficent omen. He cries:

> No es para mí tan solo ese funesto
>
> mensaje de la Noche! . . . ¡Pobre raza!
>
> [. . . . .]
>
> . . . ya mi vida
>
> Siente un frio que no es de las nevadas! (294)

Reukenám draws a connection between his destiny and that of his people, alternating between speaking of himself ("para mi"), the Indians ("pobre raza"), and himself yet again ("mi vida"). Like Tabaré, he is the falling leaf that anticipates the destiny of the entire tree. The tribes have evolved as far as they can, for they have met an opponent whose fitness outweighs theirs. According to Adriana Novoa and Alex Levine, "Darwinism *naturalized* extinction" (121), showing how extinction was the inevitable consequence for the losers in the struggle for life: "By the end of the century, the progress of civilization had come to require the replacement of the individual *physical* bodies that comprised the nation. Its evolution must now be conceived, in Darwinian terms, as entailing *waste*" (Novoa and Levine 122). Whereas eighteenth and early nineteenth-century conceptions of progressive theory – such as those of Lyell and Lamarck – maintained that all human groups could, with proper intervention, reach the upper levels of civilization (Stocking 27), the work of Darwin, Spencer, and others in their vein injected competition and thus violence into the processes of progress. Savage peoples could no longer be expected to evolve past a certain point for their relative lack of fitness would dictate the truncation of their line at an earlier stage.

Here is one of the central similarities and differences of *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél*. In *Lin-Calél*, the Indians are doomed to become extinct as the necessary waste produced in a forward-moving struggle for survival. They were unable to progress as quickly or as far and thus have no place in the future. In *Tabaré*, the Indians began on the same high level as the Spanish, but quickly degenerated and thus have no place in the future. The direction of racial change is inverted, but both Zorrilla and Holmberg agree that the Indians are doomed to become extinct. This trope of the "self-exterminating savage"

served to mitigate guilt over the disappearance of the native tribes and justify and occasionally encourage violence against them (Brantlinger 3).

Finally, in *Lin-Calél* Homberg mirrors the processes of evolution with those of nation formation, carefully tying the struggles for survival to the necessary struggles to create a cohesive, productive nation. In *Lin-Calél* the winner of the evolutionary battle is the future Argentine nation. Parallel to the premonitions of their own death, the Indians have visions of "la raza que vendrá con nuevos bríos a proclamar la libertad de América" (276). Unsurprisingly, this "raza nueva" is associated with the Argentine nation through the image of "algo azul y blanco en las montañas," a clear reference to the sky blue and white national flag. This connection is made even more obvious by the title of the last canto – "25 de mayo de 1810" – and the fact that Holmberg published the poem in time for the 1910 centenary. In Eduardo Holmberg's vision of the world, highly influenced by Darwinism, the struggles of the conquest and colonization of Argentina can be viewed as the playing out of the natural and biological laws of the world. The Indian, biologically inferior to the Spanish, would lose the battle and give way to a superior "raza nueva." In *Viaje a Misiones*, Holmberg powerfully summarized this view of Argentine history and hinted at the nature of the new race that would constitute the Argentine national body:

> La indignación causada por la muerte de algunos [indios captivos], según se publicó, no argüía en lo mínimo contra el derecho militar y por mi parte pienso que ella emanaba de nuestro fondo común de humanidad y de un sentimiento de simpatía que experimentamos, sin confesarlo, por un pueblo que se extingue con las armas en la mano, batiéndose heroicamente por su independencia, que le

> hemos usurpado, con su tierra, en la lucha por la vida, y que sin discusión posible ha infundido una gran parte de su sangre en nuestra entidad étnica actual. (289)

Here, Holmberg refers to the continual processes of miscegenation that caused racial mixing throughout Spanish America from the Conquest to the present day. In the next section I will analyze the treatment of this mixed race in *Lin-Calél* and *Tabaré*. I argue that whereas Zorrilla saw racial mixing as a prime causative factor of degeneration and excluded the *mestizo* from the Uruguayan nation as he does the Indian, Holmberg repeatedly insisted that the "raza nueva" associated with the founding of the Argentine Republic would be the product of racial mixture.

Sex and the Nation: Defining the *Raza Nueva*

While both *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* end with the inevitable death of the Indian to make way for a "raza nueva" (line 360; page 276), Zorrilla and Holmberg present very different depictions of the new race that will form the basis of their modern nations. With his seminal works on physical geography, by the mid-nineteenth century British geologist Charles Lyell had presented convincing arguments for a long history of the Earth and the incredibly slow pace of geological and biological change. Both evolutionists and proponents of degeneration were able to agree that whatever the processes of racial change and definition, they likely were carried out over many years. This temporal aspect to human history raised the issue of reproduction, as sexual contact and the production of offspring were thus necessary for these changes to occur. Robert Young has shown convincingly that nineteenth-century theories of race were "also covert theories of desire" (9), making stories of love a superlative space from which to articulate ideas on race and racial mixing. Interracial romance, as we will see, was also an effective method for

controlling and defusing the risk presented by the racial Other (Dayan 95). Nineteenth-century romance deprived the Other of self-action by rendering him or her an object in someone else's story (Dayan 91) while the language of sentimentalism allowed the covert perpetuation of structures of inequality (Dayan 95). Thus, the fact that both *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* recount love stories between a *mestizo* and a pure-blooded person (Spanish in *Tabaré* and Indian in *Lin-Calél*) is not a mere coincidence but a fundamental element in the elaboration of Zorrilla and Holmberg's views of race and nation. In this section I compare the characterization of the two *mestizo* protagonists and the depictions of their romances to argue that these poetic elements are both shaped by, and contribute to, nineteenth-century discourse on racial mixing. The treatment of the interracial romances and mixed-blood characters in each poem is used to further exclude or include Indians and *mestizos* from the national body.

Again, at first glance *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* present strong similarities. Both narrate amorous relationships between a *mestizo* (specifically, the product of an involuntary relationship between an Indian *cacique* and a female captive) and a member of the opposite sex supposedly of pure race. These *mestizos*, Tabaré and Lin-Calél, share physical features. Tabaré is a male characterized by blue eyes and pale skin. Lin-Calél is a *mestiza* whose name Holmberg tells the reader means *white flesh* in an unspecified indigenous American language. However, in the glossary he admits that he has exercised his authorial privilege: *white flesh* should be written *Lig-Calél*, but he did not like how it sounded so he used Greek phonetics and pure invention to create a more melodious name. While there was little accuracy in doing so, Holmberg insists that it does not matter because "no escribo para los salvajes" (335). Holmberg mines the indigenous

culture for poetic symbolism, but cares little for ethnographic accuracy, an attitude Enrique Anderson-Imbert has observed in *Tabaré* (19). Other characteristics shared by Lin-Calél and Tabaré are that both were raised among the Indians and have little contact with their Spanish mothers (Lin-Calél's has been expelled from the *toldos* and Tabaré's mother died). Nevertheless, both are viewed by the Indians themselves as fundamentally different from the rest of the tribe.

Despite these points of coincidence, the characteristics ascribed the *mestizo* protagonist in each poem reveal the very different understandings of racial crossing held by Zorrilla and Holmberg. Lin-Calél is exalted and passionately pursued by a number of Indians. She is so beautiful that there is no one anywhere that compares and she has gained a certain fame among many of the tribes of the region. She is also clean, orderly, useful (she can cure the sick, knit, weave, cook, paint, and even read), and very smart. Additionally, she is a good influence on the Indians and can control even the fiercest warrior with her mere presence (123-4). The other Indians adore her and are attracted by her mysterious, strange customs and abilities (150). The very qualities that most attract the Indians are the ones associated with her captive mother, who educated Lin-Calél before she was thrown out of the *toldos* for praying in the Christian fashion. The racial politics of romance as described by Young and Dayan play out in Holmberg's depiction of the *toldos*: Lin-Calél's racial otherness makes her the object of desire while the blind devotion of the Indians reaffirms the superiority of the Spanish, permanently inscribing them in an inferior position lusting after an unattainable superior woman.

Nonetheless, Lin-Calél's exceptionalism does not come entirely from her Spanish side. In many ways she also exemplifies the pinnacle of positive Indian qualities. She is

able to ride like a man and is strong and vigorous. Despite Reukenám's suggestions, she emphatically insists that she does not need to stop and rest during their long journey, nor is she in need of help in riding a horse (234). Her father explains to Reukenám that Lin-Calél is truly unique: "No hay mujeres como ella entre cristianos, / tan vivaz y tan hábil, tan activa" (129). Whereas a Spanish woman may also have been able to read or care for children, Lin-Calél possesses energy and vigor unknown in White society. Holmberg thus characterizes her in line with the thought of the influential English ethnogrpher, James Prichard, who argued that the mixing of the American race with the European would lead to improvement "since it appears that the mixed descendents are physically a more vigorous offspring" (427). Holmberg integrates this theory of hybrid vigor, which gained importance in the early decades of the twentieth century (Sollors 133), into his description of Lin-Calél. She is the embodiment of the most positive traits of each of the two races that engendered her. The mixing of two races has been a successful experiment, giving rise to a being superior to either of her two lines of ancestry. In *Lin-Calél* the combination of Indian and Spanish is represented as both fortuitous and harmonious, thus giving life to Mansilla's 1870 assertion that the fusion of races would better the conditions of humanity (see Chapter One).

In contrast, Tabaré is depicted as a deeply conflicted person and a source of bewilderment for the Indians and the Spanish. In many ways *Tabaré* is a prime example of what Warner Sollors has called the "warring blood melodrama." In this type of literature, the "racial composition of a flat, stenciled character (male or female) is expressly and deterministically made accountable for the character's psychology" (243). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this drama was often developed in

abolitionist literature through the trope of the *tragic mulatto/mestizo*. For this figure, being of mixed race caused not only physical problems but also severe psychological torment that generally led to a tragic ending (R. Spencer 36). It is my contention that this trope can be transferred to the Uruguayan context and that Tabaré can be seen as a specifically Latin American manifestation of this literary trend.

Lin-Calél's mixed ancestry makes her an object of desire among both communities; Tabaré's *mestizo* identity means that he is shunned from both. On the one hand, the Indians' reputation as rapacious means that from the Spanish perspective his interest in Blanca is highly suspicious. Although his pale skin and blue eyes mean that he looks like them (or even more Caucasian, given that the Spanish were frequently seen as the "dark races" of Europe), they view him as entirely Indian. Because they view the Indians as a violent threat to the integrity of the town and its people, his interest in her can only be attributed to evil intentions. He thus must be driven out of town, warned never to step foot on Christian land again (2169). Delirious and sick, Tabaré returns to the forest. If the city is the realm of the Christian Spanish, the wild forests are portrayed as the natural place of the barbarous Indian. However, Tabaré is no more accepted here than among the people of San Salvador. The personified forest also rejects him: "¡No eres indio! [. . .] Aquí en mi seno no hallarás abrigo / Ya, para ti, la patria es un recuerdo" (2622, 2628-2629). The trees, symbols of genealogy, refuse Tabaré a place in their shade, casting him out of the family. Lin-Calél may be unique in her exceptional goodness, but the same combination of parents makes Tabaré stand alone in his despondency.

Furthermore, while his Spanish heritage adds the positive characteristics of sensitivity and some morality to Tabaré's personality, these traits cannot neutralize the

strong negative qualities associated with his Indian side. In a victory of Christian goodness, he chooses not to rape Blanca, turning away from the example set by his own father, Caracé. However, he does kill the cacique Yamandú with his bare hands. Throughout the poem, his savage Indian qualities push him to violence while the Christian instinct inherited from his mother constantly warns him away from such behaviors. His two sides do not mesh harmoniously but instead engage in a never-ending conflict reminiscent of that which characterizes the figure of the *tragic mestizo* and reproduces on a small scale the racial wars seen as taking place around the globe.

Tabaré is never described as a balanced whole in the poem. Instead, the poetic voices highlights that he feels closer to one side of his heritage or the other depending on the context in which he finds himself, a see-sawing motion that rocks his entire being. His internal struggle is described in a manner both poetic and modernly scientific:

> Y la lucha de un átomo con otro
> se renueva potente en sus arterias
> y silba en sus oídas,
> y anubla su cabeza,
> y afluye al corazón, y en él estalla,
> y recorre su carne y sus potencias. (2073-2078)

The use of the term "átomo" emphasizes the entrenched biological nature of his problem. While the mechanisms of genetic inheritance would not be understood until the twentieth century, at the time of Zorrilla's writing there was a general understanding that the biological material of the mother and father combined to produce the child. Zorrilla depicts this alchemy as taking place in the blood, and Tabaré's mixed ancestry means that

the atoms do not work together but continually fight for predominance. Race is depicted as incredibly influential: the polysyndeton of the conjunction "y" in these verses emphasizes the totality of how being *mestizo* determines Tabaré's actions and emotions. This internal conflict makes him irrational and crazy, clouding his head and reducing him to purely physical sensations. The emphasis on physicality and emotion instead of reason suggests that miscegenation is yet another mechanism of degeneration, reducing the *mestizo* from fully human to beast-like savage. For Tabaré, the *mestizo* condition is one of instability, unproductivity, and ultimately failure and death, rendering him one more iteration in a long line of nineteenth-century tragic mestizos.

In addition to the characterization of Tabaré, Zorrilla also elaborates a more abstract statement on racial mixing in the introductory canto. Because of this location, these stanzas should be viewed as a key for comprehending the poem that follows. In this section, a series of highly visual stanzas ostensibly describing the processes of poetic inspiration and creation rely heavily on terms and phrases frequently used to describe the processes and outcomes of human miscegenation. Describing the chaos of the creative mind, Zorrilla speaks of:

> Formas que pasan, puntos luminosos,
> gérmenes de imposibles existencias;
> vidas absurdas, en eternal busca
> de cuerpos que no encuentran. (75-78)

If we imagine the "formas que pasan, puntos luminosos" to be the same "átomos" of reproduction that fight in Tabaré's blood, the beginnings of impossible existences and absurd lives are easily read as representative of the *mestizo*. Here, Zorrilla echoes the

language of Robert Knox, the Scottish anthropologist who insisted that the amalgamation of races was "impossible" (64) and that the *mestizo* was "a monstrosity of nature" (88). From this perspective, sexual contact between races was an aberrant behavior incapable of success.

The next stanza further insists upon the instability of the *mestizo*:

Colores que se funden y repelen
en inquietud eterna,
ansias de luz, primeras vibraciones
que no hallan ritmo, no dan lumbre, y cesan. (85-88)

Here, Zorrilla recognizes that the different races do engage in sexual relations ("se funden"), but maintains that the outcome of this contact, exemplified by Tabaré, is not stable. Specifically, Zorrilla insists that these unions "no dan lumbre," referring once again to the light he uses to characterize rationality and morality later in the poem. These creations, while alive, have a "vida extraña o incompleta," thus denying them productive participation in the world. These phrases echo the language of those who argued that miscegenation was undesirable, for hybrids were often "debilitated and little vivacious" (Broca 29), "flabby and weakly" (Broca 40), have "defective prolificness" (Broca 42), and exhibit a lack of viability (Broca 59).

Finally, Zorrilla explicitly mentions "razas intermedias" (94) and argues that while they might try to mix they can never really "fundirse" due to a "repulsion ingénita" (105-106). In 1855, Arthur de Gobineau wrote of the "natural repugnance" to the crossing of blood (28) and insisted that overcoming this repulsion and crossing led to ever greater confusion whose final result was "racial anarchy" (150). In these stanzas,

Zorrilla elaborates a similar understanding of miscegenation: racial mixing is unnatural, and to attempt to mix will lead to weak, sterile offspring that do not contribute to society. He naturalizes the conflict between the races, making the enmity between the Spanish and Indians a consequence of biology and not personal preference. Like Louis Agassiz (293), Zorrilla thus recommends the complete avoidance of interracial contact. While it is impossible to know with precision which theories Zorrilla had read, these verses suggest that he had been exposed to at least some of them and believed them to be productive in elaborating a poem about national history and identity.

As with the theory of degeneration, the figure of Tabaré embodies on a micro level the theories of racial mixing elaborated by Zorrilla and others with regard to the fate of entire races. Throughout the poem, Tabaré is depicted as sickly and weak. He is extremely pale and from the beginning is enveloped in the breath of death (1329-1330). He is destined to die just as the science of negative miscegenation had predicted. Mariselle Meléndez has shown that in eighteenth-century Peru, "healthy bodies equated order and progress" while the sick or damaged body "embodied deviance, anxiety, and disorder" and thus needed to be controlled (173). Similarly, in *Tabaré* the sick body of the Indian/*mestizo* is a threat to the nation and must be controlled. Like the theorists who argued that the *mestizo* was unviable, Zorrilla shows Tabaré to be an aberrant being that absolutely could not be incorporated. The national body would not suffer the sickness of *mestizaje*.

Furthermore, Tabaré is shown to be sterile just as the *mestizo* was often supposed to be. When given the opportunity to rape Blanca, he does not do so. Although this decision is portrayed as a positive manifestation of his greater Christian sentiment and

morality, it also carries the practical implication that he is impotent and will not contribute to the perpetuation of his race. This trait is associated only with the *mestizo* and is highlighted by comparison with the Indians. The *caciques* Caracé and Yamandú are described as animal-like and lustful, particularly in relation to Spanish women. "Caracé sólo quiere / en su toldo a la blanca prisionera" (405-406), and he thus kidnaps and rapes Tabaré's mother. When he sees Blanca, Yamandú abandons his fellow tribesmen in order to carry off the prize that his "ardor provoca" (3571) and makes his blood boil with "pasión salvaje" (3577). Both *caciques* are repeatedly associated with heat and fire, images that suggest both lust and destruction. In contrast, when Tabaré interacts with Blanca he is described as extraordinarily cold and pale and can only think of his Christian mother (4395-4399). Tabaré stops the Indians from reproducing with Blanca yet he is unable to take their place. Blanca will remain untouched for now.

The politics of race and sex are the fundamental building blocks of Zorrilla's effort to create an identity for the Uruguayan nation. The discourses of degeneration and negative miscegenation are used to exclude the Indian and the *mestizo* from the reproductive pool and thus from the future of Uruguay. I have already argued that the discourse of degeneration is used in *Tabaré* to justify the extermination of the Indians, a population always already destined to become extinct. They can only be a "raza muerta" (48) that "pasó sin huella" (260), reduced to providing inspiration for poetry or other artistic projects created by Whites. Likewise, Tabaré dies at the end of the poem and his symbolic role indicates that the *mestizo* race is equally unwelcome in the future nation. As Alberto Andino has noted, "Esa muerte de Tabaré cierra la puerta a la posibilidad del desarrollo de esa nueva raza que Vasconcelos llamó cósmica" (181). *The mestizo* and the

Indian are to be erased from the biological legacy of the River Plate region, leaving only the Spanish contributions.

In *Tabaré,* the Spanish inhabitants of sixteenth-century San Salvador are made into the heroic ancestors of the Uruguayan nation through Zorrilla's identification with them and their culture. In the letter in which Zorrilla dedicates *Tabaré* to his wife, Elvira Blanco de Zorrilla, he writes that Blanca is part of "tu raza, nuestra raza" and that "las últimas notas que escucharás en mi poema son los lamentos de la española y la oración del monje; la voz de nuestra raza y el acento de nuestra fe" (page 92). A direct connection is established between the pure sixteenth-century Spanish arrivals to the Americas and the nineteenth-century *criollos*. For Zorrilla, Uruguay is a Spanish and Catholic nation and could not have been anything else. In speeches and writings in Spain and Spanish America, Zorrilla once and again emphasized this project. In "El Uruguay en la exposción histórica de Madrid," he repeats the rhetorical questions that open *Tabaré* and argues that the Charrúas were but "la sombra de una sombra" (204) whose only acceptable role was as inspiration for poetry or as a source of "cráneos charrúas, fruto de investigaciones recientes hechas para concurrir a tan hermoso certamen" (204). At the same time, he again affirms the desirable racial makeup of Uruguay in various essays collected in *Huerto Cerrado* and *Juan Zorrilla de San Martín en la Prensa*, such as "A mi América Española," in which he equates Uruguay to the "familia española" and "la [raza] caucásica, la nuestra" (319). Over and over, the Indian and *mestizo* heritage of the continent is denied and the Spanish influence is affirmed.

Blanca is essential for this project. As a female, she will reproduce to populate the nation and is therefore the literal and symbolic womb of Uruguay. Women were

frequently cast in this role by nineteenth-century anthropologists such as the North American Daniel Garrison Brinton, who wrote that white women had "no holier duty, no more sacred mission, than that of transmitting in its integrity the heritage of ethnic endowment gained by the race through thousands of generations of struggle" (qtd. in Stocking 50). This idea repeats itself in Spanish American literature of the era, the most effective example of which is Esteban Echeverría's *La Cautiva* (1837). Also a long poem about the desert, Indians, and national identity, Echeverría constructs the female protagonist María as a symbol of the Argentine nation. Her greatest accomplishment in the poem is remaining untouched by the Indians, thus ensuring the purity of the national body. Similarly, in *Tabaré* Blanca's value is conceived of almost entirely in reproductive terms. Her virginity is repeatedly highlighted and she is often described as a "niña" or child so as to further distance her from the passion exhibited by the Indian chieftains. In the third canto of the second book a parallel is established between her, the Virgin Mary, and Tabaré's mother, highlighting Blanca's dual characterization as both virginal and maternal (1796-1799). Although currently uninitiated into sexual relations, she already possesses the characteristics necessary to birth and care for the new nation.

When Blanca is carried off by Yamandú, Don Gonzalo's biggest preoccupation is for her virginity, not her life: "¡Es mi Blanca! ¡mi hermana! / ¿La recordáis? ¿Lo veis? No está a mi lado. / Y no está muerta . . . ¡ni siquiera muerta!" (3655-3657). This characterization of Blanca is strengthened in the next canto when she is described as curled up in the fetal position, a "nudo ajustado" (3807) that cannot defend "el Tesoro que guarda" against the Indian advances (3809-3810). She prays the "oración de la inocencia" (3995) as a means of protection. In the opinion of Don Gonzalo and

presumably the other Spaniards of the village (and Zorrilla), for Blanca to be sexually assaulted by an Indian would be a fate worse than death. The fact that she might perhaps love him would be even more unacceptable and damning for then she is complicit in her own dirtying (Frederick 9).[50] Repression of desire, especially when illicit, absolutely must occur in order to construct national identity in the poem (San Román 307). For Blanca to serve as the mother of the Uruguayan nation, she must remain unsullied by the Indian so as not to muddy (voluntarily or involuntarily) the genetic makeup of the nation with traces of degenerate Indians or unviable *mestizos*.

The final piece of Zorrilla's racial project is to depict the American land as a similarly virginal paradise that has tolerated the presence of degenerate Indians while it patiently awaits the arrival of God's chosen people. Several times the American continent is described as pure and even Christian. The description of Uruguay that begins the first book argues that everything there was born of "la sonrisa de Dios" and that the material elements of the continent are exactly as they were when they were created (187-188), apparently having avoided the processes of degeneration suffered by the Charrúas. Zorrilla thus subverts the discourses on the degenerative power of the American land as I described in Chapter One while highlighting once again the unnaturalness of the Indians' very existence in Uruguay. By denying that the land has changed (thus denying the work of Lyell), he negates the possibility that one day the Indian could become better suited for survival. The disconnection that Zorrilla sees between the land and the Indian is furthered by the poetic voice's skeptical questions:

[50] Here Zorrilla acknowledges, perhaps unwittingly, the appeal of the other (see San Román "Negotiating Nationhood" for more on the mutual desire between Blanca and Tabaré). Nonetheless, we must remember that it is Tabaré's kindness and vestigial Christian aura, not any of his Indian traits, which draw Blanca to him.

¿Para él está formada

esa encantada tierra

que a los diáfanos cielos de Diciembre

retribuye una flor por cada estrella?

¿Para él, sus grandes ríos

cantando se despeñan

los himnos inmortales de sus olas?" (253-259)

This series of interrogatory verses denies the Indian purchase over the territory and begins to create the image of America as a Christian territory. The personification of the land continues this effort: when Magdalena baptizes Tabaré the desert "se conmueve" (536), when she sings hymns the American geography echoes them. This depiction of America as a pure, Christian womb is cemented with the verses, "Parece que este mundo Americano / a aquella niña aguarda" (1160-1161). Unlike in Spanish American poems that depict the land as a dangerous protagonist working against the human population, in *Tabaré* America welcomes the new race. Like Blanca's body, the Uruguayan land is empty but ready to be fertilized by an appropriate suitor.[51]

In *Tabaré*, the setting, symbols, and characters work together to weave a providential and teleological vision of the history of the Uruguayan nation that leads to a pure, unadulterated populace still firmly connected to the "noble raza madre" (805), Christian Spain. The project depicted in *Tabaré* is clearly articulated by Zorrilla six years later in a speech at the Ateneo de Madrid on January 25, 1892:

[51] Doris Sommer has shown that in *Facundo* Sarmiento similarly depicts the American land as waiting for an appropriate suitor to replace the "unproductive consorts" that were the Indians and *gauchos* (61). However, Zorrilla's depiction of the land places much greater emphasis on its virginity and Christian nature.

> Pero yo tengo la persuasión de que ese hombre no era ni podía ser un principio; era un término, un último vestigio. Era joven y hermosa la naturaleza, y el hombre era decrépito; el hombre agonizaba, y la naturaleza nacía o renacía; el hombre temía y notaba en todas partes funestos presagios, y la naturaleza ansiaba; el hombre cavaba su tumba, mientras la naturaleza cubría de musgo y flores esa tumba, y preparaba en ella una cuna o un tálamo nupcial para el hombre que esperaba o presentía, capaz de comprenderla, de amarla y de hacerla madre. ("Descubrimiento" 59)

Here, Zorrilla makes explicit the separate trajectories of the races living in sixteenth-century America. The images of the tomb and the womb overlap, demonstrating that as the Indian came to the natural end of his line, and modern Uruguayan nation was just beginning to flourish with the divinely-ordained support of the American land. Thus, the modern Uruguayan nation is composed of the White, Christian race that God created to fulfill the destiny of the Americas after the indigenous tribes were lost to the unforgiving forces of degeneration.

Holmberg's *Lin-Calél* also ends with the death of one of its protagonists, but in his poem it is the pure Indian Reukenám who perishes. The *mestiza* Lin-Calél is left to occupy the same position as Blanca: she is the womb that will reproduce the new nation. She has been associated with maternal qualities throughout the poem, preparing the reader for her appropriation of this role. Whereas the "raza nueva" of *Tabaré* was clearly the Spanish – new only to the American continent –, in *Lin-Calél* the eponymous protagonist is the embodiment of the new race. Holmberg writes in the glossary that "[Reukenam] es la encarnación del alma del Indio, como Lin-Calél lo es de la Raza

Nueva" (347). The shift from Mother Spain to *mestiza* mother and the literary circumstances that surround Reukenám's death are significant for understanding the vision of the Indian the poem presents. The fact that Reukenám commits suicide rather than being killed suggests a natural truncation of that genetic line, a lack of fitness in the pure indigenous form. Evolutionary thought does not necessarily predict a better outcome for the Indian, for like Zorrilla's degeneration it ends in extinction. Nonetheless, Holmberg writes that Reukenám jumped from the cliff:

> . . . dejando
> un germen de valor y de pujanza,
> el tipo en gestación que en su blandura
> formará grande número en la masa,
> y dócil al modelo que le ofrezcan
> debe hundirse en el seno de la crápula,
> o elevarse a las cumbres de la Gloria
> con los alientos de virtud atávica.
> ¡Salud oh germen del futuro incierto! (306-308)

The language in these stanzas is both highly symbolic and very scientific, as the exalted cries of patriotism and phrases such as "las cumbres de la Gloria" contrast with terms such as *germen* and *gestación* that only entered the language in the nineteenth century through science. As in *Tabaré*, Holmberg sees the Indian as physically extinct (over the cliff) and the temporal setting of the poem firmly relegates him to prehistory. The fact that he dies on the day Argentine independence is declared suggests he is a precursor to the nation but will not actually be part of the state. However, unlike in *Tabaré*, the Indian

in *Lin-Calél* does contribute to the formation of the new nation. Reukenám begs Lin-Calél to keep his memory alive: "¡Guarda en tu seno el alma de mi raza, / y en ese abismo en que hundiré mi cuerpo / busca mi corazón que ya no te ama!" (306). Finally, although we have no evidence that Lin-Calél and Reukenám had any sort of physical relationship, the use of "germen" and "tipo en gestación" in the last verses makes clear the connection between the symbolic uniting of the races described in the text and the actual sexual contact that had to occur in order to produce Lin-Calél. In Holmberg's vision, this contact would be produced again and again in the formation of the Argentine people. The *mestizo* is not only a necessary part of the nation but is also a productive and fertile source of future citizens.

The ending confirms Holmberg's faith in Darwinian evolution as a mechanism for explaining the racial foundations of the Argentine nation, but at the same time reveals the ways in which his understanding of evolution differs from the exact letter of Darwin's works. Several scholars have investigated how Darwinism was transformed in the River Plate context. Novoa and Levine suggest that Darwinism in Argentina was tempered by a need for a continued belief in progress that impeded total acceptance of the pessimistic vision of the world as a place of conflict and lacking fixed direction (76). Marcelo Monserrat similarly sees evolutionary thought in Argentina as a progressive, not chaotic force (804). Argentine intellectuals, therefore, formed theories of evolution in line with their political needs or turned to scholars such as Ernst Haeckel and Herbert Spencer for systems that maintained a progressive vision of the world. *Lin-Calél* demonstrates this desire, for despite Holmberg's insistence on the struggle for life, the past is clearly depicted as leading toward a particular point. Although the mechanism is different from

in Zorrilla's poem, Holmberg's text still maintains a version of history that emphasizes forward motion towards unity and perfection: the new race is "un Sol de gloria / un Sol de libertad, brillante y nuevo" (281). Due to the needs of the nation and particularly the occasion for which the poem was written (the centenary of Independence), Holmberg's Darwinian assertions are tempered by the overall feeling of a teleological history leading to a particular and superior outcome.

A related element of Argentine evolutionary thought was a continued reliance on the ideas of Jean-Baptist Lamarck. Whereas Darwinian evolution and the later work on germ plasm by August Weismann suggested that biology entirely dictated the forms of an organism's progeny, Lamarck's "soft inheritance" allowed that environment also played an important role (Stepan, *"The Hour"* 85). Learned traits could be passed on to future generations, thus raising the level of entire races. This influence can be seen in Holmberg's poem. The poetic voice greets the "gérmen, del futuro incierto" and insists that,

> dócil al modelo que le ofrezcan
> debe hundirse en el seno de la crápula,
> o elevarse a las cumbres de la gloria
> con los alientos de virtud atávica. (308)

Despite the fact that the work of Weismann and Gregor Mendel was fairly well-known by 1910, these verses indicate that for Holmberg the result of the mixed race experiment was not totally determined by its genetic components. The success or failure of the *mestizo* would also depend on the way the way the offspring was treated and the examples it was given. Scientists and intellectuals in Spanish America, like Holmberg and Zorrilla, did

not merely copy European thinkers, nor were they "misinterpreting" Darwin or Spencer. In fact, there is a conscious effort on their part to reconcile new and old ideas and create a scientific understanding that could continue to serve political and social purposes (Novoa and Levine 76). In the case of *Lin-Calél*, this purpose is the creation of an acceptable racial past and therefore present for the new nation. Holmberg turns to the legacy of colonial times and the power of poetry to depict Argentina as a biologically strong nation with the potential for future greatness.

Both *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* elaborate an understanding of the Indian in the nations' pasts and allow for differing degrees of incorporation into the reproductive body of the future nation. Through close ties with the debates over evolution versus degeneration, the poems present two alternatives for inclusion of the Indian into the national story: as a fundamental piece of the nation's genetic and symbolic being, or as an obstacle that had to be and was overcome. Nonetheless, neither truly permits the Indian physically, a fact that remits to the moment in which these authors were writing: the Indian had already largely been exterminated and as such could not reasonably have been allowed into the conception of the new nation as walking, talking people. These poems were not only concerned with national pasts, but also looked toward the future in their characterization of the *mestizo* as a positive or negative component of the nation. The language and themes of *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* point to the possibility that the eugenics movements that surged in the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and are generally understood in relation to the ever-increasing number of immigrants first cut their teeth on the subject of the native or internal foreigner – the Indian. Decades before the founding of the first eugenics societies in Spanish America, Holmberg and

Zorrilla were exploring the Indian and *mestizo*'s eugenic fitness through poetry. Thus, both *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* are much more complex than their frequent characterizations as epic or romantic poems of lost Indian tribes depict them to be. Each is a fruitful space where science, history, politics, and poetics come together to form a vision of a nation's past that serves the needs of its present and future in accordance with the particular beliefs of the author. While *Tabaré* and *Lin-Calél* mined the colonial history of the River Plate to elaborate national racial identities, in the next chapter I turn to a series of texts that set their sights even further back, looking to the prehistoric era to explain the nature and role of the Indian.

Chapter Three. Inventing the Prehistoric Past: Moreno, López, and Onelli

Throughout the nineteenth century, intellectuals in Argentina participated in a concerted effort to elaborate a narrative for the nation that gave meaning and unity to the diverse territories and populations that comprised it. Hugo Mases suggests that the basis of this construction is located in "la memoria histórica,"[52] where a series of events "entrelazados en un relato unívoco ayudan a comprender la emergencia y consolidación de una nación blanca y una cultura europea" (9). Other scholars have agreed with this assertion, as do I. At the same time, with this chapter I intend to show that in late nineteenth century Argentina an important segment of the elite extended their gaze beyond the historical record and began to invent a *pre*-historic past that could give coherence and justification to a specific representation of the nation. Francisco P. Moreno, Vicente Fidel López, and Clemente Onelli are three examples of scholars who undertook this sort of research in the varied fields of paleontology, anthropology, and philology. Their work on prehistory was particularly focused on fixing the racial foundations of the nation. Ironically, although the prehistoric populations were frequently depicted as connected to the contemporary Indian tribes through biology, customs, or stage of development, in Moreno and López's texts the investigation into prehistory was overwhelmingly used to contribute to the construction of Argentina as a White, European nation. The Indian tribes were as excluded from this narrative as they were from others I have explored previously. Onelli's 1904 text, *Trepando los Andes*, stands as a counterpoint that dramatically illustrates this paradox. Taken in conjunction, Moreno, López, and Onelli's work demonstrates the ways in which *prehistory* was never a neutral

[52] Eric Hobsbawm, Etienne Balibar, and Benedict Anderson have all explored the role of collective memory in the creation of the nation in a more global context.

term but instead was consistently used to shape the representation and hierarchization of the multiple racial groups composing the Argentine population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The origin and development of the term *prehistory* is as murky as the details of the period itself. It was first used in German in 1833, the same year that *ante-historique* appeared in French. Daniel Wilson was the first to use it in English in 1851 (Taylor 2), and the concept gained popularity and importance after the 1865 publication of John Lubbock's blockbuster *Pre-historic Times* (Gosden 14). Peter Rowley-Conwy has convincingly demonstrated the important and early role Scandinavia played in developing the bases of prehistory, particularly the Three Age System (Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages). According to the *NTLLE*, the first time *prehistórico* appeared in the Spanish dictionary was the 1869 edition ("Prehistórico"), while the noun *prehistoria* is not included until 1925 ("Prehistoria"). Irina Podgorny asserts that the term arrived in the River Plate via the original French and English publications, not through translations undertaken in Spain (*El sendero* 67). This hypothesis is supported by library catalogues and the references the authors themselves make to their sources.[53] It is worth noting that although the term was not codified until the nineteenth century, related concepts were common currency for decades, if not centuries, before.

To what exactly does *prehistory* refer? In 1882 Francisco Moreno wrote that "la edad histórica la formaban solamente los documentos escritos" ("Antropología" 162). This period was the only one known to mankind until the discovery of the "hombre fósil…remontó nuestro origen mucho más allá de las edades señaladas por los

[53] For more information about the development of prehistory as a discipline in Europe and in Argentina, see Podgorny's *El sendero del tiempo*, particularly chapter II, "Palabras para la historia sin palabras."

documentos escritos, y asignó al género humano un comienzo en tiempos para los cuales el del período histórico no entra en cuenta" ("Antropología" 163). Moreno and his nineteenth-century peers understood prehistory as the period before written records. For them, geology and archeology could provide objective insight into truths previously lost in the mists of time. Today, scholars such as Timothy Taylor, Martin Kuna, Gerald Sider, and Christopher Matthews have complicated this definition, arguing that we can no longer view prehistory as a concrete entity that is neutral or innocent. Instead, it is a shifting mass of practices that cannot be separated from the "political dimensions of the formation of the concept" (Taylor 10). For example, the practice of viewing people without written records as outside of history was a powerful tool of empire in the Spanish American colonies (Mignolo 128). However, just because events were not recorded does not mean that they did not occur. History is thus a "structure which is able to *perceive* and *generate* events" (Kuna 49), allowing some people an active role while pushing others to the static timelessness of prehistory. In this chapter I follow the lead of these scholars and analyze prehistory as a particular invention shaped by – and able to shape – political representations. The intellectuals I study did not just fill in the details of some pre-existing Argentine prehistory but actively worked to create prehistory as a meaningful component of local racial identities. Prehistory thus becomes an important piece of nineteenth-century racial projects in the River Plate.

"Nuestros abuelos fósiles:" Francisco P. Moreno and the Prehistory of the Nation

The remnants of prehistoric times – fossils, relics, tools[54] – appear to have first become object of study in Europe. However, the discipline quickly gained ground

[54] The archaeological interest in artifacts reflects the influence of positivism, particularly the insistence on observable things as the only true source of knowledge (Kehoe 86).

worldwide as Europeans traveled to other continents to do research, their texts were distributed in foreign markets, and so-called "peripheral" scholars independently launched parallel explorations of the physical signs of the remote past. The River Plate region was no exception. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the study of "la antigüedad del hombre" quickly grew in popularity among the elite of Buenos Aires and fed debate in newspapers, cafés, and academic societies (Podgorny, *El sendero* 109). The area became a hotbed of research carried out by both local and foreign scholars. Texts about Argentine prehistory and by Argentine authors were reproduced or mentioned in each of the three seminal European journals: *Journal of the Anthropological Institution* (London), *Revue d'Anthropologie* (Paris), and the *Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie* (Berlin) (Quijada, "América Latina" 320). Thus, Argentine explorations of prehistory were part of local and global processes.

Francisco Pascasio Moreno is probably the most well-known of all those who participated in this production. As a naturalist and the founder of the still-existing Museo de la Plata, Moreno left a plethora of textual and material sources documenting his expansive intelligence and deep curiosity about the question of the antiquity and origin of mankind. His works have been of great interest to historians and literary critics including Irina Podgorny, Mónica Quijada, Pedro Navarro Floria, Sylvia Molloy, and Jans Andermann. These scholars have done an excellent job documenting the history of Moreno's investigations and analyzing their meaning in relation to the bolstering of Argentine science and the construction of Argentine identity. I propose to build upon their work and view Moreno's theories of prehistory specifically as a racial project. In his texts Moreno makes assumptions and propositions about the prehistoric inhabitants of the

River Plate, each of which has important ramifications for the ways in which he represents both the contemporary indigenous people and the Argentine nation as a whole.

In 1875 Moreno wrote to Pedro Pico, president of the Sociedad Científica Argentina, asking for funding for an expedition to Patagonia. In the letter he proposes to study the anthropology of the southern Indians, an undertaking he believes "puede darnos la base cierta de la historia nacional Antigua de la República, la que siempre debe principiar por el estudio de las razas primitivas que habitaron su suelo en otras épocas" (19). In addition to this explicit goal of developing a prehistoric base for the nation, he also shows a desire to engage with international commentary on the origins of mankind. It is his hope that his expedition to the South will unlock the mysteries of the "épocas ante-históricas" (20) and find a "solución satisfactoria" (20) to the debate over the birthplace(s) of the human race(s). Almost all his future voyages and anthropological activities were to be dedicated to these simultaneously local and global ends. In this short letter, Moreno exposes the assumptions and beliefs he would develop as he continued to perfect his dual project of locating the various racial elements within Argentina in their respective places and establishing the importance of the Argentine nation in a global racial context. In the following section, I will unpack the various aspects of Moreno's theories of prehistory.

One of the first objectives of his racial project is to insert Argentina and its territory into the global narratives of prehistory being developed in Europe and North America. Scholars such as John Lubbock, Edward Tylor, Jean Albert Gaudry, and Louis Laurent Gabriel de Mortillet[55] had been studying various parts of Europe and discovering

[55] In addition to these very important scholars, all present in his texts, Moreno also lists the work "de del Rio, de Dupaix, de Humboldt, de Waldeck, de Brasseur de Bourbourg, de Squier, de Cassac, de Charnay,

skeletons and tools that dated mankind in those regions to the tertiary or Paleolithic period. The very remoteness of this origin required the development of new methodologies, many of which derived from the field of geology and particularly the work of Charles Lyell. In his texts, Moreno makes a concerted effort to demonstrate that similar rock formations and relics have been found in the River Plate region. Of particular interest to him for proving this point are the burial mounds and cairns of the region, as "ese modo de perpetuar el sitio de una tumba es casi universal, en los tiempos y en las razas primitivas. En Europa, Asia, África y América ha sido empleado" (*Viaje* 96). This observation includes nearly the entire known world, incorporating the Americas and other peripheral regions into the narrative center. He repeats these comparisons with regard to the burial position of fossil man, cave drawings, arrowheads, ceramics, and other objects unearthed in his excavations.

Moreno's comparison of geological features and human traces in Europe and the Americas serves three purposes. First, through these observations he makes the point that Argentina and the Americas in general possess a prehistory even though they are called the "New World" and were only "discovered" when history was well underway in Europe. The New World is in fact as old, or possibly even older, than the Old World, invalidating these titles. In a speech given in 1881 at the Sociedad Científica Argentina Moreno extends this thesis to prove that not only did Argentina have a long prehistory, but that it also "seguía igual marcha progresiva que en el Viejo Mundo" ("Antropología" 204). The pace and range of development were the same in both regions. Moreno's second thesis is that the correspondence of relics and customs "demuestran las relaciones

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de Wiener" and the studies of "Champollion, Letronne, Lepsius, Layard, Botta, Birtch, De Rougé…Mariette, y…el Profesor Maspero" ("Antropología" 164) as admirable and contributing to the growth of global knowledge about prehistory.

étnicas de América y Europa, desde Patagonia hasta Francia" ("Antropología" 166) and that it is therefore possible to speak of the "era de las grandes sociedades Mejicanas, Peruanas, Argentinas, Chinas, Indícas, Asirias, Egipcias" ("Antropología" 195). Including Argentina in a list with such civilizations and beginning his list with the American societies upsets the traditional hierarchy and presents the Americas as biologically and culturally equal, or even superior. Finally, this prehistoric equivalence allows him to set up an analogy that favors contemporary Argentina as well. If Argentine prehistory is equal to European prehistory, then Argentine modernity must be viewed as potentially equal to European modernity. An equal past leaves open the door of possibility for an equal present.

Moreno's understanding of prehistory and Darwinian evolution allows him to stress both unity and diversity among human populations. On the one hand, he emphasizes that all societies pass through similar stages of development, thus suggesting a unity of origins ("Antropología" 202). All races, including "las especies más degradadas e inferiores," are thus human (*Viaje* 29) and subject to the same universal laws of progress and change ("Antropología" 168). Through this insistence on unity Moreno subverts the dehumanization of the Indian often established by comparisons between the "lesser" races and animals. Indeed, whereas as we have seen how Lucio V. Mansilla and Juan Zorrilla de San Martín frequently used animal imagery to describe their native protagonists, these comparisons are entirely absent from Moreno's writings.[56] In this manner his writings create space for the indigenous populations of Argentina within the realm of humanity.

[56] Moreno does say that the native people, like all people, pertain to the animal kingdom. However, he does not use animal terminology or comparisons to degrade or dehumanize them.

On the other hand, Moreno's evolutionary framework allows him to construct hierarchies between further- and lesser-evolved living races. If mankind was unified in its origin, by the nineteenth century great differences between races appeared obvious to observers. Like other Argentine and foreign authors, Moreno frequently uses the image of a tree to illustrate his conception of racial evolution and division. As we have seen, trees were common structures in nineteenth-century science, shaping visual representations of biological and linguistic connections between diverse populations. Located in the far prehistoric Moreno visualizes a "tronco que ha formado y dado vida a la colectividad humana del día" ("Antropología" 161), later separating into a mess of branches of different size and strength: "Según los medios, ramas laterales inferiores del gran tronco de la vida, pueden haber producido pequeños brotes, que también murieron sin largo desarrollo, culpa de esos mismos medios y de su falta de adaptación, mientras que las ramas superiores, gozando de condiciones más favorables, continuaban progresando ("El origen" 200). Setting this tree against the genealogical history of humankind, extinct populations are represented by the dead branches, contemporary indigenous populations quickly losing strength are the inferior branches, and the superior branches correspond to societies enjoying full vitality, for example, Argentina. The symbolic meaning comes to be the same as that of the tree imagery in Zorrilla's *Tabaré*: sick branches and leaves predict an imminent disappearance for the group represented by those elements. Nonetheless, Zorrilla was certain of the tree's origin – God –, while for Moreno the construction of the tree trunk was still a mystery shrouded by the veil of time ("Antropología" 196).

The image of the tree graphically illustrates Moreno's view of the respective racial pasts and futures of the various populations of contemporary Argentina. He considers the Argentine *criollo* population as a strand moving along the evolutionary path at a rate equal to that of Europe or North America, while the indigenous races of the area are slowed or completely retarded. Evolutionary time is not globally uniform: every race must pass through the same stages but not necessarily at the same rate, nor does every race survive to see the highest stages. He repeatedly labels the contemporary Tehuelches and their habits and materials as primitive, a word whose double meaning suggests both chronological precedence and inferior development. Moreno's thinking leads him into a tautology. What he observes in Patagonia fortifies his belief in different evolutionary paces for different races, while this belief leads him to highlight the primitive aspects of the Tehuelche world in his travel writing. We know that by the 1870s and 1880s the native people of Patagonia were involved in serious commerce with the *criollo* centers and had adopted many "White" customs and objects. By the mid-nineteenth century, there were very few pristine "prehistoric" specimens left, as nearly all native populations had contact with outside influences (Kuper 9). Yet these elements do not take precedence in Moreno's texts, perhaps because they do not serve his project of racially defining the Argentine nation through the concept of prehistory.

The above discussion suggests a striking feature of Moreno's writing: his near-constant comparison of the disappeared prehistoric Patagonian with the contemporary tribes living in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. He was far from the first to suggest the utility of comparisons between these two groups. The idea was widely disseminated in John Lubbock's *Pre-Historic Times* and was supported by Edward B. Tylor, Alexander

von Humboldt, and Louis Laurent Gabriel de Mortillet, among others.[57] In fact, Lubbock's influence was so great that at the time "casi todos los autores consideraban que los *esquimales*, los *australianos* y los *fueguinos* representaban al hombre primigenio y que los *salvajes prehistóricos* debían habérsele parecido bastante" (Podgorny, *El sendero* 55). Moreno tentatively proposes some first comparisons between the current and prehistoric Indian in "Description des cimetières et paraderos préhistoriques de la Patagonie,"[58] and his arguments grew stronger over the years as he gained evidence and the confidence that came from national and international support. At the most basic level, Moreno sees similarities between the customs of the two groups, for instance, the nomadic character of the Patagonians as an example of "atavismo abolengo" ("Antropología" 193). The use of this particular term shows he views the connection to not just be cultural, but also profoundly biological. Therefore, in language echoing that of Lubbock, Moreno concludes that "Es necesario, pues, estudiar las tribus que aún viven salvages [sic] y comparándolas con los resultados del estudio de esos vestigios, encontraremos infinidad de analogías que permitirán reconstruir la historia de nuestros abuelos fósiles" ("Antropología" 203). The contemporary Indian therefore serves as a clue to that which cannot otherwise be discovered.

Whereas the other European scientists were frequently comparing non-European "modern savages" with European prehistoric ones, the situation was different in Argentina. In the River Plate, Moreno and other anthropologist-archeologists had access

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[57] Moreno references *Pre-Historic Times* in his 1874 article "Description des cimetières et paraderos préhistoriques de la Patagonie". This article was published in the prestigious French journal *Revue d'Anthropologie*, edited by Paul Broca. Moreno's efforts were not provincial or local, but instead part of a global network of scientists and theories.

[58] "Je compléterai plus tard cette description en publiant quelques détails sur les cimetières actuels des Indiens qui, quoique d'une tribu différente, occupent aujord'hui les mêmes parages; et sur quelques restes préhistoriques de la province de Buenos Ayres, qui serviront de comparaison" ("Description" 73).

to both groups in the very same territory. This spatial coincidence could be used to represent Argentina as a privileged location but also presented difficulties for the local scholars. The relationship between prehistoric and modern savage was fundamentally changed, for the modern savages were not far away but instead occupied the same land and were in constant contact with the very culture dedicated to studying them. Unlike Moreno, Europeans scientists did not have the experience of digging up prehistoric graves while in the presence of the so-called living fossils theoretically related to the bones they were disinterring. This situation posed practical and theoretical difficulties.[59] For Moreno, the present-day Indian is not just a key to understanding the prehistoric one, but is simultaneously alive in the present and a fossil ancestor. As I will demonstrate, this representation was a powerful tool for projects of redistribution of resources, national identity building, and the creation of structures of control.

Moreno's conception of fossil grandparents relies on powerful imagery that conflates space and time, a technique Jorge Luis Borges would employ in describing Patagonia over half a century later. In his travelogue *Viaje a la Patagonia Austral*, Moreno repeats the idea proposed in his funding request, writing that in traveling south,

> Sin verdaderos sufrimientos, se trasporta realmente desde el refinamiento de la civilización y de la ciencia, a los tiempos fósiles. En el trascurso de dos meses el viajero puede recorrer palpablemente 200.000 años y puede ver a su abuelo armado unas veces de una filosa piedra, disputando su alimento a las fieras, y otras, combatiéndolas con las armas de acero que su nieto, llevado por la fuerza

[59] In *Viaje a la Patagonia Austral* Moreno writes, "Ni a la ida ni a la vuelta pude registrar esas tumbas, de las que, de todas maneras, no me hubiera sido dado sacar provecho alguno, pues en caso de haber intentado recoger los despojos que encerraban mis guías me habrían enviado a hacerles compañía" (95).

> irresistible del progreso, ha conseguido fraguar, metamorfoseando, con la evolución de su inteligencia, el cuchillo o la flecha de silex. (218)

Here the Indian is represented as simultaneously the prehistoric grandfather of the nation, using tools from the Stone Age, and as a modern citizen using metal. This rhetorical sleight-of-hand is achieved by imagining the trajectory across Patagonian space as a journey backwards in time. Gabriella Nouzeilles has shown how Patagonia was conceived of as a place of "chronotopical infinity stretching between modernity and barbarism" ("Patagonia" 35-6), where travel implied "veer[ing] off the path of history" ("Patagonia" 35). In Patagonia, the normal bonds of chronology do not exist and Moreno is able to visualize thousands of years of existence in a single being.

The equating of the modern Indian with the prehistoric one sets up the following bidirectional relationship: the modern Indian helps Moreno understand the fossil/prehistoric Indian, while what he knows or believes about the prehistoric Indian (including value judgments) shapes how he views the modern Indian. The modern Indian is thus imbued with the various characteristics and valuations originally attributed to prehistoric people: outside of time, savage, primitive, etc. (Taylor, Matthews). This process has been identified by Johannes Fabian as a fundamental aspect of anthropological study: anthropology views the Other through the lens of "typological time," that is, time measured in terms of socio-culturally meaningful elements instead of physical time (23). The possession and use of a writing system is a frequently significant element. This process leads to a "denial of coevalness" in which the Other, though physically present at the same moment, is placed in another time, separating subject and object and impeding communication between the two (Fabian 31, 42). This mechanism is

very much in play in Moreno's works. Although in *Viaje* he may be physically standing next to the Indian, the Indian can still be the "único resto conocido de una tribu extinguida," (*Viaje* 324), locating him in a prehistoric time. This process of "arqueologización" of the Indian (Azar, Nacach, and Navarro Floria 79) or paleontologization of the Other (Andermann, *Mapas* 125) pushes him or her out of national history. The very nature of anthropological discourse and the idea of prehistory remove the Indian from the present of the anthropologist, rupturing the typical progression from prehistory to history as peoples are pushed backwards from history into prehistory (Matthews 284). This transference is not merely theoretical but is also always a political act (Fabian 2).[60] In the case of the Argentine Indians, the denial of coevaleness in anthropological discourse can and did lead to a denial of opportunity in real life and a consideration of the contemporary Indians as inferior, anachronistic, and ultimately destined to disappear.

Although Moreno uses this rhetoric to great effectiveness, one key phrase of the previous quotes stands out in contradiction: the repeated use of "nuestros abuelos" when describing Indians, prehistoric or otherwise.[61] At the same time that he systematically widens the gulf between the Indian and White populations, he appears to be appropriating the Indian as a literal ancestor to the nation. Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that Domingo F. Sarmiento picked up and propagated this concept in *Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América* (1883).[62] First, Sarmiento argues that the current inhabitants of

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[60] As early as 1871 Edward Tylor acknowledged the political aspect of prehistory: "[prehistory] has its practical side, as a source of power destined to influence the course of modern ideas and actions" (2: 443).
[61] See, for example, *Viaje* 124 and 218, "Antropología" 203, and *Reminiscencias* 177.
[62] Surprising in that it does not seem to follow Sarmiento's other publicly expressed statements on race. It is not surprising, however, in that the relationship between Moreno and Sarmiento was very close. Moreno was one of the few defenders of Sarmiento's *Conflicto y armonías* and their relationship was so close that newspapers published sarcastic cartoons commenting upon it (Podgorny, "La derrota" 76).

America “son el mismo hombre prehistórico de que se ocupa la ciencia en Europa” (14). Argentina further possesses the benefit that “tenemos aquí hombres prehistóricos vivos” (“El Museo” 313). In each case, Sarmiento represents the contemporary Indians of Argentina as an important resource for boosting the nation’s importance on the international scientific scene. While these statements might not be shocking, the following most certainly is: “Al hablar, pues, de los Indios, por miserable que sea su existencia y limitado su poder intelectual, no olvidemos que estamos en presencia de nuestros Padres prehistóricos” (*Conflicto* 14). Sarmiento not only borrows Moreno’s conception of parentage but also narrows the relationship, reducing the distance to one generation instead of two.

What does this relationship mean for both the contemporary Indians and for White Argentine civilization? While Moreno does not explicitly raise these questions, Sarmiento most certainly does. He repeatedly intersperses questions such as “quiénes somos cuando argentinos nos llamamos?” (*Conflicto* 1) and “Somos indios o somos españoles? Hemos dejado de serlo por llamarnos americanos?” (*Conflicto* 184) with his musings on the prehistoric modern. Mónica Quijada has dismissed the familial terminology in Moreno’s texts as merely a spatial metaphor. She argues that the Indians were the Argentine grandfathers in that they preceded them on the land, making the word “predecessors” a more accurate descriptor than “ancestors” (“Hijos” 495). I believe that this may be the meaning Sarmiento wishes to transmit: the Indians are the fathers of the moderns by virtue of preceding them temporally on the land. He finishes describing the “padres prehistóricos” as “a quienes hemos detenido en sus peregrinaciones e interrumpido en su marcha casi sin accidente perturbador a través de los siglos” (14). The

use of the first person plural in contrast to the Indians grammatically separates him and what he represents (White society or, as former president, Argentina in its civilized State form). Furthermore, he depicts himself as an agent clearly associated with the Spanish arrival and subsequent development and colonization. While the Indians may be the geographical predecessors of Argentina and a source of pride and even material wealth for the nineteenth-century nation, it does not appear that Sarmiento meant to imply any biological relationship between the prehistoric Indian and the race with which he identified.

In carefully reading Moreno's work, however, I am inclined to respectfully disagree with Quijada's conclusion about the type of linkage implied by the phrase "nuestros abuelos." In a series of conferences given at the Sociedad Científica Argentina in 1882, Moreno lays out his most ambitious theories connecting prehistoric Argentina, particularly the Patagonian region, to the worldwide development of mankind. As I will show in the following analysis, the transcripts of these lectures reveal that he did believe in some biological connection between the prehistoric Indian and contemporary (White) Argentine society. However, this connection was not direct nor easily seen. Before Moreno can include the prehistoric natives as grandfathers of the great American nations, they must pass through many steps in order to be made ready for appropriation.

In order to construct his elaborate argument about the origins and distribution of mankind, Moreno relies on the latest geological and paleontological theories. Joseph Hooker's theory of continental drift and similarities between the creatures of North and South America allow him to suggest that a lost austral continent could very well have been the source of the world's large fauna ("Patagonia" 100, 103-4). In a parallel fashion,

the presence of indigenous people possessing traits that were seemingly prehistoric implied that Patagonia was also the likely starting point of mankind. Ironically, by virtue of possessing the "lowest" or least-evolved representatives of mankind in the present, the Argentine territory could actually be elevated to the birthplace of humankind:

> El hombre, fue en su origen, hombre austral; por lo menos la más grande y fuerte de las ramas del tronco perdido pertenece a esta mitad del globo, y no hay razón para no colocar en ella el principio de las sociedades humanas, sobre todo cuando en el Viejo Mundo no hay el menor indicio seguro de que aquel haya sido su punto de irradiación. ("El origen" 214)

The second piece of Moreno's proof involved the physical evidence gained from comparing and measuring the skulls and bones of indigenous people from around the globe, past and present. Moreno is particularly shrewd in how he presents this potentially controversial material. He had long maintained contact with Paul Broca and Paul Topinard, important and well-respected French anthropologists. He sent them his collection of skulls without making any suggestions about the origin of mankind and received favorable opinions in reply. Knowing he is contradicting the word of well-known figures such as Aldous Huxley, Armand de Quatrefages, Rudolf Virchow, and Ernst Haeckel ("El origen" 190), Moreno allows citations from letters from Broca and Topinard to make the suggestion of an autochthonous American race that could provide the solution to "el secreto de los orígenes de nuestro lado" (Broca, qtd. in "El origen" 182). Topinard is even more confident, writing that the evidence presented by Moreno "Es como para preguntarse si el Neanderthal no sería accidental en Europa, en el tiempo cuaternario y si su patria real no sería la América del Sur austral" (qtd. in "El origen"

182). This deft rhetorical strategy adds legitimacy to the text by letting established authorities from the understood scientific-cultural center of the world suggest the most potentially controversial hypothesis instead of Moreno himself.

In his theory of the Patagonian origin of man, Moreno returns to separating the modern day and prehistoric Indian. Using evidence from skulls he argues for the existence of a lost dolichocephalic[63] race that was the "hombre autóctono" ("El origen" 192) but had since been replaced by brachycephalic races that had migrated from other regions. The presence of dolichocephic skulls in Argentina "proved" this origin, although the reality is that Moreno had to fudge his measurements in order to make them fit his hypothesis (Navarro Floria, Salgado, and Azar 407).[64] With this theory, Moreno establishes a fact essential to his racial project: the current Indians, whose skulls did not necessarily match those of the Patagonian fossil man, were "'invasores' tardíos de las pampas y de la Patagonia" (Podgorny, "La derrota" 73) or degenerated forms worn down by environmental factors. This simple maneuver allows him to remove the contemporary Indians from any glory that would come from being related to the earliest predecessors of mankind. If the Indians living in Patagonia were in fact invaders from another region, their claim to the land was no more legitimate than that of the Europeans who arrived in the sixteenth century. If they were of the same race, but degraded, then they were also unworthy of attention as they were on a downward spiral towards extinction. Either way, the contemporary Indian was written out of the Argentine nation, leaving only White, European-descended people as the justified heirs of a glorious prehistory.

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[63] Dolichocephaly refers to when the head is longer than it is wide, brachycephaly occurs when the head is wider than it is long. In the nineteenth century, heated debates took place over the relative superiority of the two types and over which was the original type. Chapter II of Topinard's textbook *Anthropology* examines many of these debates and lays out guidelines for taking and analyzing cranial measurements.

[64] Stephen Jay Gould has an excellent analysis of this phenomenon in *The Mismeasure of Man*.

If the modern-day Indians are not necessarily the descendents of the autochthonous race, where did the legitimate descendents go? In answering this question, Moreno plays the final card in his racial project, building on the diffusionist theory of population found in Lyell's earliest works on geology and prehistory.[65] Moreno concludes his conference on the origin of civilization by asserting that the people who created the pyramids and all those who contributed to the rise of Western civilization "parti[eron] de las regiones australes" (222), spreading "a través de una larga serie de evoluciones físicas y sociales" (222). As man moved throughout the world, he gained "elementos fecundantes" and progressed intellectually, socially, and physically (223). The final step of this process occurred in recent centuries and continues to occur today: "La onda vuelve y fertiliza con sus nuevos componentes a América, convirtiendo así, su humilde cuna, en la tierra privilegiada" (223). This version of human evolution depicts European-based civilization as the rightful owner of Argentine territory, returning after thousands of years of progress to take control of land currently being wasted by anachronistic degenerates destined to die out whether the Europeans intervened or not. In this way, the "descendientes más evolucionados [of primitive man]… desembarcaban volviendo al hogar después de un largo periplo civilizatorio" (Navarro Floria, Salgado, and Azar 416). This attitude is exemplified by the speech of Juan Darquier in the Argentine National Congress in 1885. With respect to the inclusion of the term *indígena* in national laws, he opines that "Los hijos de europeos que nacen en la República son indígenas de la República, son indígenas americanos" (Congreso Nacional Argentina 1:

[65] While many scholars agreed with this theory, it was far from uncontroversial. Robert Knox called the idea that American Indians could have migrated from somewhere else "sickening, silly follies best left to "those who hate the truth - the romancists, the novelists, the tourists" (251-2).

498).[66] Thus, Argentines of European descent are privileged as the legitimate natives of the territory. Argentina is doubly favored as the birthplace of mankind and the depository of its most highly developed forms.

Moreno's elaborate exposition of prehistory as developed throughout his work allows him to represent an unknowable extinct prehistoric Indian as a positive boon to Argentine identity, whitewashing it via a long stay in Europe or Asia in order to exalt the European-derived part of Argentina. It simultaneously situates the modern-day Indians as illegitimate invaders or degraded forms whose lack of ability to keep up in the struggle for life has left them as anachronistic remnants destined to disappear. In this way he continues the long history of a "doble discurso" in which "el indio a un tiempo está y se le niega, existe, pero no se ve, permanece, pero no se le reconoce" (Quijada, "Hijos" 473). Moreno's construction of prehistory also works within the Spanish American tendency to valorize the pre-Columbian Indians while denying the rights of the contemporary Indians (R. Earle 183). Through Moreno's prehistory, Argentina comes to be depicted as a righteous, modern civilization every bit equal to Europe or North America and involved in a long and justified struggle against illegitimate elements unfairly blocking the flow of progress.

It must be remembered that when these theoretical debates over the prehistoric Indian were developing, a simultaneous debate over what to do with the contemporary Indians was lighting up Congress, newspapers, and cafés. In July 1885, congressional debate over whether or not to create colonies for the Indians provoked questions once again about whether or not they should be considered citizens (see my Chapter One on Mansilla, also Tamagnini and Pérez Zavala). While the first debate seems imminently

[66] Rebecca Earle's book pointed me toward this debate (219).

theoretical and the second principally practical and political, they did not exist on separate planes. Moreno's actions on behalf of the Museo de la Plata demonstrate these interactions.

Moreno's vision of the theoretical Indian as anachronistic and out of time greatly influences the way that he interacts with real-life Indians in Patagonia and Buenos Aires. He has no qualms about digging up the skeletons of people he knew, such as his "amigo" Sam Slick (*Viaje* 102). He later "rescues" the *caciques* Inacayal and Foyal from the prison at Isla Martín Garcia and brings them to live at the Museo de la Plata. Moreno knew both Inacayal and Foyel from his adventures in the south, and Inacayal had visited Moreno's house in 1874 when he came to visit Buenos Aires (Podgorny and Lopes, *El desierto* 138). While it could be believed that he rescued them from the Isla Martín García out of some humanitarian impulse, it seems unlikely that he would have housed a White prisoner friend at the museum and put him to work, both literally doing tasks and as a living exhibit. The Indians were expected to participate in psychological studies, help with construction projects, and clean the museum pieces, including the bones of "sus antiguos compañeros de resistencia" (Petralito 184). Not surprisingly, they quickly became apathetic and refused to work (ten Kate 38). When Inacayal died in September 1888, his final contribution to the Museo de la Plata came "en la forma literal de pieza de museo, con su esqueleto, cerebro, cuero cabelludo y mascarilla mortuoria expuestos en las galerías de la institución" (Quijada, "Ancestros" 9).[67]

Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach have suggested that the museum is "the site of a symbolic transaction between the visitor and the state. In exchange for the state's spiritual wealth, the individual intensifies his attachment to the state" (59). Through this

[67] His skeleton remained on display until the 1940s.

relationship the museum exerts its hegemonic power and shapes citizenship. The case of Inacayal and Foyel raises the question: What happens when the museum pieces *are* citizens themselves? Sylvia Molloy sees this confusion between citizen and museum piece in Moreno's writing and attributes it to his double role as anthropologist and archeologist: on the one hand he sees the Indians as a "potential sujeto argentino" (147), while on the other he sees them as "objeto de estudio, preferentemente en pedazos, como espécimen o fragmento de una colección" (147). By incorporating them in the museum, Moreno reduces the Indians' array of possibilities as citizens to the set narrative of the museum display. They do not have the agency to determine their own future but are inscribed in scientific narratives with parallels to stories of national identity. Whereas the museum intensifies the White citizen's attachment to the state, the Indian citizen is totally subsumed by it. Moreno's theoretical understanding of prehistory denies the living Indian access to participation in the modern world.

As soon as they entered the museum as display pieces instead of visiting citizens, Inacayal, Foyel, and the other Indians lost their subjectivity and became objects. According to Andermann, "To become object is to be stripped of the fluidity of living things" (*Optic* 17) and therefore they were already enmeshed with death even while still alive. Inacayal's incarceration and eventual death in the museum demonstrate the ways in which the contemporary Indian had to be rendered dead in order for the prehistoric Indian to be available as national ancestor. Alive, the Indian represented the threat of an Otherness that could undo the imaginary community of the nation. The Indian in his prehistoric state was entirely incompatible with the modern Argentine present; living fossils had no place in the civilized nation (Quijada, "Ancestros" 9). Dead – physically or

as museum object –, the Indian was unthreatening enough that he or she could begin to play a role in national narratives. The museum becomes a "safe space" where "others" can be "experienced but not engaged" (Matthews 288). The glass walls of the display allow museum visitors to see but not touch, observe but not interact (Riegel 86). Thus, the legitimate European heirs to the territory could gaze upon their degenerate and extremely distant relatives without having to consider them fellow citizens. In this way, Moreno's Museo de la Plata, the same institution that in so many ways served to create cultural and monetary capital for Argentina as nation-state, contributed directly to the incorporation of the symbolic Indian and the exclusion of the physical one from the national body.

Returning to the specific case of Inacayal, in dying in the museum he ensured that his physical body, cultural artifacts, clothing, and other practices would live on indefinitely in the glass display cases of the Anthropology and Comparative Anatomy galleries. The *cacique* Foyel experienced a different fate. He, along with the *cacique* Sayhueque and several other Indians, was released from the Museo de la Plata after a few years and returned to their homeland in the South. There, they lived on a piece of land that Moreno had won for them from the government and underwent a process of assimilation and civilization (Quijada, "Ancestros" 9). In order to continue physically, they had to give up their culture and customs. In this way, the destinies of Inacayal and Foyel demonstrate the two possible paths of the Argentine Indians (Quijada, "Ancestros" 10). In the museum, Inacayal is made totally visible, exposed and literally naked even of flesh – a permanent relic of the national past. However, in order to be incorporated into this tradition he must die. Foyel lives, but is made invisible when he returns to the south

and is subsumed into the category of the poor. This transformation of the still-living Indians into "pobres" was a fundamental piece of the post-Conquista relationship between the government and the native tribes, although the relabeling from ethnic/biological category to social category did nothing to improve their treatment or status (Azar, Nacach, and Navarro Floria 101). In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Indian was viewed as entirely incompatible with the forward trajectory of the nation and therefore was doomed to either a physical or a cultural death.

Thus, Moreno's prehistory gives legitimacy and value to Argentina as a modern nation. However, due to physical and cultural proximity to the Indian tribes he also needed to separate the prehistoric from the modern and prove that, as in Europe, the prehistoric had remained in the past and did not contaminate the present as a living, breathing subject. In his writings and in the Museo de la Plata, Moreno elaborated an understanding of prehistory that removed the contemporary Indian from the nation, leaving space only for assimilated natives or the long-gone indigenous races of the past. These, of course, had since been thoroughly whitened and civilized, returning only after this process to form the basis of a strong, European Argentine nation.

"El Idioma Keshua es el Idioma Griego:" Vicente F. López and the Aryan Past

Moreno was one of the most vocal and active inventors of prehistory in the River Plate region but he was not the only one. Elements of this discourse appear in many other texts of the time, including political treatises, journal articles, and even poems. Vicente Fidel López, a well-known historian and politician, also turned to prehistory as a source of data for interpreting the nation's past, present, and future. Trained as a lawyer, López did not engage in archeological or craniometrical activities like Moreno but instead used

the methodologies of philology and comparative linguistics. His focus was also different than Moreno's in that he looked to the Northern Indians instead of those in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. Despite differences in object of study, method, and therefore conclusions, López's elaboration of Argentine prehistory has the similar outcome of validating a particular European-based racial identity of the nation at the expense of the indigenous elements, despite the glorification of an indigenous prehistoric past.

The investigation of the language, traditions, and history of the Quechua people was a project that held López's attention for many years and required painstaking research. Evidence of this continual process of analysis and composition is found in a series of articles published in the *Revista de Buenos Aires* between 1865 and 1869, *Les races aryennes du Peroú* (published in Paris in 1871), and the monumental *Manual de Historia Argentina* (published posthumously in 1910). As with Moreno, it is not my intention to treat these texts chronologically, but instead to draw from all of them in order to most clearly elaborate López's argument. *Las races aryennes du Peroú* summarizes and expands upon the articles published in the *Revista de Buenos Aires*, and the *Manual de Historia Argentina* incorporates the conclusions from the earlier works into the context of the historical development of the nation.

López repeatedly states that the purpose of his investigation is to contribute to mankind's understanding of his past, particularly with regard to the Americas. In Peru, there were no written records to clarify the earliest periods of man's development, and this lack combined with European prejudices had left huge holes in the (pre)historical record (*Les races* 11-12). Therefore, his goal was to resurrect Quechuan history and language and make it known. At the same time, like Moreno, his intention was to

examine these factors in a global context, taking into account other ancient nations from distant regions. Not only would his conclusions enrich knowledge about the prehistory of Peru but they could also contribute greatly to understanding the prehistory of the world, particularly the (dis)unity of language, race, and ideas ("Estudios" 3.28: 558).

As mentioned, López's discipline of choice for the reconstruction of the ancient past is philology, or more particularly, comparative linguistics. This field, considered one of the greatest intellectual developments of his period (Campbell 2), involves putting words from different languages into contact and identifying patterns known as systematic correspondences in order to posit genetic links between them (Trask 203). López was enamored of the discipline and pronounced it "la verdadera CIENCIA NUEVA de nuestro siglo" ("Iniciaciones" 479). The field's power came not from the language studies themselves, but from the fact that languages are "intimement unies au sort de l'homme, elles suivent dans leur développement la même marche que suivent las sociétés humaines" (*Les races* 9-10). Thus, cultural diversity came to represent biological diversity (Quijada, "Los 'Incas arios'" 252). In this way, language became identified with race, such that the one could stand in for the other. This correspondence meant that relationships between languages could be used to solve historical problems such as the origin and migrations of mankind or links between races. It is important to remember that like other scientific pursuits of the time, the field of comparative linguistics was not value neutral. The various categories to which languages were assigned were ranked hierarchically, from isolating to agglutinating to flectional. Each language type was linked to a corresponding stage of development, and it was commonly believed that only flectional languages were capable of reaching the highest levels of civilization (Quijada,

"Las raíces" 177). Unsurprisingly, Quechua and most American languages were classified as agglutinating, limiting the developmental possibilities of their speakers. It is in this context that López elaborates his theory of the Aryan origin of the Quechuan race and language.

The vast majority of López's works comprise a detailed linguistic comparison of the Quechua language and those of Eurasia, particularly Sanskrit and Greek. Following the methodology established by Friedrich von Schlegel, Alexander von Humboldt, Max Müller, and others, López systematically and in great detail compares the phonetics, word roots, and grammar of the two groups. These investigations produce correspondences that he feels permit him to conclude that "El Vocabulario de los Keshuas, de esas tribus tan antiguas como célebres al pié de los Andes, se traduce todo entero, y se explica por el vocabulario de la Lengua famosa en que cantó Homero" ("Estudio" 5.50 162). Or, as he boldly subtitles the first section of the same article, "El Idioma Keshua es el Idioma Griego" (161). Having related Quechua to Greek and therefore to the conjunction of ancient languages referred to today as Indo-European,[68] he attempts to give the historical explanation for this parallel existence. That is to say, how can a "lesser" agglutinating language spoken by "barbarians" be considered part of the same exalted group as the flectional languages that gave birth to some of the greatest civilizations and cultural developments in the world? To do so, López questions the belief that Sanskrit was the original form of the Indo-European languages and instead hypothesizes that the common root of Greek, Sanskrit, and Quechua is the language of the Pelasgians, the ancient

[68] By the late eighteenth century linguists were already using the term "Indo-European languages" to refer to the relationships between languages such as Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. Germanic, Baltic, Slavic, Celtic, and Armenian were all added later (Trask 217).

indigenous inhabitants of the Aegean Sea region. Here, however, López reaches a seeming dead end: "¿Qué eran los Pelasgos? ¿De dónde salían? No lo sé" (172).

This race is the Aryan base that gives the title to *Les race aryennes du Peroú*.[69] In López's theory, the Quechua and Aryans descended from a common origin. At some point in the remote past migrations forced a split in the population. Quechua is not exactly the same as Greek or other "Aryan" languages because after the mythical dividing point it developed in isolation and was affected by regional factors (*Les races* 23). "L'idiome américain, séparé du tronc avant l'heure et transplanté dans des pays lointains, n'a pas trouvé dans ses propres resources assez de force pour achiever le movement commencé" (*Les races* 102). Quechua shared the same origin and therefore had the same innate possibilities of development, but external factors determined its lesser evolution. Thus, for López the fact that Quechua was an agglutinating language and not flectional like the others in no way reflected on its internal characteristics nor, using the correspondence of race and biology, on the evolutionary possibilities of the race that spoke it.

In order to absolutely prove a common origin for Quechua and the ancient European languages, López must show that there was geographic and ethnographic contact between the two regions. Otherwise, the many linguistic parallels he identifies could be dismissed as mere coincidence. Like Moreno, López believed in the existence of a now-missing continent somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. However, in writing about twenty years earlier than Moreno[70] he did not have access to the ideas on continental drift

[69] The term *Aryan* was developed in the 1850s by German philologist Max Müller (Hill, "Ariana" 93). In the late nineteenth century, *Aryan* and *Indo-European* were often used interchangeably (Ward 69).
[70] Moreno's reaction to López's work is that it is very well done for the time it was undertaken: "Si el Dr. López hubiera poseído cuando escribió su libro, los datos que hoy tenemos, hubiera levantado un verdadero

developed by Joseph Hooker, Antonio Snider-Pelligrini, and Alfred Wegener. Instead, he relies on the texts of classical antiquity to explain the geological shifts he believes must have occurred. López takes the continent of Atlantis described in the works of Plato and Plutach and views it not as a myth, but rather as a historically-verified land mass in the Atlantic Ocean. He speculates that what the ancient Greeks called Atlantis could possibly have been "el doble continente que hoy llamamos América ("Estudios" 3.32: 537). If his assertion is true, than the American world becomes a fundamental part of antiquity. López is not content to just confirm the existence of America in prehistoric times, he also assigns it a protagonistic role. He wonders if "esas razas primitivas que habían poseído la palabra iniciadora y generatriz del progreso intelectual y moral del género humano, habían invadido desde la Atlántide los mares de Asia y África" ("Estudios" 3.32: 539). If this proves true, then not only are the Americans equal to the Eurasians, but they might have actually been their progenitors. Consequently, the spirit of "progreso intelectual y moral" might actually have originated in the Americas, completely contradicting the common opinion that they were barbarous and incapable of higher civilization.

The final major piece of López's argument is a comparison of the art, architecture, myths, traditions, astronomy, and customs of the ancient Eurasian civilizations with those of the ancient Peruvians. Through this analysis he finds commonalities and even "perfecta pariedad" ("Estudios" 3.32: 530) in all areas of culture and politics from initiation myths to calendar divisions. These similarities confirm the connections López found when studying the language of the Quechua and the geological prehistory of the Earth. Each of the branches of his analysis repeatedly confirms his

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monumento clásico a la historia precolombina con solo el cambio de interpretación de algunas de sus opiniones, que solo pecaron por la timidez producida por la falta de base sólida en aquella época" ("Antropología" 167).

ultimate thesis that "las RAZAS PRIMITIVAS del PERU [son] *un ramal evidente* de *ese* TRONCO ARIACO que *reconoce por base la* CIVILIZACIÓN HUMANA EN TODA LA REDONDEZ DE la TIERRA" (498).

This conclusion brings with it several consequences for the understanding of the pre-Columbian populations of Peru. First, López inserts the Quechua into a world history and allows them to play a part in the population and development of the world. He also makes clear that in his mind the Aryan race and language were among the most perfect and highly developed. The Pelasgos were "la raza más prestigiosa en el mundo de los antiguos" ("Estudios" 5.50: 166); by tying Quechua to this group racially and linguistically they are necessarily elevated to a similar level. Furthermore, López's description of pre-Incan and Incan civilization shows that they possessed all the characteristics of civilization normally denied to the American Indian populations and none of those stereotypically assigned to them. The Quechua possessed a political system and art equal in beauty and efficiency to that of the Greeks. They were sedentary and agricultural (*Les races* 308), not nomadic, as well as a model of order and peace ("Estudio" 5.52: 515). López not only equates Quechua civilization's achievement to that of the Eurasian civilizations of antiquity but often places the Quechua *ahead* of their peers to the east. The whole of Europe suffers when compared, as the primitive races of America knew more of astronomy, science, and medicine than their European counterparts (*Les races* 230, 321). Greece would have been better off if it had "el fondo de elementos civiles y orgánicos que tienen los Pelasgos americanos" ("Estudio" 5.52: 515) and there was no adultery or murder among the Peruvians, showing they possessed a

higher level of moral development than all of Europe, particularly the violent Italians (*Les races* 309).

López's belief in the Aryan roots of Quechua civilization affects the way he interprets the history of the Americas from the fifteenth century forward. Instead of viewing the arrival of the Spanish as a positive force of civilization and religion, he sees the Conquest as a watershed moment that stalled the Quechua development and ultimately doomed a great civilization to near extinction. He calls the Spanish "perseguidores ensañados" ("Estudios" 3.32: 525), "aventureros feroces" ("Estudio" 5.50: 186), and blames them for destroying the art, monuments, and symbols of such a great civilization. His tone reaches that of an outcry:

> Es cierto, si! Por desgracia, es demasiado cierto: los Keshuas eran infinitamente más adelantados que los Amos que les impuso el cielo por uno de esos decretos inescrutables que promulga de cuando en cuando el pregón de los tiempos. Uno se espanta al considerar el horror de ese martirio, impuesto a esa noble raza, cuando les fue dado a los Bárbaros de la Edad-Media el derecho de imponer por la fuerza a los Pelasgos del Perú el atraso más vergonzoso, las preocupaciones más absurdas, como dogmas de la civilización. ("Estudio" 5.51: 360)

Once again he elevates the Quechua civilization above its contemporaneous European counterparts and inverts the values usually given to the two sides of the Conquest. This statement also resonated with current events. Readers in Argentina would most certainly have associated this "martirio" with their own experience, vividly imagining the horror of the barbarous Indians becoming the "amos" of their own infinitely more advanced

culture. The seeming impossibility of such an event serves to heighten the emotion of López's defense of the Quechua and his censure of the Spanish.

Parallel to this condemnation López constructs a sort of shadow history, a revisionist idea of what America could have looked like had the Spanish not acted as they did.

> Oh! Si los Españoles que pisaron en el Perú hubiesen sido tan sabios como los kis-huas, o si los kis-huas hubiesen sido tan fuertes como los Españoles, el mundo tendría hoy las tradiciones de los Thales y de los Pithagoras en formas vivas y perfectas, y otros Platones nos admirarían con su sabiduría y su lenguaje sino hubieran ido a sucumbir *por millones* y *como ganados de bestias*, bajo el látigo castellano que lo arreó en las entrañas de la tierra a sacar oro para sus tiranos. ("Estudio" 5. 53 87)

Had the Spanish not invaded, the Quechua could have continued their peaceful conquest of America, spreading culture and discipline through the region ("Geografía" 629). With this argument López effectively explains why the Quechua language and race did not reach the same levels of civilization as the Greeks, despite possessing the very same potential. Furthermore, Argentina and the other American nations would also be lifted by this historical revision. Here, López implicitly addresses the debate over the relative strength and culture of the Latin races compared to the Anglo-Saxon races of Northern Europe. Had the Spanish not succeeded, the American nations could have reached such high peaks of civilization as to win the admiration of peoples around the world instead of being criticized as biologically weak or culturally backward.

Why is an Argentine historian writing about the people of Peru and why am I classifying this as a racial project for Argentina? Throughout the works studied, López carries out a deft rhetorical turn: although the titles and much of the texts speak of Peru, he makes the Argentine Indians of the Northwest appear as the legitimate contemporary representatives of this population. He continues to use *Peru* in its expansive colonial sense even though new political limits had since been drawn and made such usage outdated. Additionally, he demonstrates that the Incan kingdom reached far into Argentina. There, the Incas established a new capital in Córdoba and constructed roads and other implements of empire as far south as Buenos Aires ("Geografía" 619). Toponomy also proves the presence of the Incas in Argentina: the names *Pampa*, *Tucumán*, and *Patagonia* derive from Quechua roots. Finally, he emphasizes that even in the late nineteenth century, Quechua is the "idioma familiar" of the Argentine province of Santiago del Estero ("Estudios" 3.29: 7) and can also be found spoken in Tucumán and Catamarca (*Les races* 309). By stretching the territory of Peru into northwestern and central Argentina, López justifies the appropriation of the history and culture of the Inca dynasty for the Argentine nation.

López was hardly the first to utilize the Incan empire in establishing a base for the Argentine nation. Shortly after the declaration of Argentine independence in May 1810, there appeared a tendency to look towards the former Incan empire for the foundations of the new nation (Rípodas 227). Daisy Rípodas has identified approximately thirty texts from the period that reference the Incas, including poems, speeches, and political treatises that invoked a "envidiable paraíso incaico destruido por un puñado de conquistadores sanguinarios" (230). This version of events provided a politically useful narrative by

which the Argentine Independence movement was in fact a justified throwing off of the invaders and a return to a better, natural past. The movement reached its apex in the form of a proposal supported by Manuel Belgrano that aimed to restore a descendent of the Incas to the throne of a future Argentine monarchy (Rípodas 248). The movement failed, but the legacy of Incaism was visible throughout the nineteenth century and still is today in the lyrics of the *Himno Nacional*, penned by Vicente Fidel López's very own father, Vicente López y Planes:

> Se conmueven del Inca las tumbas,
> y en sus huesos revive el ardor,
> lo que ve renovando a sus hijos
> de la Patria el antiguo esplendor.[71]

Unlike the poetic voice of *Tabaré* who enters into the tomb to tell a tale of degeneration and death, in the *Himno Nacional* the dead Indian in his tomb is a source of strength and life ("en su huesos revive el ardor"). In the early nineteenth century, the Incan tradition emerged as a positive source of identity to which the patriots could turn once their long-established political and racial ties to Spain no longer served their needs. Vicente Fidel López's late nineteenth-century Incaism does not engage with the same dynamic. Nonetheless, his interest in the Quechua tribes and their history was not neutral. López's project was equally tied up with questions of identity and nation and can and should be viewed as a racial project that looked to identify and situate the various racial groups in the territory in relation to each other and to the rapidly-changing modern world.

[71] Interestingly, Vicente F. López dismissed the mention of the Incas in his father's anthem as "lirismo de pura convención" (qtd. in Rípodas 254).

In order to understand the relationship of López's study of prehistory to his projects for contemporary Argentina, we must turn to the *Manual de historia argentina*. Although apparently less concerned with the question of prehistory, this posthumous text nonetheless draws from his previous investigations and inserts these ideas into the context of the more recent history of the nation. By doing so, López reinvents the concept of prehistory in accordance with present history. In this reinvention he creates space for representing the modern populations of Argentina, both Indian and *criollo*.

On one hand, López's prehistory of the nation is an admirable exaltation of Argentina's prehistoric past. By insisting that much of Northern Argentina actually fell under the reign of the Incas, he allows the northern indigenous tribes to be considered part of a great civilization that produced high levels of art and other cultural artifacts. López directly calls for a revaluation of the indigenous past, saying that this race "es digna de nuestro amor" ("Estudios" 3.29: 4) and that it is a shame that no one has pieced together the prehistoric past that "encontrado el eco patrio en tantos nobles pechos de Argentinos que hablan Keshua, levantaría en ellos el orgullo de la noble y espléndida herencia que por línea recta les cabe reclamar en la Historia ("Estudios" 3.40: 238). For López, the contemporary Indians of the North may have been poor and illiterate, but they were also the heirs to a glorious legacy of a great civilization equal and related to that of the Greeks. The Argentine elite should work to make this heritage known, thus elevating the position of the modern-day Quechuas in the northern provinces.

López's arguments also have positive ramifications for the non-indigenous populations of Argentina, particularly the intellectual elite in Buenos Aires. First, through López's construction of prehistory the nation could view itself as the former seat of a

fabulous empire, built on a strong foundation equal to that of the Greeks. Although he argues that the Spanish conquest was unnecessarily violent and perhaps unjustified, the fact of the matter is that they were stronger and thus won the struggle for life. The empire that later became Argentina was able to take the best elements of the Quechua empire that proceeded it and continue to improve them. Furthermore, López's intellectual production itself stands as a monument to the high levels of civilization reached by the Argentine nation and a defense against those scholars in Europe who have taken current events to prove "como ley orgánica entológica que la raza sajona ha nacido superior a las razas latinas" (*Manual* xx). Like Mansilla, López works to defend his country against claims of biological, intellectual, and cultural inferiority.

López's understanding of the racial makeup of Argentina confirms this idea. Although he had previously decried the Spanish Conquest, he now argues that Spanish society came to America "como gérmen de la vida a propiciarnos los medios de la regeneración moral y comercial" ("Geografía" 639). By the time of the Revolution in 1810, this element of "sociabilidad moderna" ("Geografía" 639) and the Quechua race had mixed completely, such that "No había pues elemento ninguno que constituyera raza o tipo etnológico variante" and there was "una asimilación general de todas las partes que antes las compusieron y que la siguen componiendo con las contribuciones que nos trae la inmigración europea" (*Manual* 314). Even those who continued to speak Quechua in the Andean provinces "están refundidas en la sociabilidad argentina, y no son *incrustaciones* sino partes *integrantes* y asimiladas al conjunto y a la lengua nacional" (*Manual* 314). It is no surprise that he dates the racial fusion of Argentina to approximately the period of Independence. While before 1810 he could speak of an

"elemento superior de origen puro europeo" and the "*muchedumbre popular* más o menos mezclado" (*Manual* 315, emphasis his), the political birth of the nation necessitated the formation of a "tipo común argentino" (*Manual* 315) to give legitimacy to its physical borders. Whereas Moreno elaborates a prehistory that effectively washes away any biological influence of the indigenous people in the formation of national identity, López praises the Indian and allows him to be directly incorporated into the national racial makeup.

While López's racial project for the nation sounds wonderfully inclusive in theory, in practice it was much less so. First, even within the same text he cannot maintain the fiction that all biological and therefore political divisions between races were eliminated by 1810. In describing the early years of the nation he argues that problems were caused by the fact that "el país estuviese en manos de una población *bárbara* en una parte y *barbarizada* en otra: mezcla de indios *Char-huas, Huen-huas, Tapes* y de mestizos o gauchos, más desmoralizada y más brutal ahora, por el desorden revolucionario, que lo que habían sido las tribus primitivas" (*Manual* 452-3). Here, the Charruas and other tribes are resolutely categorized as *indios*, separate from, and threatening to, the national type. Furthermore, in a brief note describing contemporary events, López writes that as Ministro de Guerra, Julio Roca had led a successful campaign against the Southern Indians with the outcome that "La Patagonia y todas las extensas comarcas del sur quedaron libres de los indios que infestaban nuestras campañas" (*Manual* 945). Again, the Indians are represented as separate, inferior, and even non-human, as their presence is depicted as an infestation of pests. These examples

given by López go against his thesis and provide a glimpse into the historical reality that his generalized assertion of national type masks.

Another problem with López's argument is that he focuses exclusively on the Indians of the Northwest and makes no explanation of the racial or political incorporation of the other tribes that occupied much more of the Argentine territory. The way in which his study of Quechua slips into an argument for how all the Indians were incorporated into the unified national type highlights the nineteenth-century tension between *Indian* as catch-all category and the favoritism towards certain tribes. Although people spoke of the *cuestión del indio*, some tribes or populations were always particularly elevated or denigrated in accordance with shifting priorities from Buenos Aires. Often, those Indians willing to help Buenos Aires in military affairs were considered friends and thus civilizable, while those that maintained a physical or spiritual difference were dismissed as barbarians. For Mansilla, the Ranqueles were superior and showed great possibility for incorporation. Moreno seems to prefer the Indians of the South, particularly the pure Tehuelches, while reducing the Araucanos of the pampas to the role of illegitimate invaders. When seen in the context of his role in the fight over the Chilean/Argentine border, this hierarchy makes sense. Finally, López clearly prefers the Quechua to the detriment of the rest.

In the end, the greatest problem with López's vision of prehistory is that it makes invisible the actual differences of race and interests. By saying that everyone fused into one racial type, López can say that the government's policies or the ideas produced by the intellectual elites of Buenos Aires served everyone equally. However, this absolutely was not the case. At the time that López was writing, the military was still actively pursuing

and imprisoning the Indians of the South, and those that came to Buenos Aires were often hired out as domestic or farm workers. They were separated from their families, paid little to nothing, and forced to abandon their language and traditions (Mases 125). When López hopes that his study will echo in the hearts of the contemporary Quechua speakers in Argentina, the reader can only laugh sadly, for in the nineteenth century they were likely illiterate workers and the odds of information published in scientific journals in Buenos Aires or in Paris reaching them were exceedingly slim. To pretend that the nation was racially homogenous ignored the very serious questions of past injustices, economic inequality, and continued systematic racism. Consciously or not, López's prehistory of Argentina was much more concerned with satisfying ideological needs than truly explaining the racial past and present of the nation.

This aspect of López's project can most clearly be seen in a reading and counterreading of a citation from Clemente Onelli's *Trepando los Andes*. In the text, Onelli makes the following observation about the relationship between the *porteños* and the Indian tribes still living on the pampas:

> Naturalmente, hice mis comparaciones con la gente civilizada de la ciudad, y observé que los que más despiadados se muestran con esos antiguos señores de la pampa son precisamente aquellos en los cuales los caracteres étnicos, aunque muy diluidos, denuncian la braquicefalia, la pigmentación y la acentuación zigomática de las razas autóctonas. Recordé que uno solo, el doctor Lucio Vicente López, me decía una vez que tenía a gloria de que en sus venas corriera sangre incásica. (28)

Lucio Vicente López was Vicente Fidel López's son. Given Vicente López's understanding of the prehistory and development of the Incan empire, is it any wonder

that his son was proud of the fact that he was a descendent of those people? Onelli holds Lucio up as a model of tolerance and inclusion, but he misses the point: both father and son are no more proud of being related to the alcohol-ridden, poor populations of the pampas and Patagonia than any other of the "gente civilizada de la ciudad" who show distain for those tribes. In order for Vicente López to value a trace of indigenous heritage in himself and in his country, he must change the very meaning of the term. He shifts the emphasis from the more common Indians of the main part of Argentina to the Incan descendents of the North, a group with far less presence in Argentina but far more positive recognition worldwide. The Indians he chooses are as geographically far away as any could be from the Indians of Tierra del Fuego that Darwin had called the lowest type of mankind. López does not entirely invert the value of the Argentine Indians, bringing them into the fold in all their reality. Instead, he shifts the focus of the search for a prehistoric past to a more appropriate group that possesses the characteristics needed to give the desired results in the present. His narrative, while compelling, remains an account that disregards reality in favor of a fiction that more effectively serves the needs of a nation still trying to define and situate itself in a global context.

Broken Bottles, Broken Bones: Clemente Onelli and the Defense of the Modern Indian

The final text I study in many ways offers a counterpoint to the narratives of prehistory constructed by Moreno and López. *Trepando los Andes* (written 1903, published 1904), is the work of Clemente Onelli, an immigrant from Italy who arrived in Argentina the same year that Inacayal died in the Museo de la Plata, 1888. Trained in the natural sciences in Rome, he was quickly hired by Moreno first to work at his museum

and later as a participant in the resolution of the border dispute with Chile.[72] In the journey described in *Trepando los Andes*, Onelli crosses much of the territory explored by Moreno on his various expeditions to the South. Unsurprisingly, Onelli's text is deeply entrenched in the discourse of prehistory exemplified by Moreno's works and in many ways follows the style of his mentor. However, two factors impose a radical change on the ways this discourse is used to represent the contemporary Indians and Argentina as a nation. First, Onelli was not born in Argentina, although he did immigrate, assimilate, and frequently depend on the Argentine government for employment and financial support. Secondly, Onelli wrote *Trepando los Andes* almost thirty years after Moreno's *Viaje a la Patagonia Austral* was published. The intervening years had radically changed the physical and human landscape of Patagonia. The Indians had largely been subdued, railroads had begun to be constructed, and ever-increasing numbers of ranchers populated the vast stretches of desert. As a result, Onelli uses the concept of prehistory to lament the state of the native people and the region in general. Instead of building up a glorious national identity, Onelli critiques Argentine governmental policies, particularly as represented in the figure of Julio Argentino Roca.

Trepando los Andes is a text completely aware of time. As a travelogue it is necessarily concerned with movement through space and over time, but in Onelli's work these elements gain centrality and give meaning to the descriptions of lands and people. As he travels the paths originally explored by Darwin, Guillermo Cox, George Chaworth Musters, and Moreno, he sees many of the same signs of a remote past. Rock formations suggest the "tiempos geológicos de la época de los ictiosauros" (83) and cairns dot the

[72] Onelli was at times Moreno's secretary, confidant, and even godfather of his second child (Fernández Balboa 10). With regard to the Comisión de Límites, Onelli went so far as to physically alter the course of a river in order to prove one of Moreno's arguments (*Trepando* 82).

landscape, reminding Onelli of the global prehistory of mankind. One of the most lasting images in the text is the confluence of space and time in the repeated descriptions of the prehistoric Indian trail he discovers zigzagging across the land. This "senda prehistórica indígena" (81), like Moreno's "abuelos fósiles," is simultaneously prehistoric and present: created over long periods of time by successive generations of Indians, the trail is still being used by natives and Onelli himself in the present day.

For Onelli, the prehistoric path is rich in meaning. In it, he sees the entire (pre)history of mankind in the River Plate. Traveling the path, he remembers "aún más las grandes rutas de la humanidad" (23). Like Moreno and López, he connects this specific instance of prehistory to a global pattern. At other times he compares the Indians to the natives of "Ucrania" or demonstrates how their artistic labors "recuerdan los trabajos parecidos de los incas y los jeroglíficos egipcios y fenicios" (85). It is not coincidence that he compares the Indians of the River Plate to some of the most advanced ancient civilizations. Like his peers, Onelli works to create an Argentine prehistory that instills the region with prestige.

Despite this similarity in the representation of remote prehistory, Onelli interprets the impingement of prehistory on the present in a very different manner. Moreno and López showed great interest in the remnants of the prehistoric and used them to create glorifying narratives for the Argentine nation. From so humble a beginning, the forces of evolution and progress transformed prehistoric people into the civilized citizens of contemporary Argentina, well-equipped to continue to develop far into the future. Along the way, degenerate or weak populations fell off the path of progress, creating the groups of "inferior" Indians that still populated Argentina in the late nineteenth century and

needed to be controlled or eliminated. Whereas for Moreno and López the detritus of the prehistoric could be the basis for constructing a glorious past for the nation, for Onelli it is just broken-down junk. The forces of nature and passage of time have not led to greater perfection among the Indian tribes:

> Estamos en el centro de Patagonia, poblada otrora por numerosas tribus indígenas, cuyas capas sucesivas se vinieron sobreponiendo refundidas a veces y a veces desalojando o destruyendo la raza autóctona ancestral. Ahora, a su vez, se han visto desalojadas y casi aniquiladas por el invasor blanco y los temibles auxiliares que lo acompañan: el alcohol y las enfermedades contagiosas, que hacen estragos en esas razas. (69)

Using a metaphor of geology, Onelli demonstrates how great waves of people overtake earlier populations. Although the later populations must have had some advantage to allow them to succeed in the struggle of life, this advantage does not mean that they are superior in all aspects. Thus, Onelli's understanding of evolution and change is more closely related to true Darwinian theory than many of the authors I have studied: from unity, species diversify in a way that does not necessarily lead to perfection nor greater harmony (Novoa and Levine 8). The transition from prehistory is inescapably marked by violence, whether it be rock layers spilling over each other or the various levels of human civilization competing for land and resources.

In fact, Onelli sees the Indian populations as degenerating over time. Peaceful autochthonous tribes were replaced by warring Pampas and Araucanos (23), who in turn "se han visto desalojadas y casi aniquiladas por el invasor blanco y los temibles auxiliares que lo acompañan: el alcohol y las enfermedades contagiosas, que hacen estragos en esas

razas" (69). The passage of time has not been kind to the native populations. However, anticipating his later arguments, Onelli does not see this degeneration as the result of biological weakness but instead blames it on an external human factor: the White invaders. I will explore this idea further later in this chapter.

In keeping with his interpretation of prehistory, Onelli continually connects the prehistoric with signs of destruction or decay, particularly at the hands of human protagonists. The rock formations that remind him of prehistoric times are actually piles of broken boulders, reinforcing the connection between the prehistoric and the broken-down. Whereas Moreno describes Patagonia as un "anfiteatro grandioso" that reveals the riches of the land (*Viaje* 182), Onelli describes the landscape as "un anfiteatro en ruinas" (46). Most of the "numerosas escamas de sílex y puntas de flechas" he finds are broken and "los kairns violados" (23). The trails are further littered with piles of old and new bones and empty alcohol bottles (23). The prehistoric trash on the trail once again implicates the White populations of Argentina in the destruction of the native tribes: the broken arrowheads take on symbolic meaning, suggesting the defeat of the Indian tribes in direct warfare with the Argentine government. Although Onelli does not mention here who was responsible for violating the cairns, he later remarks that "La profanación de esos sepulcros antiguos por los exploradores los ha obligado a enterrar sus muertos en lugares menos visibles, ceremonia que tratan de que no sea presenciada por ningún cristiano" (75). This observation is highly ironic for on the very next page he writes that "en los numerosos kairns prehistóricos que he registrado, he encontrado siempre, antes de llegar al esqueleto principal, mucha cantidad de huesos carbonizados de pequeñas criaturas" (78), implicating himself in the profanation of the Indian tombs.

Onelli's interactions with the Patagonian people, native and otherwise, tell a similar story of decay. One of his first realizations on his journey is that the wild, free Patagonia he longs to experience no longer exists. Moreno was able to feel that he had traveled 200,000 years in just a few days but Onelli is constantly reminded of the present. Upon entering Patagonia, his "mestizo de indio" (22) guide takes him beyond a small town to sleep in the middle of nowhere. When Onelli asks why they did not stop in town, the guide responds, "A los exploradores que vienen de la ciudad les gusta más el campo sin gente" (24). Onelli finishes the guide's thought process in his head: "¿Y por qué lo he de llevar por las estancias de gente pobre a un hombre que se pone guantes, a uno que dicen que viene a descubrir el desierto?" (24). The feedback loop described by Ian Hacking can be seen at play: the object of study is cognizant of the way he or she is represented and classified, and thus changes behavior accordingly (104). Patagonia is no longer what it was before it became a featured object of scientific and casual study.

When Onelli encounters the Mapuche and Tehuelche Indians, he discovers that here too he can no longer encounter the pure culture that previous explorers had found. Systematic extermination, diseases, and forced migration and assimilation had led the Indians into "el túnel de la disintegración cultural" (Martínez Sarasola 290). His anthropological studies of the Indians reveal the extent to which their customs had changed in the last thirty years. They are "olvidados ya de sus glorias pasadas, que apenas recuerdan en los días de prolongadas libaciones" (28). Days of drinking have replaced even the memory of glory, not to mention the possibility of achieving it in the present. He also reports that the Indians "tienen tres veces por año inmersiones rituales, cuya significación han perdido: recuerdan solamente que su baño de octubre facilita la

incubación de los huevos de avestruz" (71). While the custom has continued, the meaning has been lost. Onelli does not bother to speculate on the prehistoric origins of the tradition or even the more recent meanings, merely noting the loss serves his purposes. Contact with White culture has also caused the Indians to stop making arrowheads: instead of forming their own, "las indias buscan ahora en los antiguos paraderos indígenas los raspadores de piedra para adelgazar las pieles que manufacturan…la época de la piedra ha pasado ya también para ellos" (78). In Onelli's time, it is no longer possible to find "nuestros abuelos fósiles" living in the South as Moreno was able to do. The land and people had left the Stone Age. Although this change would seem to fit the civilizing desire of the Argentine elites, Onelli views it at best with trepidation and ambivalence. At first he is heartened to seen signs of the progress he had been conditioned to view as unequivocally positive. However, he also laments the loss of the past and questions whether the changes are truly indicative of progress rather than degeneration and destruction (Tuninetti 164). His naturalist vocation and artistic spirit cause him to feel "desencanto por el desierto virgen violado" (Onelli, "El Chaco" 97). While the earlier nature and people of Patagonia may have been wild and savage, at least they were interesting and authentic, two qualities prized by the explorer-scientist of the nineteenth century. The Indians Onelli meets possess less skill and meaning than the Stone Age primitives that came before them.

As we have seen, Onelli sees the same evidence for a prehistoric Argentine past as Moreno does – arrowheads, bones, ancient trails – but instead of interpreting them as a positive source of ancient identity for the nation he views them as signs of destruction that lead to a diminishment of the Patagonian land and people. As previously mentioned,

in some ways this follows the thought of Argentine Darwinians such as Eduardo L. Holmberg, who viewed the primary mechanism of evolution as potentially violent competition: the struggle for life. Waste resulting from this struggle even came to be seen as a positive sign that the country and its people were in fact evolving (Novoa 228). Thus, the vestige-like Indian would be a necessary by-product of a worthwhile process. The idea that the Indians were incapable of progressing beyond a certain point or doomed to degeneration was also a popular belief; we have seen Mansilla react to this assumption and Zorrilla de San Martín and Moreno support it to varying degrees.

Nonetheless, the originality of Onelli's argument lies in the fact that he sees both the Patagonian land and the indigenous people living there as capable of development and insertion in the future, but believes that contact with White culture – particularly alcohol – and inefficient or inappropriate government policies have impeded or even reversed this process. Whereas Zorrilla believed that the light of reason was rapidly disappearing from the Indians' eyes, Onelli uses the same metaphor to suggest that the Indians can learn and progress. Describing the work of the Franciscan missionaries, Onelli insists that with time "brilla al fin en su pupila el relámpago de su inteligencia cultivada" ("El Chaco" 95). The Indian has potential but must be carefully cultivated like a delicate plant. Degeneration and extinction are not necessary. Unfortunately, proper procedures to avoid them had not been implemented in the River Plate.

Onelli is vehement in his attribution of blame for the Indians' degeneration to the forces of an incomplete civilizing process. He describes Patagonia in the beginning of the twentieth century as an unpopulated desert-like region "donde puede decirse que la civilización, hasta ahora, sólo ha conseguido hacer huir la indígena y hacer desaparecer

los ejemplares característicos de la fauna austral" (25). Civilization arrived in Patagonia, but it only succeeded in destroying what was there without introducing positive elements to replace the native elements it forced to flee. In terms of the land, he sees some evidence of progress over time, such as when he observes that around the lake Nahuel Huapí two men "han iniciado la civilización de ese lago poco conocido" (32) and that in general "amplias escenas de activa vida rural…habían transformado ya la virgen naturaleza de los años anteriores" (48). Throughout Patagonia, he sees micro-projects of development aimed at taming the wilderness and exploiting the many natural resources of the region for the benefit of individuals and Argentina as a whole. The land itself is willing to be civilized: in an apostrophe to the River Limay he lauds it for "esperando paciente el momento en que la civilización utilice tu fuerza poderosa que convierta en vergeles las escuálidas pampas que te rodean!" (23). Nonetheless, Patagonia has not progressed to the degree that it should: "Pero los pequeños estados no han progresado mucho; sus propietarios se limitan a arrendarlos, contentos de obtener un buen interés sobre el mínimo capital que sacrificaron para treinta, cuarenta o sesenta leguas cuadradas de tierra" (35). The land is marked by these stalled efforts, such as the adobe houses and barracks built by the military the year before and since abandoned (32). The innate ability and desire to progress are present in the land, but external forces have kept it from doing so.

This mixture of potential and setback is also highly visible in his description of the people of Patagonia. The tribe of the cacique Ñancuche Nahuelquir illustrates the lost opportunities of the Argentine experience in Patagonia and gives a human face to the tragedy of Patagonia that Onelli laments. He calls Nahuelquir "mi buen y gran amigo,"

and "hombre deseoso de civilizarse unidamente a su tribu" (48). Like the land, the Indians are capable and desirous of being civilized. In fact, the Indians have already made some progress towards civilizing themselves. The *cacique* lives in a house (50), proving that he is not a nomad. It must be remembered that nomadism was one of the characteristics most frequently used to prove the resistance of the Southern Indians to any civilizing efforts. Furthermore, Onelli observes that "Esos indios, tan sólo en un año, habían hecho prodigios de cultura y progreso," a fact that leads him to wonder if "esta tribu es una excepción a la apatía y al faquirismo indígena, o si no sería bueno que el Gobierno ensayara educar a las demás tribus con el aliciente de la tierra donada" (49). Onelli uses this tribe as a positive example and to suggest that the stereotype of the Indians as apathetic and lazy is false. He insists yet again: if the government would give the native tribes a chance they could easily be incorporated.

Onelli goes one step further in his arguments and says that the Indians are not only civilizable, but in fact this particular tribe "tiene más aptitudes para el progreso que los otros sujetos colonizadores de la comarca, sean ingleses, galeses o criollos, que, a pesar de disponer de campos más fértiles y de capitales más importantes, presentan una inmunidad a toda prueba contra los sueros de la civilización y del progreso" (49). This statement is truly radical. He undertakes a racial analysis of the Welsh people in which they take on many of the characteristics often attributed to the Indians. They are a good people, but they are apathetic and the race "quedará siempre estacionaria" (52) for they have no desire to do more than survive, worship God, and reproduce. In direct comparison with the Indians, described mere pages before, the Welsh are immune to progress and furthermore will always identify as Welsh despite living in Argentina for

extended periods of time. They cannot be incorporated. This exposition upends racial hierarchies, disconnecting the established pairs of Europe/civilization and America/barbarism. Additionally, although the English efforts to better agriculture in the South had been received with great fanfare, Onelli argues that they had not been carried out successfully. The land continues to be exploited "a la usanza indígena," proving that "los ingleses son también susceptible de regresión hacia la vida nómada de los pueblos primitivos" (47). With this statement he exonerates the indigenous and perhaps even Latin races, equating the much heralded Anglo-Saxon race with the lesser-valued ones. In Onelli's natural history degeneration is a risk faced by all, endorsing the fears of European degeneration that flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century (see Pick).

Thus, Onelli sees Patagonia as a land of possibilty: "Día vendrá en el cual esa frontera, hoy desierta, huraña e inaccesible en su virgen naturaleza, será el centro de actividad de generaciones futuras, empujadas contra estos peñones por la ola humana que empieza ya a encontrar estrecho los límites de las regiones pobladas" (114). However, this positive vision is located far in the future and contrasts greatly with the deserted land and people who are only "vestigios" (23) that characterized most of the region. As I have shown, Onelli does not consider this disappointing present to be the fault of the native land or people, but instead blames White civilization for retarding or failing to encourage development. The blame is channeled specifically towards two areas: alcohol, and government policy symbolized in the figure of Julio Argentino Roca.

The concern for alcohol's impact on Patagonia permeates Onelli's text. He repeatedly describes the broken bottles that litter the landscape and characterizes the

Indians as hopelessly addicted. Onelli was not the first to see the negative consequences of alcohol in the *toldos*; Mansilla also expressed dismay at the drunken state of the Ranqueles. Like Onelli, he blames members of White society for introducing and encouraging the consumption of alcohol (i.e., his quarrel with Burela). Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the River Plate elite focused ever more on national hygiene, including alcoholism (J. Rodríguez 42). Influenced greatly by the Italian school of positivism and Cesar Lombroso's criminal anthropology, *higienistas* worked to reduce epidemics, discourage alcohol use, and increase the general health of the national population (J. Rodríguez 43). Onelli should be viewed as a key link in this process. Of Italian descent, throughout his life in Argentina he maintained correspondence with key figures in Rome and Turin. In 1908 he sent a Tehuelche skull to Lombroso in order to contribute to his comparisons between criminal types and the atavistic primitivism of native people (Lombroso 203), and in turn applied Lombroso's work on criminality and alcoholism to his depiction of the Argentine Indians. According to Onelli, it was not biology but alcohol – furnished by Whites – that should be held responsible for the Indians' decline. Onelli's representation of the Indians in *Trepando los Andes* is an important reminder to literary critics and historians that programs of hygiene and eugenics were not just developed with regard to the immigrant populations of the big city, but also came from and were practiced on the remaining Indian tribes of the countryside.

In addition to blaming alcohol for the Indians' sorry state, Onelli also directly criticizes the Argentine government. He highlights the negative contributions of the state – warfare, taking possession of lands – and laments the dearth of positive influences. This

critique is particularly channeled through the figure of Julio Argentino Roca. According to Onelli, as a general Roca used weapons to "afirm[ar] la soberanía sobre este lago [Nahuel Huapí]" (32), wiping out a number of Indian tribes. Now president, he continues to contribute to the downfall of the South, this time through his passivity: "es lástima que en sus giras presidenciales al Sur no haya vuelto a esos paraje divinos, para facilitar con su influencia la obra civilizadora y enérgica de esos valientes que han empleado allí importantes capitales" (32). Roca and Buenos Aires have ignored Patagonia, leaving it to flounder. Those few government policies meant to help the region are thwarted by insufficient infrastructure. For example, the lack of roads in Patagonia ("Automovilismo") is highlighted by Onelli's frequent descriptions of the prehistoric path, which is often the best way to travel from one area to another. The lack of infrastructure means that the poor of the countryside and the city – including the Indians – are unable to take advantage of government programs of food distribution ("Automovilismo" 69). Thus, Onelli blames the current state of the Indians not on biology or their innate prehistoric-ness, but instead maintains that if they are living in a prehistoric state it is due entirely to White actions, or lack thereof. Onelli insists that if Roca does not act to better the situation of the region, the Indians and the Patagonian land will continue in their relationship to prehistory. They will never become more than vestiges and in fact will continue to decay and eventually disappear. However, with proper action there can be a glorious future for both. The great question for Onelli is whether the Indians will be still alive when this future moment comes or if alcoholism and poverty will have made further inroads and it will be too late.

Despairing of the possibility of government intervention, Onelli later took action himself and adopted one of the sons of the cacique Nahuelquir. By bringing him to Buenos Aires and teaching him to write, Onelli literally brought him out of prehistory and into history, giving him the tools to express himself and the life of his tribe. Onelli also worked with Moreno to gain territorial concessions for Nahuelquir and his family from General Roca. Although they successfully got Roca to promise the Indians land, the land transfer was never carried out (Fernández Balboa 11). In fact, as recently as 2004 this land was still the subject of lawsuits between the Mapuche Indians and Carlo Benetton, the wealthy Italian businessman who bought much of the disputed area. Onelli also participated in a number of other efforts to boost indigenous culture. He was an "importante impulsor de la industria textile indígena y del estudio de la imaginería religiosa" (Fernández Balboa 9), and organized workshops on the ceramics, metalwork, and weaving of the indigenous artisans (Pino 43). Legend even has it that he learned to speak Araucano and Tehuelche before he learned to speak Spanish (Fernández Balboa 11). One of Onelli's last projects was the creation of a movie, *El misionero de Atacama* (1922), in which the Indian once again appeared as anachronistic and without a place in modern Argentina (Carbonetti 75).[73] As we have seen, however, Onelli did not consider this characteristic of being out of time as a biological flaw of the Indian but instead the result of the forces of modernization, alcoholism, and a governing organization with its own interests.

In this way Onelli distinguishes himself from other scholars of prehistory in Argentina, particularly Moreno and López. Prehistory is not glorious for him except to

[73] Unfortunately I have been unable to find an extant copy of this film. I, like Carbonetti, have only "seen" it through the pictures and scene descriptions published in a 1922 article in the magazine *Plus Ultra*, "Un film histórico."

the extent that it was authentic and wild, an explorer's dream. Instead of a positive assertion of national triumph, Onelli uses the transition from prehistory to history to present a negative tale of fighting and conquest that was not always necessary. The Patagonian present appears as a stuck moment, torn between two futures. The first is a continued slide into decline provoked by contact with the White world. This contact introduced buildings, later abandoned, and contact with culture, of which the best parts did not stick and the worst did in the form of alcoholism and poverty. The second option is a golden future of development in which the Indians are incorporated into civilization as productive citizens and creators of industry. In *Trepando los Andes* Onelli expresses hope that the latter situation will become reality, but fears that by the time the government acts it may be too late.

These three case studies emphasize the fact that a seemingly simple term such a *prehistory* was tangled up in political projects of identity and nation, and often acquired new values and connotations according to the context in which it was deployed. Moreno and López were both concerned with defining and praising their homeland in the face of interior challenges (continued Indian raids and a growing poor population) and external ones such as international disdain and the perceived need to keep up with the pace of modernity. These concerns led them to elaborate prehistories of Argentina that assigned the nation an important role in the development of humankind and armed it with the spirit and racial makeup necessary to continue progressing in the future. As a result, their narratives glorify the prehistoric native while turning a blind eye to the contributions and problems of the contemporary indigenous populations. Onelli, writing several decades later, cannot ignore the ruinous effect alcohol and a lack of government support has had

on the native populations. Additionally, and perhaps because he was of European descent, he does not concern himself with questions of identity and has no qualms about admitting the civilizing potential of the native tribes still in existence. His analysis largely remains on a practical level and with an eye to the best ways to ensure economic success for the Patagonian region he has come to love. The contemporary Indian unites with the prehistoric one not as an equal stage of development or ancestor but instead in a shared condition of ruin. Despite these differences, all three authors demonstrate a common interest in turning to the prehistoric past to explain the present, and as a tool for directing the future development of the nation. In the final chapter, I examine the legacy of these racial projects and argue that they are still very relevant to Argentine literature and identity over one hundred years later.

Chapter Four. Updating the National Romance: Representations of Race in Twenty-First Century Argentine Historical Romance Novels

In 1889, the French engineer Alfred Ebelot wrote of Argentina, "El indio ya no existe" (16). Although the words of Ebelot and many others suggest that by the early twentieth century the Indians were exterminated and no longer of interest to River Plate politicians or authors,[74] the indigenous population of the region did not completely disappear from the territory or its *letras*. After a century of perceived absence, since the 1990s the Indian has once again emerged as a visible component of River Plate life. Indigenous movements in Argentina and Uruguay have spread through community mobilization and social media,[75] drawing attention to historical faults and contemporary problems. Representative of this trend is the project *Petú Mogeleiñ* ("we are still alive"), which was developed by the Mapuche group 11 Octubre to highlight the continued importance of indigenous culture in the Southern Cone (Ray 14). From its name to its aims, *Petú Mogeleiñ* stresses the fact that the image of a European Argentina sustained by nineteenth-century intellectuals and propagated for over a century is, and always has been, a construction with little basis in reality. Through the discourses I have examined in earlier chapters and the invisibilizing cloak of the category of *poor*, the Indians were erased from the national present, a banishment from which they are now beginning to emerge (Carrasco 7). Similarly, the Indian has reappeared as both character and theme in the River Plate literature of recent decades.

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[74] An example of a present-day historian expressing a similar sentiment can be found in Halperín Donghi, "En 1879 fue conquistado el territorio indio; esa presencia que había acompañado la entera historia española e independiente de las comarcas platenses se desvanecía por fin" (143).

[75] The Facebook group "Nación Charrúa" has been "liked" almost 14,000 times. There are multiple groups pertaining to the rights of the Argentine Indigenous communities, as well as several specifically for the Mapuche tribes.

Particularly popular within this production is the historical romance set in the mid- to late nineteenth century. In these texts, figures such as Lucio V. Mansilla, Mariano Rosas, and Julio Argentino Roca are depicted as romantic heroes with extraordinary sexual prowess. Florencia Bonelli's *Indias blancas* (2005), its sequel, *Indias blancas: La vuelta del ranquel* (2005), and Gloria Casañas's *La maestra de la laguna* (2010) – like others in the genre – dialogue explicitly and implicitly with earlier racial representations. On the one hand, Casañas and Bonelli's novels create distance from the racism of the nineteenth-century, particularly that which found its justification in the observations and theories of positivist science. They negatively depict the work of naturalists such as Moreno and Onelli, present a fluid concept of race, and, following the example of Holmberg, permit the *mestizo* as romantic protagonist. However, these inclusionary techniques are undermined by a persistent tendency to continually fix the Indian far in the nation's past, reaffirming the non-indigenous racial identity of the present. Thus, the literary acts of inclusion and valuation of the Indian disguise a neocolonial project of reaffirmation of centuries-old hierarchical racial relations. The twenty-first century Argentine romance novels are just as white-washed as the original foundational fictions that they presume to rectify.

Before beginning my analysis, I would like to explain briefly my interest in a set of texts pertaining to a much-disparaged genre and a period posterior to the rest of my study. My experience of finding these novels was likely similar to that of the typical Argentine reader. I stumbled across them in Buenos Aires at the central branch of the popular bookstore El Ateneo. All three were displayed on prominent tables at the very front of the store. This location and the stacks of copies flanking each side and

underneath the tables drew my attention and attested to their great popularity. Sales numbers support this assertion. Florencia Bonelli, the best-selling female Argentine author in any genre (Giacosa), has sold over one million copies (A. Fernández 122). She is not the only author with a loyal public: in 2012 the romance novel experienced a 20-30% growth in sales in Argentina (A. Fernández 124). This "boom literario mundial sin precedentes que se replica en nuestro país [Argentina]" (A. Fernández 120) has been well-documented by the Argentine popular press, with interviews and articles in *Vanidades*, *Clarín*, *La Nación*, *La Prensa*, and others. Nonetheless, the work of Bonelli and Casañas has attracted very little critical attention.[76]

The *Indias blancas* series and *La maestra de la laguna* are not "foundational fictions" as defined by Doris Sommer, but their nineteenth-century settings and focus on love stories remit us to those texts that used heterosexual love and marriage to advance programs of national consolidation and identity formation. To make such a comparison is probably blasphemous, as the national novels described by Sommer eventually became required reading in schools as a "source of local history and literary pride" (Sommer 4), while the novels I study here "horroriza[n] a varios intelectuales tras el mote de best-seller" (A. Fernández 121). No one would think to include *Indias blancas* or *La maestra de la laguna* on the same plane as *Facundo* or *Tabaré*, and I highly doubt they will ever feature in secondary-school curriculums. Nonetheless, I agree with María Cecilia Saenz-Roby's classification of *Indias blancas* and others like it as "retro-foundational novels"

[76] María-Cecilia Saenz-Roby has just published (June 2013) an article on the relationship between *Indias blancas* and Mansilla's *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*. The only other references to Bonelli's novels I have found are an undergraduate thesis by Carrie Rosenzweig (2011), a brief reference to the romance novels of "*Andrea* Bonelli" [emphasis mine] in an article by Sonia Jostic (2007), and a biography and summary of several of her novels in Susana Chas's overview of the novels of Córdoba (2011). I have found no scholarly texts that address Casañas's novel.

(154). These novels use nineteenth-century metatexts to "re-explorar el irresuelto tema de la identidad nacional," particularly in relation to the inclusion or exclusion of women and racial minorities (Saenz-Roby 154). Although not directly influencing policy as the nineteenth-century authors did, the incredible popularity of the novels of Casañas and Bonelli mean that they are reaching just as many (and perhaps more interested) readers as the canonical texts. It is my belief that their immense popularity requires that we understand the racial projects they are advancing, for they have millions of readers around the world. The very "bestseller-ness" that excludes romance novels from conventional academic study also cements their importance as a place of reflection, mediation, and creation of contemporary thought. In their marriage of a twenty-first century time of writing and a nineteenth-century setting, Bonelli and Casañas's novels are fecund sites for exploring current Argentine understandings of race and the legacy of colonial and nineteenth-century portrayals of the indigenous tribes. In this chapter, I look explicitly at the racial formations being enacted in *Indias blancas*, *La vuelta del ranquel*, and *La maestra de la laguna* and the ways in which they subvert and/or confirm representations and hierarchies developed during the colonial and nation-building periods.

Grave Robbers and Murderers: A Critique of Nineteenth-Century Science

As I have demonstrated, many nineteenth-century texts clearly privileged the role of science and the scientist in understanding and molding the racial identity of the Argentine nation. Museums such as the one in La Plata were viewed as bastions of national identity and places from which programs of modernization, civilization, and spiritual and material progress would be carried out. Scientific discourse became

simultaneously a site of authority and the perceived source for solutions to any and all problems facing the nation as a collective whole (Brown 59). Similarly, naturalist-explorers such as Mansilla and Moreno often depicted themselves as unsung heroes undertaking great personal trouble for the benefit of the local and global communities. This coronation of science, combined with representations of the indigenous people as biologically inferior and destined to die out, justified the frequent material practices of digging up Indian graves, imprisoning natives as scientific object, and collecting artifacts for display. Although Casañas has said that her intention in writing *La maestra de la laguna* was merely to reflect, not critique, nineteenth-century thought (Personal Interview),[77] in *Indias blancas*, *La vuelta del ranquel*, and *La maestra de la laguna*, both the personal and institutional levels of science are subjected to harsh scrutiny. Bonelli and Casañas take aim at the individual bone collectors and the museums that welcomed and displayed their loot for so many years. Through the negative depiction of two scientists, the real-life Estanislao Zeballos and the invented Doctor Nancy, Bonelli and Casañas expose the racism at the heart of the nineteenth-century scientific endeavor and poignantly depict the heart-wrenching effects these activities had on the native populations.

In *Indias blancas* the critique of science is developed through the character of Estanislao Zeballos. Born in 1854, Zeballos was the founder or promoter of many Argentine scientific institutions including the Sociedad Científica Argentina and the Instituto Geográfico Argentino (Pérez 13). He was also a prolific author who gave birth to many books about the territory and native peoples of Argentina. These treatises, exemplified by *La conquista de quince mil leguas: Ensayo para la ocupación definitiva*

[77] I also reached out to Florencia Bonelli for an interview but received no response.

de la Patagonia (1878), were often published with an eye to advancing the military conquest of the southern pampas. Thus, they frequently made prescriptions for the extermination of the Indians, as the subtitle of Zeballos's text hints. Today, Zeballos is remembered as a "fiero enemigo de los indígenas y brazo ejecutor de Roca en la Conquista del Desierto" (Rotker 83). In *Indias blancas* and *La vuelta del ranquel*, Bonelli concentrates the supposedly objective vitriol of the era in the character of Estanislao Zeballos.

In *La vuelta del ranquel*, Zeballos opines that military action in the South is the only aceptable plan of action because "Tierra Adentro nos pertenece por derecho…el derecho que nos da la cultura, la civilización y el progreso!" (*La vuelta* 27). This statement excludes the Indians from the first-person plural and positions them as a foreign enemy working against the natural development of civilization. Like others, he conceives of a hierarchy of races in which the Indians occupy a lower rung than the non-Indian race inhabiting the cities of Argentina. This biological superiority, manifested in more advanced culture and customs, guarantees the right to destroy or forcefully employ the "bestias" of the pampas "a punta de Remington" (*La vuelta* 156). These forceful statements are not sensationalist invention by Bonelli but rather a very close paraphrasing of ideas found in Zeballos's work: "Quitar a los pampas el caballo y la lanza y obligarlos a cultivar la tierra, con el Remington al pecho diariamente: he ahí el único medio de resolver con éxito el problema social que entraña la sumisión de estos bandidos" (*La conquista* 280). The Indians are not lawful citizens, but bandits or beasts contributing to a social problem that threatens the very bases of the nation. For Zeballos, the continued existence of Argentina as a modern state requires the application of force.

Bonelli brings this attitude, common to several of the nineteenth-century national heroes, to the reader's awareness by including Zeballos's comments and opposing them with the more moderate voice of Laura, the romantic heroine. As owner of the Editora del Plata she had refused to publish *La conquista de quince mil leguas* (*La vuelta* 308). Every time she speaks with Zeballos, she defends the humanity and dignity of the Indians. She argues that although they work the land in a different manner, they are not lazy nor unproductive (*La vuelta* 27, 157). Even Sarmiento is left speechless by Laura's passionate defense, something the narrator tells us had rarely happened before (*La vuelta* 76). The representatives of anti-Indian thought are never allowed to speak in the novel without being contested by a voice that calls for tolerance and understanding. This rhetorical strategy, found in many North American abolitionist novels, allows direct confrontation of the arguments the authors wish to discount. Thus, Laura becomes the mouthpiece for a critical reassessment of the proclamations of an era invested in hierarchical conceptualizations of race and infatuated with the idea of progress. The insertion of the debate into the novel form gives it more force, as the reader recognizes that the debate is not just about abstract racial groups but will also have profound effects on the characters with whom she or he has begun to identify. In *La vuelta del ranquel*, the successful realization of Zeballos's anti-Indian programs would make the happy ending the reader desires for Laura and Nahueltruz completely impossible. This careful weaving of incendiary quotes and an emotionally-charged context forces the reader to reconsider the myths learned from history books with regard to the necessity and methods of the Conquista del Desierto.

In *La maestra de la laguna*, Casañas paints a similar pessimistic portrait of nineteenth-century science. Here, the critique is carried out in dramatic fashion through the character of Doctor Nancy, a Frenchman. Officially in Argentina in his function as medic, the doctor prefers to spend his time traversing the pampas in hopes of expanding his collection of Indian skulls. This practice was not rare; in the nineteenth century scientists frequently dug up graves and sent bones to museums at home and abroad in similar patterns to those established by the commoditization of other fossil mammals (Podgorny, "Bones" 253). Even Clemente Onelli, whom we have seen to have a more tempered attitude toward the native people, collected skulls (Fernández Balboa 12). He writes of a trip in 1918, "Pasé penurias sin fin, pero regresé con una buena colección de cráneos indígenas que me consolaron de no haber encontrado oro suficiente" (qtd. in Cáceres Freyre 4). Indian skulls are equated with gold, highlighting their status as a commodity within the museum community. Because the only accounts we have of these nineteenth-century actions are narrated by the scientists themselves through the prism of their unwavering faith in the necessity of certain actions for the common good, grave robbing is depicted as essential for the advancement of the noble cause of science. The Indian is so far Othered by the discourses of prehistory and racial hierarchy that the fact that the bones were once a person who likely had family and friends is willfully ignored.

Doctor Nancy similarly believes that there is nothing wrong with his efforts to collect Indian skulls. He explains to Francisco and the *estanciero* Armando Zaldívar that he is building a museum in his hometown and therefore is interested in collecting "todo cuanto pertenece a los salvajes americanos," including ceramics, arrowheads, and bones (261). For him, the collection of skulls is "una colección como cualquier otra" (261),

equating Indian bones with stamps, rocks, or teapots. Thus, the fictional scientist's attitude, like that of Moreno, demonstrates once again Andermann's assertion that collecting strips the object of humanity (*The Optic* 17). I would also add that it is not merely the act of collecting that renders the Indian object, but rather the accumulated theories that represented the Indians as less than human and nearly extinct that permitted Nancy and others to treat them as such. It is impossible to imagine Doctor Nancy arguing for the disinterment of his family members or of upper-class Europeans, for the discourses of anthropology and racial determinism had firmly located them within the upper and fully-human ranks of mankind. The same theories that validated the extermination of the Indian also protected the White populations as a separate, superior group.

Faced with Armando and Francisco's skepticism with regard to the morality of collecting Indian skulls, Nancy relies on a familiar justification: his collecting activities are actually for the benefit of the Indians and serve a conservational purpose. He affirms that "En Norteamérica ha habido verdaderas masacres…y, de no ser por mí, no quedaría ni rastro de los vencidos" (261). This rationalization echoes Moreno's claim that the Indian tribes of his day were rapidly disappearing and that ethnographers and other scientists needed to take immediate action to save what vestiges they could ("Antropología" 203). Because the Indian is represented as inevitably destined to disappear (vanishing Indian thesis, see chapter 2), scientists' conservational efforts could focus on preserving a memory instead of trying to save the physical Indians. From his actions to his justifications, Doctor Nancy is a fictional counterpart to Moreno, Zeballos, and others, using nearly the same language to justify and elevate the collection of Indian

body parts. However, to the modern reader this heroic rhetoric rings false and we are left with a vision of the scientist as insensitive grave robber.

In *La maestra de la laguna*, the act of collection and its ramifications on the objects of scientific study are drawn into close contact: the reader is told that previously in North America, Nancy killed Jim Morris's father and brother, both Cherokees, in order to "engrosar su colecion de cráneos de los indios de America" (255). Jim is understandably upset, and his presence in Argentina is due to his desire to enact revenge. It is this quest for retribution that puts him in Elizabeth's path. Jim begins a long chase across the pampas that ends when he attacks Doctor Nancy's carriage and kills and scalps him (436). Unbeknownst to Jim, Elizabeth (to whom he is attracted) is traveling in the same caravan and he can thus take her captive. Even though these actions make Jim appear to be the villain of the novel, Doctor Nancy's belief in scientific progress at any cost and lack of remorse lead the reader to prefer the scalping Indian over the French doctor. The true villain of the novel is Nancy, whose work is not only repugnant but is also indirectly the motor that further complicates the plot and delays Francisco and Elizabeth's happy ending. Like Satan's fall from grace, the heroic nineteenth-century scientist is now represented as an immoral villain with evil designs. Bonelli and Casañas achieve this transformation by appealing to both a rational-logical level, presenting counterexamples to racist discourse, and an affective level, appealing to the reader's sense of justice and righteousness.

Implicit in the censure of Doctor Nancy is also a censure of the museums and scientists that purchased and displayed the bones he collected, creating a market for an inhumane trade. If there were no buyer, than there would be no need to collect Indian

skulls and skeletons. Responding, perhaps, to changing beliefs with regard to the role of anthropology and the 2006 formation of Grupo Universitario de Investigación en Antropología Social (GUIAS), dedicated to fulfilling indigenous communities' demands for the restitution of nineteenth-century skeletons in the Museo de la Plata (Pepe, Añon Suarez, and Harrison 16), Bonelli and Casañas question the role of the scientific museum in the construction of nineteenth-century racial formations. In *La maestra de la laguna* the museum is no longer depicted as a place of national honor and a launching point for the future, but rather as a silent place of death and thus ending. It is a specter on the edge of the narration, signaling only bad fortune for the indigenous protagonists. Jans Andermann notes this function of the ethnographic or scientific museum, arguing that "The 'anthropological' display of indigenous corpses and body parts, in contrast, forges a gruesome allegory of state conquest by exposing, in the museum interior, the radical exteriority of an otherness that the rationality of liberalism can only conceive as – and thus turns into – a space of death" (*The Optic* 16). Nancy's collection of indigenous skulls tracks the government's slow conquest of land and people, paralleling scientific processes of petrification (Andermann) and prehistorization (Matthews) and physical processes of death or forced assimilation. The fact that Nancy has been hired by the Argentine government (as a medic, although he rarely acts as such in the novel) stresses that Nancy is not just a rogue racist but part of an institutional, nationwide effort in which science and policy are complicit. Casañas's depiction of the aims and procedures of nineteenth-century science make clear the racism at its center.

La vuelta del ranquel also engages in this wider criticism of the institutions of science. The last quarter of the novel centers on an historical event, the theft of Mariano

Rosas's bones from his grave in Leuvucó by Lieutenant General Eduardo Racedo in 1879. Although the novel introduces an invented rationalization for this action (revenge against Nahueltruz for killing Racedo's uncle), the other details of the episode coincide with historical fact. Racedo dug up the bones, considered selling them to a museum, and eventually donated them to our very own scientific villain, Zeballos. Zeballos mentions this proudly in a footnote to his fictionalized chronicle, *Painé y la dinastía de los zorros*, boasting that the skeleton of the "famoso cacique ranquelino" (106) "forma parte de mi colección histórica" (88). Later, the bones were donated to the Museo de la Plata where they were displayed for 123 years (Ray 79).

Bonelli restores the human element to this practice by presenting the reactions of Mariano Rosas's family to the news of the theft of his remains. Quoting Mansilla, who wrote that the Ranquel Indians had a profound respect for their dead and that "No hay herejía comparable al hecho de desenterrar un cadaver" (*Una excursión* 251), she depicts the theft as a tragedy that shakes the very core of the family. When Laura goes to visit, Mariano's mother Mariana is not well and "Nahueltruz presentaba la traza de un demente" (*La vuelta* 379). Dirty, drunk, and sleep-deprived he is determined to kill Racedo even though it would mean certain death or arrest. Whereas in the nineteenth century science was depicted as a triumphal process of national advancement, Bonelli's novel reinserts scientific practice into a context of complex relations and presents the formerly unnarrated viewpoint of the victims of progress. The web of actors and practices that contribute to the creation of scientific facts are made visible, drawing attention to the social context of the scientific enterprise and the "history of construction" of the observed results (Latour and Woolgar 105). The purported objectivity of nineteenth-century

science is dismissed, exposing both the biases of the scientific practitioners and the humanity of those formerly reduced to lifeless object.

The novel does not end once the romantic relationship between Nahueltruz and Laura has been resolved, but instead continues with an epilogue situated in the year 2001. Titled "Promesa cumplida," it includes the text of Argentine Law 25.276. This law, passed in August 28, 2000, decreed the return of Mariano Rosas's skeleton to his hometown of Leuvucó. There, he was to be reinterred with an "homenaje oficial" over one hundred years after his skeleton had been exhumed (453). This legal text is real, but the newspaper article that follows was written by Bonelli for the novel. The text, dated June 24, 2001, describes the ceremony that accompanied the reburial. A young woman, identified as the great-granddaughter of Mariano Rosas speaks:

> Mi abuela, Laura Escalante de Rosas, le prometió a mi abuelo, el cacique Nahueltruz Guor, allá por 1880 que, algún día, los restos de su padre, Mariano Rosas, regresarían a descansar en Leuvucó. Y, a pesar del denuedo con que luchó para conseguir su objetivo, tocando cuanta puerta conocía, Laura Escalante murió con la pena de no haber cumplido. Debieron transcurrir ciento veintiún años para que el pueblo argentino dejara de hacer oídos sordos a este legítimo reclamo y devolviera lo que jamás debió salir de aquí. (455-6)

This short episode condemns not only the individual grave robbers, but also the institutions that housed and displayed the remains for so many years, refusing to return them for decades.[78] It further implicates the general Argentine public. Laura's

[78] For more information on the return of Indian remains in Argentina, including the legal aspects of the process, see María Luz Endere, "The Reburial Issue in Argentina: A Growing Conflict." Also see *Antropología del genocidio: identificación y restitución. "Colecciones" de resto humanos en el Museo de La Plata* by Fernando Pepe, Miguel Añon Suárez, and Patricio Harrison. This fascinating book includes

granddaughter makes the unsettling point that everyone who allowed the indigenous people's protest to fall on deaf ears or refused to speak up in their favor is complicit in the perpetuation of the crimes of anthropology. Despite this accusation, the fact that the novel ends with this episode suggests that all is well in the present and that measures to rectify past wrongs will soon be taken. The use of the preterit in the citation above indicates that the Argentine public has awoken to the plight of the Indian and will no longer "hacer oídos sordos" to the claims of the indigenous communities. In fact, the settings of these novels and the emphasis on the racism of the nineteenth-century scientists allows Bonelli and Casañas to incorporate this moment into national narratives while ignoring the racism of the present. The happy endings, particularly with regard to the return of Mariano Rosas's bones, suggest that the racist attitudes they expose in the novels are safely in the past and that the present-day Argentina from which they write is aware of the danger of these beliefs and therefore far distanced from them. In my personal conversation with Casañas, she indicated that she believed that the Indian-Argentine conflict of the past was due to cultural misunderstandings that have been largely overcome, despite the Indian's still-incomplete integration into the nation (Personal Interview). In their focus on scientific racism, Bonelli and Casañas are able to critique the past without having to engage in a critical examination of the present.

The critique of science in these novels is also tempered by the fact that both authors offer a positive reassessment of a major historical figure who worked towards the extermination of the Indian: General Roca in *La vuelta del ranquel* and Domingo F. Sarmiento in *La maestra de la laguna*. In *La vuelta del ranquel*, Roca appears as a

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pictures of the chieftains, their remains on display in the museum, and the boxes in which they had been stored. In an unsolved mystery, some skulls were recently found in boxes covered with swastikas (Pepe, Añon Suárez, and Harrison 96).

passionate and smooth lover, capable of conquering the most desirable maidens of high society. Despite the avarice he displays in the bedroom, however, his actions in the field of battle are shown to be the judicious reflection of society's wishes. He may have been the military commander, but in the novel the ideas that inspire the Conquista del Desierto appear to originate separate from him. This innocence is highlighted by the fact that it is repeatedly stressed that General Roca himself never killed a single Indian, nor had he even seen any: "no se había topado con un indio alzado ni para muestra" (*La vuelta* 191). Later, his assistant affirms once again that although they suffered from hunger and cold, "no nos topamos con un indio ni para muestra" (212) and that it is absolutely certain that Roca himself never entered into battle with the Indian *malones* (213). The expedition is thus characterized as tedious weeks that "más tenían que ver con falta de provisiones, pestes y tedio que con batallas, muertos y heridos" (213). Roca and his soldiers are martyrs for the national cause. The fact that Indians were in fact killed during this campaign is glossed over, and Roca himself is absolved of any direct participation in the processes of extermination. The only people who actually kill Indians in the two novels are the Racedos, Hilario and Eduardo, who are depicted as cruel villains from the very beginning. Despite Nahueltruz's insistence that Roca is "el asesino de mi pueblo" (419), the text continually works to depict him as an innocent pawn in an unstoppable process. This is of course false, for Roca was the Minister of War and it is highly unlikely that the others were acting without his approval.

In *La maestra de la laguna*, a similar protection of the reputation of national heroes occurs. President Domingo F. Sarmiento, who argued that the Indians lacked the capacity to think (*Conflicto* 110) and were "destinados por la Providencia a desaparecer

en la lucha por la existencia, en presencia de las razas superiores" (*Conflicto* 269), is depicted as a struggling old man, working tirelessly to better the country while facing political opposition. The characteristics most associated with the fictional Sarmiento of *La maestra de la laguna* are love and compassion. He adores his lover, Aurelia Vélez, and values her mind as well as her heart, treating her as a trusted advisor and equal (25). He also loves animals, carrying on better with his cat than with his peers (35). His only fit of anger in the novel occurs when a servant removes a cardinal's nest from his window, scaring away the birds that "[le] hacían compañía cada tarde mientras trabajaba" (60). It is incredibly difficult to connect anti-Indian policies and racist attitudes with this animal-loving, feminist Sarmiento.

The text also stresses Sarmiento's role as an educator and not an exterminator. His connections to Mary Mann and his projects of instituting public education throughout the Republic are repeatedly highlighted. With regard to the Indians, Sarmiento claims that "hay que educar a todos por igual, sin discriminación de raza o credo" (31). What is overlooked is the fact that education could also serve to whiten Argentina by facilitating assimilation and portraying certain elements of Indian culture as backwards or shameful. In the novel, Elizabeth "civilizes" the young Indians of Mar Chiquita by teaching them to read and replacing indigenous rituals with the practices of Christianity. Education, of course, is one of the prime areas through which control over bodies is carried out (Foucault 175). The one-sided representation of Sarmiento in the novel removes him from the general condemnation of scientifically-supported racism developed throughout

the novel.[79] By neutralizing and absolving one of the primary architects of these policies, Casañas perpetuates the myths of the nineteenth century.

Finally, as in *Lin-Calél*, the marginalized in *Indias blancas* speak with the words of Darwin and Spencer, predicting and justifying their own elimination. Despite her critique of nineteenth-century science and its complicity in legitimizing and carrying out the extermination of the Indians, Bonelli naturalizes the same arguments. From the beginning of *Indias blancas*, Nahueltruz is a prophetic voice arguing that "Los huincas son más poderosos, y tarde o temprano nos doblegarán" (*Indias blancas* 220). Nahueltruz also subscribes to the idea of the cultural superiority of the Whites, saying that "No se puede rehuir el progreso que viene con el avance del huinca, es una realidad implacable. Y yo creo que nos adaptamos o perecemos" (*Indias blancas* 221). His language is not that different from Zeballos's earlier in the text, as both insist that the culture of the Whites constitutes an advance over that of the Indians. The mulatta servant María Pancha makes a similar assertion at the end of *La vuelta del ranquel*. Her words are almost the last thing the reader reads: "Bien sabe usted [Nahueltruz] que entre su pueblo y los cristianos existía una guerra que, tarde o temprano, terminaría con el exterminio del más débil. Sin duda, los más débiles eran ustedes, por salvajes e ignorantes" (*La vuelta* 433). By including the language of Darwin, Bonelli echoes the discourses of the nineteenth century that argued that the extermination of the Indian was not an evil or inhuman action but rather the development of natural processes. This discourse allows for the removal of blame, freeing White Argentina from much of the guilt of having contributed to the decimation of rich and varied cultures. Once again, the disappearance of the Argentine

[79] This is not to deny that some of Sarmiento's policies did have a positive effect on Argentina, particularly with regard to education (Dorn 77). I wish to simply reveal that which Casañas's text elides.

Indian is depicted as lamentable but necessary. Despite her effective critique of some practices and beliefs of nineteenth-century scientific racism, Bonelli's novels still engage in an evolutionary understanding of racial history whereby the Indian was a necessary stage to overcome as the nation progressed.

Thus, Bonelli and Casañas's novels decry the racism of the nineteenth century while perpetuating many of the attitudes and beliefs that undergirded the very practices and policies they condemn. This double discourse reflects an unfortunate truth of present-day Argentina: although many (including Casañas) suggest that racism is not a problem in Argentina (Joseph 336), indigenous people continue to suffer the effects of earlier and recently-imposed discriminatory policies. Although the 1994 Constitution defined Argentina as a pluricultural nation thus "encoding the ethnic and cultural pre-existence of indigenous peoples,"[80] it also set up major obstacles to the success of indigenous demands for land rights (Vom Hau and Wilde 1289). Today, indigenous people in Argentina are more likely to be poor (Ray 22) and illiterate (7.8% for citizens of indigenous origin compared to a 2.6% national average, INDEC), and thus excluded from the rights afforded by citizenship. As in the nineteenth century (and particularly the 1853 Constitution), formal recognition of citizenship and its related rights for indigenous people do not always translate to their full engagement and day-to-day participation in society as equals.

Representing Race

In some ways, Bonelli and Casañas's portrayal of race subverts the focus on racial fixity and the importance of biology that characterized many of the nineteenth-century

[80] Several provinces, including Formosa, Salta, Chaco, Misiones, Río Negro, Chubut, and Santa Fe, also passed indigenous legislation in the 1980s and 1990s (Gordillo and Hirsch 18-19).

texts I have studied here. In fact, all of the male protagonists of their novels lead doubled lives in which they embody different perceived races. Race, therefore, at times appears to be less something that positively identifies people and more a complicated production that emerges from context, personal choice, and the perception of others. The most dramatic case of the contextuality of race is that of Jim Morris, the Cherokee Indian in *La maestra de la laguna* who meets Elizabeth onboard the ship that transports them to Argentina. Jim is traveling in the guise of a Southern gentleman from Tennessee, intentionally adopting a different racial identity in order to take advantage of the privileges and protections associated with being White (C. Harris 279). The power of appearance in the making of identity is made clear towards the end of *La maestra de la laguna* when Jim prepares to return to the United States. He enters a hotel where fellow travelers "sin duda, adivinaban al indio bajo su vestimenta" (632), for he is still in the clothing he wore in the pampas. In his room, however, he shaves, cuts and styles his hair, and chooses a suit such that "De nuevo lucía como un pasajero elegante" (633). Although the reader knows that Jim is a murderer and an Indian, simple changes in appearance allow him to pass as a Southern gentlemen. At the same time, he deeply feels his racial identity and almost all of his actions in the novel derive from this identity and the treatment he receives because of it. In this way, the portrayal of Jim's identity reflects Linda Martín Alcoff's insistence that "social identities are relational, contextual, *and* fundamental to the self" (90). Race may not correspond to any inner essence, yet it still dictates what we notice and how others interact with us.

The experiences of Nahueltruz Guor, a *mestizo*, further emphasize the malleability of race. Despite his mixed parentage, in *Indias blancas* Nahueltruz is almost completely

associated with his Indian side. Río Cuarto society views him as a dangerous savage, and he sees himself as an Indian who belongs in Tierra Adentro. However, the beginning of *La vuelta del ranquel* informs the reader that Nahueltruz has gone to Paris and remade himself with the Christian name with which his mother baptized him. He is now Lorenzo Dionisio Rosas, a wealthy White Argentine whose business is the breeding of horses. He has short hair, wears suits, and uses the gestures and mannerisms of the upper class. Changing his appearance gives him access to spaces and people that had previously shunned him, including Lucio and Eduarda Mansilla and the extended family of Laura. In Marisol de la Cadena's book, *Indigenous Mestizos*, she has argued that in twentieth-century Peru, race was separated from biology and reformulated as a cultural phenomenon. Today, being Indian in Cuzco means being poor, rural, and uneducated, whereas *mestizos* have indigenous heritage but are urban, educated, and wealthier (6). She sustains that "In this alternative and relational view [of racial identity], Indians and *mestizos* emerge from interactions and not from evolution" (6). In de la Cadena's description of Cuzco, I see many similarities with the racial representations of Indians, Whites, and *mestizos* elaborated in the *Indias blancas* books. Nahueltruz is viewed separately from his indigenous brethren due to his education, location, and financial success. His appearance and ability to interact according to the "norms that constitute or make present the 'community'" (Bell 3) further permit his entrance into White society. Nahueltruz masters these techniques to such an extent that even those that knew him previously are deceived. When he meets Mansilla as Lorenzo Rosas, he fears the worst but "tal era la metamorfosis operada en su persona, que mientras le apretaba la mano, Lucio Victorio ni siquiera daba muestras de encontrar sus facciones familiares, a pesar de

que durante su excursión a Leuvucó en el 70 se habían visto en variadas ocasiones" (*La vuelta* 103). His outward appearance and the very fact that he has already gained access to the spaces of privilege and acceptance by other upper-class Whites makes the reading of his identity as Indian an impossibility. Colonial understandings of race as a function of education, social class, and behavior collide with postmodern insistences on the illusionary and social nature of racial identity, launching a two-front attack on the idea of race as biology and ancestry espoused by Zorrilla, Holmberg, or Moreno.

All of these elements are brought together in the marrying of oppositional labels in the title of the novel, *Indias blancas*, and the passages within the text from which the title comes. Right after Nahueltruz and Laura have declared their love he reminds her that he is an Indian. She responds, "Si eso es un problema para ti, haz de cuenta que yo también soy una india." Nahueltruz objects that she is "Demasiado blanca para ser una india," a concern she brushes off by stating that she will be "Una india blanca, entonces" (*Indias blancas* 227). In this short exchange we see the three aspects of race described above: its mutability, the potential to choose, and the need for an Other to fix and validate one's race. Laura's aunt Blanca also becomes an "india blanca" (*Indias blancas* 315), taking part in the Ranqueles' language and customs to the point that "Blanca Montes había dejado de existir; Uchaimañé había tomado su lugar" (324). She becomes both an "india blanca," that is, an Indian-acting woman with pale skin, and the "India Blanca" opposed to the Blanca Montes who had moved safely through Córdoba's upper ranks. Although chronologically anterior, she is the fulfillment of Laura's promise to Nahueltruz, a promise that Laura herself is unable to keep.

Thus, in the novels of Casañas and Bonelli, the category of *race* is imbued with more freedom than many of the nineteenth-century scientists I have studied would have admitted. In this way, their representations of the Indian bypass the primary tenets of scientific racism and instead follow in the colonial tradition (which did not absolutely disappear in the nineteenth century), which itself anticipates to some extent the theorizing about identity expressed by critical race theorists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Casañas and Bonelli's novels also demonstrate another characteristic of de la Cadena's Cuzco: despite the focus on race as culture, Casañas and Bonelli's novels leave no room to doubt that the category of *Indian* is still inferior and thus undesirable in the nation. De la Cadena illustrates how the discourse of de-Indianization allows racism to persist by replacing racial hierarchies with social hierarchies based on education. Casañas and Bonelli's characters similarly give preference to those with more education and income, indicating that assimilation to the world of upper-class urban Whites is what the Indians need in order to survive. As mentioned previously, Elizabeth works within Sarmiento's program of public education to civilize the children of the pampas. The story of Francisco Peña y Balarce further reaffirms the privileges associated with being White. The fact that his mother and non-biological father chose to hide his parentage and raise him as White demonstrates that they viewed this identity as superior to that of a *mestizo*. Despite certain abnormal behaviors and a darker skin color, Francisco is welcomed as "one of us" by the Argentine elite and his parentage is never questioned. Up until he discovers that Rogelio Peña is not his father, he had lived a life filled with dances, social gatherings, and endless streams of money, "a salvo de desdichas y sinsabores, bendecido

por la suerte de haber nacido en el seno de una familia aristocrática de Buenos Aires" (73). In the end, he decides to continue living as White, just as Nahueltruz chooses the urban White life at the end of *Indias blancas*. These decisions illustrate the implicit bias of characters and authors towards the civilized world of education and wealth, a world closely associated with Whiteness in nineteenth-century Argentina.

Furthermore, the sort of intuitive folk biology or folk taxonomy that accompanied scientific racism does not go away when it is deconstructed. These novels do begin to demonstrate ways in which race is more permeable and less rigid than previously believed, but they also continue to rely on essentialism and stereotype. Perhaps the best example of this tension is a description of Jim after he has beheaded Dr. Nancy and kidnapped Elizabeth. As they cross the pampas she realizes that nothing is left of the "gentil pasajero" that had traveled to Argentina with her:

> Sus facciones endurecidas parecían talladas sobre piedra, llevaba el cabello en una coleta, rozando los omóplatos, y su vestimenta cada vez se asemejaba más a la de cualquier indio…Aquel hombre cortés, vestido con ropa elegante y modales de caballero sureño, se había ido despojando de las capas de civilización para quedar en su esencia desnuda. (452)

On the one hand, this passage demonstrates the importance of context in assigning race, for even the physical features of Jim's face appear to have been reshaped in ways suggesting both evil and the stereotypical well-defined cheekbones and nose of the Indian. When seen on the face of the Southern gentlemen of the *Lincoln*, the features were merely "poco común[es]" (18); on a kidnapper and potential rapist in the pampas they are unmistakably Indian. Nonetheless, the identity that emerges in this context is

revealed to be his "esencia desnuda," a sort of underlying true racial self that continued to exist despite disguise and deceit. The revelation is shocking and inexplicable: "Jim era un indio. ¿Cómo podía ser, si había venido con ella en el vapor?" (457). The gap between Jim's essence and appearance are so great that the truth is unthinkable, showing the strength of stereotypes about Indian nature and the power of modifying outward appearance. And yet, the narration insists that behind even the most convincing mask is a true essence that irrevocably identifies the person's self. Jim may be able to pass as a Southern gentleman, but he will never be one for his essence defines him as Indian.

Similarly, when Francisco discovers that he is a *mestizo* he describes this part of himself as the "algo intangible" that had always enveloped him and the "leve susurro que acompañó siempre sus movimientos, como un halo fatídico" (536). The use of the word "fatídico" implies once again that while racial fluidity can occur, there is always an underlying racial truth that is bound to be exposed. As predicted by Gelman and Hirschfeld's studies (435), this essence, present even when unidentified, is used to explain the abnormalities in Francisco's appearance and behavior. When something is not as it seems, the human mind recurs to essentialist thinking in order to make sense of the discord.

The continuity of folk biology is fundamental for the success of these novels. As with many contemporary romance novels, deception and disguise are major plot points (Radway 133). In order for the reader to untangle these mysteries and arrive at the happy ending, the authors must rely on recognizable racial cues, thus chaining themselves to racial identifiers long codified. In this way, Bonelli and Casañas continue to rely on an understanding of racial identity as emanating from a particular essence, marked on the

body through certain visible features (Alcoff 5). For example, since colonial times, the Indian was represented as a cat. We have already seen this comparison take literary form in *Tabaré*, where the Indian is continually compared to the jaguar, particularly in moments of lust or violence. In *Indias blancas*, Bonelli makes the comparison through the quiet, quick movements of the Indian protagonists: Mariano Rosas "se acercaba con el paso cauteloso de un felino" (*Indias blancas* 260) and "a pesar de ser robusto y tosco, [Nahueltruz] se conducía con el sigilo de un gato" (*Indias blancas* 141). As in *Tabaré*, this feline characteristic is associated with a predatory nature, both in a violent and rapacious sense. Nahueltruz attacks Riglos with "la certeza de un felino" (*Indias blancas* 570), and both of the previous citations occur in the lead up to early romantic encounters between the protagonists. Through this metaphor, a certain sneakiness is inscribed on the Indian as natural fact, just as these behaviors are instinctual in the wild cat.

Francisco is even more closely identified with the cat, particularly the puma, despite his Indian identity not being known until much later in the book. In one of their first encounters, Francisco backs Elizabeth up against a wall, grabs her shoulders, and brings his face close to hers:

> Paralizada por la sorpresa, Elizabeth no atinó a hacer nada, quedando a merced de los apetitos del señor Santos, que la olía como si fuese un animal salvaje. Un puma. Eso era lo que le sugería la mirada del hombre: los ojos ambarinos de un puma. Un peligroso felino que le acariciaba la piel con su nariz, soplando sobre su cuello, causándole un secreto placer que no se sabía capaz de sentir. (201)

Here Francisco's eyes are the primary mechanism of this association, and the inherent danger of the feline is made clear in the descriptors "salvaje" and "peligroso." The

connection between Francisco's eyes and the puma's is repeated multiple times throughout the text, and the similarity is so great that at one point Elizabeth "casi olvidó que se trataba de un hombre" (289). As in the nineteenth century, the representation of the Indian relies on a discourse of dehumanization. When he kisses her later in the scene, she feels "como una animalito al que su depredador hipnotiza para poder atrapar con facilidad" (289). Like in *Tabaré*, the feline association suggests sexual rapacity; unlike in *Tabaré*, in *La maestra de la laguna* the female "prey" responds positively to being stalked. A secret pleasure, not fear, is the reaction. I will return to this point later. For now, let it suffice to show the continuity of a trait associated with the Indian in the colonial, nineteenth century, and modern eras and the way in which the insistence on this trait suggests how essential markers work as "giveaways" for the true racial essence masked by the fluidity of appearance. The reader is reminded that even in his "civilized" form, the male Indian (for it is specifically the male that is defined in this way, never the female) is still a savage animal that is unable to control himself. The Whitened Indian is still dangerous, although now the sense of danger is both frightening and titillating.

A second trait highlighted in the nineteenth century was the Indian's excellent eyesight. In Herbert Spencer's explanation of this racial identifier, the primitive mind was closely tied to the environment and thus savages had superior sensory perceptions. However, they were unable to match their perceptive abilities with cognitive ones, thus making them reflexive, not thoughtful people (Stocking 117). In Argentina, the scientist Hermann ten Kate described an Indian in the Museo de la Plata collection in the following manner: "Un trait frappant était la lucidité avec laquelle il voyait les objets à grande distance," a fact he generalizes to all members of the tribe (39). Similarly,

Mansilla observed that the Ranquel Indians "Descubren a inmensas distancias, sin equivocarse jamás, los objetos, distinguiendo perfectamente si el polvo que asoma lo levantan animales alzados o jinetes que corren" (*Una excursión* 264). This characteristic continues to be an important marker in the contemporary romance novel. Nahueltruz can see far away with great ease (*La vuelta* 255), and Francisco is repeatedly characterized by his "ojos de lince" (73). In fact, when he wants to conceal his identity he decides that a pair of eyeglasses will be his most effective disguise. It is also interesting to note the convergence between this trait and the previous one, for while "ojos de lince" as a set phrase means "eagle-eyed," a "lince" is also a type of wild cat. The excellent eyesight of the puma and related animals is what permits it to be such a good hunter. In this way, even a seemingly innocent trait such as good eyesight allows the Indian to be continually connected to a sense of danger and the animal world.

A last clue to Indian identity in the novels is a strong love of horses. Jim brings his own horse to Argentina with him; the difficulty of this endeavor emphasizes the importance of his horse to his happiness. He also covets Francisco's horse throughout the novel. Nahueltruz loves horses so much that he makes them his primary occupation, dedicating himself to breeding and selling purebreds. The connection between the Indians and their horse is perceived so strongly that it is depicted in *La maestra de la laguna* not as a culturally-learned practice but rather a biologically-determined trait. Although Francisco has been raised as White and in the city, he feels passionate about horses, a "cualidad que no compartía con nadie en la familia, ya que sus hermanos rehuían todo contacto con los animales y Rogelio, por su parte, había sufrido una caída en su juventud que lo alejó para siempre de las jineteadas" (154). Because the reader is told that his

family avoids the animals and he has not been raised around them, Francisco's love must come from that which differentiates him from his siblings: his Indian father. Furthermore, "Francisco, en cambio, sentía que a lomos de un caballo podía escapar de sí mismo y olvidarse de todo" (154), just as "El indio vive sobre el caballo, como el pescador en su barca; su elemento es la Pampa, como el elemento de aquél es el mar" (Mansilla, *Una excursión* 120). In this way, a cultural trait is again portrayed as immutable and confused with some idea of "stock or collective heredity" (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 2). This process of naturalization makes it even more difficult to contradict the discourse of difference that emerges from the representation of these characteristics, for they become natural, biological, and thus irrevocable.

By portraying these characteristics as markers of race, Casañas and Bonelli perpetuate ideas of essentialism and the permanence of racial type and deny the social aspect of race despite simultaneously suggesting the very opposite. The commercial success of these novels demonstrates the continued power of colonial and nineteenth-century racial thought in the general Argentine consciousness. If the reader did not share the same horizon of expectations, to use Jauss's term, then these novels would not function. In order to discover the "true" identities of Jim, Nahueltruz, and Francisco, the reader must be familiar with certain conventions of racial representation in the West in general and the terms of Argentina in particular. A reader keenly aware of these features is able to discover the secret earlier and participate in the delicious experience of dramatic irony. A reader from another culture might miss these signs, significantly diminishing their experience of the novels. The huge popularity of Bonelli and Casañas's

books indicates that older racial identifiers and essentialism still very much resonate with Argentine readers.

Two Options for *Mestizos*: Discord or Disappearance

Bonelli and Casañas also vacillate between challenging and confirming older racial concepts in their treatment of the *mestizo*. In many of the nineteenth-century works I have examined, the authors asserted that the product of miscegenation was inevitably a weak, degenerate, and sterile creature. Zorrilla de San Martín's blue-eyed Indian Tabaré is an excellent example of the literary manifestation of this "scientifically-proven" theory. In the twenty-first century novels, the *mestizo* portrayed is the exact opposite of this being. Both Francisco and Nahueltruz are tall, very muscular, and beautiful. Nahueltruz is even described as having "la apariencia de héroe mitológico" or "un héroe de la mitología griega" (*Indias blancas* 135, 197). Roca metatextually observes that "se asemejaba más a la descripción de un héroe de novela romántica que a la de un reo prófugo de la Justicia" (*La vuelta* 63). Vicente Fidel López and Francisco Moreno would have loved this comparison given their desire for a connection between the Argentine natives and the ancient civilizations of Eurasia. Furthermore, the romantic heroes are portrayed as sexually powerful. In all their time together, Laura is not impregnated by Roca, the great representative of civilization, but Nahueltruz is able to do so almost immediately. Francisco similarly impregnates Elizabeth during their first sexual encounter. The plots of these novels defy the characterization of the *mestizo* as sterile. It is hard to imagine anything further from the impotent, cold Tabaré or the *mestizo* as represented in the works of Agassiz, Le Bon, and Gobineau.

In many ways Francisco can be considered the literary progeny of Lin-Calél, representative of both beauty and the possibility for a mixed-race future in Argentina. Although learning of his real father's identity is quite a shock, it is also a moment of resolution that brings him inner peace. Returning to the idea of essentialism, he now feels that he can understand certain parts of himself better, parts that did not "match" his identity as an upper-class *porteño*. He had always felt that "Aun cuando participaba de las costumbres [de sus pares], algo recóndito en él se mantenía intacto: la parte india" (536). In this view, being a *mestizo* implies having two different sides, each corresponding to a certain set of characteristics and behaviors. Despite occupying an in-between space, Francisco does not feel any sort of inner drama. Although suggestive of the trauma of the tragic mulatto, his extreme headaches are actually alleviated when he learns he is half Indian as now he no longer lives with the uncertainty of not knowing who his father is (535). The racial wars that Bello and Sarmiento saw as inevitable on a personal and national level evaporate in the case of Francisco. Being *mestizo* is only a dilemma for him with regard to how Elizabeth might view him (622), and her nonjudgmental love and acceptance further distance him from any sort of tragic ending. In fact, in *La maestra de la laguna*, everyone except Francisco's embittered step-father is shown to gladly and quickly accept the revelation that he is a *mestizo*. In the end he finds comfort in knowing that the *mestizo* condition is so common that he is literally one in a million. His mother's rape by an Indian is "algo que ocurría a muchas mujeres" and thus "Había muchos como él…La frontera todo estaba sembrada de mestizos" (644). While Francisco's reaction to this revelation is perhaps a little too cavalier to be believable, the

novel does positively depict the *mestizo* condition as a viable and increasingly common one.

In contrast, for Nahueltruz being a *mestizo* provokes a species of psychological torment approximating that of the tragic mulatto. In *La vuelta del ranquel* we see the effects that abandoning his Indian identity and living as White have on him. He no longer feels any desire to go back to Tierra Adentro and dismisses his previous judgment of "la vida montaraz [como] superior a la culta que le ofrecían" (*La vuelta* 337) as naive and overly romantic. However, when facing his uncle Epumer, imprisoned on the Isla Martín Garcia, he feels a profound sense of guilt. Epumer accuses both him and Mariano Rosas of forgetting their heritage and permitting White women to manipulate him (*La vuelta* 334), thus becoming traitors to the Ranquel people. He cries the entire way back to Buenos Aires, overcome with culpability and sorrow (*La vuelta* 340). At the same time, in *Indias Blancas* he had repeatedly wished he were White in order to facilitate his relationship with Laura (306). As a *mestizo*, he is not White enough for White society and not Indian enough for the Indians. Nahueltruz's divided loyalties are paralleled by an unstable sense of self that leaves him unsure of who he really is. After speaking with Epumer he feels so far removed from that life that he has the sensation that he had never been an Indian (*La vuelta* 352), but quickly contradicts himself by thinking "Para ella siempre seré un indio" (359). As a result, he suffers from a split identity that at times feels like no identity at all: "Él no pertenecía al mundo de los blancos…menos aún al ranquel, porque había llegado a despreciar el primitivismo en que vivían; jamás habría podido regresar a las tolderías…Él no era nada, ni huinca ni ranquel" (*La vuelta* 214).

Nahueltruz feels pressure to "be" one identity or the other, and the impossibility of this choice spirals him into nothingness.

Because these are romance novels, there must be a happy ending in order to satisfy the reader (Radway 67). As we have seen, being *mestizo* is not a problem for Francisco, and in the end he continues with life as it was before. After marrying Elizabeth he voluntarily chooses to forgo his fortune and position in Buenos Aires and goes to work as a ranch manager in the provinces. The epilogue, a letter from Elizabeth to Julián, says that Francisco is entirely cured of his illness and makes no further mention of his racial identity. Any difficulty he might have assimilating it or interacting with society after learning of his parentage fails to appear. It has been left in the past along with the other trappings of the drama. He chooses to identify and live as completely White, thus erasing race as a meaningful identifier, for White is nearly always depicted as "no-race," the "normative center" from which all deviance is measured (Yancy, "Introduction" 2). This ending suggests the possibility that the creation of a large population of *mestizos* along the frontier served to negate the importance of race as an important factor in Argentine life. Nonetheless, we know that this is not in fact true and must view it as a forced concession to the need for a happy ending. Once again, Casañas's novel works to keep the specter of racism in the past, denying its continued importance in the present.

Nahueltruz also decides to live the rest of his life according to the demands and privileges of a White identity. This decision is dramatically underscored by the action of a most unusual ally: General Julio Roca. Aware of Nahueltruz's role as the son of a *cacique* and the killer of Hilario Racedo, he acquiesces to Laura's pleas for help and alters military records to list Nahueltruz as a battlefield casualty during the Conquista del

Desierto (*La vuelta* 253). In this way, Nahueltruz the Indian is permanently killed off and Lorenzo Dionisio Rosas takes his place. The deception can never be discovered and for the outside world Lorenzo is, and always will be, White. The implication is that there is no place in the Argentina of 1879 for anyone identified as an Indian. The only two options are the extermination favored by Zeballos or complete acculturation to the point of erasure. Laura's brother, Father Agustín, advocates for the latter opinion, telling Nahueltruz "¿No logras ver…que eres el vivo ejemplo de lo que podría haberse hecho con los tuyos?," meaning, as Nahueltruz correctly intuits, "Volverlos huincas" (*La vuelta* 339). Whether it be by violence or assimilation, at the end of the nineteenth century the Indian had to be erased from the Argentine territory and narratives of nation. For a *mestizo* like Nahueltruz , the only logical option was to finish the process of cultural transformation and come to identify completely as a non-Indian. Thus, although Bonelli and Casañas depict the *mestizo* as a privileged type, he must be de-Indianized in order to be incorporated into national history. Francisco and Nahueltruz shed their indigenous qualities, using the power of education, dress, and manners to separate themselves from a race still depicted as inferior.

Mother, May I Sleep with Danger?

Interracial sex has a long history in Argentine literature dating back to the earliest works of colonial times. We have already seen examples of this in *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*, *Tabaré*, and *Lin-Calél*, and additional examples could be drawn from *Martín Fierro*, "La cautiva," *Marta Riquelme*, and the long series of texts that narrate the legendary tale of Lucía Miranda, beginning with Ruy Díaz's *Historia del descubrimiento, conquista y población del Río de la Plata* (1612). In these texts, "rape and miscegenation

are the indeed the focus of disgust" (Frederick 3), and captivity is associated with a process of contamination, potential contagion (Rotker 56), and an irreversible exit from polite society. Furthermore, the female captive was often symbolic of the battle for land, with her flesh as the territory on which each side wished to make its mark (Frederick 7). By rendering the captive woman's body a symbol, captivity tales "invierte[n] los términos estructurantes de la situación de conquista" (Iglesia 563) and justify the Spanish takeover. The trope of the Indian as a rapist turns the Conquest on its head and allows the Spanish to be portrayed as the legitimate owners of the land, victimized by an Indian usurper both out of place and out of time.[81]

In *La maestra de la laguna* and the two *Indias blancas* books, the fear of captivity and of miscegenation are present as in the earlier texts. Nonetheless, the actual relationships developed between Whites and Indians invert the traditional terms of the captivity tale and the Indian becomes a figure of attraction and desire. The most evident tale of captivity in these novels is that of Blanca Montes in *Indias blancas*. En route to the countryside with her husband and a few servants, Blanca's carriage is attacked by an Indian *malón* led by Mariano Rosas for the sole purpose of taking her into his possession. The initial reaction of both Blanca and others to this unfortunate event is as expected of nineteenth-century society: her husband attempts to kill her before seeing her kidnapped (235), then refuses to try to rescue her after he learns she is still alive.[82] At first, Blanca herself is disgusted by Mariano. She calls him "un salvaje que me había arrebatado del

[81] For more on the idea of the anachronistic Indian, see Chapter Three.
[82] "Los ex cautivos no recibían ningún tipo de tratamiento especial a su regreso. Más que héroes venían a ser sujetos marginados en la sociedad de la que habían sido arrancados. El contacto con los indios había dejado en ellos un estigma que los marcaba por vida, especialmente a las mujeres" (Operé 21).

mundo real para satisfacer a un instinto animal" (237).[83] With this simple phrase she simultaneously dismisses the Indian life as unreal and thus less valuable, and the Indian as an animal-like savage responding only to base instinct. Mariano acts the part, saying that he will satisfy himself as many times as he likes despite her protests. He then throws her to the ground and rapes her (238). Blanca's name adds a myriad of symbolic readings to this episode, suggesting at once purity of the racial line (prior to this moment she is unstained) and the naming of her race itself: White. In this name she embodies the fears and concerns of all the women on the frontier trained to see the Indian as an affront to their personal purity and that of the entire racial group.

Despite initial appearances, Blanca's tale introduces a fundamental change into the captivity story. Over time she comes to love Mariano. At first she chastises herself, wondering "¿Qué está sucediéndome? Me fallan los principios, me vuelvo salvaje y disoluta, me olvido de que estoy casada, que soy católica, que soy blanca. ¿Qué me pasa? Tengo que escapar" (283). Attraction to the Indian is so taboo that feeling it shakes the foundations of her very identity: how could a married, Catholic, White woman ever feel desire for a savage? Eventually she acquiesces and gives herself to him "voluntaria y completamente" (299). The very traits that identify Mariano as an Indian are those she most loves about him: she likes seeing the contrast of the colors of their skin (314) and finds him astonishingly beautiful in his Indianness (315). Interestingly, the attraction for the Other goes both ways. Mariano Rosas gives Blanca a sun hat because "no quiere que te vuelvas oscura como nosotras; que a él le gustas bien blanca" (282). This preference is born out by the historical record, as descriptive lists of captives show that a large number

[83] In the novel the passages belonging to Blanca's autobiographical telling of her ordeal in her diary are printed in italics. I have removed them here to facilitate the reading experience.

of them were women with light eyes and hair, despite the relative uncommonness of these traits in the region (Socolow 125). Mansilla also notes that the Indians have a "predilección por nuestras mujeres, en las que hallan más belleza que en las indias" (*Una excursión* 434) and himself manifests a certain attraction to Carmen, the indigenous woman who acts as his guide (*Una excursión* 374). In the twenty-first century romance novel the sparks of interracial desire suppressed in the nineteenth-century texts are given free rein to flourish and grow.

Blanca Montes has a nineteenth-century historical-literary precedent in the figure of Doña Fermina Zárate, presented towards the end of Mansilla's *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*. Like Blanca, Doña Fermina was taken captive when she was young and became the wife of the *cacique* Ramón, giving him three children (*Una excursión* 407). With permission from Ramón, Mansilla offers to escort her home to Río Cuarto. She refuses because Ramón will not let her take their children with her. Mansilla thinks, but is unable to say out loud, "Déjelos usted, son el fruto de la violencia" (*Una excursión* 407). From the perspective of the nineteenth-century elite, children of captivity are a product of rape worth abandoning in order to erase the stain of forced miscegenation and return to civilization. In *Indias blancas*, Nahueltruz is also the "fruto de la violencia" for he is conceived during one of the rapes before Blanca comes to love Mariano. Nonetheless, she loves him unconditionally and the narrative treatment of the episode provokes the reader to do the same. Instead of functioning as a symbol of the divisive violence of the frontier, Nahueltruz becomes a symbol of unity. It is his birth that finally ties Blanca and Mariano together: "Esa criatura que crecía dentro de mí había creado un lazo tan fuerte y perdurable entre Mariano Rosas y yo que ataba nuestros destinos irremisiblemente; ese

hijo suavizaba los rencores y diferencias, y redimía lo que había comenzado con ultraje y odio; a veces, incluso, la palabra 'familia' asomaba en mis soliloquios" (*Indias blancas* 338). In the nineteenth century, women who chose to stay with their Indian captives were often seen as dangerous due to their incomprehensible, suspicious crossing of physical and symbolic barriers (Rotker 56). In contrast, although we see this reaction towards Blanca and Nahueltruz by the general public, the voices of shame are represented as ignorant and unfair (*Indias blancas* 402). By allowing Blanca Montes to narrate her own story through diary entries Bonelli permits the reader to view the captive and her child as real people. The crossing of the racial divide thus becomes a positive process of construction, not destruction.

Indias blancas is structured such that Nahueltruz and Laura's romance develops in a parallel fashion (although temporally at a distance) to that of Mariano and Blanca's. However, an important inversion occurs. Instead of being taken captive and raped by Nahueltruz, Laura is the first to feel desire and she voluntarily begins a relationship with him. She is instantly attracted to him when she sees him visiting her brother, the priest, and masturbates to his image after meeting him for the first time (121). In a way, Laura is the reflected double of Mariano Rosas who had seen Blanca, desired her, and decided to make her his. This is a profound change in terms of both race and gender, for we see not only the White person lusting after the Indian but also the woman taking control of the relationship. Furthermore, unlike Blanca's first interaction with Mariano in which he must violently rape her, Laura responds positively to the touch of her Indian lover: "el cuerpo le quedó blando de placer, los músculos no le respondían, las piernas parecían hechas de azúcar" (197). Rather than fear and disgust, she actually "se sentía a salvo,

cobijada por la fortaleza de ese indio" (197). This is a complete reversal of the terms and emotions of the canonical interracial story of the Argentine frontier. Laura is no longer a victim and if anyone suffers as a result of the relationship it is Nahueltruz. Like the traditional female captive, he gives up his home, language, and customs for the relationship. From the perspective of his tribe, as represented by the attitude of his uncle Epumer, he is the traitor, the spy, and the diseased crossover, while the only captivity that Laura must suffer is the metaphorical ties of romantic love.

Despite these significant changes, Laura's body, like those of literary captives before her, becomes the territory on which the battle for the pampas is symbolically played out. During the period in which she believed Nahueltruz to be dead, she begins a relationship with General Roca as he prepares to leave for the final push in the Conquista del Desierto. Her two lovers thus represent the two options available to the Argentine nation looking to clarify its physical and sexual boundaries. Laura can give herself to Roca and the politics of extermination, or she can opt for assimilation and miscegenation by returning to Nahueltruz, the last in a long line of powerful *caciques*. There is only one letter of difference between her two lovers' names (Roca and Rosas), but a world of difference in meaning. Nahueltruz makes this gap very clear when he refuses to forgive Laura for loving "el asesino de mi pueblo" (433). The tensions of the love triangle characterize the critical decision point to which Argentina had arrived by the late nineteenth century.

In *La vuelta del Ranquel*, the Indian wins the battle for control over the female body, at least in terms of the romance between Laura and Rosas. This victory, as well as the conquest of Elizabeth by Francisco, suggest a new openness towards the Indian as a

participant in the genetic constitution of the nation. But again, despite the perhaps noble desire to expand the boundaries of the acceptable romantic hero and open up a more positive (re)vision of the interracial history of Argentina, Bonelli and Casañas include significant historical changes or commentary that undermine their projects. Both novels operate with a contradictory discourse whereby the romantic heroines are attracted to the heroes because of their Indian-ness, while at the same time the majority of the descriptions make it clear that the hero is really not very Indian. Although the mechanisms are different, both novels engage in projects of whitening the nation.

Nahueltruz Guor is attractive to Laura because he is an Indian, and the difficulties that they have in their relationship occur because he is considered an Indian and is thus not welcome in White society. However, he has been educated in the city, first in Córdoba and then in Paris, and he speaks Spanish, French, Italian and Latin so well that he makes Laura feel ugly and unrefined in comparison (*La vuelta* 93). These characteristics contrast sharply with what both the characters and the reading public have come to expect from an Indian. Laura guiltily admits to Eduarda Mansilla that had he not been "un hombre instruido" (*La vuelta* 171), she probably would not have fallen in love with him. While the beauty of his "estilo salvaje" and his exoticness first attract her attention, the social differences are so great that this love cannot possibly endure (*La vuelta* 170). Furthermore, although he is repeatedly referred to as an Indian or a Ranquel, Nahueltruz actually has very little Indian blood. In *Una excursión*, Mansilla names the real-life Mariano Rosas as the son of the *cacique* Painé and describes when he was captured and taken to the Governor Juan Manuel de Rosas's ranch to work as a peon (200). Legend tells that Rosas grew fond of Mariano, baptized him, gave him his

Christian name, and became his godfather. Bonelli takes liberties with this story, alleging that Mariano Rosas was actually the son of Juan Manuel de Rosas and the wife of Painé, Mariana, herself the daughter of an Indian and a White woman (*Indias blancas* 332). In the novelized account, therefore, Mariano Rosas is only 1/4 Indian. Nahueltruz, son of Mariano Rosas and Blanca Montes, is thereby only 1/8 Indian, and his child with Laura will consequently possess only 1/16 Indian blood. The novel thus engages in a process of *emblanqueamiento* (whitening) indicative of the direction of the future racial composition of Argentina. Bonelli's innovative paternity for Mariano Rosas and Nahueltruz Guor also permits both to belong to the very highest levels of society on either side of the divide: the wealthy Montes and Rosas families for one part, and a highly esteemed chieftain on the other. When Julián again denies that Laura could love an Indian, she "se refrenó de confesarle que ese indio era hijo de su tía Blanca Montes, nieto de Juan Manuel de Rosas y del doctor Leopoldo Montes, biznieto del barón de Pontevedra, tataranieto del duque de Monalvo y sobrino segundo de Lucio Victorio Mansilla" (*La vuelta* 15). In order for the Indian to become a romantic hero he must be whitened and socially elevated.[84] Nahueltruz and Laura's romance thus becomes less a generalizable symbol of the possibility of interracial love, and more the story of an exceptional pair of exceptional people. This aspect, combined with Nahueltruz's conscious choice to become White at the end of *La vuelta del ranquel*, once again sends the message that there is no place for the Indian in the racial composition of the present Argentine nation.

La maestra de la laguna does not engage in the same type of historical revision but similarly presents the importance of an infusion of educated, upper-class, White

[84] This can also be partially seen as return to an early colonial mentality wherein upper-class Spaniards were encouraged to mate with the most noble Amerindian women (Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write* 209).

people into the nation's genetic pool. Elizabeth is a North American with strong Irish heritage. The choice of Elizabeth instead of a *criolla* as the romantic heroine and other half of the foundational family in the novel points to the fulfillment of Domingo F. Sarmiento's goal of attracting European immigrants to the country in order to rejuvenate and advance it. The fact that she was contracted to teach in Argentina by Sarmiento and then falls in love with a *mestizo* further emphasizes the compatibility of his two goals: educational advancement and racial redefinition. Like the child of Nahueltruz and Laura, her child will be whiter than his father who in turn was whiter than his father. While Casañas's novel seems more open towards a *mestizo* population for Argentina it also engages in subtle processes of whitening that reflect the continued impact of desires and strategies first implemented in the nineteenth century.

In this chapter I have shown how notwithstanding pointed critiques of nineteenth-century science and the racist discourse that emerged from it, *Indias blancas*, *La vuelta del ranquel*, and *La maestra de la laguna* continue to perpetuate many of the aspects of this mentality. Unlike the writers and consumers of the nineteenth-century foundational fiction, the nation that produces and consumes these contemporary historical romances is well-aware of the stigma attached to certain racial attitudes and historical actions. Thus, Bonelli and Casañas explicitly work to rectify the injustices they see in the foundational fictions pertaining to race. Nonetheless, essentialism is still used to identify characters as Indians, there is a marked preference for Whiteness demonstrated by changes in historical fact, and the final crossings between heroes and heroines will lead to children who are less Indian, culturally and biologically, than their fathers. The two couples' children, both newborn at the end of the novels, form part of a series of White/Indian pairings that

continually dilute the Indian blood and redefine the nation as genetically and culturally White. A fundamental paradox is at work in these texts: they elevate Indians to the status of romantic hero/protagonist while simultaneously erasing the presence of the Indian in the implied future of the nation. The twenty-first century romance novel laments the racism of the past, while continuing to contribute to the "narrative of invisibilization" (Gordillo and Hirsch 11) of the present-day Indian. The novels thus take on a nostalgic tone whereby their settings must be seen as the last possible moment from which these stories could be narrated. Just a few years later there would not be many Indians to serve as protagonists. *La maestra de la laguna* comes to a close with the battle of San Carlos that marked the last effective stand of Calfucurá and the imminent decline of his empire. *Indias blancas* and *La vuelta del ranquel* occur in the context of the Conquista del desierto; *La vuelta del ranquel* includes the celebration of the successful conclusion to the campaign and Roca's corresponding rise in popularity and political power. These settings further write the Indian out of the present, thus giving a twenty-first century spin to the vanishing Indian thesis. In sum, the *Indias blancas* novels and *La maestra de la laguna* introduce some positive challenges to earlier conceptions of race that inscribed the Argentine Indians within a very small window of possibilities, usually eliminating them from productive contribution to the nation. Nonetheless, if they are "novelas retro-fundacionales" as Saenz-Roby has claimed, the "retro" must seen to be mostly closely associated with the idea of retrograde. In their descriptions of racial identity, treatment of the *mestizo*, and tales of love and reproduction, Bonelli and Casañas reaffirm that the only role the Indian can play in present-day Argentina is as fodder for historically-

inspired literature. He or she, as well as problems of discrimination and prejudice, are thoroughly buried in the past.

Conclusion

Although the texts I have studied here span centuries and genres, there are similarities between them. In previous chapters I have focused on different features of these texts; here, I wish to briefly trace the common threads that run through them.

First, the texts that I have studied, particularly those of Zorrilla, Holmberg, Onelli, Bonelli, and Casañas, remind us that the official end of the Conquista del Desierto in 1885 did not mean that the Indian ceased to be a political, literary, and philosophical concern. Zorrilla and Holmberg's epic poems reflect the continued need to wrestle with the indigenous past and legacy of the Conquest in order to build usable national identities. In Zorrilla's case, the Charrúas had been mostly exterminated for over fifty years, yet they still remained a fecund source of literary inspiration. For Holmberg, the approach of the 1910 Centenary of Independence led to new reflections on the role of the Indians, particularly as a source of genetic material. Onelli's *Trepando los Andes* poignantly depicts the reality of the Indian tribes after 1885. Having suffered the aggression of the Argentine military, the survivors eked out lives of poverty, largely forgotten or intentionally ignored by the national government. Patagonia was stuck between a prehistoric past that impinged on the present, and a glorious but hard to reach future. Finally, Bonelli and Casañas's twenty-first century historical romance novels demonstrate the extraordinary legacy of late nineteenth-century racial thought. Written in the context of new visibility and demands of indigenous groups, they continue to rely of ideas of race – particularly Indianness and Whiteness – developed many years prior. The Indians may have been subdued by the military actions of the 1870s and 1880s, but they never entirely disappeared physically or as a literary theme.

The continued presence of the Indian in the literature of the region did not, however, mean that the treatment of him or her stayed exactly the same. In Lucio Mansilla's *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles*, written when the Indians were still an unresolved issue, he uses the techniques and rhetorical strategies of ethnography to describe a still-vibrant population. The debate over how to solve the *cuestión del indio* is reflected in the deep contradictions of his text, as he himself oscillates between defending the Ranqueles and insisting that they must be fundamentally changed or eliminated in order to bring civilization and order to the pampas. The later texts I study, including López's *Les races aryennes du Peroú*, most of Moreno's work, and Zorrilla and Holmberg's poems, show less uncertainty with regard to what to do about the Indians. In the moment their works were being written and published, it was already quite clear that the Indians would be severely reduced in number. Thus, many of the texts are imbued with an elegiac tone. Authors such as Holmberg, Bonelli, and Casañas are able to entertain new visions of the Indian and his or her possible role in the nation precisely because the physical Indian no longer was perceived as a threat to lives and property. Interestingly, we can also see how in the case of Argentina the progression of science more or less tracked the historical reality of the Indians. The ethnographic approach used by Mansilla and Moreno (in his earlier works), gives way to a focus on prehistory and archaeology in later texts. The physical death of many of the Argentine Indians facilitated a transition from the Indian being conceived of as an ethnographic subject to the Indian as a remnant or relic, even when still alive.

The above observation highlights the tightly-intertwined nature of science, politics, and literature in the nineteenth-century River Plate. It is difficult if not

impossible to determine the exact direction of the influences between science and its context; I, like many constructivist historians of science, would argue that it moves in both directions. The relationship between science and military action can be most clearly seen in the *Informe Oficial de la Comisión Científica agregada al Estado Mayor General de la Expedición al Río Negro (Patagonia)*, a collection of reports compiled by the engineers that accompanied Julio Roca on his excursion in 1879. Their observations and conclusions were used to facilitate the expedition against the Indians, thus furthering military goals. At the same time, the mission provided the means for the scientists to reach and study the pampas. In addition to the official record of the expedition, the scientists were also able to produce and publish volumes on botany, geology, and zoology. Science was able to provide the tools for representing the Indians in such as way as to facilitate and justify plans of extermination or forced assimilation: the Indian was frequently represented as a biologically inferior being always already destined to disappear. At the same time, changes in context, particularly the military action against the native tribes, contributed to a change in the type of questions that science asked and the evidence that it found for them. There was no natural reason that Moreno should have become interested in explaining the prehistoric past; historical context determines the processes of science and the questions that can be and are asked (Hacking 165). Once the Indians were mostly exterminated or brought under control, it was easier to wonder about their past or admit that they held a place in global histories of humankind. Of course, these intellectual revaluations of aspects of indigenous cultures and peoples most frequently did not lead to better treatment or more respect for those Indians who continued to live in the River Plate territory.

Finally, as I have suggested since the beginning, the nineteenth-century River Plate scientific realm was not an exact replica of the way that anthropology and ethnography were being developed and used in Europe and North America. Although well aware of the developments in those regions, River Plate scientists did not just passively receive them. Drastic differences in context would have made such a reception impossible anyway. European ethnographers who wished to focus on "savage" tribes often had to travel to other continents to find their objects of study. Once in contact with the savages, the spatial distance and perceived racial differences were so great that the ethnographer rarely had to seriously consider the potential links between the savage and him or herself. In the River Plate, in contrast, a long history of biological and cultural *mestizaje* meant that ethnographers and anthropologists were often forced to confront the fact that they and the nation they represented likely shared some biological material with their barbarous subjects. In the work of all of the authors I study we see evidence of this struggle and the various ways in which it could be resolved. From Moreno's complicated global migrations to Zorrilla's outright denial to Bonelli's alterations of historical fact, the texts of these authors reveal the signs and scars of complex identity negotiations.

Scientific racism is often viewed as belonging to a particular moment beginning in the nineteenth century and common to Europe and the Americas. In this study, it has been my intention to refine this definition with regard to the experiences of the River Plate. As I have shown, the River Plate authors were not just consumers of scientific theories from the industrial and cultural centers, but also producers of data and theories that enjoyed a positive reception and recognition in Europe and North America. Mansilla's *Una excursión a los indios ranqueles* was successfully presented at the

International Geographic Conference in Paris in 1875, Moreno's theories of prehistory were validated by European luminaries such as Paul Broca and Paul Topinard, and López's tract on the Aryan races of South America was published in France and even warranted a "examen critique du livre" written by Victor Henry, a French philologist.[85] Today, postings on Spanish-language romance novel forums show that readers in Spain clamor for more of Bonelli and Casañas's romance novels to be made available on the European continent. Thus, these texts must be read in relation to both local and global contexts in terms of their inputs and outputs: oftentimes they are revealed to be careful balancing acts between the specific racial representations needed to facilitate regional politics and daily life and the racial representations of the nations the authors wish to present to the world. Thus, Mansilla's defense of the Indians not only responds to positivists' calls for extermination, but also contributes to his defense of the *mestizo* nation for an international audience.

I have also shown that although scientific racism is usually studied within the period between 1880 and World War II, in the context of the River Plate its roots can be traced much earlier and its legacy persists even today. Many of the questions that interested nineteenth-century anthropologists can be traced back to ancient times, and the influence of the ancients can be seen in the theories they developed. Terms and representations from the Conquest era, particularly the use of *cristiano*, did not disappear overnight but continued to appear alongside more biological conceptions of race. River Plate anthropology and ethnography were not fixed disciplines, but were rather places of transition and negotiation between newer ideas and the older systems they complemented

[85] In 1878 Henry published *Le quichua est-il une langue aryenne?* in which he forcefully disagreed with López's conclusions.

or replaced. Furthermore, the folk taxonomies and biologies that existed prior to the development of scientific ideas of race continued to exist side-by-side with theories of racial determinism and genetics that developed during the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, and still play an important part in racial understanding in the present day.

In Chapter Four I looked at the legacy of scientific racism in three romance novels from 2005-2010. It was my contention that although the novels questioned the practices and ideologies of nineteenth-century scientists and museums, they continued to use ideas of biological essentialism and racial hierarchy to elaborate visions of Argentina and its history that similarly depended on the whitening or erasing of the indigenous populations. A similar tension can be seen in other areas of contemporary Argentine life. The Grupo Universitario de Investigación en Antropología Social continues to work towards returning the indigenous bones that formed part of museum collections and diffusing knowledge about the 10,000 human remains that formed part of the Museo de la Plata and the practices that brought them there ("Colectivo GUIAS"). A documentary made in 2011 about the life of Inacayal has won numerous awards and represented Argentina in the Festival de Cine de Medellín, Colombia ("Presentan"). Nonetheless, participants in the processes of genocide such as Francisco P. Moreno and Julio Roca are still recognized as national heroes and indigenous people in the River Plate continue to be subject to discrimination that depends on racial thinking that can be traced to the nineteenth century and beyond.

In this study, I have endeavored to demonstrate the ways in which late nineteenth-century River Plate intellectual elites used the discourses and practices of anthropology

and ethnography to elaborate racial formations of the region that were utilizable for creating government policy, writing narratives of national identity, and projecting particular visions of Argentina and Uruguay to the world. Mansilla, Zorrilla, Holmberg, Moreno, López, Onelli, Bonelli, and Casañas wrote in different contexts and from unique vantage points, but are joined together by their common aims and the tendencies presented above. Although I have attempted to pinpoint the mechanisms and salient features of their many racial formations, there is much work yet to be done with regard to the interactions between River Plate science, literature, and race. There are texts and authors I was forced to exclude by limitations of space and time, vast quantities of archival materials that could further this study, and aspects of these racial formations I have barely touched on, particularly the imbrication of race and gender. It is my hope that future projects will fill in these gaps, for I believe that knowledge of the River Plate racial past and awareness of its continued importance in the present will be important pieces in the fight to end racial discrimination in the region and around the world.

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