

**WRITING THE EARTH, WRITING THE NATION:
LATIN AMERICAN NARRATIVE AND THE LANGUAGE OF GEOGRAPHY**

by

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University of Pittsburgh, 2010

This dissertation examines the relationship between literary writing and geographical discourse in Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie* (Argentina, 1845), Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* (Brazil, 1902), and Rómulo Gallegos's *Doña Bárbara* (Venezuela, 1929). These narratives are often read as locating their authority in the discourse of science or within the didactic lessons of the national allegory. I contend that both readings simplify the legacies of these works and elide the significance behind the form coupled with their content. To fully understand the politics of these mixed forms, we must move from the general (empiricist science) to the particular (geographical discourse). I defend this move by demonstrating that Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos emerge as literary figures alongside, and even participate in, the formation of politically oriented geographical institutions; between 1833 and 1910 over fifty geographical societies appear across the Americas, first in Mexico and later in Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela. This simultaneity—between literary writing and institutional formation—points to an understudied alignment between literature, geography, and politics in Latin America. I illustrate that, through a host of literary devices (e.g. metaphor, anaphora, alliteration, etc.), these writers give form to a consolidated nation-state by constructing a unified—or potentially unifiable—geographic space. By tracing how their narratives are informed by and in dialogue with previous non-Latin American land treatises (by, for example, Alexander von Humboldt, Henry Thomas Buckle, and Agustín Codazzi), I argue for the centrality of geographical discourse in literary, cultural, and social analysis. This project contributes to several conversations in the field,

including the discourse of Eurocentrism, the issue of Amerindian versus Occidental epistemology, and the interconnectedness of race, inequality, and land distribution.

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PREFACE

My pull to Latin American literary and cultural studies often surprises me. How did a child born of traditional Indian parents and raised in Tennessee become so infatuated with the language of Cervantes and the literature of Sarmiento? I can only find an answer in what I long ago recognized as an identity crisis. Debbie Truhan, our Graduate Administrator in Hispanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Pittsburgh, remembers well: in the Fall of 2005, as a wee first-semester doctoral student, I told her I'd finally "found myself" amidst a variety pack of Latin Americans and Latin Americanists—from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Peru, Guatemala, Mexico, the United States. With age, and with the culturally sensitive and praising environs and readings of graduate school, I discovered that a hodgepodge identity defines us all. I finally found a wealth of terms to articulate my sensation of residing on a border. And the geographical and literary treatment of such arbitrary lines—which determine the fates of so many—became my primary research interest. I am grateful to the many voices that harmoniously came together to help me produce this work.

My dissertation benefitted from two FLAS Fellowships to study Portuguese, a CLAS Summer Research Grant to conduct archival research in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, and an Andrew Mellon Pre-doctoral Fellowship. I thank these organizations for their support. I also thank Hispanic Languages and Literatures, in particular Debbie, Connie, and Lucy.

My inimitable adviser and friend, Dr. Joshua K. Lund, has seen me through the entire process, from the moment I stepped in his office and eagerly took notes about Foucault (Foucault), through endless drafts of fellowship applications and cover letters, and to the grand finale: signing my contract with Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where I begin employment in Fall 2010. Josh's vast stores of energy, wit, balance, logic, and smarts have shaped who I am today, and I am honored to have worked with such a fine scholar for the past five years.

My brilliant, and kind, committee members have also provided me with many words of wisdom and encouragement. Dr. Susan Andrade, from Pitt's English department, made literary and cultural theory digestible while also demystifying a woman's role in academia and an Indian girl's role in family. Susan also read many a draft of my work and provided much insight on good prose, for which I am grateful.

Dr. Bob Chamberlain introduced me to Brazilian literature my second semester at Pitt, and if not for his classes and beautiful Portuguese, I might have missed the boat to this fascinating world of narrative and culture. With his impeccable bibliographic memory and his contagious love for Brazil, Bobby makes for a matchless mentor.

Dr. Juan Duchesne-Winter has the enviable ability to break down the most complex of ideas into the simplest of words; he has mastered this task with both high theory and student

writing. Modest despite his extreme intellect, Juan leaves me in awe with his lectures and his analyses, with his thought provoking yet always gentle questions.

Each of these individuals has spent countless hours writing recommendation letters for the many grants and jobs that I have earned as well as for those that I have not. Pitt English professor Dr. Gayle Rogers, too, has selflessly read my work and written letters on my behalf. I cannot possibly repay professors Sarah Williams and Beatrice DeAngelis, who wrote more than one letter to attest that they had, indeed, taught me the nuances of teaching. I'm better for it.

Were it not for the laughs and the beers and the poker nights with my friends here in Pittsburgh, this adventure would have been a bit miserable. Thanks for the many excuses to celebrate—at Hemingway's, in Montreal, Rio, and Puerto Rico, at 214 Edmond Street.

Ale Picapão, you've taught me so much. Thank you for your endless advice on everything from sandals to sentence structure. Te quiero mucho.

My Southern gals, you get it. Robincita, Corty, H-Bomb, Lillith, Rita K., Jamie, Ferne, and Marian: thank you for your visits to chilly Pittsburgh, your many care packages, and your ears during both good times and bad.

I've written nearly every stage of this project, from proposal to acknowledgments to conclusion, in my home away from home, the Té Café in Squirrel Hill. From the teaslingers to the owners to the regulars: all have shared in this often tumultuous but always entertaining trip.

And, finally, my beloved family, to whom I dedicate this project:

Mom, you're the most patient soul and a born mother. Thanks for consoling me, for bugging me, for loving me. I love you more than I ever let on.

Pop, you're the wisest (and funniest) man I know. Your daily phone calls have a way of brightening my evening even when I'm grouchy. I feel so lucky to have such supportive parents.

Tash, I'm happy that you've shown this family what it means to have a dream and to follow that dream. I'm also happy that you've provided me with an alternative career.

Loki, you have a way of setting me straight, of making a molehill out of my mountain, and of making my long story longer. Whether solicited or taken, your advice and early morning phone calls are always a welcome presence in my life.

Goji, were it not for your ability to make me belly laugh, to help me breathe, and to enable my chocolate-chip-cookie-eating and *The Wire*-watching, I wouldn't have made it. At least not smiling. You by my side at Té, or across from me at Silky's, or next to me at Napoli's: these memories outweigh the anguished days of writing, making them beautiful and irreplaceable.

1.0 THE SCIENCE OF STATECRAFT: DISCIPLINARY GEOGRAPHY AND THE POLITICS OF LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE

¿Cómo llaman? El reino—Reino Unido—están violando el derecho internacional, están violando, bueno, los principios básicos de la geografía, y de la historia, el tiempo y el espacio. Váyanse de allí, devuélvanles las Malvinas al pueblo argentino. Ya basta de imperio—ah, ¡petróleo! La flota inglesa que se movió en el '82 para las Malvinas sabía lo que estaba haciendo. Allí hay petróleo, allí irás en torno al archipiélago. Ahora, imagínense ustedes, nosotros tenemos la reserva de petróleo más grande del mundo. Cuando el petróleo—a los ingleses se les acabe ése del Mar del Norte [...]—baja, baja, y no consigan más petróleo, andan desesperados, los yanquis están desesperados, no tienen más reservas. Y tú, Inglaterra, ¿hasta cuándo tú vas a estar en las Malvinas? Reina de Inglaterra, a ti te hablo, Reina de Inglaterra, ya se acabaron los imperios, ¿no te has dado cuenta, Reina de Inglaterra? ¡Devuélveles las Islas Malvinas al pueblo argentino, Reina de Inglaterra!

- HUGO CHÁVEZ, on *Telesur* February 22, 2010

No es de ninguna manera imprudente, sino de todo punto necesario reconocer en alta voz el grave riesgo que para la soberanía del país, no ya sólo en el terreno de lo económico incontrovertible sino también en lo político, por obra de los días que corren, constituye el hecho de la preponderancia lesiva de tal industria, controlada exclusivamente por capital extranjero y de aquí que sea aspiración en la integridad de Venezuela como Nación soberana la de que se arbitren los medios legales adecuados para restituir paulatinamente el patrimonio nacional esa fuente de riqueza.

- RÓMULO GALLEGOS, 1941

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the 1941 piece “Constancia puesta en empeños de iluminación,” Venezuelan writer and statesman Rómulo Gallegos vehemently insists that the state *must* control its oil reserves in order to maintain sovereignty. Gallegos’s early-twentieth-century warning of “el grave riesgo” bears great implications as British oilrigs begin, in these first months of 2010, to trawl the waters

around the hotly contested Islas Malvinas; significantly, the British refer to the same maritime swath as the Falkland Islands. With roots dating back to the nineteenth century, the territorial conflict has fired up national leaders across Latin America and the Caribbean. But, as per normal, Hugo Chávez's voice reverberates loudest across the ethers of cyberspace. In a Telesur broadcast, and with the pointed irreverence that only he can muster, Chávez touches upon the precarious intertwining of national sovereignty, imperialism, natural resources, and, above all, geography: the United Kingdom's drilling violates the basic principles of geography and history, of time and space, he claims.

Chávez's keywords—national sovereignty, imperialism, natural resources, geography, history, time, space—are also mine, albeit in the context of Latin American literary and cultural studies. Issues of land and its ownership define Latin America's tumultuous trajectory from the colonial period to present day, explaining geography's incomparable role in diagnosing the ailments of contemporary culture. From border disputes to questions of immigration and land distribution, the geographic determines the fine line between political discord and harmony.

Despite its very public contemporary persona, geography has its roots firmly planted in an academic discipline that solidified in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Important for my purposes, it emerged in its modern incarnation with German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt's exploration of Latin American land, with his geographic practice, with literally the ways in which he *wrote the earth*, the etymology of "geography." By virtue of its very definition, geography treads between land and language in its examination of the human subject and the physical environment.

In this dissertation I examine the necessary intersection between land and language—between geographical discourse and literary writing—in Latin America's foundational narratives,

texts characterized by a concern with nation building. This concern manifests itself with the consolidation of the nascent republics into cohesive, and productive, nation-states. At the same time, there surfaces a burgeoning sense of Latin American-ness as a shared identity; writers begin to imagine a national community united by their autochthonous elements, what Richard Hartshorne identifies as “man and land” in his pioneering 1939 survey of geography.

One means of negotiating these two cultural priorities—national autonomy versus regional identity—rests in the reproduction of *geographical discourse* written by Europeans and a smattering of North Americans who had explored Latin American lands, including but not limited to Humboldt, Henry Thomas Buckle, Agustín Codazzi, and Orville Derby. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries a number of Latin American writers and statesmen begin to write such texts, and these are the very works that compose my archive. More specifically, I read three canonical narratives as the first Latin American geographies: Domingo Faustino Sarmiento’s *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie* (Argentina, 1845), Euclides da Cunha’s *Sertões* (Brazil, 1902), and Rómulo Gallegos’s *Doña Bárbara* (Venezuela, 1929). While each work is fascinating in its own right and has been studied through a variety of lenses, I find the narratives’ respective incarnations of geographical discourse particularly intriguing. Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos dramatize the negotiations between a discursive standard based on the works of European and North American naturalists—in Roberto González Echevarría’s reading, a standard that lends them authority—and the promotion of a forward-looking, historically conscious “national” geography that re-appropriates both lands and letters.

And herein lies the problem: Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos find legitimacy via the very discursive practice that had already constructed a Latin America fitting its capitalist agenda—that is, commercial geographies invested *less* in conservation and *more* in exploitation. If, for Marx, in

the bourgeois era the world appeared as a spatially diversified bundle of natural resources waiting to be discovered and extracted, then commercial geography reflects this trend—that is, this trend of constructing a systematic description of the earth’s surface as a repository of use-values. But nations cannot grow economies, maintain sovereignty, and elide imperialism through their creative destruction, as evinced in the Gallegos and Chávez epigraphs on petroleum extraction. I will thus demonstrate that this predicament results in an aesthetic departure, which, in lieu of exact replication, favors Sarmiento’s revision, Cunha’s rectification, and (what appears on the surface as) Gallegos’s rejection of previous non-Latin American geographies.

I expose these acts of *revision*, *rectification*, and *rejection* by attending to the form/content relationship in these narratives; the literary form—so often noted yet so often discarded—propels the political, institutional, and disciplinary project that is grounded in the geographic content.¹ To understand the geography, we must understand the literature by analyzing the literary devices that animate these narratives, for instance, metaphor, alliteration, polysyndeton, anaphora, even punctuation. Together, they give form to a consolidated nation-state by constructing a unified—or potentially unify-able—geographic space, a synthesis between man and land. These devices not only materialize from the landscape but also enact its very construction. From this aesthetic task emerges a political project: national consolidation as imagined through a national literature.

¹ A relatively conventional idea, the immediate relationship between form and content is one that attracts attention in myriad contexts, be they magazine advertisements, literary texts, or historiography. The form gains particular weight when employed to politicize the attempted content; there exist, then, political implications to aesthetic choices (Vico 1725; White 1987). Despite the popularity of this convention, the politics of form has gone understudied in these Latin American texts. While their formal idiosyncrasy has been noted (e.g. Piglia 1980 [on Sarmiento]; Ramos 1989 [on Sarmiento]; González Echevarría 1990 [on Sarmiento and Cunha]; Araujo 1955 [on Gallegos]; Shaw 1972 [on Gallegos]), critics have yet to systematically pursue the relation between form and the politicization of Latin American landscape.

The politics run deeper than mere theory housed in literature, however. On a practical and historical level, Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos emerge as prized literary figures alongside, and even participate in, the formation of Latin America's geographical institutions, explicitly in the case of Sarmiento and Cunha and implicitly for Gallegos. These institutions shepherd their nations away from creative destruction, indeed, away from exploitation of the natural world; this conservationist inclination appears, in one way or another, in these authors' literary trajectories.² This simultaneity—between writing and institutionalization—points to an understudied convergence between three realms: literature, politics, and geography. And this is where both aesthetics and my place in the critical conversation come into play: *Facundo*, *Os Sertões*, and *Doña Bárbara* are traditionally read as locating their authority in the discourse of science or within the didactic lessons of the national allegory (González Echevarría 1990; Sommer 1991; Costa Lima 1992). In my view, however, these readings greatly simplify the legacies of these narratives because they neglect the political implications behind the form-content relationship. But how do we fully extract the politics of these mixed forms? By moving, I claim, from the overarching, general, and somewhat nebulous category of empirical science to the specificity of geographical discourse. I will thus elaborate on the science/literature juncture (Candido 1950; Costa Lima 1984; Certeau 1986; Williams 1986; Jordanova 1986) to determine how *writing the earth* translates to *writing the nation* in Latin America's foundational narratives.

I hope to reveal the many productive avenues opened by studying the alignment between literary writing, geographical discourse, and institutional formation in Latin America. To accomplish this feat, I first excavate geography's literary and political roots down to the

² Of course, I do not intend for these "conservationist" tendencies to gloss over Sarmiento's complicity in genocide, that is, the war-craft alongside his statecraft. Rather, I speak of these institutions as a *transition* toward saving natural resources, both human subject and environment, something that comes to a head with Gallegos.

discipline's origins in Classical Antiquity (Strabo) and then the consolidation of its "classical period" (Humboldt). Geography's Humboldtian core establishes geography as the "science of statecraft," to borrow from historian Raymond Craib, while illustrating territorial knowledge's influence on Latin America's independence and anti-imperialist struggles. In the works that I study, these struggles surface through a common mediating code—that of national consolidation—and thus I ground my theoretical framework in Roberto Schwarz and Fredric Jameson's respective demands to unify the aesthetic and the social, to mediate between literary language and social life. Finally, I turn to Giambattista Vico's notion of Poetic Logic, in which he applauds the simplicity of the barbarian's language, to bolster my contention that Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos indirectly (and sometimes directly) praise the "barbaric" elements often associated with their national spaces. As these authors *write the earth* in the push toward national consolidation, they seek harmony not only between man and land, but also between man (occidental) and man (indigenous)—that is, between the competing and contradictory representatives of civilization and barbarism, of modern and pre-modernity. They achieve such accord, I maintain, through the discipline, discourse, and practice of geography.

1.2 THE POLITICAL AESTHETICS OF GEOGRAPHY: STRABO

Geography flourished in nineteenth-century América despite having entered a period of stagnation and extended dormancy in Europe until approximately the 1870s. Though geographic institutions in official and military capacity certainly came into existence as early as 1791 (Great Britain's Ordinance Survey), geographical societies in the private sector emerged more slowly,

the tentative model rising in 1788 (Britain's Royal Geographical Society, which solidifies in 1830), and the actual predecessor to all modern societies sprouting in 1821 (Paris's Société de Géographie). Not until the Napoleonic campaigns, however, was there an evident reawakening and renewed interest in the latent field. With the impending threat of invasion by French forces, European states became obliged to recognize the necessity of cartography and specialized geographical knowledge as the requisite basis for military planning (Godlewska 4; Risco 1).³

As an institutionalized discipline fundamentally aligned with the prospects of nation building, geography's crucial thrust occurred in the Americas. Between 1833 and 1935 approximately fifty societies were founded, the first in Mexico (1833, Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística) and later ones in Brazil (1838, Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro), Argentina (1854, Instituto Geográfico Argentino), and Venezuela (1935, Dirección de Cartografía). As Luz Fernanda Azuela Bernal explains in her essay on the institutionalization of geography in Mexico, national consolidation proved to be the primary impetus for the founding of these groups:

En relación con el papel de la geografía para el progreso de México, considérese por lo pronto que la Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística se fundó con el doble objetivo de construir la Carta de la República y levantar la estadística nacional. Eran tareas estratégicas y fundamentales para la consolidación del país como nación independiente, cuya dificultad requería de la intervención de los hombres de ciencia. (153-54)

³ For a country-by-country chronology of international geographical societies and Spanish colonial acquisitions, see Eduardo Barredo Risco, "La Cartoteca de la Real Sociedad Geográfica," www.realsociedadgeografica.com/es/pdf.

Cartographic ambition coalesced with statistics and strategy to create the image of a consolidated, independent nation; thus Bernal ultimately concurs with Raymond Craib's contention that "[s]tatistics and geography were sciences of statecraft" designed to project progress (22).

With designs toward nation-building, Latin America's emergent geographical institutions confirmed the discipline's original tenets as intrinsically tied to politics. If we turn to the Greek origins of geography—Strabo's *Geography* (c. 17-23 AD), arguably the earliest surviving example of a universal geography—we discover that the subject inheres in any political venture:

It seems to me excellent encouragement for the project at hand to say that geography is essentially oriented to the needs of politics. In effect, the scene of our actions is constituted by the earth and the sea that we inhabit: for small actions, small scenes; for grand actions, a large scene. The largest of all is the scene that we call the inhabited world. And that is the scene of the greatest actions. The greatest captains of war are thus those who can exercise their power over earth and sea, collecting people and cities together under a single empire, *controlled* by the same political structures. In these conditions it is clear that all of geography is oriented toward the practice of government: ... It would be easier to take control of a country if we knew its dimensions, its relative location, and the original particularities of its climate and its nature. (qtd. in Godlewska 93; emphasis in Strabo's original)

This political agenda of power and control directly aligns with language. For Strabo, whom Anne Marie Claire Godlewska describes as "fundamentally conservative and backward-looking to the glory of the Greek empire" in her *Geography Unbound* (1999), the Greek intellectual

tradition far surpassed that of the Romans, a people he perceived to be lacking cultural depth (92).⁴ But more importantly, Strabo linked geography to the immediately *aesthetic* project embraced by the Greeks. He viewed geography as a sort of poetry amongst the most supreme of endeavors, an act of the creative, subjective mind far removed from the mechanics of, say, engineering. In fact, Strabo abided by the beliefs of the ancients, who held an unabashed respect for poetry and employed it to teach even adults all that was “oriented to the social and the political and also historical”; the genre sat in stark contrast to prose, that form fashioned to convey philosophy and history but ultimately fallen because it isolated knowledge from the masses, from women and children, making it an exclusory venture available only to elite men (qtd. in Godlewska 94).

Geography, argued Strabo, stemmed from Homer, the greatest of the poets. Those who attempt to extract poetry and fable from geography (like Eratosthenes and Hipparchus, who pushed to include mathematics and measurements) thus endangered the absolute core of geography.⁵ Poetry’s value and, with that, geography’s value, resided in the realm of the abstract as opposed to the concrete tangibility of, for instance, metallurgy. This abstraction stemmed from their subjective creation. Both the poetic and the geographic maintained a necessary relationship with their creators; put plainly, both relied on the subjective tendencies and truthful

⁴ This lack of cultural depth does not mean a lack of smarts, however. Strabo compliments the Roman tenacity, noting that “this people, beginning from the single city of Rome, obtained possession of the whole of Italy, by warfare and prudent administration; and how, afterwards, following the same wise course, they added the countries all around it to their dominion” (Strabo 296). For Strabo, acquiring territory is tantamount to success.

⁵ In the 1857 Preface to *The Geography of Strabo*, W. Falconer explains that Strabo idolizes Homer to a fault: “It is a lively, well-written book, intended to be read, and forms a striking contrast to the geography of Ptolemy. His language is simple, appropriate to the matter, without affectation, and most clear and intelligible, except in those passages where the text has been corrupted. Like many other Greeks, Strabo looked upon Homer as the depository of all knowledge, but he frequently labours to interpret the poet’s meaning in a manner highly uncritical. What Homer only partially knew or conjectured, Strabo has made the basis of his description, when he might have given an independent description, founded on the actual knowledge of his time: the observations apply especially to his books on Greece” (ix). See Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, Volume 3, Trans. H.C. Hamilton and W. Falconer, London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854.

willingness of their architects, thereby suggesting room for interpretation. Geography thus shared more in common with poetry in “spirit, purpose, and form of thought than to ‘geometry’” (Godlewska 94-95).

In the Latin American context, we can apply Strabo’s unification of aesthetics and politics to the region’s literature. Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos—with their interlaced literary and political agendas—appropriate a Strabonic incarnation of aestheticized geographical discourse in an effort to advance their respective nations, to, in Strabo’s words, “take control of a country” by understanding and portraying “its dimensions, its relative location, and the original particularities of its climate and its nature.” And this control ultimately surfaces as they create their discursive landscapes in the push toward national consolidation.

1.3 AESTHETICIZED GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE IN PRACTICE: ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT

To illustrate this aesthetic—and so subjective—valorization of the land, I turn to the origins of geographical discourse’s intersection with national consolidation in Latin America, which can be summed up in one, non-American, name: Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859). Just as Marco Polo’s exultant tales of the Orient’s spices and silks resounded through medieval Europe, just as Columbus’s fabulous accounts of naked natives, lush vegetation, and abundant gold mesmerized the Spanish crown, so Humboldt’s scientific travelogues and cartographic endeavors drew a geography that would captivate and create in both the Old and the New Worlds, both in his times and in our present.

Humboldt disembarked with Aimé Bonpland, his French traveling companion, upon America's soils armed not with weapons and shields but rather with a cache of classifying devices that included everything from barometers to compasses, from charting instruments to astrolabes, and, most importantly, from feather pens to papers.⁶ These pens and their recordings would, according to Simón Bolívar, change the face of America: Humboldt, declared Bolívar in an 1821 letter, “ha arrancado [América] de la ignorancia y con su pluma la ha pintado tan bella como su propia naturaleza” (in Humboldt, *Cartas Americanas*, 266). Bolívar—and then subsequently Italian cartographer Agustín Codazzi—cannot but acknowledge Humboldt's inadvertent cartographic assistance in the military's traversal of the region. In fact, Codazzi attributes his 1840 map of Venezuela's military campaigns to Humboldt's previous work, which allowed Bolívar's proposed battles to come to fruition (*Memorias...* 76-77).⁷ In the quest for independence, the armies needed first to navigate the terrain; as the most accurate image of the hitherto unmapped territories, Humboldt's maps allowed such traversals. Geography and cartography thus acquired significant clout in advancing the independence projects of the budding American nations.

This geographic knowledge and its textual enactment indicate Humboldt's entire immersion in his Enlightenment surroundings. Certainly, his pursuit to concretize his standing as a man of letters took place in a Rousseau fashion—that is, via science and experimentation performed on voyages and then meticulously detailed in books that would create a written image of visited lands; Ángela Pérez-Mejía rightly notes that these images “contributed to European

⁶ Bonpland was also Humboldt's presumed lover. See Helmut de Terra's *The Life and Times of Alexander von Humboldt, 1769-1859*. New York: Knopf, 1955.

⁷ As I will further develop in Chapter 4, Codazzi points out that Humboldt's works were something of a springboard for all future expeditions, be they scientific or military. See Mario Longhena, ed. *Memorias de Agustín Codazzi*. Trans. Andrés Soriano Lleras and Fr. Alberto Lee López. Bogotá: Publicaciones del Banco de la República, 1973.

imperial development as much as Oriental silks and New World gold had done” (12). In this sense, then, we can posit Humboldt as Spanish America’s personal ambassador of Enlightenment ideals.⁸ His journeys and writings acquired the authority of precision, that is, the power bestowed upon the most accurate geographical description of America, universally accepted both in the Old and New Worlds (Pratt 111); with Humboldt, the new continent garnered its own entry in the encyclopedia of world geography.⁹ This entry, however, must be noted as being a production of Humboldt himself—in other words, he was the cartographer of his own geography, one who would represent the landscape through the unique discourse by which it would forever be named.

The power of naming is indeed incontrovertible. Let us not forget Gabriel García Márquez’s introductory chapter to *Cien años de soledad* (1967), in which “el mundo era tan

⁸ Leopoldo Zea explains that these very Enlightenment ideals leave Humboldt with a heightened sense of equality, which is of particular importance in the context of indigenous rights. Unlike “los colonizadores del otro lado” who perceived the native inhabitants to be “salvajes, primitivos, sin redención alguna porque carecían de humanidad,” Humboldt was different. “De esta Europa vendrá también Alejandro de Humboldt. Impregnado filosóficamente por el Siglo de las Luces y la nostalgia por un mundo romántico más sencillo, más cercano al Paraíso que vio Colón, como el “buen salvaje” de Juan Jacobo Rousseau. [...] Humboldt vio en América gente distinta, pero no menos humanamente valiosa que cualquiera otra de la tierra. En *Cosmos* dice: ‘Hay pueblos más capaces de civilización, más altamente cultivados, ennoblecidos por la cultura del espíritu, pero no pueblos más nobles que otros’” (63-64). This commitment to equality strikes me as interesting insofar as Humboldt tends to perceive the land as empty, indeed, as lacking inhabitants that might want equal rights; this incogruency aside, we will see an incarnation of this respect replicated in the works of Agustín Codazzi. See “El Paraíso: de Colón a Humboldt,” in *De Colón a Humboldt*, eds. Leopoldo Zea and Mario Magallón, México D.F., Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1999: 61-68.

⁹ As Jason Wilson informs us in his Introduction to Humboldt’s *Personal Narrative*, Humboldt’s South American expedition fortuitously occurred *prior* to the Independence struggles, a moment that created prompt difficulty if not sheer impossibility for foreign travelers. Whereas the Spanish Crown obsessively restricted foreign entrance to its colonies, Portugal enacted an outright prohibition to travel within Brazil between 1823-1840. Humboldt’s written images were thus the sole images available to Europeans for quite some time; he conditioned, in M. Deas’s words, “the way in which nineteenth-century Europe viewed Latin America”—to be sure, Mary Louise Pratt’s argument in *Imperial Eyes* (qtd. in Wilson liii). Humboldt himself declares an ominous premonition: “I fear that for many years no foreign traveller will be able to cross those countries I visited. This circumstance may increase the interest of a work that portrays the state of the greater part of the Spanish colonies at the turn of the nineteenth century” (*Personal Narrative* 13). Humboldt’s publication of *Voyage aux régions équinoxiales du nouveau continent, fait en 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803 et 1804* certainly indicates his long-lasting control over the discursive America, for the process began in 1805 and continued until 1834 after the production of thirty folio and quarto volumes. That the six-year journey took twenty-nine years to document underscores Humboldt’s goal to classify and record every aspect of his expedition so as to fashion the consummate portrayal of Spanish America. And it is this lengthy portrayal that rendered America apt for inclusion in world geography.

reciente, que muchas cosas carecían de nombre, y para mencionarlas había que señalarlas con el dedo” (9). In this novelistic realm of prehistory, objects and concepts are discovered and named with the assistance of the “astrolabio, la brújula y el sextante,” the very historical instruments accompanying Humboldt and company on their expeditions (12). In both history and its fictional rewriting, instrumental *re*discovery and subsequent discursive naming mark the overcoming of the newness of the “new” world. But just like the Falkland Islands continue to be the Islas Malvinas in Latin America, worlds cannot—despite insistence from any quality or quantity of hegemonic powers—simply be renamed without a struggle.

Humboldt reveals his awareness of such a fact. His foresight with regard to the potentially independence-minded America merits commendation, although, when seen in hindsight, the thrust towards separation seems a transparent probability. Humboldt, mindful that civil unrest and an eventual threat to colonial control was underway, cites a letter from the respected Fray Antonio de San Miguel in his commissioned *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* (1811) in which the clergyman fervidly declares,

If the new legislation which Spain expects with impatience do not occupy itself with the situation of the Indians and people of color, the influence which the clergy possess over the hearts of these unfortunate people, however great it may be, will not be sufficient to contain them in the submission and respect due to their sovereign. (196)

Humboldt adds to the Bishop’s warning that increased comfort and wealth among the native population would not only be financially beneficial for the Crown but also ensure the safety of the white inhabitants of the Americas, ominously closing Book II Chapter VI with the pronouncement “[i]t is therefore of the greatest importance, even for the security of the

European families established for ages in the continent of the new world, that they should interest themselves in the Indians, and rescue them from their present barbarous, abject, and miserable condition” (203).

Nor is the concern for sovereignty, prosperity, and security limited to the “Indian problem.” Rather, Humboldt notes that the preoccupation extends to the conflicted relations between the Spanish-born *peninsulares* and the American-born *criollos*. By virtue of place of birth, each group maintains their respective superiority. In other words, whites born on American lands, Humboldt remarks, consistently prefer the nomenclature of American as opposed to, say, Spaniard or Creole and, furthermore, prefer French or English intellectual work as opposed to Spanish; the Spaniards, Humboldt counterposes, sustain their “decided preponderance over the rest of Europe” (210-11). He is quick to point out that this preponderance is often without reason: “The most miserable European, without education, and without intellectual cultivation, thinks himself superior to the whites born in the new continent” (205). It should come as no surprise, consequently, that the Creole bureaucratic class—Americans, as they preferred to be called—sought independence from a land and peoples that indiscriminately assumed an unfounded superiority.

Following Pérez-Mejía, we can argue that from Humboldt’s interaction with this bureaucratic class, two distinct but equally beneficial discourses emerge. First and foremost, Humboldt’s depiction of Latin American geography unfolds with such scientific and historical finesse that it garners the status of the region’s “truth.” Meanwhile, the ruling elite on the perilous cusp of power welcomes his observations with such applause and so resonant an echo that the character “Humboldt” and his travelogue script achieve a deliberately designated lead role in the drama of nation-building discourse (58). Sarmiento himself includes Humboldt, along

with the painter Rugendas, as the two Europeans to “have portrayed America most truthfully” (qtd. in Wilson xxxix). Bolívar, similarly, writes, “[d]esde los primeros años de mi juventud tuve la honra de cultivar la amistad de señor Bonpland y del Barón de Humboldt, cuyo saber ha hecho más bien a la América que todos los conquistadores” (Bolívar, in *Cartas del Libertador*, III, 264). He refers, after all, to Humboldt as “el descubridor del Nuevo Mundo” in an 1823 letter (in *Papeles de Bolívar*, 34). As Mary Louise Pratt notes, “[c]ertainly Humboldt was looking for what he found in the new continent, and found what he was looking for” (124). The same might be said about America with regard to Humboldt himself.

Humboldt’s rediscovery, accordingly, occurs in the realm of the discursive. His words and sentences and paragraphs craft the American landscape as engagingly as possible in order to captivate both global and local audiences. Perhaps due to his active personal relationship with Goethe—certainly the preeminent figure of German Romanticism, renowned not only for his poetry and plays but also for his structural theories on plants and animals—Humboldt’s interest in the sciences was far from limited to the technical sphere. Rather, his link to the German

Romantic movement surfaces in his integration of aesthetics and natural investigation.¹⁰ Humboldt was, after all, a literati at heart, brother of writer Wilhelm von Humboldt and active participant in “liberal Jewish salons rather than those of the German aristocracy” (Pratt 115). Not only revered by the American independence-seekers (who were also, incidentally, writers), Humboldt enjoyed the praise of Darwin (who sought to appropriate his vivacious language), Balzac, Hugo, Chateaubriand, Flaubert, Lord Byron, Thoreau, Emerson and a host of other literary figures (Wilson xxxviii).

Nevertheless, while most would agree that Humboldt’s geographical and political observations engage in terms of both form and content, many of his scientifically oriented contemporaries thought him to be boring, repetitive, rambling. Humboldt himself thought the criticism hearkened back to his digressions, and, most importantly, to more glaring faults in style, specifically his tendency toward the poetic. In an 1834 letter to Varnhagen von Ense, he wistfully laments his “unfortunate propensity to poetical expressions” (qtd. in Wilson lvii). Yet, at the same time, Humboldt acknowledges in his *Cosmos* (1849) the need to avoid “mere

¹⁰ Humboldt’s inclination toward melding together already known facts as opposed to discovering new, isolated ones reveals his intrigue with nature’s harmonious balance, its “rapports,” a prominent Humboldtian term (Wilson l). The very essence of life, for Humboldt, thrives in demonstrating the interconnectedness of the world, of why certain men live in certain lands, of a Goethe-inspired all-embracing holistic view of nature, one stemming from an interlocking whole based on notions of *urform*, *urpflanze*, and *urtier* (Wilson xlvi). Humboldt’s ultimate vision, then, revolves around mutual interrelationships as opposed to individual occurrences; this focus threads its way through each paragraph of his *Personal Narrative*. “The discovery of a new genus,” he declares, “seemed to me far less interesting than an observation on the geographical relations of plants, or the migration of social plants, and the heights that different plants reach on the peaks of the cordilleras” (6). In another six pages he underscores the emphasis on interrelations several times, writing that he and Bonpland considered every phenomena “according to the relations they each have with one another” and then, again, he reiterates that he “had arranged the facts not as they presented themselves individually but in their relationships to each other” (9-10). The thought is repeated, for his mission stems from a desire to “link so many different fields of research in a narrative,” to describe phenomena “as they appear to [him], then [...] consider their individual relations to the whole” (11-12). And, for those who have yet to understand, he writes, “Nowhere else [but America] does nature so vividly suggest general ideas on the cause of events, and their mutual interrelationships” (12). Humboldt’s projection towards holism continues in the three national narratives that I have selected for my dissertation, for the desire is to unite disjointed elements in the creation of a whole—to unite different cultures, to unite civilization and barbarism, to unite poetry and geography. It is, as Humboldt relates it, “historical narrative [interrupted] with straightforward descriptions” (*Personal Narrative* 12).

encyclopedic aggregation” of geographical findings. “The higher the point of view,” he declares, “the greater is the necessity for a systematic mode of treating the subject in language at once animated and picturesque” (36-37).¹¹

That Humboldt’s systematic mode simultaneously succeeds in and exhausts in its grandiose mission to represent the American landscape stems from what Pratt describes as the “interweaving of visual and emotive language with classificatory and technical work” (121). “Here is a prose,” she continues, “that fatigues not by flatness or tedium, as the Linnaeans sometimes did, but by a dramatic and arrhythmic ebb and flow that would have been intensified by oral delivery” (123). Though accurate in her observation, Pratt falls shy of pinpointing Humboldt’s force. Rather than dry, analytical statistics conveyed in *prose*, the Baron’s “ebb and flow” exudes the *poetry* of Strabo and of Classical Antiquity, a language indeed designed for the act of performance. With his exuberant language, Humboldt, the “founder” and thus paternal figure of modern geography, speaks directly to the discipline’s investment in poetry and politics.¹² It should come as little surprise, then, that Humboldt’s New World admirers—this is to say, Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos—should inherit and even emulate this original quality.

Emulation does not translate into replication, however. Though each author explicitly reproduces key Humboldtian rhetorical figures—for example, the metaphor of land as water, a hypothetical traveler from whose vantage point we see the terrain, the discourse of emptiness—

¹¹ I will return to Humboldt’s “propensity to poetical expressions” in Chapter 2, where I discuss Sarmiento’s tendency to do things bigger and better than his models, in particular, Alexander von Humboldt.

¹² In his now canonized *The Nature of Geography* (1939), Richard Hartshorne traces the discipline’s origins in Classical Antiquity (Strabo), its establishment as a modern science (Kant), and then, most importantly, the consolidation of its “classical period” (Humboldt and Ritter). In Humboldt and Ritter we find the fundamental concepts of geography adhered to in present times, though, Hartshorne pointedly notes, “had neither of these men lived, the development of geography after 1800 would have led ultimately, even though far more slowly, to something like that which we now know” (35). No matter what *would* have happened, it is, ultimately, Humboldt and Ritter who concretized the formal discipline in the mode appropriated by Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos.

the duplication then becomes transformed into dialogue. This conversation also extends to those scientists and naturalists who were, in some way or another, responding to Alexander von Humboldt's studies, including but not limited to Agustín Codazzi, Henry Thomas Buckle, and Orville Derby. In each chapter case study, then, I examine the specific dynamics of these geographical relationships, which I refer to as Sarmiento's revision, Cunha's rectification, and Gallegos's apparent rejection of non-Latin American geographical treatises. By tracing how previous, non-Latin American works inform their narratives but are subsequently fitted to the Latin American context, I illustrate geographical discourse's ability to claim and reclaim both lands and letters from the grips of occidental geography.

1.4 INDEPENDENCE, IMPERIALISM, AND TERRITORIAL KNOWLEDGE

With the assistance of Humboldt's geographical advances in the territories of Nueva Granada, the colonies successfully sought and attained independence. The Spanish Empire, consequently, came to realize that an objective knowledge of the land was absolutely vital to control it or to transform it.¹³ After all, Humboldt's own motivation for the discursive naming and taming of American lands emerged from the conscious belief that only science might allow the mind to observe and to comprehend the real world; science, he thought, "brings you closer to reality" (qtd. in Wilson lxii).

¹³ Their rather belated comprehension of geography's eminence is curious, specifically when Humboldt's explicit declaration to King Charles and Queen Isabella—that sovereign power and geographical knowledge are inextricably connected—is taken into consideration. "I have already indicated in the analysis of my maps," Humboldt declares in the *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain*, "the advantage which might be drawn by the government from this extraordinary aptitude in constructing a map of the country" (218). I shall return to this curiosity in my analysis of *Facundo*.

The geographical approaches thus developed upon the eighteenth-century's end continued to serve as the paradigmatic model throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, so that in certain territories—particularly Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines—Spain launched new surveys and geographical reconnaissance projects intended to undergird a new administration. Upon first realizing the necessity for science and scientists in effective exploitation of the colonies and then, subsequently, the necessity of geography in the Enlightenment program of scientific research, Spain sought not only cartographic advances but also regional descriptions, geographical statistics, studies of the natural environment, and analyses of political economy. Political reforms, however, were invested less in law making and more in geographical, statistical, and political research; by the 1870s exploration had become the norm for European imperialism, and it manifested itself in the expansion of geographical knowledge and the ideological manipulation of spatial concepts (Capel 58-64). Following the contemporary arguments of Edward Said, then, imperialism amounted to an act of geographical violence whereby space was explored, reconstructed, re-named, and controlled. But as he declares in *Orientalism* (1978), “if there is anything that radically distinguishes the imagination of anti-imperialism it is the primacy of the geographical” (77). The requirement for geography, accordingly, extends to the realm of both imperialist *and* anti-imperialist designs.

Latin American statesmen were well aware of this necessity. As a latecomer to the geographical game, however, Spain responded to the colonial threat with the frantic and haphazard 1876 foundation of the Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid, an organization bequeathed the responsibility of advancing and diffusing geographical knowledge of the Spanish territory and its overseas provinces. Spanish geographers and geographical societies fomented public opinion and public policy while actively participating in exploratory expeditions and

appropriating territory. Yet as late as 1889 the secretary of the Sociedad Geográfica, Ricardo Bertrán y Rózpide, continued to bemoan the consequences of Spain's minute use of geography:

The earth, we repeat, will belong to whoever knows it best. It is not possible to use the wealth that a country contains, nor to govern its inhabitants in a manner keeping with the innate, historical condition of their race, without a profound knowledge of the people and the land. If we lack this knowledge, we will continually face economic and political questions with false or incomplete information, we will commit errors, we will persevere with it, and there will come a time when people will protest, the land will be lost, and the various national groups divided. (qtd. in Capel 71, from *Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfica* 17, 1889)

Despite this explicit and (which has since proved) prophetic warning, few paid heed to the complex relationship between “the people and the land” in the colonies, and the land was indeed lost. This loss was cemented on the eve of colonial defeat in 1897, when Spain's main geographer, Rafael Torres Campos, ruefully lamented in his annual report to the Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid that “[w]e lost the colonies because we didn't know any geography” (qtd. in Capel 73, from *Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfica* 121, 1897).

By detailing this systematic chronology of geography's rise to prominence, I strive to demonstrate that three distinct yet coeval political branches of the discipline come to the fore. There exists, foremost, the anti- or post-colonial geography of the revolutionary liberals who appropriate Humboldt's geographical advances in order to escape the yoke of colonialism. Nearly in tandem is the intra-colonial geography of the nation-building liberals who actively seek territorial knowledge so as to develop sovereign nations committed to natural conservation. And, finally, in what can only be described as a last gasp, we arrive at the colonial, and

exploitative, geography of Spain, the empire clenching its territories with whitened knuckles to no avail. Geographical awareness thus presents itself as a key factor across the gamut of imperial success or failure.

1.5 THE *ACCIDENTAL* MISREADING

By outlining geography's political undercurrents and constant presence in America's independence struggles, I wish in part to extend Roberto González Echevarría's argument for science as *the* hegemonic discourse of the nineteenth century. In his *Myth & Archive* (1990), González Echevarría argues that the novel's defiance of its own categorical designation as "literature" remains its most prominent characteristic: "The desire not to be literary, to break with *belles-lettres*, is the most tenacious element in the novel" (7). In an effort to fulfill this generic defiance and simultaneously participate in social life, the novel proceeds to mimic those contemporary documents that are imbued with ideological authority. Starting with the legal documents of sixteenth-century Spain, moving on to the scientific discourse of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and then, finally, ending with the anthropological and ethnographic studies of the twentieth century, González Echevarría traces Latin American narrative's obsession with legitimacy and authority.

Relevant to my argument is González Echevarría's emphasis on scientific discourse as the dominant mode of authority in nineteenth-century Latin America. He maintains that by embracing the scientific travelogues of the period as models to emulate, Latin American writers sought not to replicate precise analysis and description of Latin American nature but rather to

appropriate the authority of European science in order to create a legitimate and singular regional narrative: “The new Latin American narrative absorbs this second voyage, this pilgrimage in search of Latin American historical uniqueness through the textual mediation of European science” (96). European travelers, contends González Echevarría, fashioned a historical depiction of Latin American nature as the foundation upon which might rest “an autonomous and distinct Latin American being” (106).

That Latin American writers appropriated the discourse of science and thus followed in suit of European travelers cannot be denied. Yet I insist that González Echevarría, in his commendable effort to neatly categorize the influential discourses with their respective epochs—juridical/sixteenth century, scientific/eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, anthropological/twentieth century—falls short of identifying the exact discourse nourishing the writers pertinent to my dissertation. Like Humboldt, and, as such, like Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos, we should move from the general (that is, the discourse of science) to the particular (in other words, the discourse of geography) when considering the discursive practices influencing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Latin American narrative. Put plainly, then, I argue in my dissertation that we take González Echevarría a step further; to do so, I look beyond “science” as *the* hegemonic discourse, thereby homing in on geography as the more specific force of authorization. I defend this move in more detail in Chapter 2, where I examine González Echevarría’s use of the geographical term *accidente*, which he loosely translates as being a literal accident. By tracing the word’s etymology and its multiple appearances in the Sarmentine corpus, I determine that González Echevarría’s appeal to the broad category “science”—and his subsequent conclusions—are based on a misreading of the term.

Like González Echevarría, many critics have sought to interpret the presence of science, particularly nature, in Latin American narrative. Indeed, literary discussions of Latin American nature have recently been reestablished (e.g. Nouzeilles 2002; Mignolo 2005; French 2005; Miller 2007), yet this scholarship re-reads nature, for the most part, as a primary source for the aesthetics of neocolonialism in Latin America. In contrast, I propose an analysis that departs from the empirically problematic notion of *nature* and looks instead to how the more immediately political category of *land* (always subject to unequal distribution) is configured at the confluence of geographical and literary discourse.¹⁴ By focusing on the narrative production of the region's landscape, my study aims to be the first transnational attempt to articulate and to analyze the relations between geography (as a science) and literature (as an aesthetic project) in Latin America. Geography—literally, *writing the earth*—has recently gained new strength in mainstream intellectual life as a mode of understanding spatial limits and constraints, of analyzing response to place based on race, class, or gender, of cultivating difference, identity, and ideology (e.g. Woodward 1998; Harley 2001; Harvey 2006). Understanding land, then, is crucial to understanding man, and this relation can only be articulated through language. By demonstrating that the form/content relationship draws sustenance from geographical discourse in these seminal works, I offer an entrance into the cultural politics of this complex matrix. As I analyze the ways in which Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos converse with and are molded by the

¹⁴ Nature both conceptually and etymologically suggests a space without humans. Land, on the contrary, is an objective space, one that might or might not have inhabitants. For the purposes of this project, then, I distinguish between the terms based on their *Oxford English Dictionary* definitions. Nature is “the phenomena of the physical world collectively; *esp.* plants, animals, and other features and products of the earth itself, as opposed to humans and human creations.” Land, on the contrary, is “a part of the earth's surface marked off by natural or political boundaries or considered as an integral section of the globe; a country, territory. Also put for the people of a country.” Land might also be thought of as “the (cultivable) earth viewed as a repository of natural resources and the chief source of human sustenance or livelihood.” In this shift from exploitation (a repository of natural resources) to conservation (a part of the earth's surface marked off by natural or political boundaries) we thus also see a change in usage and perception of *land*, which also implies man in both incarnations.

representatives of occidental geography, I illustrate the shift from an extraction-based demarcation to a conservation-minded territorial knowledge. Within their narrative constructs, these authors additionally participate in the formation of their nations' respective geographical institutions. By examining this institutional interaction and then closely reading the literary language in *Facundo*, *Os Sertões*, and *Doña Bárbara*, I explore how and why *writing the earth* translates to *writing the nation* in these texts.

Finally, my study is relevant to questions of political and spatial identity in the modern world. Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos were among the first to articulate in narrative form complex notions of space and place that would, in turn, serve to complicate notions of Latin American difference. In their aesthetic production, man—and thus culture—stems from the land. Geography, for these selected writers, becomes a way of speaking whereby topography and climate affect the way a culture imagines space and time—how exceptional or singular attitudes toward space emerge, for example, from a people's surrounding horizons, deserts, oceans, jungles, mountains, or plains. The aesthetic production of Latin American land undeniably maintains an aura of exceptionality in the twenty-first century, even if now dramatically shifted to an apocalyptic urban landscape. It thus seems both wise and relevant to take account of how this land was wrought and written in the past so as to understand its contemporary consequences and potential as a site for the production of culture. How have Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos contributed to the geographic imaginary in Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela? And how does this imaginary influence matters of national interest, including but not limited to exploitation of natural resources, conservation, imperialism, and sovereignty?

1.6 LAND TO LANGUAGE, LANGUAGE TO LAND: MEDIATION

To approach these questions, I need to define and clarify my conceptual apparatus. Following David Harvey in his *Explanation in Geography* (1969), I recognize that differentiating between geography and other disciplines—science specifically—results in an acute dilemma: geography, after all, departs from the scientific method in most of its incarnations and, as Harvey suggests, looks in particular to geology and physics in an effort toward explanation (27). Best, then, would be to think of geography as an ever-evolving term regarding the scholarly domination of space. Its definition need not be transcendental but rather one that transforms with the modes of production and consequent social formations. Harvey's discussion of geography in *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989) also shapes my interpretation of Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos; here, he describes the Enlightenment project as “the first great surge of modernist thinking, [which] took the domination of nature as a necessary condition of human emancipation. Since space is a ‘fact’ of nature, this meant that the conquest and rational ordering of space became an integral part of the modernizing project” (249).

This modernizing project is rendered impossible without language. I often use the term *poetry* or *poetics* to describe the literary language that Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos employ; Sarmiento and Gallegos also refer to their *poesía* on several occasions. But considering that their sense of “poetry” is transient, indeed, nearly synonymous with “spontaneity,” I suggest that we understand their—and therefore my—usage of the expression in the Jamesonian sense of style, i.e. a will to style that can be read as a socially symbolic act (*Political Unconscious* 225). Under the rubric of style, we can consider their unification of form and content—the Vichean conceptualization of poetry, in other words—outside the parameters of proper verse. I offer an

analysis of such styles via the tools of literary analysis and as put forth by M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 9th ed.: “Style has traditionally been defined as the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse—as *how* speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say. The style specific to a particular work or writer, or else distinctive of a type of writings, has been analyzed in such terms as the rhetorical situation and aim (see *rhetoric*); the characteristic *diction*, or choice of words; the type of sentence structure and *syntax*; and the density and kinds of *figurative language*” (349, emphases in original).

I analyze such stylistic devices—rhetoric, diction, syntax, figurative language—to examine the ways in which Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos write the land as well as break down the component parts of two otherwise incongruent registers; literature and geography align in my dissertation under the umbrella of national consolidation. By thinking them together, I strive for a better political understanding of the specific form-content relations in these writers’ monumental texts. Following Roberto Schwarz and Fredric Jameson, I put the poetic into conversation with the political. I abide by Schwarz’s call to arms to conscientiously avoid the “current habit of dividing the aesthetic from the social” (19). The aesthetic must always, according to Schwarz, dialogue with the social. He maintains—in adherence to Walter Benjamin’s *stereoscopic* line of thinking—that provocative literary exploration best stems from “the close study of spheres distant from one another, together with an intuition into the totality that then emerges” (22). Through analysis of the geographic in conjunction with the literary—in other words, “materials and formations engendered (in the final analysis) outside of its own literary domain”—my project seeks to reveal the “substance” and “dynamism” rampant in the selected national narratives (Schwarz 22).

This process of navigation between the aesthetic (poetry) and the social (geography) requires the concept of *mediation*, for which I turn again to Fredric Jameson. In tandem with Schwarz's insistence to coalesce the aesthetic with the social, we find in Jameson's *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1982) the declaration that *all* literary interpretation should seek a political entrance, for politics should be, in the critic's words, "the absolute horizon of all reading" (17). The ability to enact a political interpretation, however, requires that readers actively engage with and expose the veiled role of the political unconscious. Upon appropriating Freud's thought that each individual's unconscious functions as a locus of repressed desires, Jameson argues that to answer "What does [the text] mean?", readers must approach interpretation with regard to the unconscious or, at the very least, "some mechanism of mystification or repression in terms of which it would make sense to seek a latent meaning behind a manifest one" (58, 60). Only via literary interpretation—this is to say, excavation through the literal—can readers mine to the core of the political unconscious: the history of class struggle (20). In order to surface the realities of this volatile history, Jameson resorts to "mediation," a term crafted to explain the interrelations between two differing levels of reality: social life and literary language. While mediation requires the invention of a code that "can be applied equally to two or more distinct objects," the objects themselves are necessarily mediated though not obliged to invoke similar messages or perform similar acts (225). Rather, the mediating codes allow interpretation because they themselves are intermediaries employing the same conceptual terminology to treat disparate registers; by melding difference with similarity, mediation promotes coherence and continuity, thus reinstating "the lost unity of social life" (226). The objective point of mediation, in Jameson's words, is "the possibility of reading a given style as a projected solution, on the aesthetic or imaginary level, to a genuinely

contradictory situation in the concrete world of everyday social life” (225). Returning to the aforementioned poetics, then, the practice of mediation allows us to read a writer’s “will to style” as a socially symbolic act (225).

For the purposes of my dissertation, mediation between the social (in other words, geography, or the study of relations between man and land) and the aesthetic (that is, the literary language employed to represent that land) serves as an intermediary between these two otherwise incongruent spheres; the mediating code rests in the arena of national consolidation, what Jameson would refer to as “political domination” (266). I argue, on the one hand, that both geography as ideological production and poetry as aesthetic production must first be understood vis-à-vis the concrete situation to which they are both responses: that of national consolidation in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Latin America. On the other hand, I demonstrate that Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos may best be located in history if we recognize their stylistic practices as responses to previous geographic treatises about Latin America written by Europeans and North Americans. In order to effectively contemplate national consolidation in Latin America as explicated by the three writers that I have chosen for my dissertation, we must first understand their intellectual contexts and forebears and, subsequently, their aesthetic appropriation and rendition of that discourse. In so doing, we can think two distinct realities (language and geography) together in a meaningful way.

That we seek meaning requires that we retain the “manifest” political tones of Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos as surface currents bubbling in the realm of the obvious. Rather, we ought to look to the “latent meaning” behind their primary mediating code of national consolidation. What subtext underlies their invoking of land to literarily write the nation? How do they unite poetry and geography in the political act of giving form to content? So as to shed light on these

questions, I rigorously analyze the language, especially the uses of metaphor, in the selected works. Metaphor reigns supreme in these narratives where, for example, the Argentine *pampa*, the Brazilian *sertão*, and the Venezuelan *llano* each acquire the explicit and implicit qualities of the sea, chief among them its limitless expanse and unreachable horizon. Land, here, *is* water; Facundo Quiroga *is* tiger; the Republican army *is* barbarism; Santos Luzardo *is* the light of civilization. These metaphors suggest the recurrent unification of disparate elements, but the literary device appears to different ends in each narrative: in Sarmiento and Cunha, it surfaces to create alignments between the known and the unknown, thereby demystifying and familiarizing both man and land. In Gallegos, on the contrary, metaphor defamiliarizes the unknown of the land, thereby accentuating its strangeness. I sense in these disparities a difference in the modernizing agendas of each author, and it is this very trajectory that I hope to reveal to readers.

Their varied agendas aside, Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos employ their rhetorical authority to map the Latin American road to progress by allowing their language to mimic as well as to construct the contradictions, ambiguities, and tensions rampant in each national landscape. Their writing strives to demonstrate the parallels between human life and the natural world, and if, as Ludmilla Jordanova indicates in *Languages of Nature* (1986), “[i]deas like division of labour, progress and hierarchy appeared to have equal explanatory power in both realms,” then “[t]his raises the question of metaphor—was it that society and nature were *like* each other, that is, linked through metaphorical language, or was it rather that they were different aspects of the *same* thing for which only one language was needed, social phenomena being merely more complex than organic ones?” (Jordanova 39, emphases in original). Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos might argue for the former, for only through metaphor might we appropriate—or, should we say, civilize—the force of the land, of the primitive, of the barbaric.

1.7 METAPHOR AND THE PRIMITIVE: VICO'S POETIC LOGIC

Thus far I have attempted to methodologically outline geography's rise to political eminence, its inherent relationship with poetry, and its relevance and replication, particularly with regard to Humboldt, in Latin American letters. Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos create their own rendition of geographical discourse, one markedly literary in its unification of form and content, in its appeal to metaphor. These writers and statesmen strive, moreover, to outline the parameters of a national literature by looking to its land; only through the land might readers understand the national man. It is important to note that this man—the Argentine *gaucho*, the Brazilian *jagunço*, the Venezuelan *llanero*—exudes barbarity at its highest form. He is primitive, violent, savage. Yet, the three narratives selected for my dissertation elevate this barbarous figure—wittingly or not—by extension of their poetic language; poetic representation of the negative alludes to potential respect for that very negativity. In light of this observation, I turn to Vico's notion of Poetic Logic to hypothesize that in their embracing of poetry, Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos actually embrace the language of primitive man—this is to say, the barbaric man. Their poetic process begins, incidentally, with metaphor.

In his essay “The Tropics of History: The Deep Structure of *New Science*,” Hayden White asks, “What is the nature of the creative power of language?” (203). He contends that the answer can be found not in Vico's concept of poetic imagination but rather in his theory of *metaphor*, which is developed in the context of, and as the key to, his discussion of poetic logic.

For Vico, poetic logic refers to the manner in which forms, as comprehended by primitive man, are signified. Because barbarians lacked the ability to analyze and to apprehend abstraction, they had to resort to their fantasy to understand the world. Vico contends that

“poetic wisdom must have begun with a metaphysics which, unlike the *rational* and *abstract* metaphysics of today’s scholars, sprang from the senses and imagination of the first people” (144, emphasis added). Therefore, Vico asserts that the first men’s knowledge of things was not “rational and abstract,” but rather felt and imagined, and, in this vein, he denounces the metaphysics—the focus on the rational and the abstract—of his contemporaries. He states:

The countless abstract expressions which permeate our languages today have divorced our civilized thought from the senses, even among the common people. The art of writing has greatly refined the nature of our thought; and the use of numbers had intellectualized it, so to speak, even among the masses, who know how to count and reckon. [...] We are likewise incapable of entering into the vast imaginative powers of the earliest people. Their minds were in no way abstract, refined, or intellectualized; rather, they were completely sunk in their senses, numbed by their passions, and buried in their bodies. [...] [W]e can barely understand, and by no means imagine, the thinking of the early people who founded pagan antiquity. (147)

Denouncing both his precursors Aristotle and Plato as well as his contemporaries Patrizi, Caesar, and Castelvetro, Vico claims that, “unlike them, we have discovered that poetry was born sublime precisely because it lacked rationality” (149).

Poetry, thus, is a primitive necessity, a result of curiosity that “sprang naturally from their ignorance of causes” (144). “The earliest people of the pagan nations” could only create by resorting to their imagination, which was “grossly physical,” indicating an embodiment of language that the philosopher suggests “made their creation wonderfully sublime” (145). Vico describes the giants’ reaction to the first “frightening thunderclaps and lightning bolts,”

recounting that in their ignorance, “[the giants] imagined the heavens as a great living body, and in this manifestation, they called the sky Jupiter”; he proceeds with the definition that, “Jupiter was born naturally in poetry as *divine archetype* or *imaginative universal*” (146, emphases mine). The concept of “imaginative universal” appears to be the predecessor of the metaphor: Jupiter is sky; Achilles is bravery—form and content are indistinguishable. In Greek, “poet” means “creator,” and in order to create, the first men perceived all of nature “as a vast living body that feels passions and emotions” (145-46).

Returning to Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos, I posit that they (the poets and creators) perceive in the immense Latin American landscape the spirit—that is, the passion and emotion—of a nation and a national literature. By returning to the land, they return to metaphor, to a primitive necessity that can only be located in the barbaric elements of this dichotomous land. In this Humboldtian throwback, the writers consistently travel from the particular to the universal, from the part to the whole, allowing the modern day “imaginative universal”—the metaphor—to animate their narratives. With their stylized writing, Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos succeed in applauding the barbaric through what appears, at least on the surface, to be a civilized mode of representation. In reality, however, their language appeals to the rivals of civilized man, to the poetics of the *gaucho*, the *jagunço*, and the *llanero*, to the “coplas donde el cantador llanero vierte la alegría jactanciosa del andaluz, el fatalismo sonriente del negro sumiso y la rebeldía melancolía del indio” (Gallegos 358). With this appeal, the three authors again uphold their original tendency to flit back and forth between deprecation and elevation; yet, as they poetically give form to the Latin American landscape, their linguistic admiration only propels their political project, one in which the barbaric remains, in Luiz Costa Lima’s words, “indispensable to national literary expression” (*The Dark Side of Reason* 169).

1.8 SARMIENTO'S REVISION, CUNHA'S RECTIFICATION, AND GALLEGOS'S REJECTION

By delineating the progression from Strabo to Humboldt, from Latin American to Spanish geographic institutions, from mediation to Poetic Logic, I have set the stage to analyze the alignment between literary writing, geographical discourse, and institutional formation in Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. My hope is that these readings can be superimposed upon a great deal of Latin American literature from the same period. The remainder of this project shall therefore unfold as a series of case studies in chronological order, which will allow me to demonstrate the change over time in the perceptions and outcomes of the geography/literature intersection. Because Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos not only hail from different countries but also from decidedly different literary and scientific backgrounds, I take care to contextualize each author's work within his unique political and institutional arc while demonstrating his dialogue with key interlocutors.

Working from archival material, my second chapter reads *Facundo* alongside and against the formation of Argentina's geographical institutions. I argue that Sarmiento seeks authority, and with that, civilization, in the texts of the Old World, particularly those of Alexander von Humboldt. Sarmiento models Humboldtian geographical discourse in order to construct a marketable geography—a brochure of sorts—designed to convince potential European and North American immigrants of the merits of the Argentine terrain. This reproduction does not aspire to exact replication, however. Rather, I demonstrate that Sarmiento revises the German naturalist's rendition of Latin American terrain through a uniquely Argentine lens, which appeals

to the unification of form and content—to the language of Vico’s primitive man—in order to simulate consolidation.

In my third chapter I contrast Sarmiento’s revision with Cunha’s rectification of non-Brazilian land treatises. Cunha, I argue, composes *Os Sertões* as something of a cartographic narrative—a literary map, as it were—that creates the illusion of national integrity by including the formerly excluded Brazilian *sertão*. His stylized correctives supplant the divisive strategies implanted during colonial rule and continued during the neocolonial Republican years. By correcting the Eurocentric, and error-laden, representations and nomenclatures of foreigners—especially Humboldt but also Buckle, Eschwege, Derby, and Martius—Cunha reclaims Brazilian land and letters while submitting a softer rendition of the national man and land to world geography, indeed, to universal history.

My fourth chapter follows revision and rectification with Gallegos’s apparent rejection of European, North American, and even Latin American geographic models, Sarmiento and Cunha included. I illustrate that the Venezuelan only partially departs from geographical discourse by employing the narrative structure of the novel in *Doña Bárbara*. Although Gallegos denies the authority of previous geographical texts—by refusing to cite his major influences, Codazzi and Humboldt, for example—he implicitly participates in and even advances the formation of Venezuela’s geographical institutions. He encourages a shift from environmental exploitation to natural conservation, thereby prefiguring the tenets of Venezuela’s disciplinary geography. This is not to say that he denies the modernizing efficacy of a properly demarcated territory; rather, Gallegos literarily contains the land by denying the Llano’s hand-drawn maps and movable boundaries, by denying the law of the oligarchy. His literal and figurative fences, I contend, plot a specific ideological path to national consolidation and modernization. By locating the nation’s

economic growth outside the limiting, and damaging, confines of the petroleum industry, Gallegos rejects the self-serving and nepotistic ways of Juan Vicente Gómez and their continuation, albeit post-*Doña Bárbara*, in Marcos Pérez Jiménez: his novel is a rebuttal against the barbarism of both *caudillismo* and the imperial interests that deny Venezuelans progress.

And, finally, the fifth chapter returns to the opening question of geography, natural resources, and sovereignty as it posits geographical discourse as integral to both the conservation and exploitation of land. I interweave past commentary on the Islas Malvinas with contemporary ecocritical issues, including discussion of Mexico's national Pemex—Petróleos Mexicanos—and its current need for international assistance in extracting petroleum from potential deepwater reserves. I aim to leave readers with a better sense of disciplinary geography's presence in present cultural matters, including the ways in which reading past geographical discourse through the lens of ecocriticism might be useful in analyzing the Latin America of today.

2.0 SARMIENTO THE GEOGRAPHER: UNEARTHING THE LITERARY IN

FACUNDO

I have already indicated in the analysis of my maps the advantage which might be drawn by the government from this extraordinary aptitude in constructing a map of the country.

- ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Baron Alexander von Humboldt's prophetic words, from his *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* (1811), ricochet across the Americas in the decades following their grand declaration, prefiguring a moment in which the young nations ubiquitously and systematically demarcate their territories and thereby boost their military defenses. Argentina is no exception. In 1873 sitting President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento contracts the first national map of the Argentine territory to Italian cartographer Pompeo Moneta. His presidency also backs the 1872 founding of the Sociedad Científica Argentina (SCA), the organization whose founders go on to inaugurate the Instituto Geográfico Argentino in 1879 with Sarmiento's determined guidance. For the Argentine statesman, writer, and educator, geography can cure the nation's ills: both word and image provide the key to national "advantage," as Humboldt describes it. Institutionalized geography guards Argentina from the *baqueano's* innate territorial knowledge

(and, with that, potential domination) while also thwarting invasion from antagonistic neighbors; the discipline thus provides protection not only from external forces but also internal.¹⁵ In geography Sarmiento locates the two-fold benefits of a national defense system based on knowing the land: economic stability and social progress.

In this chapter, I aim to explore the ways in which Sarmiento's engagement with the institutionalization of geography unfolds in his magnum opus, *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie* (1845). Geographical discourse nourishes his literary project, yet its role in his work remains insufficiently understood. Though Cristóbal Ricardo Garro outlines Sarmiento's immersion in and dedication to the field of geography in *Sarmiento y los estudios geográficos* (1988), his chronological and historical effort is largely removed from the realm of Sarmiento's aesthetic practice. And while Roberto González Echevarría's *Myth and Archive* (1990) observes that Sarmiento seeks authority in the hegemonic discourse of science, I insist that we can extend and problematize such a reading by conversely narrowing our source of authorization to the more specific discourse of geography.

Sarmiento, I will illustrate, engages in a dialogue with Alexander von Humboldt that allows us to think the separate realities of literature and geography together in meaningful ways. Though Humboldtian for the sake of credibility, his new national discourse breaks with Europe both aesthetically and orthographically as he translates "writing the earth" to "writing the nation." He replicates Humboldt's aestheticized geographical discourse and thereby channels the political power already imbued in the German naturalist's works. His replica is not exact,

¹⁵ In cartography Sarmiento finds defense from the *baqueano*, an indigenous tracker at one with the land and capable of reading its signposts; he is one of the many human fauna that Sarmiento beautifully details in *Facundo*. Knowing that the *baqueano* can easily navigate the land's every nook and cranny and thereby defeat any city-dwelling military, Sarmiento decides that a civilized nation needs a textual rather than a human map. The figure of the *baqueano* is significant because he represents indigenous modes of knowledge, which are in stark contrast to the maps and instruments of Western civilization. Sarmiento simultaneously fears and respects the power of such knowledge.

however. Ever aware of audience, Sarmiento fashions his narrative as a brochure for two distinct but interrelated groups. Foremost, he composes a *didactic geography* directed toward the citizens of Argentina; in what becomes a rallying cry, Sarmiento explains that knowing the Argentine land—its rivers in particular—is tantamount to knowing the nation. Navigating the wide network of waterways will reduce the barbarism fostered by isolation. Yet because Sarmiento deems these lands empty and in need of settling by immigrant populations, he also writes for a second audience: potential European and North American immigrants. He constructs his narrative as a *marketable geography* designed to convince foreign readers to populate the lush Argentine terrain; Sarmiento thus employs geographical discourse as a luring apparatus with persuasive ends.¹⁶

Sarmiento continues to transform Humboldtian geographical discourse beyond matters of audience. I will show that he amplifies the Baron's intertwining of politics and poetics such that the land emerges from the very language; in so doing, he writes the Argentine—rather than the European—version of the nation's "true" tale. The poetic and the geographic coalesce at the site of the narrative, harnessed to put forth something like a national form (aesthetically) and national consolidation (politically). I detail this multistep formal process by analyzing how the land/man relation—the basic premise of geography (Hartshorne 1939)—reappears in *Facundo*. Though more than one critic has acknowledged *Facundo*'s monstrous form (Piglia 1980; Ramos 1989; Lipp 1993; González Echevarría 2004), this scholarship has overlooked the geographical roots, and, indeed, order of Sarmiento's literary language. I unearth these roots by excavating the host of literary and figurative devices (punctuation, anaphora, polysyndeton, personification,

¹⁶ In some pages, I will further nuance this notion of a *marketable geography* by contextualizing the production, distribution, and reception of *Facundo*.

alliteration, metaphor, and so forth) that Sarmiento employs to represent the national land. Time is halted in the Argentine Pampas, where everything moves slowly, where one can see the horizon for miles on end. Sarmiento thus leans toward a narrative style that is slow and steady, replete with devices to give form to the national land. His constant hyperbole mimics the enormity of the Pampas while his long periodic sentences and rhetorical questions provide form to the never-ending character of the open country. Form and content unify in the creation of a politicized landscape; this union, when thought through the language theories of Vico, points toward an elevation of the primitive man, of the gaucho, of the barbarian. Though Sarmiento's rhetoric demands civilization, the form of his language suggests otherwise; indeed, his appeal to metaphor appreciates the very barbarism that he condemns.

I contend that Sarmiento's aesthetic task yields two political byproducts: first, national consolidation in the form of a national literature; and, second, the institutionalization of geography in Argentina. His revision amounts to re-appropriation, to nationalization—in other words, he literarily snatches Argentina's lands back from the grips of occidental geographers. Sarmiento therefore writes both alongside and against the formation of geographical institutions; he writes both alongside and against civilization's maps, alongside and against barbarism's *baqueanos*. These contradictory formulae originate in *Facundo* and prefigure the narrative evolution of *Os Sertões* (1902) and *Doña Bárbara* (1929). To draw out the implications of this first work of Latin American geography, I highlight the means by which Sarmiento produces a language that is an outgrowth of the land itself, in which literature and geography unify to give form to an Argentine content and, consequently, to a national literature.

2.2 THE GEOGRAPHICAL ROOTS

A number of scholars have underscored *Facundo*'s most salient characteristics: its singular form, its dialectical structure, its national agenda, to name the most prominent. Why turn again to what González Echevarría describes as “the first Latin American classic and the most important book written by a Latin American in any discipline or genre”? (*Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism* 1). I return to Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and his *Facundo* because scholarship, despite having recognized the cultural merits of such original Sarmentine characteristics, have not dug down to their geographical roots. Broadly speaking, critics tend to acknowledge Sarmiento's formal qualities; his literary and figurative devices cannot but invite passing comment. My contentions with this passing commentary are two-fold and related: first, I insist that cursory acknowledgement of Sarmiento's style ought to be augmented with a close reading of that very style. I plan, therefore, to explicate his literary and figurative language with the tools of criticism. Second, I argue that scholarship often analyzes Sarmiento's literary language only as it relates to his political efficacy. On the one hand, critics chastise Sarmiento for imposing a literary form upon the historical tale of Rosas/*Facundo* and therefore remove him from the sphere of politicization (Alsina 1846). On the other, they negate his poetics—in his defense, to be sure—in order to imbue his project with the very politics previously denied (Piglia 1980; Ramos 1989; Lipp 1993; González Echevarría 2004).

A large part of scholarly attention thus falls upon the poetics/politics relationship without understanding its beginnings. Yet, without excavating the geographical origins of these relations, scholars neglect a crucial component of the narrative's political agenda. Though they aim to talk politics, they ignore the discipline that most explicitly politicizes their subject matter.

Indeed, Sarmiento's "poetic inventiveness"—to use Hayden White's term—conflates with geographical discourse in order to fashion the ultimate political manifesto. Sarmiento's dedication to the art of writing rarely goes unnoticed, but scholars like Solomon Lipp downplay his poetic pulse by investing disproportionate textual space on his politics:

[Sarmiento's] writings are primarily political and instrumental. For him, literature had to serve a utilitarian purpose. Content was more important than form. [...] I have cast aside [...] the exclusively literary approach, which removes the text from the sociopolitical realm. It appears to me to be a rather sterile exercise not to take into account the social milieu in which a work is produced. (15)

Overzealous in his endeavor to shun the literary in favor of the political, to shun the form in favor of the content, Lipp overlooks two significant turns: first, that the categorical pairs of literature/politics and form/content are couplings that necessarily walk hand-in-hand and, second, that the source—the geographical—of both parts might, in fact, be the same and therefore worthy of critical attention. Geography nourishes the form *and* the content in an effort to arrive at national consolidation, which is entirely contained within the "sociopolitical realm."

In his *Myth & Archive* (1990), Roberto González Echevarría locates this similar source of nourishment mediating between the aesthetic and the social. Where? In what he considers to be *the* hegemonic discipline of the nineteenth century: science. Though keen in his observation, González Echevarría disregards geography's stature as the "mother of the sciences" in this epoch (Hartshorne 1939). By taking his reading one step further—that is, by moving from science to geography—I aim to more accurately pinpoint the discourse lending Sarmiento his intellectual and political authority.

My distinction between science and geography might appear slight on first glance.

Indeed, what does González Echevarría mean by “scientific discourse” and, more importantly, how does that differ from “geographical discourse”? His definition is broad, even unwieldy:

Modern imperial powers, through institutions charged with acquiring and organizing knowledge (scientific institutes, *jardins des plantes*, museums of natural history, *Tiergarten*), commission individuals possessing the scientific competence to travel to their colonies or potential colonies to gather information. [...] The result is thousands of books describing, analyzing, and classifying the flora, fauna, landscape, social organization, ethnic composition, fossil formations, atmosphere, in short, everything that could be known by nineteenth-century science. (101-02)

One might contend that González Echevarría refers to the above list to cover all his bases. But the problem arises a few pages later, when he fails to cover said bases by mistakenly translating, and thereby understanding, Sarmiento’s *accidente* as a circumstance, an event “inaugural by definition: it is an event independent of the past which becomes a unique form of present violently broken off from history, a new form of temporality, like the series of tumultuous acts narrated in Echeverría’s story” (116). With this definition, then, he translates the following Sarmiento sentence in ways that deny the presence of the geographical: *Existe, pues, un fondo de poesía que nace de los accidentes naturales del país y de las costumbres excepcionales que engendra* appears as “The country consequently derives a fund of poetry from its natural circumstances” (116). In González Echevarría’s reading, Argentina’s poetry is something of an accidental event emerging from nothing more than circumstance: disciplinary geography and its terminology fail to enter the translation or the interpretation.

I argue that Sarmiento uses the word in its geographical sense, defined by the Real Academia Española as, “[i]rregularidad del terreno con elevación o depresión bruscas, quiebras,

fragosidad, etc.” I base my certainty on his usage of *accidente* in other contexts, the most explicit of which appears in “Ley de tierras de Chivilcoy”: “La tierra baldía no tiene nombres geográficos y la Pampa carece de accidentes marcados para especificar con precision los límites de un terreno” (*Obras* 23:299). *Accidente* here corresponds with the RAE’s definition, that is, an irregularity of the terrain that might designate the borders and the limits of a specific plot of land.

Returning to González Echevarría’s translation, then, I would argue that *accidente* ought to be interpreted in its geographical sense. That is, the gaucho’s poetry is born of the irregularities of the terrain; here we have the union of man and land, a union in which in which the literary is absolutely necessary to geography, and vice versa.

I do not intend to suggest, however, that González Echevarría entirely neglects the geographical impulse in *Facundo*. Rather, he explains in the Introduction to Kathleen Ross’s English translation that

[b]y establishing a determining link between the Argentine landscape and its culture and political development, *Facundo* set the bases for the study of the uniqueness of Latin American culture in terms of its own specific geographical setting. [...] By expressing the grandeur of its landscape and the struggle to represent it, Sarmiento created the voice of the modern Latin American author as a response to an exceptional Latin American reality. (2)

But although he acknowledges that Sarmiento establishes a “determining link” between land, man, and politics—in other words, he appeals to at least *descriptive* if not *disciplinary* geography—González Echevarría derails from that thought and loses sight of what is the writer-statesman’s most resonant achievement: a politicized landscape in which form and content coalesce. Upon

comparing Sarmiento's novelty first to Bello and then to Heredia, González Echevarría suggests that while the latter were "corseted by neoclassical poetics," Sarmiento, "a romantic, wrote, *untrammelled by the demands of form*" (2, emphasis mine). Although the critic's contention—that Sarmiento feels less than obliged to the strict formalism of Bello and Heredia—is rather benign, he ultimately implies that the Argentine indulged in something of a *formlessness*. Here, González Echevarría acquiesces to the reading already mandated by Sarmiento himself; in his 1851 letter to Valentín Alsina—in which he defends *Facundo*'s methodological shortcomings—the Argentine statesman speaks of his narrative as something of a myth, a drama, a formless work, which, if constrained by any structural formulation, might lose its primitive physiognomy: "He usado con parsimonia de sus preciosas notas guardando las más sustanciales para tiempos mejores y más meditados trabajos, temeroso de que por retocar *obra tan informe*, desapareciese su fisonomía primitiva y la lozana y voluntaria audacia de la mal disciplinada concepción" (51-52, emphasis mine). Sarmiento thus encourages the reading eventually enacted by González Echevarría, whose ambiguity suggests that despite an awareness of Sarmiento's formal strategies—metaphor in particular—and stylized descriptions, he continues to gloss over the subtleties of the Sarmentine form in relation to the Latin American landscape. In particular, González Echevarría briefly appeals to the text's metaphor as one in a constant state of engagement with nature, in which "we must be ready to read the opposite of what words appear to mean" (245). He underscores—in passing—Sarmiento's beautiful natural descriptions, particularly the detailing in the famous tiger scene (247). While González Echevarría alludes to the political significance behind Sarmiento's stylized details, he stops there. His acute observations thus fall by the wayside, for he does nothing to sustain them in the face of "formlessness."

While critic and novelist Ricardo Piglia appreciates both Sarmiento's subtleties and his forging of the Latin American literary tradition—he describes the “first page of *Facundo*” as the “first page of Argentine literature”—he, in his article “Sarmiento the Writer,” also elides the Sarmentine emphasis on form despite explicit reference to the text's politicized writing (131). Geography fails to enter the critical picture as relating in any way to the politicized writing. Parting from the coeval relationship between Sarmiento and Flaubert, Piglia offers a comparison between the two writers, suggesting that whereas Flaubert desired “to write a book about nothing, a book that searches for absolute autonomy and pure form, [...] a book that would be good for nothing, that would be beyond the register of bourgeois utility,” Sarmiento contrarily “searches within the effectiveness and utility of the written word,” “effectiveness” and “utility” coming to signify *removed from art* (128). According to Piglia, Flaubert seeks the maximum autonomy in art whereas Sarmiento consciously employs a writing that embraces the public sphere but thereby disregards any emphasis on form. In fact, despite the occasional mention of Sarmiento's rhetorical ability—“No one possesses a more personal sense of the conjunction than Sarmiento”—Piglia undermines the accolade in the very preface to the statement: “The book's problems with literary form are concentrated within the title's *and*”—the writer/geographer first receives lauding for his use of the conjunction “and,” which, contradictorily, becomes his literary demise (134).

To be sure, however, Piglia acknowledges the text's political and literary efficacy, albeit in an indefinable sense located solely in the artist's ability (or inability) to write rather than in the *inspiration* to write—this is to say, the land. He asserts that, “on the one hand, *Facundo* is the kernel of the state; [...] on the other, it is the kernel of the Argentine novel” (136). Such disparate commentary hints at an interesting perception of Sarmiento, as if the Argentine

statesman became writer through pure causality and, at the same time, as if the Argentine writer became statesman through the same causality. In my reading of Piglia's criticism, Sarmiento appears hyperbolic yet successful for that very reason. Declarations such as "[h]is linguistic megalomania seems to be an example of the arrogant ideology of the failed artist" indicate, at least in part, a recognition of Sarmiento the artist concerned with form but, at the same time, an explicit sense of the artist failing to achieve said form.¹⁷ Sarmiento's "political use of language" then carries less weight, for *Facundo*, in Piglia, becomes—to a certain degree—the site for a megalomaniacal politico's attempts to write poetry as opposed to a legitimate site of political resistance, in which a creative form is bestowed upon a nation-building content, in which literature and geography coalesce to write the Argentine nation (142).

A contemporary response to Piglia's reading may be found in Julio Ramos's *Divergent Modernities* (2001), in which the critic laments Piglia's willingness to accept the European models that Sarmiento imitates without questioning their authority (7). Ramos attempts here to differentiate between the distinct modes of knowledge as explicated by Sarmiento, specifically the contrast between European (civilized) knowledge and *gaucho* (barbaric) knowledge. Gaucho knowledge of the land—the *baqueano's* cartographic abilities, in other words—fits perfectly in this discussion but does not make the cut. Instead, Ramos argues that Sarmiento appropriates the subaltern position in order to authorize "an alternative intellectual practice that emphasizes its difference from European knowledge"—that is, *Facundo's* author proposes an alternative task for the Latin American writer, one in which barbarism (the voice of the Other) must be heard since the Other lacks writing (9). The written word takes precedence in regard to the political

¹⁷ I will return to Sarmiento's megalomania as pathology related to self-imposed problem-finding and problem-solving. However, I am interested more in how this megalomania unfolds with relation to geography than in how it informs him as an artist, either failed or successful.

when, in fact, Ramos's argument necessitates the geographical since much of the Other's knowledge resides there.

Formal concerns enter the critical analysis, however. The Other, in Ramos's reading of Sarmiento, possesses an "original and primitive poetry" despite an inability to write (15). The critic thus dedicates a portion of his study to *Facundo's* literary function, which he describes as having been "constantly highlighted and problematized in order to contrast it with the authority and validity of a 'true' or historical discourse" (12). Citing Valentín Alsina's now famous letter to Sarmiento—"I will say that your book, notwithstanding the many things that it may contain deserving admiration, seems to me to suffer from a general defect—that of exaggerations: I believe it holds much poetry, if not in the ideas, at least in its forms of locution"—Ramos then relates Sarmiento's ambiguous response: that the "defect of spontaneity, of poetry" is complementary to his manner of writing history (13). Sarmiento, Alsina, and Ramos each highlight this style—this "primitive poetry," this "form of locution," this "defect of spontaneity"—without attempting to locate its origins. Yet these origins most explicitly politicize Sarmiento's narrative and therefore demand something of an excavation.

In sum, the political controls and concludes most interpretations of *Facundo*. But, these interpretations need to be augmented. I aim to demonstrate that considering Sarmiento's literature alongside and against the formation of geographical institutions immediately politicizes it in unseen ways. The remainder of this chapter thus strives to establish that this nineteenth-century "mother of all sciences" leaves an indelible mark on Sarmiento's form, which, upon close reading, exhibits the nation-building potential in the language of geography.

2.3 ARGENTINA'S INSTITUTIONS: FROM SCIENCE TO GEOGRAPHY AND THE CONFLATIONS IN BETWEEN

From the onset of academic attempts to define geography, the conflation between science and geography has been a near constant. Hartshorne contends that the discipline consolidates as a modern science between 1750 and 1850, the period in which it reigns supreme as the “mother of all sciences.” This designation suggests that the specific discipline of geography assumes the position of authority and hegemony formerly occupied by the overarching category of science, more commonly known as *natural history* and signifying multiple things. Having risen to this task of governing matriarch, geography soon spawns an unmanageable, and disparate, amount of disciplinary progeny. But this excess leads to a crisis and thereby a new function for geography: a synthesizing discipline based, to a large degree, upon region.

Much of this synthesis departs from spatial concerns, such that, as David Harvey points out, at times geographers have “taken an extraordinarily broad view and come to regard themselves as the synthesisers of all systematic knowledge in terms of space” (*Explanation in Geography* 27). Space narrows down to the categories of land and landscape with Carl Sauer, who defines geography as “the establishment of a critical system which embraces the phenomenology of landscape” (“Morphology of Landscape” 320-21). As Sauer’s title suggests, language shapes this critical system.

Language heavily influences—indeed, provides the structural pillars for—the first conceptualizations of geography as they appear in the works of Strabo and Eratosthenes; the former argues not only for the political but also for the poetic elements of the discipline. For geographers like David Stoddart, this element of artistic inclination detracts from geography’s

scientific rigor; he therefore relegates the ancient Greeks to the proverbial backburner and concludes, concomitantly, that disciplinary geography does not actually originate until 1769, the year Cook's ship first ripples the waters of the Pacific (*On Geography and its History* 33-38). Subsequently, the discipline acquires a more definable form through Forster, Humboldt, and Darwin. What, precisely, bestows upon these "geographers" the stamp of intellectual rigor? The scientific method. According to Stoddart, the institutional cementing of geography in the late nineteenth century resulted from its systematization—that is, from its emphasis on quantification, comparative method, and social concern as emerging from an ecological understanding. By leaving aside the humanistic tenets espoused by the ancient Greeks—or so claims Stoddart—the geographers attain scientific viability.

According to Margarita Bowen in *Empiricism and Geographical Thought* (1981), nevertheless, empirical science proved detrimental to the discipline; "as far as geography was concerned," she contends, "the initial encounter with scientific empiricism was close to disastrous" (10). Only Alexander von Humboldt was able to survive this disastrous encounter, for he, according to Bowen, rejected the naïveté of empiricism and chose instead to coalesce the studies of physical and human phenomena. This coupling allowed for a heightened awareness of the geographer's social responsibilities. Geography, moreover, could not possibly maintain a scientific investment due to its engagement with the national and imperial interests of the ruling classes. Humboldt, in her view, contrarily employs science without the binding restrictions of empiricism and thus succeeds in his treatment of the man/land relationship embodied in geography. Bowen's reading of Humboldt alludes to a humanistic approach mired not only in understanding the earth but also the physical beings residing on it.

On the one hand, then, Stoddart shuns the humanistic approach, claiming that it denies

geography the credibility garnered from the rigors of science. For Bowen, on the other, scientific empiricism hinders geography's humanist responsibility. I find, however, that both of these historiographers of geography deny the subject's potential to bridge between the humanistic and the scientific, to bridge between the arts and sciences.

In their *All Possible Worlds: A History of Geographical Ideas* (1972), Geoffrey Martin and Preston James argue for just this bridging capacity. In tracing the process of geography's rise to institutionalization, Martin and James follow in suit of Hartshorne and confirm the discipline's nineteenth-century stature as "mother of all sciences." They explain, however, that this umbrella-like designation provoked the discipline to seek autonomy, to seek an independent and articulated role; it located this role as something of a disciplinary hinge functioning in the space between art and science.

Returning to Sarmiento, I maintain that the Argentine statesman embraces this hinge status of geography as he writes alongside its institutionalization. Composing *Facundo* on the heels of the 1830 foundation of the English Royal Geographical Society—the first institution to actively push geography away from the Strabonic and the humanistic "science of princes" and toward the statistical and exploratory "science of empire" (Mayhew 214)—he chooses instead to incorporate a multifaceted definition of geography into the national project. Sarmiento's approach conflates art and science to effectively create and institutionalize the new discipline of geography.

Juan Manuel Rosas's leadership necessitates such confluences. *Facundo* is a treatise against the caudillo Rosas, whose freedom-suppressing and oligarchy-supporting Federalist Party provokes Sarmiento's rage. His authoritarian rule ensures that without an extra-academic portal, science will fall by the wayside like all other intellectual pursuits. Indeed, under Rosas's rule,

scholarly interest in science decreases to such an extent that by the 1820s, so few jobs remain in the field that students, too, diminish. In his article on Argentine science and technology, Juan Carlos Nicolau explains: “Hay que esperar la derrota de Rosas en la batalla de Caseros para que al regreso de algunos exiliados, como Juan María Gutiérrez se adopten medidas tendientes a revertir la situación de estancamiento existente en el estudio de la ciencia y la técnica” (8). As one such exile, Sarmiento’s utter distaste for stagnancy (and profound taste for literature) allows him to enact the integration of science—and, in turn, geography—into the modernizing project. With *Facundo* he spells out the first letters of contestation toward Rosas’s scientific, intellectual, and national oppression. Following his 1868 election to President of the Argentine Republic, Sarmiento articulates this contestation through the explicit formation of institutions.

Institutions are tantamount to all that Sarmiento deems necessary for progress: composition and education, organization and dissemination, and, most importantly, action and participation in the ways of the civilized West. Argentina need not shy from—indeed, she need embrace—the arena of European industry and science. Sarmiento’s series of –tions promises to solve the nation’s overarching dilemma, at least as he sees it: her vast expanse and the challenge of maintaining communication across it. He locates the solution in two separate but similar implementations: telegraphs and trains. The telegraph would facilitate contact with Europe and therefore the construction of a modern state, while the train would close the distance between the interior provinces and the capital of Buenos Aires. Both would reduce the solipsism and isolation feeding barbarism and thereby beget national progress (Curator Notes, *Museo Histórico Sarmiento*).

Sarmiento’s trajectory as a promoter of institutions follows the same path of conflation that appears in geography’s rise to “mother of all sciences”—that is, from overarching scientific

concerns to particularized geographic investigations. According to José S. Campobassi in his study *Sarmiento y su época* (1975), Sarmiento declares from the onset of his presidency that science will be his administration's primary concern; to this end, his presidency backs the 1872 founding of the Sociedad Científica Argentina (SCA) by students of the Universidad de Buenos Aires. Ambitious in their pursuit to advance scientific studies in Argentina, these students look to the likes of Germán Burmeister and Estanislao Severo Zeballos for leadership (Campobassi 18-24). These two individuals come—again, under Sarmiento's guidance—to later outline the parameters of Argentine geography. Prior to a localized support for geography, which I will speak of momentarily, Zeballos and Burmeister dedicate their intellect to the SCA.

In *La ciencia en la Argentina* (1963), José Babini explains that the primary tenets of the SCA were three-fold: to foment the study and application of mathematical, physical, and natural sciences; to promote scientific publications, inventions, or improvements, in particular those that encourage practical applicability in the nation; to convene national and international engineers, students of the applied sciences, and others whose scientific knowledge might advance the aforementioned objectives (48). Through these tenets, the SCA aims to expand national industry and economy by better locating and utilizing Argentina's natural resources.¹⁸

Soon, however, the Society sees the need not just to excavate into the earth's recesses but rather to know its most minute details; the year 1875 welcomes the SCA's sponsorship of several geographic adventures, including Francisco P. Moreno's expedition into Patagonia (Babini 15). This initiative discourages creative destruction of the natural world while

¹⁸ Carlos Moreno explains the antecedents for geographic exploration in Argentina, noting that the first Jesuit priests sought knowledge of the land for purposes of excavation and profit: "En nuestro territorio, con una dilatada y variada geografía, con posibilidades de sustentar dignamente una creciente población, muchas veces faltó el conocimiento para saber como transformar esas materias que contiene su generosa naturaleza en recursos útiles para la vida" (4). See "Los pioneros y las producciones científicas" in *La ciencia y la tecnología en el proyecto de una nación 2* (2004): 4.

encouraging productive knowledge of the terrain.¹⁹ Moreno's telluric explorations thus boost the demand for a proper geographical society, thereby prompting the 1879 foundation of the Instituto Geográfico Argentino.

In the years separating the two institutions, I find that the terms "science" and "geography" overlap—indeed, they conflate to such extremes that the SCA sponsors another expedition to Patagonia in 1877, specifically designed to study the territory contained with the southern 43rd and 49th parallels. These studies find dissemination in the various conferences organized by the SCA, including the Congreso Científico Latino-Americano, which takes place in Buenos Aires in 1898—incidentally, the year of the Spanish-American war and the moment that Spain explicitly recognizes the relationship between territorial knowledge and imperial domination. These forums for intellectual promotion demonstrate Argentina's—and, more specifically, Sarmiento's—insistence that geography take precedence in advancing the national project. By providing a locale in which national and international intellectuals can discuss territorial concerns, Argentina solidifies the discipline's move toward institutionalization. Indeed, the impulse to convene continues several years later with the Congreso Científico Internacional Americano in Buenos Aires, held in 1910 (Babini 14-22).

Conferences aside, the society's Annals primarily publicize and disseminate its scientific and geographic pursuits. Published in 1922 as a series of monographs, the Annals provide a developmental summary of the distinct branches of Argentine science during its first fifty years. Between 1923-1926 eight of these monographs appear under the title *Evolución de las ciencias en la*

¹⁹ Each of the authors studied in this project will come to exemplify this crux in Latin American geography—in other words, the impulse to know the land in an effort to defend it from interior and exterior forces rather than knowing it for the sake of exploitation. In this sense, they prefigure the tenets of ecocriticism, which I will address in more detail in Chapter 5.

República Argentina. Written descriptions of scientific endeavors thus come to dominate as the society's mode of publicity, the model for the nation appearing something like: Publication → Institutionalization → Modernization → National Project. Publication includes maps, too. In *Las ciencias y la universidad en la vida de Sarmiento* (2003), Ricardo R. Peláez explains that under Sarmiento's presidency, the SCA brings forth multiple non-textual geographical advances, particularly in the arena of cartography:

Otras importantes resoluciones técnicas de la Sociedad, durante el último año de la presidencia de Sarmiento, fueron el revelamiento cartográfico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires en escala I: 200.000, para lo que se contrató el servicio del ingeniero civil Esteban Dumesnil; la construcción de un plano en relieve de la República Argentina con datos de altitudes; se resolvió, además, propiciar un plan de perforaciones en el territorio de la Provincia, para conocer su estructura hidrológica, en el cual la institución trabajó durante dos años seguidos. Se constató al término de la investigación, que existían aguas surgentes en cuatro pueblos de la campaña —San Vicente, Merlo, Chascomús y Dolares—, y aguas minerales en Castelli. (63)

The cartographic controls, for in Sarmiento's view, maps can rectify the nation's maladies; recall that maps are, according to his much-esteemed Humboldt, the key to national "advantage." To these ends the *gran sanjuanino* commission the first national map of the Argentine Republic.²⁰ According to Cristóbal Ricardo Garro in his rigorous study *Sarmiento y los estudios geográficos* (1988), Sarmiento contracts the Italian engineer and physicist Pompeyo Moneta to create the

²⁰ See <http://68.178.150.41/htdocs/zoom/18464.htm> for the image of this first map, which was contracted in 1873 and finally completed in 1875.

first lithograph of the Argentine territory under the auspices of Sarmiento's very institutional creation, the Departamento Topográfico Nacional (71). That the sitting President of Argentina—President from 1868-74—should culminate his lifelong mission with the ultimate map—that of the nation—should come as little surprise given his cartographic trajectory: as governor of San Juan, Sarmiento creates the Departamento Topográfico, Hidráulico y de Estadística de la Provincia on February 20, 1862; his primary motivation is to commission a map of the province. Under the direction of engineer Gustavo Grothe, this “non-governmental organization” succeeds in its endeavor, eventually producing maps of both the province and city of San Juan (Garro 47).²¹

Exclusive to neither him nor Argentina, Sarmiento's cartographic and geographic ambition had infected most of the emerging nation-states in the Americas. In his study *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes* (2004), Mexicanist Raymond B. Craib concurs that “[g]eography proved a key science in the formation of nineteenth-century nation-states and had a close association with the technical, regulatory needs of those in power,” explaining, too, the emphasis on map-making: “... the powerful sway of territoriality as the basis for modern identity and control ensured that geographic science and its primary medium, the map, occupied a place of preeminence in the nationalist repertoire” (24).²² Similar to Argentina, Mexico sought territorial defense from both international and domestic threats, and this defense

²¹ For a more detailed historical chronology of cartography in the Argentine territory, see Guillermo Schulz's *La precisión de mapas compilados: Un capítulo de la historia cartográfica del territorio argentino*. Universidad Nacional de Tucumán: Instituto de Estudios Geográficos, 1948.

²² I provided the short story. Here, we have the long: “Without a reliable national map the new government could hardly begin to conceive of, let alone carry out, any political reorganization of the territory. This would prove a constant source of concern in the recurring territorial reconstructions of the country's politicoterritorial divisions by federalists and centralists, each of whom had their own politicoadministrative geographies. A national map could also prove useful in the war against fiscal chaos, administrative fragmentation, and regional politics in that a variety of local and regional statistical information, and maps could be compiled and incorporated into a master map. More important, perhaps, a national map of geographic and topographic accuracy could improve the fledgling state's military capacity during a time of both international and domestic uncertainty, at least for the macro-coordination required for national defense” (22).

appeared in the form of the map—that is, in the form of precise, and often statistical, territorial knowledge: “Statistics and geography,” Craib explains, “were sciences of statecraft” (22).²³

For Sarmiento, this “science of statecraft” entails demarcating territorial lines and thereby moving one step closer to civilization; it also entails crafting the state that he wishes to market to his consumer, both immigrant and national. In an 1855 article in *El Nacional*, “Ley de tierras de Chivilcoy,” the Argentine statesman contends, “La demarcacion en lotes de terreno, partiendo de una base cierta, y cruzándose las líneas á distancias regulares, trae la ventaja de hacer imposibles las intervenciones de unas propiedades en otras [...]” (*Obras* 23:295).²⁴ Who does he incriminate for partaking in such “intervenciones”? None other than Juan Manuel Rosas: “¿Quién era Rosas? Un propietario de tierras. ¿Qué acumuló? Tierras. ¿Qué dió á sus sostenedores? Tierras. ¿Qué quitó ó confiscó á sus adversarios? Tierras” (*Obras* 23:292-93). To prevent unequal distribution of land—inequality being, according to Jacques Rancière, the impetus for *all* politics—Sarmiento argues for its proper naming and delineating. He commends Buenos Aires’s status as the only South American city to have undergone geographical delineation (courtesy of his creation, the Departamento Topográfico), yet he insists that the same must occur outside of the city limits in order to maintain national integration. “La tierra baldía no tiene nombres geográficos,” he explains, “y la Pampa carece de accidentes marcados para especificar con precision los límites de un terreno” (*Obras* 23:299).

Sarmiento rightfully fears that without necessary territorial reorganization, the nation risks disintegration. Demarcation through a national map empowers Argentina in the face of

²³ Whereas *Facundo* does not explicitly embrace the empiricism of science, Sarmiento’s other narratives often include an overwhelming quantity of data and statistics, most often to the end of attracting immigrants through their *folletín* qualities. See *Campaña en el ejército grande* (1852 [1958]), especially starting on page 236 as well as *Obras Completas* 23:157.

²⁴ Though I will return to the ideological impetus behind Sarmiento’s unique spelling, for now suffice it to note that I shall abide by his orthography for the remainder of the quotations.

internal and external threats through the very *suggestion* of integration; in Craib's words, "A national map had as much iconographic as it did instrumental power" (23). Craib continues: "A national map refuted such troublesome realities [of national disintegration] by visually affirming what supposedly already existed: after all, if a map were simply a mimetic reflection of an objective reality, then a national map by definition presupposed the existence of the nation itself" (24). The map thus "serves as a model *for*, rather than *of*" what it aims to represent: the nation (Craib 14, *emphases in original*). In this vein, Sarmiento seeks a model for his unified nation. Aiming to rewrite and thereby reinvent the nation through the Argentine lens, he gives form to the nation not only textually but also cartographically: both the textual unification of form and content as well as a national map presuming integration "visually affirm" a consolidated nation-state.

Whereas Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística—later known as the Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística and renowned as Latin America's first geographic society—was a federally subsidized creation of President Valentín Gómez Farías's administration (Craib 21), in Argentina geography and cartography only reach such heights with the help of non-governmental organizations. In mid-nineteenth-century Argentina, *las organizaciones no gubernamentales* occupy a privileged space, appearing across the continent at both the national and international levels. Unaffiliated with the church and not-for-profit, these organizations "son aquellas entidades privadas que tienen uno o más objetivos sociales, espirituales, culturales, económicos, educativos, sanitarios u otros conexos, y que carecen de fines de lucro" (Garro 49).

Sarmiento forms an integral part of two NGOs directly related to the study of geography. Secretary, first, of the Instituto Histórico-Geográfico del Río de la Plata, created by

General Mitre between 1854 (the incipient stages of the institution) and 1856 (its effective execution), he later becomes honorary member and, eventually, honorary president of the Instituto Geográfico Argentino (IGF), founded February 6, 1879 by Estanislao S. Zeballos.

Zeballos's leadership during the incipient stages of the SCA and then in its geographical offshoot, the IGF, leaves a marked impression on Sarmiento. Zeballos actively participates in writing and institutionalizing the Argentine terrain, leading to his high esteem in Sarmiento's eyes. This esteem translates to laudatory book-reviews, particularly of Zeballos's *Quince Mil Leguas*, which, in the October 8, 1878 issue of *El Nacional*, Sarmiento describes with immense praise: “Mucho mérito ha contraído el señor Zeballos con la compilación de tan rica colección de datos, y su libro está destinado, más que adornar las bibliotecas, a ser el compañero inseparable del expedicionario al desierto, ya sea el Este de Córdoba, ya al Sur de Buenos Aires” (qtd. in Garro 43). Sarmiento's faith in the power of *written* geographical descriptions seeps through these lines. Despite the accessibility of photographic and/or artistic images, Sarmiento believes that Zeballos's textual compilation of descriptions and data will accompany all future expeditions. Written description, to Sarmiento's mind, paints a better picture than an actual photograph, cartography notwithstanding. This textual picture begets territorial knowledge, which, in turn, leads to national progress.

Given his multiple pre-presidential textual pictures that engage with the discipline and discourse of geography, Sarmiento unsurprisingly dedicates a significant portion of his 1868 inaugural speech to the subject. Along with some lines from his 1871 inauguration of the Observatorio Astronómico de Córdoba—“Yo digo que debemos renunciar al rango de nación, o al título de pueblo civilizado, si no tomamos nuestra parte en el progreso y en el movimiento de las ciencias naturales”—his presidential inauguration speech makes a cameo appearance at the

International Geographic Congress of Paris, held in 1875 (*Archivo de Observatorio Astronómico de Córdoba* 1).²⁵ Sarmiento's international recognition merits commendation, for power relations and intellectual hierarchies between Europe and the Americas maintained their disparities. In this context of assumed superiority, then, the irony of the conference theme—potential for power through territorial knowledge—resonates even stronger. In his introductory words, Assembly president Admiral La Rouciere-Le Noury proudly encourages further exploration of the relationship between “knowing the earth” and “conquest”:

Gentleman, Providence has dictated to us the obligation of knowing the earth and making the conquest of it. This supreme command is one of the imperious duties inscribed on our intelligences and on our activities. Geography, that science which inspires such beautiful devotedness and in whose name so many victims have been sacrificed, has become the philosophy of the earth. (qtd. in Murphy 46)

The Admiral conveniently overlooks the fact that Sarmiento—and Argentina, and Latin America—had long ago discovered the clear connection between “knowing the earth” and “conquest.” As early as 1845 Sarmiento was composing the first of his geographical treatises—*Facundo*—only to officially institutionalize a component of the discipline with the 1872 Sociedad Científica Argentina (SCA). Spain, on the contrary, blamed the 1898 colonial defeat upon her late entry into the geographical game—indeed, not till 1876 did the former colonizer even found the Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid. “Imperious duties” aside, then, for Sarmiento territorial knowledge equates protection from imperial powers. Having successfully protected—and

²⁵ The Argentine representative to the Geographic Congress, Carlos Calvo, reproduces the former President's words as a means of demonstrating the national commitment to geographical knowledge.

advanced—the nation by his presidency’s end, Sarmiento declares geography, and in particular cartography, among his administration’s most influential contributions to the nation (Garro 43).

Argentina’s inclusion in an international conference dedicated to geography confirms the success of Sarmiento’s efforts—in other words, through his writings, Argentina gains entry into world geography. As an advocate of intellectual camaraderie, moreover, Sarmiento applauds the conference as a site to gather and distribute findings and where “el espíritu de fraternidad universal y el interés común favorecen” (qtd. in Garro 61). International camaraderie indeed holds center stage in his national project. Argentina’s geographic progress under Sarmiento’s determined guidance occurs, in part, because of his ability to foster productive relationships with European scientists and naturalists. Peláez explains that,

Las exploraciones científicas del territorio argentino por parte de los profesores contratados por Sarmiento comenzaron durante el verano de 1871/72. El Presidente se interesó por conocer sus primeros resultados, por lo que instruyó lo necesario para que los expedicionarios informaran adecuadamente al Gobierno nacional. Los dos primeros profesores alemanes que realizaron expediciones exploratorias, en cumplimiento de lo establecido en el 2º de los fines de la fundación de la Facultad de Ciencias Físicas y Matemáticas —según la Memoria Ministerial de Avellaneda de 1872—, fueron los doctores Paul Lorentz (Botánica) y Alfred Stelzner (Mineralogía). (90)

Beyond botanists and mineralogists, another more geographical example includes the German naturalist Karl Hermann Burmeister, brought to Argentina upon Sarmiento’s recommendation, which vouches for Burmeister on the basis of his name and work being comparable to that of Alexander von Humboldt. On September 25, 1875, Sarmiento convinces the Senate to allocate

two thousand pesos per volume for the publication of Burmeister's geographic findings, titled *Description physique de la République Argentine* (1876); this collection comes to be one of the premiere resources regarding Argentine geography (Garro 69).

As his participation in the Burmeister volume indicates, Sarmiento maintains a legitimate, and often direct, engagement with various nineteenth-century publications linked to the discipline and practice of geography. Other works include Sir Woodbine Parish's English-language study (*Buenos Aires and the Provinces of the Rio de la Plata, From Their Discovery and Conquest by the Spaniards to the Establishment of Their Political Independence*, 1836), Víctor Martin de Moussy's French-language *Description géographique et statistique de la Confédération Argentine* (1860-64), Richard Napp's German-language *Die Argentinische Republik* (1876), and, of course, Burmeister's *Description physique de la République Argentine* (Garro 69). Yet despite vast knowledge of *international* works, Sarmiento seeks promulgation of *national* works as the means to institutionalization.

2.4 THE ARGENTINE TOCQUEVILLE: A DIDACTIC GEOGRAPHY

Sarmiento's willingness to spread his bibliographic knowledge—which spanned across languages, cultures, and sub-disciplines—hints at his appreciation for the written word, for the composed article, for the published study. In his view, textual descriptions of land most efficiently contribute to the continued documentation and proliferation of geographical knowledge. Similarly, maps allow for detailed knowledge—and, with it, domination—of national territory. “Writing the earth” governs Sarmiento's political and literary trajectory; more to the point, the geographical impulse drives his many publications beyond *Facundo* (e.g. *Viajes por*

Europa, Africa, América, 1849; *Recuerdos de Provincia*, 1850; *Argirópolis*, 1850). By modeling the behaviors of geographical description and subsequent publication, Sarmiento writes alongside the formation of geographical institutions. Instead of a series of individual compositions with limited readership, geographical discourse becomes, through Sarmiento, tantamount to published expeditions in service of the national project. Through the publication and dissemination of texts—that is, through institutionalization—Argentina garners a notation in the compendium of world geography and approaches civilization, progress, and modernization.

Sarmiento's re-appropriation of national land and letters takes Alexander von Humboldt as its point of departure. Both Chapters 1 and 2 of *Facundo* include epigraphs from Humboldt, though the first is mistakenly attributed to Sir Francis Bond Head. It reads: "L'étendue des Pampas est si prodigieuse, qu'au nord elles sont bornées par des bosquets de palmiers, et au midi par des neiges éternelles" (55).²⁶ The second, rightly attributed to Humboldt, also appears in French: "Ainsi que l'Océan, les steppes remplissent l'esprit du sentiment de l'infini" (75).²⁷ These two thematic veins—the vast expanse of the territory and its similarity to the ocean—originate in Humboldt's work and are replicated across Sarmiento's

²⁶ In their annotations of *Facundo* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1977), Nora Dottori and Silvia Zanetti indicate that Sarmiento's citation comes not from Sir Francis Bond Head but rather from Humboldt's *Tableaux de la nature* (1808), vol. I, p. 21 (35n1). In her 2003 translation of *Facundo*, Kathleen Ross translates the epigraph as: "The expanse of the Pampas is so huge, that to the north it is bordered by forests of palms, and to the south by eternal snows" (264).

²⁷ Ibid. "Like the ocean, the steppe fills the soul with a feeling of infinity" (265). She notes, too, that the quotation comes from Humboldt's *Voyage aux régions équinoxiales du Nouveau Continent* (1816).

corpus.²⁸ In *Facundo*, however, Sarmiento nullifies his initial veneration for the Baron when he announces the need for a *scientific traveler*—like Tocqueville, he insists—to explore South America and, more specifically, Argentina: “A la América del Sud en general, y a la República Argentina sobre todo, ha hecho falta un Tocqueville, que premunido del conocimiento de las teorías sociales, como el viajero científico de barómetros, octantes y brújulas, viniera a penetrar en el interior de nuestra vida política [...]” (40).²⁹ If Sarmiento so eagerly seeks to infuse Humboldtian strategies into his narrative, why does he look for another Tocqueville? Put another way, what does Tocqueville get him that Humboldt does not?

Sarmiento *is* Argentina’s Tocqueville, or so he aspires to be by writing *Facundo*. Frankly irritated by Europeans (like Tocqueville) staking textual claim to American lands, he also bristles at Americans shunning national knowledge yet lithely spouting off factoids about Europe; in his piece “Emigración alemana al Río de la Plata,” Sarmiento attributes this neglect to “un defecto general á nuestra especie”:

Los americanos conocemos todo, entendemos de todo un poco, menos de las cosas americanas. Conocemos persona que sabe nombrar de memoria los ochenta y seis departamentos de Francia y los treinta y nueve estados de

²⁸ Also interesting are the ways in which this water metaphor relates to the feminization of the land, an issue often written about with regard to Caribbean landscape (see Ben A. Heller’s “Landscape, Femininity, and Caribbean Discourse,” in *MLN* 111.2 (1996): 391-416)) but, to my knowledge, disregarded with respect to the Argentine *pampa*, the Brazilian *sertão*, and the Venezuelan *llano*. As for Sarmiento, he introduces the metaphor immediately, noting in his narrative’s first lines the Pampa’s smooth, downy brow (feminized, no doubt), which is “la imagen del mar el la tierra” (57). Jorge Luis Borges, who cites *Facundo* as the best story of Argentine literature, does something similar in his story “El atroz redentor Lazarus Morell”: “The female soil, worn and haggard from bearing that impatient culture’s get, was left barren within a few years, and a formless, clayey desert crept into the plantations” (8). Gilberto Freyre, too, feminizes the Brazilian land with regard to her penetration by British imperialists. “Here was a land,” he explains, “that was gratifying to the palate of the Don Juan of trade that British imperialism was in those days: virgin, plump, and ripe for penetration by the imperial commerce of His Britannic Majesty’s subjects” (36). See “The British Imperialist in Brazil” in *The Gilberto Freyre Reader*, Trans. Barbara Shelby New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974.

²⁹ Sarmiento’s fascination with Tocqueville also rests in the Frenchman’s shared intrigue with the United States of America. In her biography *The Life of Sarmiento* (1952), Allison Williams Bunkley notes an important difference, however: Tocqueville eventually found himself disenchanted with democracy, whereas Sarmiento walks away from the United States entirely enchanted. See Chapter 24 (pgs. 299-307) of her work for a comparative analysis of the two thinkers.

Alemania, y que no sabe en cuantas Provincias está dividido el Ecuador, ó la República Argentina. Escribiríamos *currente calamo* un libro sobre ideología, ó retórica, sin que nos sea posible dar una plumada sobre la dirección, volumen, y país adyacente de un río de nuestro propio país. El *nosce te ipsum* del sabio, lo entendemos, conocer á franceses ó españoles, en Europa, sus guerras, sus reyes y sus discusiones. Así es como la América no da un paso decisivo en su mejora si no viene un geólogo, un geógrafo ó un viajero europeo á revelarnos lo que tenemos á la vista y no examinamos ni conocemos; aunque debe ser este un defecto general á nuestra especie [...]. (*Obras* 23:154, emphases and orthography in original)

Sarmiento's tone indicates his discontent with Americans as well as his desire to actively assuage those feelings by appointing himself as Argentina's geographer. No Humboldt, Tocqueville, Wappaüs, or any other *geólogo, geógrafo, o viajero europeo* will suffice for Sarmiento; rather, *he*, Sarmiento the Geographer, will reveal what they have "á la vista." Moments later, the Argentine statesman acquiesces to his very demands and criticisms as he details that "La República Argentina está dividida en catorce provincias distribuídas de este modo: Jujuy, Salta Tucumán, Catamarca, La Rioja, San Juan y Mendoza, en el límite occidental de la República [...]." After listing all fourteen provinces, he concludes with a description of the neighboring countries: "El Paraguay está en el fondo de este sistema de ríos, y el Uruguay forma la Banda Oriental del Río de la Plata" (*Obras* 23:158). His provincial breakdown appears alongside incessant praise of the climate and affirmations that Argentina lacks the diseases of other American countries: "El clima es saludable en toda la extension de la palabra, no conociéndose ni de nombre las enfermedades endémicas que reinan en otros puntos de Américas situados entre los trópicos" (*Obras* 23:156).

Again, he is the national Tocqueville, the national Humboldt, marketing his product to a national *and* international clientele who deserves to know that Argentine geography is, to his mind, the best.

Explaining a deficiency (i.e. Argentina needs a Tocqueville, Argentines need to know the provinces) and then resolving it defines Sarmiento's method.³⁰ Though he appreciates the work already accomplished by the likes of Humboldt, who indeed traversed the Latin American lands armed with an arsenal of classifying devices—*barómetros, octantes y brújulas*, in other words—and a pen to record his findings, and though he considers Humboldt's account to be the region's "truth," Sarmiento himself wants to tell Argentina's true geographic tale. Thus, despite his inclusion of Humboldtian epigraphs and his immediate elevation of those scientists presumed to have had a relationship with Humboldt (such as Karl Hermann Burmeister as well as the astronomer Benjamin Gould), Sarmiento seeks not simply to commend Humboldtian geographical discourse; rather, for this first national geographer, his revision become a means to stake claim to the Argentine nation.³¹

To start this dual project of commendation and departure, Sarmiento appeals to the Humboldtian notion of immensity as he rewrites the Argentine land. Whereas in his other narratives geography appears as a secondary or even tertiary concern, in *Facundo* territorial

³⁰ Using the comparison between Sarmiento and his nemesis, the *caudillo*, as a point of departure (see Shumway 1991, in particular), we can interpret the pathology that causes Sarmiento to diagnose a problem, prescribe its remedy, and comply with his self-designed treatment. Is it that Sarmiento hates the caudillo but in reality *is* the caudillo, Hegel's world-historical man? After all, Alberdi ultimately concludes his opinion of Sarmiento by referring to him as a "caudillo of the pen" (qtd. in Shumway 125). Might this tendency be something like megalomania, one aligned with but slightly removed from the sort that Piglia speaks of? It will be interesting to trace the ways in which this brand of Argentine arrogance develops in Sarmiento's writings, for this arrogance—this vanity—is precisely what he ascribes as the gaucho's (and therefore the Argentine's) most original quality.

³¹ Through his relationship with Mary Mann (widow of the North American educator Horace Mann and translator of the first English edition of *Facundo*), Sarmiento comes to meet the German astronomer Benjamin Gould, whom he eventually contracts to found and run the Observatorio Astronómico in Córdoba. When describing his first meeting with Gould, Sarmiento includes the astronomer on a list with other celebrities of the time. Of note is that Gould's celebrity status stems from his ties to Humboldt (*El Gran Sarmiento* 81).

descriptions dominate the text as though the land's enormity necessarily occupies a majority of the narrative's pages. From the first paragraphs Sarmiento illustrates this size:

Allí la inmensidad por todas partes: inmensa la llanura, inmensos los bosques, inmensos los ríos, el horizonte siempre incierto, siempre confundiéndose con la tierra, entre celajes y vapores ténues, que no dejan, en la lejana perspectiva, señalar el punto en que el mundo acaba y principia el cielo. (56)

Sarmiento undergirds his declarations of vastness by referring, time and time again, to the land's undefined horizons (56, 78, 170). If this land seemingly never ends, then its potential—both material and symbolic—is also endless; in other words, Sarmiento illustrates the limitless potential of both Argentina's lands and literatures as he emphasizes the unreachable horizons.³² The nation's ubiquitous trait, grandeur surfaces at even the sentence level of its most famous narrative as Sarmiento's rhetorical landscape returns to the geographical space of the continent. This style appears in the first pages of *Facundo*:

La parte habitada de este país privilegiado en dones y que encierra todos los climas, puede dividirse en tres fisonomías distintas, que imprimen a la población condiciones diversas, según la manera como tiene que entenderse con la naturaleza que la rodea. Al norte, confundiéndose con el Chaco, un espeso bosque cubre con su impenetrable ramaje extensiones que llamaríamos inauditas, si en formas colosales hubiese nada inaudito en toda la extensión de la América. Al centro, y en una zona paralela, se disputan largo tiempo el terreno, la Pampa y la Selva: domina en partes el bosque, se degrada en matorrales enfermizos y

³² This obsession with the horizon surfaces through Sarmiento, Cunha, and particularly Gallegos, and thus in Chapter 4 I closely read its appearances in *Doña Bárbara*.

espinosos, preséntase de nuevo la selva a merced de algún río que la favorece, hasta que al fin al sur triunfa la Pampa, y ostenta su **lisa** y **velluda** frente, *infínita*, *sín límite conocido, sín accidente notable: es la imagen del mar en la tierra*; la **tierra** como el mapa; la **tierra** aguardando todavía que se la mande producir las plantas y toda clase de *siemiente*. Pudiera señalarse, como un rasgo notable de la fisonomía de este país, la aglomeración de ríos navegables que al Este se dan cita de todos los rumbos del horizonte, para reunirse en el Plata, y presentar dignamente su estupendo tributo al Océano, que lo recibe en sus flancos, no sin muestras visibles de turbación y de respeto. (57-58, emphases mine)

Diction in this passage enacts the varying textures of this peculiar space, seen, for example, in the “matorrales enfermizos y espinosos.” The adjectives claw at the reader, like the diseased and thorny bushes. Moments later, the “lisa y velluda frente” is deliberate, allowing us to feel (immediately after being clawed) the velvet-like surface of the Pampas: contradictions, dialectics, and binaries are the norm in this land, a land that is triply accentuated via Sarmiento’s anaphoric “tierra.” The author further underscores the terrain’s expanse by means of assonance with the repeated and smooth *i* sound.

Sarmiento’s sense that the land’s power surges from its oceanic size spans the entire narrative. While the reference to the Pampa as “la imagen del mar en la tierra” evokes Humboldtian undertones of indomitable expanse, Sarmiento’s declarations additionally call to

mind the endless supply of rivers that twist their way through his lands.³³ He considers these rivers to be the nation's underused lifeline, that metaphorical blood that (ought to) surge through its veins and sustain its being. But, "[o]tro espíritu se necesita que agite esas arterias en que hoy se estagnan los fluidos vivificantes de una nación" (58). Key in this declaration is the notion that these arteries—these rivers, this is to say—need to be stirred up, for in their present state they remain stagnant. And, as it can only be, this stagnancy impedes the progress, the forward movement, the flow of the national sphere.

Sarmiento blames Argentine disinterest in the rivers upon his countrymen's Spanish ancestry, remarking that "[e]l hijo de los aventureros españoles que colonizaron el país detesta la navegación, y se considera como aprisionado en los estrechos límites del bote o de la lancha. Cuando un río le ataja el paso, se desnuda tranquilamente, apresta su caballo y lo endilga nadando a un islote que se divida a lo lejos" (58). In this fictional scene, horse and horseman cross the waterway, yet the crossing is forced, lacking both pleasure and efficiency. Without proper, efficient navigation of the rivers, Sarmiento argues, Argentina cannot have adequate intellectual and capital exchange between exterior and interior, between *ciudad* and *campo*. This exchange, for Sarmiento, is integral to the civilizing project, a belief he highlights again late in *Facundo* as he articulates Rosas's two primary faults: first, that he opposes free navigation of the rivers and, second, that he wants to close the doors of immigration:

Porque Rosas, oponiéndose tan tenazmente a la libre navegación de los ríos,

³³ The notion of infinite expanse arises on several occasions in the rest of Sarmiento's corpus, particularly as he attempts to draw German immigrants to the Argentine Pampa. Because he knows the need to outshine the United States, he tends to underscore two related facts: the vastness of the land and its proximity to rivers. In his piece "Emigración alemana al Río de la Plata," he writes of "los terrenos de una extensión sin límites" (155), of the "tan inmensa extensión de un país igual en superficie á la Europa" (156)—a land that is "despoblado" and in need of occupants, to be sure—and of the "inmensa llanura," a "mar de verdura," "una ilimitada alfombra que va a perderse en el horizonte" (*Obras Completas* 23:158-59). Note, too, that he continues the Humboldtian water metaphor with the "mar de verdura."

protestando temores de intrusión europea, hostilizando a las ciudades del interior, y abandonándolas a sus propias fuerzas, no obedece simplemente a las preocupaciones godas contra los extranjeros, no cede solamente a las sugerencias de porteño ignorante que posee el Puerto y la aduana general de la República, sin cuidarse de desenvolver la civilización y la riqueza de toda esta nación, para que su puerto esté lleno de buques cargados de productos del interior, y su aduana de mercaderías; sino que principalmente sigue sus instinto de gaucho de la pampa que mira con horror el agua, con desprecio los buques, y que no conoce mayor dicha, ni felicidad igual a la de montar en buen pajarero para transportarse de un lugar a otro. (277)

As Sarmiento so often emphasizes in the passages of *Facundo*, this inability to overcome distance fosters isolation, which, in turn, fosters barbarism. Alongside trains and telegraphs, Argentina's rivers and their traversal will allow her to continue "una e indivisible," a status indebted to "[s]u llanura continua, sus ríos confinantes a un puerto único" (182).

For Sarmiento, utilizing the great abundance of waterways will reduce the prevalence of barbarism in the national sphere. His belief in the potential of fluvial navigation reiterates an obsession that originates in Humboldt's *Personal Narrative*. Here, the Baron dedicates seven chapters (out of twenty-three) to South American rivers and particularly to their confluences, remarking that "Everywhere water, like land, displays its unique characteristics" (186). These characteristics, Humboldt contends, lend themselves to commerce: "The position of San Fernando on a great navigable river, near the mouth of another river that crosses the whole province of Varinas, is extremely useful for trade" (174). And trade propels the modernizing project, an observation of which Sarmiento is abundantly aware.

Returning to *Facundo*, the waterways serve as a civilizing life force as Sarmiento employs the corporeal metaphor in the narrative's closing chapters. This time, however, he highlights not just the ancillary arteries and veins but rather what he refers to as the "aorta" of navigable rivers: the Plata.

Ese Estado se levantará en despecho suyo aunque sieguen sus retoños cada año, porque la grandeza del Estado está en la Pampa pastosa, en las producciones tropicales del Norte, y en el gran sistema de ríos navegables cuya ahorta es el Plata. Por otra parte, los españoles no somos ni navegantes ni industriosos, y la Europa nos proveerá por largos siglos de unos artefactos en cambio de nuestras materias primas; y ella y nosotros ganaremos en el cambio; la Europa nos pondrá el remo en la mano y nos remolcará río arriba, hasta que hayamos adquirido el gusto de la navegación. (353-54)

Argentina's superiority, Sarmiento contends, resides in the national terrain: in the grassy Pampas, in the tropical North, in the infinite quantity of rivers. But young Argentina and its vestigial Iberian tendencies have allowed for neither navigation nor industry.³⁴ Sarmiento condemns Rosas's prohibition of free navigation and lists it among the myriad issues arising from the latter's administration, issues that Sarmiento unapologetically aims to overturn: "Porque *él* ha puesto a nuestros ríos interiores una barrera insuperable para que sean libremente navegados; el NUEVO GOBIERNO fomentará de preferencia la navegación fluvial; millares de naves remontarán los ríos [...]" (364, emphases in original). Contentions like these are omnipresent, such that Sarmiento's iterations of the river question become something of a broken record to

³⁴ Note here the conflation between Argentine science's original goals (industry/excavation of *materia prima*) as contrasted with geography's (navigation/territorial knowledge).

the soundtrack of *Facundo*. Sarmiento concludes with an unprecedented quantity of fluvial references in order to firmly plant his primary contention: free navigation of the rivers is the *only* path to industrial progress in the interior (369).

River odes of this sort limit themselves not just to the pages of *Facundo*. Instead, they inundate much of Sarmiento's writing, the most blatant appearing in *Campaña en el Ejército Grande* (1852). As per his norms of flowery writing, Sarmiento pronounces his undying, magnificently charged love for the rivers of Argentina, noting that they inspire a poetic pulse within him:

He vivido en estos últimos tiempos entregado a una monomanía de que se resienten todos mis escritos de cinco años a esta parte. ¡Los ríos argentinos! Ellos han sido *mi sueño dorado, la alucinación de mis cavilaciones, la utopía de mis sistemas políticos, la panacea de nuestros males*, el tema de mis lucubraciones y si hubiera sabido medir versos, el asunto de un poema eterno. (101-02, emphases mine)³⁵

Sarmiento's modest undertones regarding his stylistic, indeed poetic, abilities suggest a self-perception of lack, of inability. Had he been able to write in measure, he claims, the rivers would certainly be subject to an eternal poem. Sarmiento attempts to convince his reading public that he is no poet; for them, after all, he is a statesman, perhaps capable of being moved by poetry but ultimately interested in national progress. His efforts fall by the wayside, for his narrative unifies the aesthetic and the social; it mediates between literary language and social life. Indeed, his lines suggest that he crafts his "prose" with a particular—even poetic—style that is infused

³⁵ Returning to the notion of Sarmiento as Hegel's world-historical man, perhaps here we might diagnose his pathology as something like a megalomania that cannot but escape in his river odes. Joshua Lund has usefully pointed out to me that the image of the river emerges in much of postcolonial literature as intrinsically related to madness, to megalomania. Sarmiento's fixation with exerting his power—much in the same way as the strongman *caudillo*—again appear in his tendency to name and then solve a problem, this time in direct relation to free navigation of the rivers. Rosas (megalomaniac, as well) obsesses over stopping free navigation; Sarmiento obsesses over encouraging free navigation. And both send themselves into a frenzy (evident in Sarmiento's apostrophe to "¡Los ríos argentinos!", apostrophe being yet another example of madness: think *King Lear*) around the river question, antitheses of one another to the end.

with political meaning.³⁶

Beyond the immediate apostrophe (“¡Los ríos argentinos!”) and metaphors (in italics), let us return to the closing lines of one of the above passages: “Pudiera señalarse, como un rasgo notable de la fisonomía de este país, la aglomeración de ríos navegables que al Este se dan cita de todos los rumbos del horizonte, para reunirse en el Plata, y presentar dignamente su estupendo tributo al Océano, que lo recibe en sus flancos, no sin muestras visibles de turbación y de respeto” (57-58). Sarmiento writes the waterways into his landscape, whereby he emphasizes their integrality to “la fisonomía de este país”—that is, the connection between its outward appearance and inner character. Each of the sentence’s seven clauses—separated by commas like riverbanks—come together like tributaries at the first confluence of the Plata, only to then feed into nothing less than the whole of the mighty ocean. To emphasize the immense power of both the rivers and the ocean, Sarmiento employs charged diction—“dignamente,” “estupendo tributo,” “turbación,” and opts to end with the sentence’s lasting impression: “respeto.” The personified rivers and ocean have a mutual respect, evinced in the rivers’ stupendous tribute and the ocean’s signs of turbulence: the land seems to possess more awareness regarding its prowess than its very human inhabitants. In the following sentence Sarmiento laments that “estos inmensos canales excavados por la solícita mano de la naturaleza no introducen cambio ninguno en las costumbres nacionales” (58). Desperately seeking change in “las costumbres nacionales” as he composes *Facundo*, Sarmiento fashions a didactic geography for his fellow citizens as he details his prescription for subjugating the land. The first remedy

³⁶ I refrain from counting meter or attempting to qualify Sarmiento as a proper poet in this project; to do so does not better my reading of his language as related to geographical discourse. For the only study of Sarmiento’s poetry, see Horacio Castillo’s *Sarmiento Poeta*, Buenos Aires: Academia Argentina de Letras, 2007, particularly pages 153-64, in which Castillo reads what he nominates *Facundo*’s implicit poetry.

equals better navigation of rivers. For Argentina to civilize her expanse, she must invest in the modes available to connect that vastness. Departing from Sarmiento's overt call to supplant barbarism by defeating geography, however, his language contradictorily alludes to an underlying elevation of barbarism. As his words poke and prod and sleep, as his sounds startle and stumble, and as his paragraphs suddenly burst with the intensity of a storm, Sarmiento unifies form and content. This language, according to Vico, originates with the primitive man, thus Sarmiento—indeed, the Argentine Tocqueville—embraces the language of the barbarian to write the “true” national tale.

2.5 THE IMMIGRANT'S BROCHURE: A MARKETABLE GEOGRAPHY

Taking into account Sarmiento's tendency to flit back and forth, to say one thing while arguably doing another, we can conclude that he thrives on contradiction. He even declares in *Facundo* that contradictions are only ended by means of further contradictions: “¡No! no se renuncia a un porvenir tan inmenso, a una misión tan elevada, por ese cúmulo de contradicciones y dificultades: ¡las dificultades se vencen, las contradicciones se acaban a fuerza de contradecirlas” (46). Contradictions, dialectics, and binaries continue to surface as he describes the “man” component of the man/land relationship in geography. While in one moment Sarmiento deplores the open and monotonous expanse of the Pampa, in the next he attributes the state's unity and indivisibility to that very Pampa, one “generalmente llana y unida” (61). These peculiarities reflect a discourse of a consolidated state faced with the challenge of penetrating—by realizing its sovereignty—the barbarism of this “empty” space.

In fact, in his piece “Inmigración alemana al Río de la Plata,” Sarmiento attempts to lure German immigrants and explains that “la población nacional es escasa” and that the country is “despoblado aun y admite millones de pobladores que lo cultiven y enriquezcan con su trabajo” (*Obras* 23:155-156). In *Facundo*, he employs a series of rhetorical questions to persuade readers that the “uninhabited land” might still be utilized to the national advantage: “¿hemos de abandonar un suelo de los más privilegiados de la América a las devastaciones de la barbarie, mantener cien ríos navegables abandonados a las aves acuáticas que están en quieta posesión de surcarlos ellas solas desde *ab initio*? ¿Hemos de cerrar voluntariamente la puerta de la inmigración europea que llama con golpes repetidos para poblar nuestros desiertos y hacernos, a la sombra de nuestro pabellón, pueblo innumerable como las arenas del mar? (44). Sarmiento’s questions provoke the notion that the land cannot be left by the wayside—to the birds—suggesting that the land is, in fact, unoccupied. A few sentences later, he explicitly juxtaposes Europe and America: “Después de la Europa, ¿hay otro mundo cristiano civilizable y desierto que la América?” (44).

The discourse of emptiness is thus a metaphor—in other words, a metaphor for land ripe to be populated. But the land is far from empty, leading us to consider the people *already* populating it. With each detailed analysis of the different gauchos, Sarmiento’s contradictions intensify. Foremost, the author notes that moral progress—civilization—is impossible to achieve in a land in which man and education remain isolated from one another due to distance. The cultivation of intellect is impossible where “la barbarie es normal” (70). Sarmiento describes the gauchos’ desire to dominate nature with a deliberate diction entrenched in negativity: “altivos,” “aislados,” “salvajes,” and “brutos,” for example (72). His adjectives overflow with deprecation. All the same, Sarmiento’s admiration for the gauchos seeps through his stylized

writing, and we can unquestionably hear something akin to praise. The gauchos may lack the ability to read, but they can topple and slay a fierce bull, described in one of many lines that reads like verse: “el puñal en una mano y el poncho envuelto en la otra para meterle en la boca, mientras le traspasa el corazón y lo deja tendido a sus pies” (73). Sarmiento notes that the gauchos’ tendency to subdue nature develops the individuality, nationalism, and vanity intrinsic to the Argentine; might his appreciation for these characteristics surface because of his self-fashioned inclination toward such traits? Indeed, gaucho arrogance has provoked, according to Sarmiento, independence in this segment of America (73).

As Sarmiento scorns the barbarism behind the gauchos’ abilities with horses and contrasts it with their intellectual inabilities—they are, he insists, barbaric illiterates—his writing shines light on an underlying respect for the beauty and the necessity of the act. Sarmiento believes that physical nature yields human nature, and this belief escapes through his language, through his rhythm, through his repetition. Yet, at the same time, he wishes to erase these barbaric non-readers from the Argentine expanse and to replace (or integrate) them with European immigrants. Sarmiento’s immediate contradiction surfaces through the intertwining of literary language and geographical discourse, through his impulse to attract “civilized” inhabitants to the Argentine *pampa* with his descriptions of the terrain.

Sarmiento is not alone in his efforts. Nineteenth-century modernization policies in Latin America (particularly the Southern Cone) included an effort to populate the vast stretches of land with European immigrants; this plan, as Juan Batista Alberdi put it, consisted in governing by populating—*gobernar es poblar*. To this end, thinkers and statesman like Sarmiento and the Chilean Vicente Pérez Rosales embarked on geographic ventures designed as marketing tools to attract immigrant populations. Johann Eduard Wappäus, professor of statistics and geography at

the University of Göttingen, facilitated these ventures, for his German-language brochures had drawn prospective emigrants to the Río de la Plata region (*Obras* 23: 152-56). After befriending Dr. Wappäus, Sarmiento has the brochures translated and includes a Preface to the Spanish editions, wherein he lauds the geographer's success in steering German immigrants to Chile:

... el Dr. Wappäus se hallará bien pronto en estado de dar a luz en alemán una historia de Chile, rica de informaciones útiles sobre el terreno de esta franja de tierra, su población, sus instituciones, el espíritu de sus habitantes y los elementos de riqueza que encierra; obra preciosa calculada para producir su efecto sobre lectores alemanes dispuestos a emigrar a aquellos países que les ofrecen facilidades para establecerse, estabilidad en el orden y garantías para el trabajo. (*Obras* 23:105)

Explicit in Sarmiento's declaration are his deliberate and calculative designs to attract German immigrants. Publications advertising the merits of a particular locale increase the likelihood of immigration, he concludes. With this in mind, Sarmiento urges the Chilean government to publish brochures similar to those of Dr. Wappäus across France and Italy. Sarmiento's certainty regarding the relationship between "conocimientos geográficos" and immigration is founded; he admiringly details the United States's recent "movimiento alemán" as evidence:

El movimiento alemán hacia los Estados Unidos lo han producido los conocimientos geográficos que difunde con uniformidad el generalizado sistema de educación pública. El Almanaque del Emigrante, que se publica todos los años, presenta á los ojos de todos el cuadro de la emigración, en todo el mundo, con las ventajas y desventajas que ofrece en puntos determinados; pero el de la Irlanda, por ejemplo, que es mayor, se produce, propaga y continúa por medio de

la correspondencia epistolaria de los emigrados mismos, á cuyos asertos dan valor, é irresistible atractivo, las sumas de dinero que acompañan las cartas. (*Obras* 23:384)

Geographical discourse as a means to immigration often occurs at the level of governmental request, as happens when Sarmiento serves as an Argentine representative to the United States. Upon being asked to describe Argentina in an 1865 letter to the Cónsul General de la República Argentina, he fashions a veritable treatise on the geographical qualities of the national sphere—all, to be sure, with the purpose of attracting immigrants from the United States. The letter, written in New York, employs North American strategies to attract North Americans:

El infrascripto, Ministro Plenipotenciario de la República Argentina, se dirige al señor Cónsul a fin de satisfacer el deseo que muestra el autor de la carta que se ha servido remitirle, comunicándole las breves noticias sobre la República Argentina que puedan interesar a los que deseen trasladarse a ella. (*Obras* 34:291)

Despite—or perhaps because of—the text’s short length, Sarmiento includes an immense amount of geographical description, suggesting that the geographical takes precedence over other factors when thought of in terms of drawing immigrants. Within a three-page “*breve noticia*,” the Argentine statesman guides readers through the rivers (291), the borders (292), and the climate of his national landscape (293), taking care to pause en route upon the agricultural production and human populations that are its natural byproduct; his endgame: “interesar a los que deseen trasladarse a [Argentina].”

Sarmiento follows the same pattern in the piece “Emigración alemana al Río de la Plata” as he describes in vivid detail the climate, the lack of diseases, and the great tracts of land, which, he explains, are better and cheaper than those in Argentina’s leading competition: the United

States. His rhetoric indicates to prospective immigrants that, in the other hemisphere,

con el exceso de población, y la multitud de emigrados que de todas partes acuden, la vida empieza á hacerse tan difícil como en Europa mismo, por el subido precio de los terrenos, la larga distancia de las costas á que se encuentran las partes colonizables, y la dificultad cada día en aumento de colocacion lucrativa para los inmigrantes. (*Obras* 23:155)

Sarmiento insists that the Argentine system, on the contrary, always places land within monetary reach of immigrants by maintaining fixed and reasonable prices; “[h]ablar en Buenos Aires de la ventajas de la inmigración,” he proudly declares, “es probar que la luz del sol alumbra y calienta á la vez” (*Obras* 23: 359). With these words, Sarmiento translates “writing the earth” to “writing the nation”—in other words, geography presents itself as being interwoven with national organization and national pride.

Like Sarmiento, Vicente Pérez Rosales details the value of attracting German immigrants to populate the vast expanses of his Chilean lands in *Recuerdos del Pasado* (1882). Geography, for him, reigns supreme in the mission to draw foreign peoples, such that he dedicates an entire previous narrative, *Ensayo sobre Chile* (1857), to describe Chilean geography, customs, and opportunities for immigrants. Akin to Sarmiento, his source knowledge on the methodology of geography stems from Europe and North America. Generally speaking, Pérez Rosales learns from friends; Sarmiento learns from reading. Thus, the Chilean socialite casually mentions acquaintances while the Argentine bibliophile does the same with texts and authors. Other times, however, both simply engage in name-dropping for the sake of celebrity by association. For instance, Pérez Rosales proudly lists his scientific adventures in *Recuerdos del Pasado*:

Había recorrido toda Europa, captándome la voluntad de algunos seres

coronados, y honrándome con la amistad de Humboldt, Pöppig, Wappaüs, Korff, y otras eminentes lumbreras del saber humano, cuyas cariñosas cartas, así como los títulos de miembro honorario de varias sociedades científicas, con justo orgullo conservaba, y, sin embargo, aún quedaba en mi corazón un vacío que llenar. Faltábanme mis tierras afecciones; faltábame el sol de la querida patria.

(586)

Sarmiento similarly documents his engagement with the intellectual elite in a letter to his alleged lover Aurelia Vélez Sarsfield:

De casa de Mrs Mann me llevaron a Cambridge, la célebre Universidad, donde he pasado dos días de banquete continuo, para ser presentado a todos los eminentes sabios que están allí reunidos: Longfellow, el gran poeta, que habla perfectamente el español; Gould, el astrónomo, amigo de Humboldt; Agassiz (hijo), a quien pronostican mayor celebridad que el padre; Hill, el viejo presidente de la Universidad. (*El Gran Sarmiento* 81)

Like Sarmiento, Pérez Rosales's pride surges in the context of nationality—that, despite such powerful friendships, he still wishes to return to Chile and ultimately does. Nonetheless, his integration into European circles of science and, more importantly, circles of geography, influence his geographic stance significantly. His newfound knowledge ultimately moves him to dedicate a significant portion of *Recuerdos del Pasado* arguing against one of the premiere European geographers dedicated to charting Latin American lands. Indeed, Pérez Rosales entirely refutes the previously mentioned document, Richard Napp's *Die Argentinische Republik* (1876), commissioned by the Comité Central Argentino para la Exposición en Filadelfia with Sarmiento's support. His accusation: that Napp fabricates the Argentine territory's boundaries,

thereby bestowing that nation with *more* land.

Compaginando los apuntes de mis recuerdos y relacionándolos con mis posteriores viajes, puedo asegurar que es enteramente antojadiza la aserción del escritor Napp, en su *República Argentina*, al sentar en la página 67 de esa obra que <<al sur del grado 32, la meseta andina se estrecha convirtiéndose al fin en cresta que, disminuyendo gradualmente, se extiende hasta el extremo meridional del continente>>. Al sentar como cierta semejante inexactitud, el buen Napp, o ha obedecido al propósito que se perseguía entonces de estrechar el territorio chileno en aquellas latitudes, o ha creído oportuno sanciar por escrito, como exactos, los muchos desaciertos que luce su mapa de la República argentina en la designación de sus fronteras con la República chilena. (219)³⁷

Here, we have the conflation of several relevant leitmotifs: an enhanced sense of nationality, a respect for and pride in geographical knowledge, and an immediate need to accurately delineate national territory based on geographical knowledge. Moreover, we see the need to clarify (Pérez Rosales might argue, *further fabricate*) the visual representation of the mapped territory through language—“sanciar por escrito, como exactos, los muchos desaciertos que luce su mapa de la República argentina” (219). Despite Sarmiento and Pérez Rosales’s friendship—the former serves as the latter’s tour guide upon his visit to Buenos Aires—nationalism and its promotion come first. This revelation marks another moment in which “writing the earth” effectively translates to “writing the nation” as, again, geography intertwines with national organization,

³⁷ Pérez Rosales’s approach reminds me of Cunha’s righteous tendency toward correction. However, his ire toward other geographers assumes a dry, acerbic tone, contrary to Cunha’s aestheticized geographical discourse. For example, Pérez Rosales complain that “Muy equivocados están los escritores que tratan de la geografía de América cuando, guiados por el trazado más o menos antojadizo de los mapas generales, dan por sentado que la gran cordillera de los Andes es desde su entrada a Chile un cordon continuo hast alas aguas del estrecho magallánico. Ni hay tal cordon ni tal continuidad, sino en la mediana, y ésta no alcanza a abarcar la cuarta parte de la extension que se da al todo de la sierra chilena” (218).

with national delineation, with national pride.³⁸

Geographical discourse thus emerges in an effort to exert a pull on an immigrant population. The thought process follows a circuitous route: if we attract European immigrants, we can populate these “sparsely inhabited lands” not only with humans but also with ideas; in this way, we might reduce the physical and mental isolation that plagues the national territory. Sarmiento evinces this plague through his descriptions of Córdoba, that backward city he perceives to be the antithesis of the modern Buenos Aires. Córdoba’s own trappings feed its backwardness, he believes. More simply, a large part of Sarmiento’s fear for Argentina stems from its natural inclination to isolate, to lock itself, in solipsistic fashion, within its very self, to become its own worst enemy: the barbarian. Echoes of this fear resound in varying forms throughout *Facundo*, be they the isolation caused by the vast expanse of the Pampa or that caused by the trappings of tradition. Both types of isolation lead to stagnancy, which leaves no exit, no forward movement away from the land’s natural barbaric tendencies. Sarmiento speaks of this latter sort of isolation in regard to Córdoba, the national territory that he imagines to be entrenched in the barbaric, the ignorant, and the stagnant. He dedicates several pages of Chapter 7 to painting a textual picture of Córdoba’s geographic qualities, starting first with its climate, then moving on to its eastern side, to its main plaza, to its churches and convents, and, finally, to its university. In Córdoba, he laments, religion maintains unquestioned dominance while a public theatre, an opera, a daily newspaper, or a printing industry have yet to exist. He emphasizes the lack of art, the lack of free, creative thinking; Sarmiento fears that this intellectual isolation

³⁸ Craib reads the construction of the national map as the moment in which the nation can effectively pre-articulate itself, useful here in regard to Pérez Rosales’s irritation with Napp, who chooses to *fabricate* the territory instead of *articulate* it. Beyond the cartographic, the need for textual articulation explains Sarmiento’s obsession with delineation and naming, evidenced, for example, in his insistence that the Departamento Topográfico demarcate all of the Argentine territory as opposed to just Buenos Aires. See *Obras Completas* 23: 293-99.

impedes Argentina's progress:

Hasta dónde puede esto influir el espíritu de un pueblo ocupado de estas ideas durante dos siglos, no puede decirse; pero algo ha debido influir, porque ya lo véis, el habitante de Córdoba tiende los ojos en torno suyo y no ve el espacio, el horizonte está a cuatro cuerdas de la plaza; sale por las tardes a pasearse, y en lugar de ir y venir por una calle de álamos, espaciosa y larga como cañada de Santiago, que ensancha el ánimo y lo vivifica, da vueltas en torno de un lago artificial de agua *sin movimiento, sin vida*, y en cuyo centro está un cenador de formas majestuosas, pero *inmóvil, estacionario*: la ciudad es un **claustro** con verjas de hierro; cada manzana tiene un **claustro** de monjas o frailes; los colegios son **claustros**; la legislación que se enseña, la teología, toda la ciencia escolástica de la edad media es un **claustro** que se encierra y parapeta la inteligencia contra todo lo que salga del texto y del comentario. (170-71, emphases mine)

A lack of physical space leads to a lack of intellect: these are self-fashioned trappings that extend from the corporeal to the mental. Contrary to those who reside on the vast expanse of the Pampa and thereby suffer from isolation, the inhabitants of Córdoba fail to see past what they know; rather than *actually* lacking space, they fail to recognize it—"no ve el espacio, el horizonte está a cuatro cuerdas de la plaza." Space, here, becomes a metaphor for room to broaden one's intellectual horizons. Though there exists actual, tangible space in Córdoba—space, sensing from Sarmiento's flowing assonance with the repeated *a* in "en lugar de ir y venir por una calle de álamos, espaciosa y larga como cañada de Santiago, que ensancha el ánimo y lo vivifica," that lends itself to kinesthetic energy—its inhabitants nevertheless entrap themselves in a life that is "sin movimiento," "sin vida," "inmóvil," "estacionario," much like the artificial lake

around which they monotonously walk. We return to the Humboldtian water metaphor: Sarmiento finds progress in the flowing currents of Argentina's rivers; quite the opposite, the nation's barbaric citizens find themselves willingly stuck in the murky stagnancy of a fishpond without fish, without life, without motion. Sarmiento follows the water metaphor with a series of comparisons between the city, its inhabitants, its institutions and a cloister. Córdoba materializes as a barred jail ("la ciudad es un **claustro** con verjas de hierro") enclosed in the grip of a religion and conservative education ("cada manzana tiene un **claustro** de monjas o frailes; los colegios son **claustros**"), both entrenched in the Middle Ages ("la legislación que se enseña, la teología, toda la ciencia escolástica de la edad media es un **claustro** que se encierra y parapeta la inteligencia contra todo lo que salga del texto y del comentario").

Sarmiento's metaphors nourish his *Volksgeist* orientation insofar as they allude to the Córdoban man as emerging from his surroundings, even those that are manmade or, in other words, unnatural.³⁹ Man is like the promenade in Córdoba, locked in, immobile, stagnant: the readers are locked into Sarmiento's never-ending sentence, trapped by his punctuation. To cement the notion of immobility, he returns to the lake replete with dead waters:

³⁹ A believer in the dialectical relationship between organisms and their environment, Sarmiento was heavily influenced by the general thought of the time, which stemmed from a distorted reading of the works of Herder and his subsequent adherents. Deeply immersed in the study of geography, climate, and history, these scholars thought that these past and present exterior factors had the potential to shed light on contemporary internal qualities and characteristics of mankind. In line with this thinking, argues William H. Kattr in his study *Domingo F. Sarmiento: Public Writer* (1985), Sarmiento was informed by the particularities of the *Volksgeist*, "which proposes that events were largely influenced by the physical environment and that the leaders of social struggles were to a great degree the personifications of the forces of nature" (145). Kattr contends that the *Volksgeist* orientation—whose roots are planted in Vichian thought and potentially traced their way to Sarmiento via Herder—was commonplace in the nineteenth-century French historical school, thus Sarmiento might have been influenced by Tocqueville as well (146). No matter the source of Sarmiento's ideological framework, the idea of *Volksgeist* and his abidance by its tenets is crucial to any understanding of his purported exposé of the *caudillo* regime in Argentina. I say "purported" because his intent is not only to reveal and combat the particularities of both Facundo and Rosas but also to explicate the systematic debilities that allowed for their ascendancy in the first place. In view of this, Sarmiento opts for an entire section detailing the geographical and anthropological antecedents that "influenced" these leaders, thereby opportunistically employing the *Volksgeist* historical orientation to deliver his ideological lines and propel his political project.

¿Qué asidero encontrarían las ideas revolucionarias, hijas de Rosseau, Mably y Voltaire, si por fortuna atravesaban la Pampa para descender a la catacumba española, en aquellas cabezas disciplinadas por el peripato, para hacer frente a toda idea nueva; en aquellas inteligencias que, como su paseo, *tenían una idea inmóvil en el centro, rodeada de un lago de aguas muertas*, que estorbaba penetrar hasta ellas. (171, emphasis mine)

That these revolutionary ideas cannot enter the impermeable geographical center of Córdoba negates, too, their ability to enter its impermeable intellectual center. And, without ideas, Sarmiento contends, progress is rendered impossible. Stagnancy thus persists. Whether they are metaphorically locked in (the cloisters) or metaphorically stagnant (the dead waters), the peoples of Córdoba resist any potential for upward intellectual or cultural movement. For this reason, Sarmiento contends that only through European immigration might Argentina's lands and people locate said movement.

Yet Sarmiento's literary strategies reverse his textual insistence to rid the national sphere of its barbaric element. By demonstrating the relationship between man and land, between Córdoba and her inhabitants, he looks to the tenets of geography to legitimate his declarations. But, his literary language further politicizes and radicalizes those declarations as it contradicts their negativity. Sarmiento's stylized writing returns to the land in *defense* of the "clases inferiores," always vouching for the merits of primitivity: "Si el origen de esta vanidad original en las clases inferiores es mezquino, no son por eso menos nobles las consecuencias; como no es menos pura el agua de un río porque nazca de vertinentes cenagosas e infectas" (73). Sarmiento the Geographer looks to the land to explain man, and his contradiction continues. Via immigration he aims to incorporate, much like the tributaries of a river, those "vertinentes

cenagosas e infectas”; simultaneously, he pushes to maintain “esta vanidad original”—that is, the barbarism of the “clases inferiores.” Sarmiento’s appeal to barbarism thus underlies his attempts to write the Argentine earth, to write this geography that will, he hopes, draw the civilization of European and North American immigrants.

2.6 THE FIRST PAGE OF ARGENTINE GEOGRAPHY

For a marketable geography, the dry prose of scientific writing proves insufficient to sell the land. In this vein, we must acknowledge that Sarmiento learns of aestheticized geographical discourse from Humboldt, also inclined to sell Latin American lands to his Spanish commissioners. Recall that Humboldt often admits his tendency toward the poetic; in an 1834 letter to Varnhagen von Ense, he wistfully regrets, “the besetting sins of my style are an unfortunate propensity to poetical expressions, a long participial construction, and too great concentration of various opinions and sentiments in the same sentence” (qtd. in Wilson lvii). Always grandiose, Sarmiento takes Humboldt’s admitted “propensity” and amplifies it ten-fold. Going beyond the German naturalist, Sarmiento joins literary writing with geographical discourse, thereby giving form to the Argentine landscape and, at once, telling its most dramatic political tale. He assumes the role of geographer as storyteller, he who recounts the relationship between man and land in ways that place his *Facundo* as the standard for canonization. But he does so in harmony with the literary origins of geography, as explicated by Strabo: in this sense, the literary surfaces as integral to geography. Geography unfolds as a genre of literature.

Even Argentina’s most esteemed fiction writers tout Sarmiento’s literary skills. In the

Prologue to the 1974 edition of *Facundo*, Jorge Luis Borges contends, “*Sub specie aeternitatis*, el *Facundo* es aún la mejor historia argentina” (vii). Recall, too, that Ricardo Piglia describes the “first page of *Facundo*” as the “first page of Argentine literature” (131). To further nuance these contentions, I argue that Sarmiento simultaneously writes Argentina’s first nationally composed geography; the first page of *Facundo*, therefore, is also the first page of Argentine geographical discourse. The conflation with literature—a necessary tool—allows Sarmiento to bring geography’s political potential into the mainstream; he achieves such publicity through periodicals. Having established Santiago’s first newspaper, *El Progreso*, under the auspices of Manuel Montt, Sarmiento’s position as editor of the paper coincides with the installments of *Facundo*, which appear between May 2 and June 1, 1845.⁴⁰ He immediately seeks national and international readership, sending copies of the text—published in book form as early as July 1845—to Chilean statesmen, to politicians in Buenos Aires, to leaders throughout the Americas, even across continental lines. Referring to his narrative as the *Odyssey*, Sarmiento begs his primary distributor, Juan Maria Gutiérrez, to send *Facundo* as far and as wide as the limits of nineteenth-century transportation will allow: “Pero volvamos a su misión de derramar la Odisea por toda la redonda del orbe. ¿A que no ha escrito una palabra a sus amigos de Francia, al Nacional, la Democracia Pacífica, Revista de Paris i de Ambos Mundos, etc., etc.? Vamos, ágalos”

⁴⁰ The minister of justice and public education under the administration of President Manuel Bulnes, Manuel Montt becomes something of a mentor to Sarmiento during the latter’s exile in Chile. Montt’s belief in education and immigration, which ultimately infects Sarmiento, leads him to consider populating the “empty” lands of southern Chile with European immigrants. To this end, he sends Sarmiento to Europe late in 1845 in an effort to better understand the French methods of colonization in Algiers as well their education system. Sarmiento’s thoughts on immigration thus begin in these beginning years of his career, and they are intrinsically connected with ideas of (re)colonization. See Samuel L. Baily’s “Sarmiento and Immigration: Changing Views on the Role of Immigration in the Development of Argentina” in *Sarmiento and His Argentina*, Ed. Joseph T. Criscenti. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993: 131-41.

(qtd. in Sorensen-Goodrich 36).⁴¹ This 1845 letter reveals Sarmiento's zealous insistence that *Facundo* attain worldwide circulation and, with that, rise through the ranks of mythologies to become the definitive account of Argentina. Breaking with established tradition—particularly with Europe's institutionalized geographies—Sarmiento creates a new national discourse firmly planted in his incarnation of Humboldtian geographical discourse.

Why the urgency to distribute? Writing nearly two decades prior to the 1879 founding of the Instituto Geográfico Argentino, the pioneering geographer in Sarmiento achieves three of the institute's primary objectives, which co-founder Estanislao Zeballos lists in the inaugural *Boletín del Instituto Geográfico Argentino*: “la exploración y descripción de los territorios, costas, islas y mares adyacentes de la República Argentina; hacer conocer al país en el extranjero por medio de una revista; y escribir una geografía argentina” (Zeballos 79). For Sarmiento, his tale of Argentina establishes difference between the emergent nation and Europe, particularly Spain. Argentina can mature only as fast as his national narrative can circulate, reaffirming, indeed, his faith in the power of the written word. I suggested that Sarmiento revels in dictating a call-to-arms to which he actively responds. This pattern continues with regard to “writing the earth” in order to “write the nation.” He explains in *Facundo*,

Si un destello de literatura nacional puede brillar momentáneamente en las nuevas

⁴¹ In *Viajes por Europa, África i América 1845-1847*, Sarmiento indicates his desire to circulate his works through Paris, which is, to his mind, the Mecca of literature: “¿Es Ud. literato? Entonces consagre un año a leer lo que publican cada día esa turba de romancistas, poetas, dramatas, que tienen en agitación los espíritus, que hacen de París una sociedad pueril, oyendo con la boca abierta a esa multitud de contadores de cuentos para entretener a los niños, Dumas, Balzac, Sue, Scribe, Soulié, Paul Feval, que os hacen llorar i reír, que inventan mundos i pasiones estrañas, absurdas, imposibles para entrenar a este pueblo fatigado sin hartarse de sentir emociones, de hacerse pinchar los nervios con descripciones atroces, terribles, irritantes” (102). And not unmodestly, Sarmiento includes himself as the American representative in the halls of literature, if only to learn from the masters: “Sobre el mérito puramente artístico i literario de estas pájinas, no se me aparta nunca de la mente que Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Dumas, Jaquemont, han escrito viajes, i han formado el gusto público. Si entre nuestros intelijentes, educados en tan elevada escuela, hai alguno que pretenda acercárseles, yo seria el primero en abandonar la pluma y descubrirme en su presencia” (7). See *Viajes*, Ed. Javier Fernández, Madrid: Colección Archivos, 1993.

sociedades americanas, es el que resultará de la descripción de las grandes escenas naturales, y sobre todo, de la lucha entre la civilización europea y la barbarie indígena, entre la inteligencia y la materia: lucha imponente en América, y que da lugar a escenas tan peculiares, tan características y tan fuera del círculo de ideas en que se ha educado el espíritu europeo, porque los resortes dramáticos se vuelven desconocidos fuera del país donde se toman, los usos sorprendentes, y originales los caracteres. (75-76)

Sarmiento prescribes and promptly abides by his solution for the new American societies: if we are to produce a national literature, we must locate it, above all, in “las grandes escenas naturales.” And these natural scenes include land and landscape, topography and climate, flora and fauna—*la geografía latinoamericana*. But straightforward Spanish will not suffice for these scenes. In an attempt to institutionalize linguistic difference between Latin America and Spain, Sarmiento writes his *Memoria sobre ortografía* (1843), a spelling model for the budding nations. The new national discourse thus breaks with Europe in several ways: Humboldtian only for the sake of credibility, Sarmiento’s geographical discourse writes against the established institution by employing not only Latin American spelling but also by coalescing form and content. His highly stylized story embraces the literary as it recounts the volatile relationship between man and land; *Facundo* thus mediates between the aesthetic and the social by using the language of geography to articulate the nation.

Sarmiento unabashedly notes on several occasions that his *Facundo* arises from literary

intentions; other times his false modesty wins and leads him to deny his literary capabilities.⁴² Regardless of his admissions or non-admissions of literary aptitude, Sarmiento's narrative is replete with land-inspired passages that employ poetic prose and literary devices. In his essay "Literatura e cultura de 1900 a 1945," Brazilian sociologist and critic Antonio Candido observes that "as melhores expressões do pensamento e da sensibilidade têm quase sempre assumido, no Brasil, forma literária" (152). The internal logic of his text—if superimposed on all of Latin America (Lund 69)—captures the dynamic at work in Sarmiento's *Facundo*. Foremost, literature successfully introduces (and makes more digestible) Sarmiento's new geographical discourse, engaging society and providing "sensibilidade" and "consciência nacional" alongside "o orgulho e superação das inferioridades sentidas" (154). By the same token, Candido explains that "o poderoso ímã da literatura interferia com a tendência sociológica"—analogically speaking, geography is to the novelist what literature is to the geographer (153). From the outset, then, societal intellectual demands dictate that Sarmiento approach *Facundo* at the confluence of geography and literature.

In Argentina, particularly, the demand for literature translates to a demand for poetry, which is to say the political expression of the national soul. In the second chapter of *Facundo*, for instance, Sarmiento sets out to explain why Argentines are the way they are, why they are poets. He contends that this poetic pulse beats in the land, in the climes, in the geography. Following his tendency to exemplify his explanation, Sarmiento explains with poetic prose:

⁴² See, for example, the end of *Facundo's* Chapter 6, in which Sarmiento defends his periodic exclusions as based on literary ambitions: "Me fatigo de leer infamias, contestes en todos los manuscritos que consulto. Sacrifico la relación de ellas a la vanidad de autor, a la pretensión literaria. Diciendo más, los cuadros saldrían recargados, innobles, repulsivos" (163). At the end of Chapter 13, contrarily, Sarmiento recounts the night of *Facundo's* death, noting that he has omitted no details in order to most effectively tell the story: "La noche que pasaron los viajeros de la posta del Ojo de Agua es de tal manera angustiosa para el infeliz secretario, que va a una muerte cierta e inevitable, y que carece del valor y de la temeridad que anima a Quiroga, que creo no deber omitir ninguno de sus detalles, tanto más, cuanto que siendo por fortuna sus pormenores tan auténticos, sería criminal descuido no observarlos [...]" (303).

De aquí resulta que el pueblo argentino es poeta por carácter, por naturaleza. ¿Ni cómo ha de dejar de serlo, cuando en medio de una tarde serena y apacible, una nube torva y negra se levanta *sin saber de dónde*, se extiende sobre el cielo mientras *se cruzan dos palabras*, y de repente el estampido del trueno anuncia la tormenta que deja frío el viajero, y reteniendo el aliento por temor de atraerse un rayo de dos mil que caen en torno suyo? La oscuridad se sucede después a la **luz**: la muerte está por todas partes; un poder terrible, incontrastable le ha hecho en un momento reconcentrarse en sí mismo, y sentir su nada en medio de aquella naturaleza irritada; *sentir a Dios, por decirlo una vez, en la aterrante magnificencia de sus obras*. ¿Qué **más** colores para la paleta de su fantasía? **Masas** de *tinieblas* que anublan el día, **masas** de **luz** lívida, temblorosa, que ilumina un instante las *tinieblas*, y muestra la pampa a distancias infinitas, cruzándola vivamente el rayo, en fin, símbolo del poder. Estas imágenes han sido hechas para quedarse hondamente grabadas. Así, cuando la tormenta pasa, el gaucho se queda triste, pensativo, serio, y la sucesión de **luz** y **tinieblas** se continua en su imaginación, del mismo modo que cuando miramos fijamente el sol, nos queda por largo tiempo su disco en la retina. (78-79, emphases mine)

The passage as a self-standing paragraph makes landfall just as randomly as the storm that it describes—“sin saber de dónde.” In the midst of a chapter that is “serena y apacible” and speaks of a calm aesthetics, Sarmiento suddenly exemplifies the Argentine’s erratic nature and innate poetry as resulting from the land’s unpredictability. With the figurative speed of two words being spoken—“se cruzan dos palabras”—the thunderous storm hits the textual landscape with the cacophony of a consonant *t* in addition to the rhythmic end rhyme sounding

through the repeated *o*. The darkness that hits after the light of the storm punctuates the passage literally with a series of short clauses separated, in short succession, by a colon, then a semi-colon, later a couple of commas, another semi-colon, and two more commas. Brief, threatening, and lacking flow (evident in the diction: “oscuridad,” “muerte,” “terrible,” “nada,” “irritada”), the scene nevertheless exudes beauty, a grandeur that demands poetry—the aesthetic sublime, as it were: “sentir a Dios, por decirlo una vez, en la aterrante magnificencia de sus obras.” Sarmiento’s textual painting explicitly asks, then, what more might be done, what more might be achieved; indeed, “más” reverberates here first in the question “¿Qué más colores para la paleta de su fantasía?” and then as part of the word “masas,” which repeats twice. That the idea of *more* repeats multiple times lends to the notion of power (“símbolo del poder”) explicit in the Pampa’s expanse (“distancias infinitas”), which is exposed only through the “masas de luz lívida.”

“Estas imagenes han sido hechas,” Sarmiento writes, “para quedarse hondamente grabadas.” And, arguably, he writes these images into posterity, for only literature can do them justice; only literature can engage and attract his reading public. As he literarily constructs the Argentine land, he writes the nation’s geography as one removed from Europe both materially and symbolically. The terrain requires complex language to articulate its contradictions and binaries. To this end, “cuando la tormenta pasa,” so, too, does the paragraph, leaving readers with the image of land and man inextricably bound. The tempo now slower with a series of adjectives separated by commas, the lines ache with the gaucho’s torment (“triste,” “pensativo,” “serio”); as the succession of light and darkness continues in his imagination, it also burns through the text. The oscillation between light and dark is lasting, overwhelming, and best explained by the metaphor of the sun leaving its (sometimes painful but always beautiful)

imprint on one's retina, "del mismo modo que cuando miramos fijamente el sol, nos queda por largo tiempo su disco en la retina."

For Sarmiento, these scenes of unmitigated beauty and power demand literature, leaving little recourse other than poetic language for their transmission. Some paragraphs after the above passage, he poses the rhetorical question, "¿Cómo no ha de ser poeta el que presencia estas escenas imponentes?" and proceeds to cite the meter of Echeverría and Domínguez as examples of such behavior (79). Sarmiento follows his "storm poem" with the poetry of esteemed Argentine poets suggesting that he includes himself with the likes of said writers. By concluding his "storm poem" with such analysis, he hints that he perceives himself to be, in fact, a poet inspired by the "escenas imponentes" taking place on the Argentine land. Sarmiento the Geographer is now Sarmiento the Poet. In this sense, he follows the Strabonic school of thought, in which poetics and politics combine to yield geographical discourse. Bent on departing from European tradition and institutionalization—bent on "writing the earth" à la Argentina—Sarmiento locates Argentine difference in a language that constructs the land. This stylized rendition of geographical discourse is, when read through Candido's productive theory, "esta linha de ensaio, —em que se combinam com felicidade maior ou menor a imaginação e a observação, a ciência e a arte" a genre that, ultimately, constitutes "o traço mais característico e original do nosso pensamento" (14). If we expand Candido's Brazilian "nosso" to include Latin America, Sarmiento's geographical discourse serves his quest toward constructing and legitimizing a national discourse that can set Argentina apart from the European canon. Neither Cervantes nor Humboldt, Sarmiento writes the earth—entirely trammled "by the demands of form" (in González Echevarría's words)—to tell Argentina's true tale via the relations between man and land.

The national man—primitive, barbaric, the *gaucho*—receives Sarmiento’s flattery in the form of imitation: Sarmiento imitates and thereby elevates the gaucho’s language. As he gives form to the land, Sarmiento appropriates and thereby extols the language of the Vichean primitive man, nationally embodied in the Argentine gaucho. Here is a language in which form and content conjoin, in which the concrete prevails over the abstract, in which simplicity carries more weight than complexity. Sarmiento’s willingness to include himself, Echeverría, and Domínguez—writers under the rubric of *high art*—with the gauchos, who have their own, more rudimentary poetry, indicates a move toward national consolidation. Though he distinguishes between the poetry of the city and popular poetry, the separation arises in the context of a shared trait: the rhythm shared by all those of Argentine descent. Here, then, emerges something akin to respect for the primitive poetics of the gauchos: “Pero esta es la poesía culta, la poesía de la ciudad. Hay otra que hace oír sus ecos por los campos solitarios: la poesía popular candorosa y desaliñada del gaucho” (80). Whether high or low, poetry serves as remedy, as innate, and as spanning the classes. Poetry surfaces as the political expression of *all* national souls. In the push toward an original expression, high art *and* low art intersect with the discourse of geography, thereby allowing the national form (aesthetically) to beget national consolidation (politically).

2.7 EXPLAINING THE “UNKNOWN” THROUGH METAPHOR

Sarmiento ultimately succeeds in applauding the barbaric through what appears, at least on the surface, to be a civilized mode of representation. But in reality, his language appeals to the rivals of civilized man, to the poetics of the *gaucho*, as it establishes alignments through metaphor. For

Vico, effective language—in his words, “poetic wisdom”—deflects complication, and thereby facilitates communication, by grounding itself in concrete comparisons. The “first people” deny “rational and abstract metaphysics” as they think through the “imaginative universal,” which is the predecessor of the metaphor: Jupiter is sky; Achilles is bravery. Form and content are indistinguishable (144-47).

Sarmiento’s work reflects this discourse of alignments through metaphor. In Chapter 6, for example, Sarmiento enacts a detailing of La Rioja comparable to that of Córdoba insofar as the land serves to explain the shortcomings of man. For the sake of context, I shall include the entire passage:

De los Andes se desprenden ramificaciones que cortan la parte occidental en líneas paralelas, en cuyos valles están Los Pueblos y Chilecito, así llamado por los mineros chilenos que acudieron a la fama de las ricas minas de Famatina. Más hacia el Oriente se extiende una llanura *arenisca, desierta y agostada* por los ardores del sol, en cuya extremidad Norte, y a las inmediaciones de una montaña cubierta hasta su cima de lozana y alta vegetación yace el esqueleto de la Rioja, ciudad solitaria, sin arrabales, y marchita como Jerusalén al pie del Monte de los Olivos. Al Sur y a la larga distancia, limitan esta llanura *arenisca* los Colorados, montes de greda petrificada, cuyos cortes regulares asumen las formas más pintorescas y fantásticas: **a veces** es una muralla lisa con bastiones avanzados; **a veces** créese ver torreones y castillos almenados en ruinas. Últimamente, al Sudeste y rodeados de extensas travesías, están los Llanos, país quebrado y montañoso, a despecho de su nombre, *oasis de vegetación pastosa*, que alimentó en otro tiempo millares de rebaños.

El aspecto del país es por lo general desolado, el clima abrasador, la tierra seca y sin aguas corrientes. El campesino hace *represa* [emphasis in original] para recoger el agua de las lluvias y dar de beber a sus ganados. He tenido siempre la preocupación de que el aspecto de la Palestina es parecido al de la Rioja, hasta en el color rojizo u ocre de la tierra, la sequedad de algunas partes, y sus cisternas; hasta en sus naranjos, vides e higueras de exquisitos y abultados frutos, que se crían donde corre algún cenagoso y limitado Jordán. Hay una extraña combinación *de montañas y llanuras, de fertilidad y aridez, de montes adustos y erizados*, y colinas verdinegras tapizadas de vegetación tan colosal como los cedros de Líbano. Lo que más me trae a la imaginación estas reminiscencias orientales, es el aspecto verdaderamente patriarcal de los campesinos de la Rioja. Hoy, gracias a los caprichos de la moda, no causa novedad de ver hombres con la barba entera, a la manera inmemorial de los pueblos del oriente, pero aún no dejaría de sorprender por eso la vista de un pueblo que habla español y lleva y ha llevado siempre la barba completa, cayendo muchas veces hasta el pecho; un pueblo de aspecto triste, taciturno, grave y taimado; árabe, que cabalga en burros, y viste a veces de cuero de cabra, como el hermitaño de Engaddy. Lugares hay en que la población se alimenta exclusivamente de miel silvestre y de algarroba, como de langostas San Juan en el desierto. El *llanista* es el único que ignora que es el ser *más* desgraciado, *más* miserable y *más* bárbaro; y gracias a esto, vive contento y feliz cuando el hambre no le acosa. (146-47, emphases mine)

Man and land intersect through language as Sarmiento writes the terrain of La Rioja, jumping

from the east, to the south, and then finally to the southeast. He continues the metaphor of the Orient that treads the whole narrative, albeit now more explicitly and concretely. For Sarmiento's *volksgeist* orientation, man stems from land, therefore because the land of La Rioja is like the Orient, the man too must be like the Oriental. Notice the many similes and metaphors that the Argentine statesman employs to align the two regions: "ciudad solitaria, sin arrabales, y marchita como Jerusalén al pie del Monte de los Olivos," "el aspecto de la Palestina es parecido al de la Rioja, hasta en el color rojizo u ocre de la tierra, la sequedad de algunas partes, y sus cisternas; hasta en sus naranjos, vides e higueras de exquisitos y abultados frutos, que se crían donde corre algún cenagoso y limitado Jordán," and "vegetación tan colosal como los cedros de Líbano" are some that stand out. Sarmiento notes, moreover, that these "reminiscencias orientales" bring to mind "el aspecto verdaderamente patriarcal de los campesinos de la Rioja," who, with their long beards "a la manera inmemorial de los pueblos del oriente," ultimately shock those around them when they speak perfect Spanish. Why so? Because, he contends, their countenances reveal not the jovial and carefree expression of the Argentine but rather the pained one of the Arab: "un pueblo de aspecto triste, taciturno, grave y taimado; árabe, que cabalga en burros, y viste a veces de cuero de cabra, como el hermitaño de Engaddy."

Sarmiento strives not for subtlety in his comparisons between the Orient and La Rioja. Rather, his metaphor conspicuously pushes the correlation in the direction of the negative, the pejorative, the condescending. To refer to the inhabitants of La Rioja as sharing characteristics with the hermit of Engedi deprecates said inhabitants. Yet, Sarmiento's poetry elevates those same inhabitants and the land on which they reside, concluding that both are replete with contradictions. Sometimes the land is one way, sometimes another, but it always contains "las formas más pintorescas y fantásticas": "a veces es una muralla lisa con bastiones avanzados; a

veces créese ver torreones y castillos almenados en ruinas.” Like the wall it describes, the first clause is initially smooth and replete with vowel sounds (“muralla lisa,” “bastiones avanzados”) that repeat and thereby give the sense of wholeness; the second, on the contrary, projects strong consonants (v, t, r, c, l, n) and therefore halted flow, much like the very collapsed protrusions that it presumes to represent. Despite differences in message, pre- and post-semi-colon connect through the repetition of *a veces*, suggesting that both images are part and parcel of the same package, that, in fact, both the good and the bad are to be accepted as one.

Form and content unite beautifully in this segment of *Facundo*, in particular as Sarmiento transitions from the first to the second paragraph. Moving from smooth walls to battlements in ruins and on to the Llanos, which, he notes, are a “país quebrado y montañoso, a despecho de su nombre,” he abruptly ends the paragraph; one is left with the sensation that the Llanos break the flow of both the literal and the textual landscape despite the notion of continuity one might extract from their name. The paragraph splits in two, and we arrive at a lengthy description of the Llanos; now, there is no flow. To construct this desolate, burning hot, and dry ambiance, Sarmiento cobbles together a dry, halted sentence, one punctuated to the extremes and therefore staccato-like, “sin aguas corrientes.” As soon as “the narrow Jordan flows,” however, Sarmiento picks up the tempo with a polysyndetonic series of “y” as well as the anaphoric “de,” thereby emphasizing the contradiction, the “extraña combinación” that characterizes Argentina (translation mine). The closing slew of polysyllabic words (“colinas verdinegras tapizadas de vegetación tan colosal”) carpets both the literal and the textual landscape with its expanse, ultimately entangling and enveloping readers.

But who does Sarmiento wish to entangle and envelope? Given his tone, his attention to detail, and his constant comparison between the presumably known/written (the Orient) and

the unknown/unwritten (La Rioja), Sarmiento writes this first text of Argentine geography to a specific audience: readers unfamiliar with the terrain. This category could include Argentine readers (if so, the narrative functions as a didactic geography) or European readers (to whom he markets an immigrants' guide). Obligated to paint an accurate textual picture for these two audiences, Sarmiento cautiously includes all the characteristics—positive and negative—of the man and land composing the national geography. He nevertheless minimizes the effect of the negative by comparing the situation to one already known and, on some level, already conquered: the Orient. Sarmiento's intrigue with attracting European immigrants to South America begins with his visits, at the behest of the Chilean government, to France, Spain, and Algiers. The French defeat of the Arab horsemen—to his mind, the Arab equivalent of the Argentine gaucho—impresses him, as does the subsequent French colonization and economic development in Algiers (Bunkley 261-66). In Sarmiento's view, European immigration can quash the Argentine land's barbaric tendencies in the same way that French colonization allegedly aids the modernization process in Algiers, for the lands, united by metaphor, are the same. Lest the European immigrant fear Argentine barbarism, Sarmiento cannot but include a familiar solution.

Sarmiento attempts to assuage any fears regarding the unknown lands by writing them and thereby making them known. Clarifying not only the similarities but also the differences between Europe and the Americas, he describes Argentina as a safe harbor, protected from “otras enfermedades que [...] se conocen en Europa” where the climate “es análogo al de la Andalucía en España, y al del mediodía de la Francia” (*Obras* 23:156-57). Because familiarity leads to comfort, and because he writes, in part, to a European audience, Sarmiento promotes the Argentine terrain as similar to Europe but better. He takes care to patiently define why Buenos Aires received such a name (the naming colonizers were “encantados al respirar aquellos

aires tan puros”), what sort of land composes the *Pampa* (“un terreno llano, sin árboles, y tan igual y unido que en todas direcciones ruedan carruajes”), and what exactly “estancieros” means (“*farmers*,” he writes in English) (*Obras* 23:158-59). These definitions indicate that the intended recipient falls, potentially, in the category of the non-Spanish speaker—that is, the European or North American.

Though Sarmiento underscores national independence—both intellectual and political—throughout his narratives, he, like so many of his contemporaries (Pérez Rosales, for instance), seems willing to perpetuate the yoke of colonialism through European and/or North American immigration. Whereas his initial impulse toward immigration (pre-1880s) bears the aim of civilization and modernization through integration, Sarmiento’s later writings (post-1880s) reveal his discontent: the immigrant groups, particularly the Italians, refuse to integrate. Contrary to the Germans he so actively seeks, the Italians cross the Atlantic in vast numbers and unify through their exclusive schools; the curricula in these institutions include Italian language, history, and geography—indeed, all the ingredients necessary for the nationalism recipe (Favero 180-81). Sarmiento fumes at the thought of these schools, begrudged by the presence of “una *Italia en América*, dando en las escuelas á los americanitos, educacion italiana, á fin de que se empapen desde ahora en las ideas monárquicas de la Italia, en su lucha con el papado, en sus aspiraciones á la Italia *irredenta*, porque al fin no conocemos otro rasgo en que se destinga un italiano argentino, de un argentino italiano” (*Obras* 36:69, emphases in original). His concerns relate to both nationalism and national defense. These schools “en que se *paga* para educarse *italianamente*, es decir, en nombre de otro país, y para conservar *extranjeros* á niños que han nacido en éste” create Italian nationals who settle into hamlets from where, he fears, they might assist Italy in colonizing Argentina: “Supongamos, lo que Dios no permita, y es que uno de esos alumnos

educados *italianamente* llegue á ser Ministro de la Guerra ó de Relaciones Exteriores, y un día la cabra tirando al monte, nos italianice ó nos traicione que es lo mismo, obedeciendo á su educacion italiana, y obrando como extranjero” (*Obras* 36:71-72, emphases in original). Without integration, Sarmiento posits, immigration essentially gifts parcels of land and allows for potential re-colonization.

In his early writings—*Facundo* (1845) and “Emigración alemana al Río de la Plata” (1847)—Sarmiento obsesses less over integration and proper declaration of nationality. His uses of *nosotros* evince his own wavering and undefined *patria*: at times he is a Spaniard (“los españoles no somos ni navegantes ni industriosos”) and at others an American (“los americanos conocemos todo, entendemos de todo un poco, menos de las cosas americanas”). This rather tormented incarnation of Sarmiento proceeds to sympathize with both sides (Spanish and American) in a reply to Chilean writer José Victorino Lastarria’s report on Spanish cruelty during the conquest. In the 1844 letter, Sarmiento defends Spain, declaring

Porque es preciso que seamos justos con los españoles; al exterminar a un pueblo salvaje cuyo territorio iban a ocupar, hacían simplemente lo que todos los pueblos civilizados hacen con los salvajes, lo que la colonia efectúa deliberada o indeliberadamente con los indígenas: absorbe, destruye, extermina. (*Obras* 2: 217-18)

Cognizant of potential distaste for the Spaniards’ colonizing policies, Sarmiento employs a measured rhetoric to build up to his final message—absorb, destroy, and exterminate continue as viable solutions to resolve the “Indian problem.” European immigration, moreover, allows for the most benign of the three options: absorption. Benign though it may be, absorption’s efficacy is limited by the foreign group’s willingness to integrate into the nation. Thus, while

populating via immigration might intend to reaffirm the nationalistic impulse, immigration potentially contradicts the thrust toward independence. It encourages non-Americans to take the reins of the country and serve their interests, exemplified in the *italianización* of Argentina. If Sarmiento's didactic geography encourages Americans to take the national reins (i.e. write and know their lands), then to attract immigrants through a marketable geography challenges the independence project.

2.8 ALONGSIDE AND AGAINST

Sarmiento's contradictions propel the narrative motor of *Facundo*. Though he seeks authority in Alexander von Humboldt's geographical discourse, he refuses to simply reproduce the Occidental mode of representation. Rather, Sarmiento literarily simulates consolidation—and thereby territorialization—of the Argentine nation via the political project of *Facundo*. He stakes claim on both the literary and geographical space of his country by underwriting politics with an aesthetic of domination; he writes the earth in ways that demand to be unearthed.

Directing this national product—land and letters—to his fellow Argentines as well as to potential immigrants, Sarmiento the Geographer describes the nation's productive qualities, particularly its wide network of waterways. This detailing never strays from literary language. While giving form to the Argentine land through a range of literary devices, Sarmiento's use of metaphor reveals the tensions that ultimately shape Latin American identity. First, he elevates the barbaric by revising the “civilized” geographies of the Old World. The Argentine nation remains incomplete and ill defined without the barbaric, without Vico's primitives. Yet, Vico's

primitives and their immediately sensual poetry represent Sarmiento's fear: that he (Argentina) might be "primitive," and, above all, the need to resolve that fact. Second, then, his metaphor conjoins the known and the unknown, thereby marketing the Argentine geography as not entirely foreign and exerting a pull on national and immigrant populations. In this sense, Sarmiento's new national discourse writes alongside and against the formation of geographical institutions, alongside and against civilization's maps, alongside and against barbarism's *baqueanos*. Resting on the sometimes uncomfortable conjunction *and*, Sarmiento's Hegelian dialectics leave no choice but to accept, even cement, the contradiction at the heart of Latin American narrative: to embrace the land's singular quality—its barbarism—and, simultaneously, to dilute it by introducing European civilization.

3.0 EUCLIDES DA CUNHA'S LITERARY MAP, OR UNDOING BANISHMENT TO THE BACKLANDS IN *OS SERTÕES*

O caso, vimo-lo anteriormente, era mais complexo e mais interessante. Envolvia dados entre os quais nada valiam os sonâmbulos erradios e imersos no sonho da resauração imperial. E esta insciência ocasionou desastres maiores que os das expedições destroçadas. Revelou que poco nos avantajávamos aos rudes patrícios retardatários. Estes, os menos, eram lógicos. Insulados no espaço e no tempo, o jagunço, um anacronismo étnico, só podia fazer o que fez – bater, bater terrivelmente a nacionalidade que, depois de o enjeitar cerca de três séculos, procurava levá-lo para os deslumbramentos da nossa idade dentro de um quadrado de baionetas, mostrando-lhe o brilho da civilização através do clarão de descargas.

- EUCLIDES DA CUNHA

Os partidários de Conselheiro lembraram-se dos piratas românticos, sacudiram as sandálias à porta da civilização e saíram à vida livre.

- MACHADO DE ASSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The first epigraph of twelve lines might serve as a précis of Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* (1902), a literary, journalistic, and geographic treatise of some five-hundred-odd pages: the author—a daytime military engineer and moonlighting news reporter—presents a disquisition regarding the conflicts (material and symbolic) between the allegedly civilized Republican troops and the millenarian Catholic folk community of the *sertão*. Cunha's national portrait is a tragic

one, for it portrays a society that effectively banishes a third of its population to its most remote and inhospitable territory where they are geographically condemned, “insulados no espaço e no tempo.” Perhaps inevitably, this third of Brazil, equally referred to as *jagunços* or *sertanejos*, unites under the auspices of the enigmatic Antonio Conselheiro in the backlands settlement of Canudos, where the events of the bloody account unfold between October 1896 and October 1897.

In its traversal of one year, four expeditions, and countless lost lives, the hybrid text provides a chronicle of the government’s failures and a profound analysis of a society that fails to see its subaltern citizens, both in the realm of the literal and in the figurative. The “civilized” Republican troops undergo a slow but evident metamorphosis: through the hardship of incessant physical and psychological warfare, all amidst the unmerciful landscape of the *sertão*, the troops transform and become the “barbarous” *jagunços*—in their vengeance, in their attire, in their fighting. Their brutality, nevertheless, is taken to a level that surpasses even that of the *jagunços*, and the stress of battle becomes readily apparent in their unseemly and horrific actions; in their quest to exterminate religious fanaticism from the national sphere, the troops themselves transform into fanatics as they eradicate what they perceive to be a vermin that will only spread.

Machado de Assis’s evocation of piracy—the second epigraph—brings to bear on the contemporary relevance of *Os Sertões*: how, you might wonder, do pirates relate to Cunha’s reincarnation of the epic battle between civilization and barbarism in the backlands settlement of Canudos? With his keen eye for nuance, Machado recalls the long history of piracy as sharing commonalities with that of the *conselheiristas*, those indefatigable defenders of human rights, those ardent advocates of an egalitarian society in the midst of a nation having condemned them “na penumbra secular em que jazem” (Cunha 131). Akin to those romantic pirates of times (no

longer) long past, the *conselheiristas* discover true freedom on the periphery of “civilization,” outside the oppressive confines and mistreatment of hegemonic rule.⁴³ Akin to piracy’s impetus as an escape from what historian Marcus Rediker refers to as “the brutal and oppressive ways of the merchant service” (*Villains of All Nations* 17), the *sertanejos* find, under the auspices of Antonio Conselheiro, an escape from a capitalist and racist state’s whimsical quest to exterminate difference. And, akin to the British government’s propaganda project—one that propelled images of the pirate as a savage thief, a barbaric scoundrel out to make a quick buck—the Brazilian government, too, did little to discourage (and much to encourage) perceptions of the *sertanejo* as a figure lacking in morality and therefore replete with savagery. In the backlands agitator the common folk saw an exaggerated image of an adversary capable of sabotaging the nascent nation and its institutions: “Vimos no agitador sertanejo, do qual a revolta era um aspecto da própria rebeldia contra a ordem natural, adversário serio, estrênuo paladino do extinto régimen, capaz de derruir as instituições nascentes” (Cunha 131).⁴⁴

Yet in both cases public opinion often vied neither for the victory of the Royal navy nor for that of the Republican troops but instead for the underdog, for the pirates and the *jagunços*. Rediker explains that supportive crowds rescued pirates from the gallows on more than one occasion; similarly, recent data suggest that seventy percent of Somalis support pirate activity in the Gulf of Aden (Hari 1). And, as Cunha recounts the coastal communities’ outward glee upon the troops’ return, he appends an aside regarding their inward admiration for the *sertanejos*:

⁴³ See Johann Hari’s recent article in *The Huffington Post*, in which he partially defends contemporary Somali piracy as being the result of hegemonic abuses, i.e. French dumping of nuclear waste barrels or European trawlers illegally depleting Somali coastal waters of seafood, their primary export. Without a proper government and Coast Guard, civilian Somalis have taken to patrolling (also known as pirating) the Gulf of Aden from intruders: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/johann-hari/you-are-being-lied-to-abo_b_155147.html.

⁴⁴ See Daniel Heller-Roazen, *The Enemy of All: Piracy and the Law of Nations*, Boston: MIT Press and Zone Books, 2009 for an interesting analysis of the pirate as paradigmatic of the “universal foe,” similar to Cunha’s notion of the adversary, indeed, the agitator with potential to destroy all.

“Sobre tudo isto um pensamento diverso, não boquejado sequer mas por igual dominador, latente em todos os espíritos: a admiração pela ousadia dos sertanejos incultos, homens da mesma raça, de encontro aos quais se despedaçavam daquele modo batalhões inteiros” (316). Each of these groups, be they romantic pirates, *jagunços*, or Somali pirates, embraces a markedly riskier life, one mired in the constant possibility of death while denied the material comforts of life. Each of these groups receives tremendous public support. The question thus arises: why? Or, as Machado would have it, “Se na última batalha é certo haverem morrido novecentos deles e o resto não se despega de tal apóstolo, é que algum vínculo moral e fortíssimo os prende até a morte. Que vínculo é esse?” (*Obras Completas* 2: 401-07).

I maintain that Cunha locates this *vínculo*—this tie, this bond that supersedes any sort of mortal desire—at the confluence of geography (as a scientific discipline) and literature (as aestheticized representation). Given the *sertanejos*’ literal banishment to the *sertão*—a royal charter of February 7, 1701 prohibited and punished any communication or trade between seaboard and *sertão*—and given their symbolic exclusion from Brazilian national maps, they construct what amounts to a backland’s nationalism. Machado’s *vínculo*, in fact, prefigures Benedict Anderson and his *Imagined Communities*. Anderson contends that a willingness to fight and die for symbolic space or an “imagined community” characterizes nationalism. Condemned to the *sertão*, the *conselheiristas* find such community in the midst of a nation that has rejected them for nearly three centuries. Blaming the *jagunço*’s barbarism on a state-sponsored insularity that originates with the white oligarchy, Cunha concludes that a divided nation necessarily yields a weakened nation. How to overcome such division and, at once, model consolidation? Cunha composes *Os Sertões* as something of a cartographic narrative—a literary map, as it were—that creates the illusion of national integrity by including the formerly excluded. He relocates Canudos from periphery to

center by overwriting the work of previous non-Brazilian land treatises (e.g. Buckle 1862), which, for years on end, have denied the Northeastern hamlets entry into the national geography. By acknowledging rather than ignoring differences between North and South, Cunha portends unification; by allowing Canudos onto his literary map, he effectively simulates consolidation.

However, Cunha's cartographic inclusion only partially gives form to a consolidated Brazil. Like Sarmiento, he coalesces form and content to construct a unified nation, to mimic consolidation. Metaphor reigns supreme here as Cunha linguistically and literarily connects disparate elements in a throwback to the Vichean primitive man, thereby elevating the barbarism of the Brazilian land. His literary devices construct, moreover, a large map in relief of Brazilian topography, upon which he occasionally zooms in to highlight the land's minor, yet defining, details. By explicating Cunha's language, I intend to demonstrate that his stylized correctives supplant the divisive strategies implanted during colonial rule and continued during the neocolonial Republican years. This overcoming also entails escaping the shadows of occidental thought. Thus, I contend that, unlike Sarmiento, Cunha's stylized writing not only rewrites but also rectifies the geographic works of illustrious foreigners, especially Humboldt but also including Henry Thomas Buckle, Wilhelm Ludwig von Eschwege, Orville Derby, and Carl Friedrich Philip von Martius. By correcting their Eurocentric, and error-laden, representations and nomenclatures, he aims to reclaim both Brazilian land and letters while submitting a softer rendition of the national man and land into world geography, indeed, into universal history.

I propose to understand Machado's *vínculo* at the intersection of disciplinary geography and literary language: why do the *sertanejos* willingly step in front of bullets for the Canudos cause; why do the coastal Brazilians come to respect this heroism; why does the nation as a

whole come to question (failed) Republican strategy? These are the contradictory elements that propel Cunha's narrative. Indeed, contradiction, inversion, and reversal abound in *Os Sertões*. The representative forces of civilization—that is, the Republican troops—gradually acquire the tacit characteristics of barbarism—or, in other words, the *jagunços*. To illustrate this reversal, the Brazilian author relies on something of a bridge connecting his incarnation of the dialectic with Sarmiento's.⁴⁵ Yet, whereas Sarmiento's savage text balks at any generic etiquette—be it the proper protagonist or the linear narrative—Cunha's treatise hesitantly conforms to a more confined style and storyline despite its massive length. And, unlike *Facundo*, the Brazilian text weaves together a nearly melodramatic tale of battles and insurgencies, of heroes and antiheroes, of climactic ups and downs that dizzy readers to exhaustion with their repetition. The dramatic series has its own recurring lead actor and setting—that is, Antonio Conselheiro and Canudos—and, unlike the one-time tale of Facundo Quiroga, Cunha's epic has spawned several offshoots, the most famous being Mario Vargas Llosa's novel *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981).

Differences aside, the similarities invite a comparative analysis; the primary similarity, for the purposes of my project, is the mutual intertwining of geography and literature. Like the Argentine masterpiece, Cunha's narrative begins with a section dedicated solely to introduce its central protagonist: the land. Both *Facundo* and *Os Sertões* opt first to present the national landscape and then the national man, each under distinct chapter headings; this chronology

⁴⁵ Considering the importance of metaphors to this project, perhaps we might see Cunha's immersion in a bridge-building project precisely at the moment of his writing of *Os Sertões*. As José Carlos Barreto de Santana informs us, the year 1898 finds Cunha as the primary engineer in the reconstruction of a metallic bridge in São José do Rio Pardo (98). Of note is that he was given the work of restructuring the bridge (restructuring *Facundo*?), but he concluded that, in the interest of the bridge's (and his) integrity, to undo the whole thing and start anew (rewrite *Facundo*?). Not only did he completely rebuild it, but he did so after serious expeditions rerouting the bridge to more adequate bedrock, far from its earlier position (Santana 98). Here in São José do Rio Pardo Cunha finds an atmosphere fit for writing his magnum opus. His dedication to what I consider the literal (metallic construction connecting two sides of the river) and the figurative bridging (textual composition connecting past and present), one in which both building and writing receive equal attention, calls one's attention. Olímpio de Sousa Andrade puts it well: "Ainda que tivesse varado boa parte da noite escrevendo, Euclides madrugava para os trabalhos de ponte" (196).

brings to mind Humboldt's *Cosmos* (1849), in which the Baron systematically outlines “physical geography” but concludes his study with a section on man. Following Humboldt's lead, Sarmiento and Cunha respectively appropriate the standards of geographical discourse insofar as they also transform them for the creation of a personal style and, more significantly, for the advancement of a political agenda. The styles and agendas converge and diverge fluidly but always address the central dialectic of civilization versus barbarism. As González Echevarría aptly notes, “*Os Sertões* is a blow-up of *Facundo*, but as with most enlargements, it is not simply a bigger copy but also a distortion” (*Myth & Archive* 128).⁴⁶ Not alone in his discovery of comparative potential, González Echevarría writes, with his 1990 study, on the heels of Luiz Costa Lima's 1986 presentation titled “Euclides e Sarmiento: uma Comparação,” among the first comparisons realized. In his pioneering talk—which eventually develops into the now-famous *Terra Ignota* (1997)—Costa Lima underscores the gaping hole in the Cunha bibliography. He calls attention to the fact that despite volumes of critical analysis on the Brazilian magnum opus, no scholarship adequately addresses *Os Sertões* and *Facundo* in conjunction. He calls out to critics, declaring that ample opportunity exists to extract meaning from both authors' treatment of intellectual history, of evolutionary and determinist paradigms (177).

⁴⁶ In the overarching critical argument of this dissertation, I have attempted to take González Echevarría's discussions of *science* a step further by illustrating that the specific category of *geography* was, in fact, the hegemonic discourse nourishing nineteenth- and early twentieth century narrative. In this chapter I will necessarily have to extract geography from its Positivist roots, in particular because *Os Sertões* cannot but be contextualized within the heyday of Auguste Comte's Positivism, which consumed nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Brazil. The Positivist Church insisted that so long as the State based its doings on science, its procedures and processes would be verifiable and therefore indisputable. I illustrate that part of Cunha's corrective impulse stems from his use of a geographical poetics as a response to the epistemological basis of Positivism. For more on Cunha and Positivism, see C. Moura, *Introdução ao Pensamento de Euclides da Cunha*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1964; N. Sevcenko, *Literatura como Missão: Tensões Sociais e Criação Cultural na Primeira República*. São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1989. For a concise analysis of Positivism's general presence in Brazil, see R.G. Nachman's “Positivism, Modernization, and the Middle Class in Brazil,” in *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 57.1 (1977): 1-23 and I. Lins's *Historia do Positivismo no Brasil*, São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1964.

One such critic who hears and responds to this call to arms is Miriam V. Gárate, who, in her 2001 *Civilização e barbárie n' Os Sertões: Entre Domingo Faustino Sarmiento e Euclides da Cunha*, delineates one central difference: that, on the one hand, in *Facundo* we have a sense of transience, of plasticity, of mobility, which, on the other, morphs into the stability, into the discipline and rigor of *Os Sertões* (91). In a distribution of four chapters, Gárate addresses the narratives first individually and then comparatively, centering on two points of intersection: (1) configurations of land, and (2) reception. From the outset, however, she neglects what I argue to be two productive points of convergence: (1) appropriation and revision of non-Brazilian geographical discourse, and (2) language. When Gárate speaks of land, she acknowledges that both Sarmiento and Cunha abide by a strict tripartite order—land, man, battle. Yet by attributing this division to Sarmiento, she fails to pay homage to the original model—this is to say, the writings of Alexander von Humboldt:

Porque em ambos os livros primeiro foi *a terra*, logo *o homem*, e por último *a luta*. Esboçada por Sarmiento, embora de modo algum inventada por ele, e redefinida por Euclides da Cunha, a série é tanto uma ordem taxinômica (distingue, discrimina e classifica componentes ou entidades), quanto uma ordem dramática (visto que projeta os componentes demarcados sobre um eixo temporal, articulando-os numa seqüência dinâmica), bem como, obviamente, um modelo explicativo. (89, emphases in original)

Such an explicative model originates in the work Humboldt, I argue, and therefore might benefit from consideration and analysis of those very political roots.

Humboldt plays an integral and distinguishing role in my reading. In other words, I depart from González Echevarría and Gárate's acute comparative analyses—and, in so doing,

acquiesce to Costa Lima's demands to "iniciar uma questão de dimensões bem mais amplas" (177)—by examining the ways in which first Sarmiento and then Cunha reincarnate Humboldtian geographical discourse, which, in turn, will allow me to consider geography and literature as united in meaningful ways. Poetics and politics coalesce uniquely in each of the narratives selected for my project. But, whereas Sarmiento appears to appropriate and revise the Baron for purposes of authorization, with Cunha, I believe, the reproduction occurs with a markedly different twist—that is to say, the reproduction is directed toward rectification.

Thus, I aim to illustrate that though the narratives share similarities, their primary differences stem from two observations: *Os Sertões* is, at once, *more* immersed in the geographic and *more* literary than *Facundo*. This amplification stems, in part, from a latent desire to include Brazil not only in world geography but also in universal history, to insert the excessively local into the global. It follows, then, that Cunha's narrative better complicates its representation of land, subsequently leading to a heightened problematization of the political, national, and ideological spheres.

3.2 "THE BASTARD CHILD OF ENLIGHTENMENT THOUGHT":

EXTRACTING GEOGRAPHY FROM POSITIVISM

Prior to any extended illustration of Euclides da Cunha's immersion in geography, I must contend with those critics who interpret his engagement with the sciences as best defined by and understood through the lens of Positivism. The poetic or literary factor, they allege, irrupts into the scientific text alongside Cunha's realization of Positivism's shortcomings, of its inadequacy

to account for the many contradictions encountered in the clash of the “two Brazils,” of its inconsistencies and complications in explaining something as complex as Brazil’s national sphere. Positivism, as they see it, occupies center stage in Cunha’s narrative. No doubt exists regarding its eminence as a phenomenon in Latin America as well as perhaps *the* transformative philosophy of late nineteenth-century Brazilian culture. Yet for this very reason I find that a more fruitful analysis resides beyond Cunha’s inevitable Positivist inclinations and within his relationship with the hard sciences, particularly geography; I therefore contextualize his writing of *Os Sertões* within the highly charged politics of the times as well as within his own particular intellectual circles. Only in this manner might I move on to better understanding the implications of his very real and very fastidious relationship with the discipline and practice of geography. To begin, let us understand—if only to depart from it—Positivism’s presence in both Latin America and Brazil.

Eager to counter what they regarded as philosophical movements imposed upon them by the colony—particularly that of scholasticism—nineteenth-century Latin Americans looked to European philosophical thought in search of contestation. Some of the currents in vogue that debunked the authority of Roman Catholic philosophies include Cartesianism, sensualism, the Enlightenment, eclecticism, and utilitarianism. As Leopoldo Zea notes in his study *The Latin-American Mind* (1949), none of these currents achieved the level of importance ultimately bestowed upon Positivism (26). “By following positivism,” he recounts, “the Mexicans thought that they could put an end to the almost perpetual anarchy which kept them in turmoil. In Argentina, positivism was considered a good instrument for eliminating the absolutist and tyrannical mentalities which had scourged them. The Chileans considered positivism an effective means of converting the ideals of liberalism into reality” (28). Upon listing generalizing but

nevertheless helpful explanations regarding the other countries of the continent, Zea concludes by stating,

Positivism was in every case a radical remedy which Hispanic America attempted to use to break away from a past that was overwhelming it. The Brazilians, in contrast, adopted only those aspects of positivism which their reality required. It was reality itself which demanded this doctrine, and not the doctrine which sought to impose itself on reality. (29)

For Zea, the Hispanic American denial of history and simultaneous search for a new scientific culture was a revolutionary, albeit futile, stance, one defying Hegelian dictates of an acknowledged national past prior to the existence of any possible future. Herein, according to Zea, lies the essential difference between the two approaches to the philosophy: whereas the Hispanic Americans opted for a revolutionary Positivism, the Brazilians instead chose an evolutionary one. Because the latter maintained a semblance of acceptance for their past, they “looked upon positivism as the doctrine most suitable for bringing into focus new realities which arose in their natural evolution” (27).

What was this reality that Zea alludes to in the most ominous of tones? João Cruz Costa reminds us that the second half of the Brazilian nineteenth century was indeed a turbulent period of radical social change made manifest in the realm of politics.⁴⁷ With the mid-century expansion of the national economy, the new urban elite came to the political and economic fore as an emergent middle class, thereby unsettling the previous power structures controlled by the land-owning aristocracy. Upon having their interests dismissed, this heretofore static and

⁴⁷ See *A History of Ideas in Brazil: The Development of Philosophy in Brazil and the Evolution of Natural History*. Trans. Suzette Macedo. Berkely: U of California P, 1964 [1956].

unassuming bourgeoisie collectively sought reform of traditional policy and practice. Chief among these reformers were the Positivists. Moving first as a slight breeze across Brazil's coastal cities in the 1850s, Positivism soon swept across the distressed nation with gale-size winds promising a path to progress through order. Its adherents, for the most part, followed the French Positivism inaugurated by Auguste Comte in the early 1820s when he coined the word "positive" to mean nonspeculative or provable knowledge (Cruz Costa 82-83). This usage of the word grounded his philosophical system, which relied on verifiable facts as opposed to metaphysical abstractions. A vehement critic of the Enlightenment (for its lack of strategies to replace former, now destroyed social values with a new morality), the monarchy, and the Roman Catholic Church, Comte demanded contemporary equivalents. He expected these counterparts to emerge not from theological or metaphysical concepts—the first two of his Law of Three Stages—but rather from rational and empirical (positive) principles. Always working from the simple to the complex, Comte believed that man's attempts to define his relationship to nature progressed forward to a higher and more total level of knowledge. Positivism, then, equated to the final stage of intellectual evolution in his progressive history of (European) humanity.

To arrive at this final positive stage, one based on certain progress, Comte insisted upon the creation of order; only with order would progress be able to follow the natural laws of evolution. Order might come from the constructive application of science and technology to man's activities. To this end, Comte fashioned a hierarchy of the sciences to serve as the foundation for a discipline that he called "sociology," which would meld together the various aspects of science to discover therein the laws of society. This first "sociologist" pushed for analysis, synthesis, and the relativity of knowledge, and, with his Law of Three Stages and Hierarchy of Sciences, he initiated a "counter-reformation" that would anchor the social

scaffolding of the Middle Ages to the stabilizing beams of modern science. Science was not to be the ultimate destination but rather a means to deal with society's problems (Simon 25).

Returning to the Brazilian context, then, we can understand Comtean Positivism as a means to resolve their changing society's problems. And there were problems galore to be resolved in such tumultuous times, obstacles that included—and this is not an exhaustive list—the Brazilian abolition of slavery in 1888, the overthrow of Dom Pedro II/the Empire and the consequent establishment of the Republic in 1889, the military dictatorships of Deodoro Fonseca and Floriano Peixoto, and the subsequent counterrevolutionary revolts in 1893-94.

Nonetheless, I agree with Frederic Armory's matter-of-fact observation that the Brazilian obsession and complete enrapture with Positivism “will always remain something of a puzzle” (87). In an article on Brazilian Positivism, Armory lists potential reasons that the Brazilians turned to Comte's philosophy of science and reform—“Brazil's dependence on French thought since the days of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the need to train up a scientific élite in Brazil for the future industrialization of the country, or the urge to undertake sweeping social and political reforms of Brazilian institutions after the Paraguayan war”—but he concludes that “they do not adequately account for their self-immersion in French Positivism. There was nothing quite like it in the Americas” (87).

Positivism's unique installation and germination in Brazil might be due to its forking into both the secular and the spiritual arenas of national culture. On the one hand, the philosophy acquired momentum in the secular sphere when, in 1873, military officer, educator, and devoted disciple of Comte's teachings, Benjamin Constant Botelho de Magalhães, was hired as professor of mathematics at the Military School in Rio. Not only was he responsible for indoctrinating an entire generation of young men with the Positivist quest for science and reform, but he also

founded a Positivist society dedicated to the study of Comte's philosophy. On the other hand, however, the discipline quickly branched towards the spiritual in 1881 when the "Apostolate"—a two-person mutiny from Benjamin Constant's society consisting of one Miguel Lemos and one Raimundo Teixeira Mendes—transformed the society into the Positivist Church of Brazil. Though within fifteen years this pseudo-religious Positivism would wane in popularity, between 1889-90 it held immense control over the establishment of the Republican government, even contributing to the drafting of Brazil's constitution; the symbolism of the Brazilian flag or the national motto inscribed upon it—"Ordem e Progresso"—as well as the approbation of civil marriage and separation between church and state stem back to Positivist contributions during the formation of the Republic (Cruz Costa 83-108).

Considering Positivism's influential power over the Republic in this moment of Brazilian history, it should come as little surprise that Euclides da Cunha—born in 1866 and coming of age in this tumultuous time—should, as a military student, find his way to the tenets of the philosophy. As Samuel Putnam explains in "A Translator's Introduction" to *Rebellion in the Backlands* (1944), Cunha studied mathematics and Positivism under Benjamin Constant as he completed a so-called "liberal arts course" at the Colégio Aquino, whereupon he entered the Polytechnic School in 1884 and from there Military School (xi). As a military engineer, Cunha imbibed the lessons of science, which, Putnam concludes, "must have constituted a major portion of his mental diet" (xii-xiii).

Both Armory and Putnam agree that Cunha aligned himself with the evolutionary social Darwinism imbued more with Herbert Spencer than with Comtean Positivism. Armory goes so far as to contend that Cunha's paradigm shift from "Comteism to Darwinism via Spencer" was complete by 1898—that is to say, prior to his publication of *Os Sertões* (91). Indeed, Armory

asserts that the presence of Cometan Positivism alleged in Cunha's later writings are mere cameo appearances, "slight" and "overinterpreted," evinced by the fact that the writer steered clear of the Positivist Church after having taken his fill from Constant's teachings and his own readings of Comte (89). "Da Cunha's lukewarm Positivism (after 1890) does not match his intellectual profile as one of the most scientific-minded members of his generation," Armory insists (89). He continues:

But this mild discrepancy is partly of our own creating insofar as we have simply equated Positivism with a penchant for science, omitting the other nonscientific or semiscientific elements which accrued to it in the course of the movement. Full-blown Positivism in Da Cunha's day was, rather, synonymous with scientism and stood fairly close to what we would call scientology today. The essential thrust of Brazilian Positivism beyond science to scientism and spiritualism was [...] uncongenial to his mentality. (89)

I agree with Armory's wish to distinguish between "science" and "Positivism," which is ultimately my intent in this section. Yet, it seems radical to posit Cunha as not significantly steeped in the philosophy of his day. Positivism indeed impregnates Cunha's work with, in Putnam's words, "its virtues and its errors, its scientific half-truths and untruths" (xii). Like his contemporaries, Cunha soaked in

such imported fare as Buckle, Bryce, Taine, Renan, Ratzel, Gumplowicz, and Gobineau. He was also to be influenced in his thinking by the North American geologist and physiographer, Orville A. Derby, and certain Brazilians as well. This led to a rigid biologic determinism, tending to become fatalism, such as is apparent in passages of [*Os Sertões*]. (Putnam xii-xiii)

As Gilberto Freyre points out in his *Actualidade de Euclides da Cunha* (1941), however, we cannot qualify Cunha as a simple racist committed to doctrines of superiority and inferiority based upon an irreverent hate for humanity. On the contrary, his unmitigated compassion and utter dislike for violence alongside a profound respect for humankind pervades the whole of *Os Sertões*. So strong was Cunha's respect for the fundamentals of science that, to invoke Freyre again, he was "the victim of scientific preconceptions with the appearance of anthropological truths" (qtd. in Putnam xv). Most appealing to Cunha were those theories that dominated under the overarching heading of *science*, particularly the hard sciences.

I maintain that Cunha seeks authority in what unfolds as the most predominant of these hard sciences: geography. Given the works and writers he dialogues with in *Os Sertões*—Humboldt, Derby, Eschwege, Buckle, and so forth—the Brazilian author rarely wanes in his engagement with geography. His writing suggests a progressive disinclination toward Positivism's rigid determinism, yet his emulation and simultaneous correction of geographical discourse by non-Brazilians remains constant. Analysis of these correctives shall reveal the ways in which Cunha's literary bent aims to transform and re-appropriate Brazilian geography.⁴⁸

To correct, however, requires training, an important point of divergence when comparing Cunha with Sarmiento. According to Armory, Cunha's geographic instruction began during his engineering career thanks to several formative relationships. Foremost, a friend at a military construction site in Minas Gerais gave the young Cunha *Climats, géologie, faune et géographie botanique du Brésil* (1872), Emmanuel Liais's treatise on the Brazilian terrain. As a civil engineer in São Paulo, furthermore, he befriended the Bahian geographer and Indianist Teodoro Sampaio,

⁴⁸ The relationship between Positivism (a philosophical movement) and geography (a discipline) stems from the basic man/land dichotomy—that man is a product of his surroundings.

whose texts *O Tupi na Geografia Nacional* (1901) and *O Rio de São Francisco e a Chapada Diamantina* (1905) proved crucial to his knowledge of the lands and people of interior Bahia (precisely where the Caundos rebellion was quietly brewing). Using the knowledge provided by these geographers as a point of departure, Cunha embarked on a mission of self-education in the discipline. Manuals described as “*aide-mémoires* or engineer’s pocketbooks” supplemented the hands-on interaction with the Brazilian terrain required by his profession as an engineer (Armory 91).⁴⁹ In an act of supposition that nonetheless merits citing, Armory notes that:

Ultimately, however, it was his immediate experience of the land, whether in Minas Gerais, São Paulo, or Bahia, which dictated his own writings on the geology and geography of Brazil, and which provoked his harshest criticism of “the uselessness of the theoretical wonders with which we deluded ourselves in academic times.” This last remark, in a diary entry on the way to Caundos, was his parting shot at his Positivist education in the Military School and the War College. (91)⁵⁰

Geography and its discourse, then, proved to be a central impetus and point of departure for Cunha’s magnum opus, an impetus evident in both *Os Sertões* and Sarmiento’s *Facundo*. Both the

⁴⁹ Though distressed by the thought of leaving behind his beloved works of philosophical erudition, Cunha locates his contribution to the nation (and the times) in a practical, and hands-on, engagement with the sciences. His literary diet thus changes, too. Consider the following statement he makes in an 1895 letter to João Luís Alves, a friend and miner-cum-deputy and senator as well as Minister of Justice in Minas Gerais: “Por aí já vêes que a minha atividade intelectual agora converge toda para os livros práticos – deixando provisoriamente de lado os filósofos, o Comte, o Spencer, o Huxley etc. – magníficos amigos por certo mas que afinal não nos ajudam eficazmente a atravessar esta vida cheia de tropeços e dominada quasi inteiramente pelo mais ferrenho empirismo. Infelizmente é uma verdade: as páginas ásperas dos *Aide-Mémoires* ou dos *Engineer’s pocket books* são mais eloqüentes, neste fim de século, do que a mais luminosa página do nosso mais admirado pensador. Imagina, se podes, a imensa tristeza que sinto ao escrever isto” (84-85). Relevant though these geographic and scientific texts may be to his era, they simultaneously sadden and intrigue Cunha. See *Correspondência de Euclides da Cunha*, Eds. Walnice Galvão and Oswaldo Galotti, São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1997.

⁵⁰ Cunha’s quotation comes from *Obra Completa*. Vol. 2 Ed. Afrânio Coutinho. Rio de Janeiro: Companhia José Aguilar Editôra, 1966: 531.

Brazilian and the Argentine reproduce non-Latin American geographical discourse while amplifying its literariness. With regard to Cunha, some critics contend that the literary register of *Os Sertões* exists as a means for him to surmount the impossibility of Positivism. Consider, for instance, Raúl C. Gouveia Fernandes's argument in "Euclides e a literatura: Comentários sobre a 'moldura' de *Os Sertões*":

A ficcionalização da história e o arrebatamento lírico socorrem o autor quando os parâmetros teóricos adotados não conseguem esgotar a explicação dos fenômenos observados. Com efeito, para Euclides a única forma possível de dar a conhecer o 'impossível'—isto é, o inexplicável, o mistério, aquele excedente de realidade que causa admiração e não cabe nos estreitos moldes da ciência—é a literatura. (56)⁵¹

I contend, on the contrary, that the literary register of Cunha's text cannot be said to occur *gradually* over the course of the narrative, simply "quando os parâmetros teóricos adotados não conseguem esgotar a explicação dos fenômenos observados." Rather, Cunha's style maintains a constant presence that begins in the work's first paragraphs through words that accentuate the land's discontinuity ("saliente," "projetante," "desarticulada," "riçado," "corroído," "escancelando-se," "repartindo-se," "desagregando-se," "desnudos" appear in a mere five lines). Cunha's literary tendencies, I would argue, are deep-rooted. His first forays into literature occurred at the Colégio Aquino, where he helped found *O Democrata*, a journal residing somewhere between the literary and the political; his first published pieces were lyric poems,

⁵¹ Fernandes's declaration ensues in order to contest that of Luiz Costa Lima, who argues that the literary register of *Os Sertões* serves as the very framework for what is in reality scientific analysis. In this vein, then, I concur with Fernandes in saying that both registers exist simultaneously and complementarily. See Luiz Costa Lima, "Os Sertões: Ciência ou literatura," in *Intervenções*. São Paulo: Edusp, 2002: 359-72.

eighty-four of which have been collected in a volume entitled “Ondas” (Putnam xii). Given that he writes *Os Sertões* a decade after these poems, we can conclude that Cunha’s tendencies toward the poetic had not faded; indeed, if anything, they matured along with his age and experience.

These poetic tendencies reveal a desire to elevate the barbaric elements of the Brazilian nation. They reveal an inherent zeal towards pedagogy, towards teaching Brazilians about their land and, with that, their nation. According to Fernandes, “[...] Euclides acreditava que o registro literário serviria como forma de embelezamento e suavização do discurso científico, tornando-o mais acessível ao público leigo” (48). Though I shy from pondering intentionality in this project, I believe it safe to explore Cunha’s pedagogical objectives within the context of his politicized writing of the nation. Geography and poetry align in his work under the umbrella of national consolidation. Cunha has not been alone on this unifying venture. Certainly, literature has consistently been a primary mode to affirm nationality and to reflect upon Brazilian identity since the days of independence. To invoke Antonio Candido again, the most significant attempts to interpret Brazil—Cunha himself, Gilberto Freyre, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda—have occurred within the literary sphere.

That Cunha coalesces Science with Literature reveals yet another of his pioneering qualities that markedly characterize Brazilian intellectual thought. His early disenchantment with Positivism also earns him points on the chart of originality; his early enchantment with geography shall earn him the most points in my project. I believe, then, that my interpretation of *Os Sertões* should indeed account for Cunha’s immersion in the “science” of Positivism, perhaps if only to disregard it in favor of the legitimate science of geography. Positivism and Cunha’s relationship with it have been exponentially analyzed in the hundred-odd years since the publication of his most famous work. Geography, on the contrary, has been peripherally noted

to exist in Cunha's works, yet there have been no systematic attempts to trace its inception, its formation, and its contribution to his writing. I aim to analyze the formal qualities of his words, sentences, and paragraphs so as to engage with his representation of land, and, in so doing, interpret his politicization of geography within the national sphere. I aim, furthermore, to extract geography from its positivist beginnings, from its scientific banishment, in David Harvey's words, as "the bastard child of Enlightenment thought," and thereby analyze its appearance in and relevance to Latin American narrative as a concrete science (233). Indeed, as Harvey says so well, "It is time to bring it actively into the light of day, legitimize it and recapture its emancipatory possibilities" (233).

3.3 MAN AND LAND: INCLUSION THROUGH INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Cunha's relationship with geography exhibits a sort of hands-on practicability impossible to find in the unempirical leanings of Positivism. Olímpio de Sousa Andrade explains this highly tangible relationship in his *História e interpretação de "Os Sertões"* (1966), and his passage is worth reproducing in its entirety:

... é preciso destacar aquele aspecto do seu método, do qual parece derivar parte ponderável da sua maneira de ser e de dizer: o contato direto que invariavelmente tomou com as coisas que o preocupavam. Para certificar-se da qualidade de obras de engenharia, viveu em vaivéns constantes dentro de tálburis e ferrovias; para bem conhecer um rio, navegava nas suas águas; para escrever sobre o sertão foi ver o sertão primeiro; para reconstruir uma ponte, fazia-se presente em todos os

momentos, mudando-se para o local; para traçar mapas perfeitos, ia pisar o chão desconhecido e empurrar batelões com água acima dos joelhos em rios ignorados; para escrever um livro, reunia toda a experiência que possuía sobre o assunto, buscava a companhia de outras, enveredava por todos os caminhos, até onde permitia o seu longo alcance e ainda lamentava a impossibilidade de ir além.

(331)

This scientific impulse to “get his hands dirty,” as it were, appears alongside his passion for journalistic writing, thus on more than one occasion we find Cunha working as a daytime engineer and a moonlighting news reporter. By 1895 he works as an engineer in the Superintendência de Obras Públicas and intermittently for the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*; in 1898, as he writes *Os Sertões* by night, he also functions in the capacity of lead engineer to reconstruct a metallic bridge (Santana 80-98). Sousa Andrade highlights Cunha’s dedication to both professions: “Ainda que tivesse varado boa parte da noite escrevendo, Euclides madrugava para os trabalhos de ponte” (196).

Cunha’s participation in nation building extends itself not only to constructing bridges but also to institutional formation. Akin to the Argentine national sphere, nineteenth-century Brazil welcomes the construction of several geographic institutions. The 1838 inauguration of the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (IHGB) occurs concomitantly with other continent-wide efforts to institutionalize—and thereby nationalize—the discipline. For Cunha, the locus of intellectual activity focalizes in São Paulo. In this southern city just west of Rio de Janeiro, the author finds an ambiance buzzing with innovation and scholars milling about engrossed in fascinating work. Several institutions subsidized this work, including the Comissão Geográfica e Geológica de São Paulo (1886), the Instituto Agrônomo de Campinas (1887), the

Instituto Bacteriológico de São Paulo (1892), and the Escola Politécnica de São Paulo (1892). With the 1894 inauguration of the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo (IHGSP), deliberate geographic study officially plants itself in *paulista* intellectual circles.

Structured around the model of the original chapter in Rio de Janeiro (IHGP), the IHGSP emphasized territorial knowledge as an inherently patriotic duty, yet it also catered to the specific issues affecting only São Paulo. According to Lilia Schwarcz in her study on scientific institutions and race, the majority of the institute's published works between 1895 and 1930 branched from the discipline of history (45%), while another part (22%) included biographies, a mere smattering (15%) addressed matters of geography and geology, and a small slice (11%) spoke to topics categorized as anthropology or ethnology (126-27). Those articles subsumed under geography/geology, she explains, often revealed a "modernizing" attempt best attributed to the influence of "profissionais especializados que orientavam um projeto <<modernizador>> para o estado" (Schwarcz 140).

Cunha quickly gains entry into this modernizing project. His name surfaces for potential membership in the institution when the group's founders, Albert Loefgren, Orville Derby, and Teodoro Sampaio, nominate him one day after he publishes a rave review of Loefgren's work (Santana 84).⁵² Admitted to the nepotistic group in 1897, Cunha then joins, in rapid succession, the Comissão de História e Estatística de São Paulo (1898) and the Centro de Ciências, Letras e Artes de Campinas (1901). With these memberships, his respective relationships with geography and literature literally converge. Because the institutions actively promote scholarship and provide a space in which to share that work, Cunha's fervent writing finds curious eyes and ears,

⁵² Recall, too, that Sarmiento established his relationship with Estanislao Zeballos upon writing laudatory reviews of the latter's *Quince Mil Leguas*. In this sense, both Sarmiento and Cunha (relative outsiders to geography's elite), gain entry to the inner circle by extension of their writings *beyond* the primary texts I discuss in this study.

a crucial motivation for him to document his observations on Canudos. On February 5, 1898, the Brazilian author presents the first written component that will later be included in *Os Sertões*, a conference presentation titled “Climatologia dos Sertões da Bahia” (Santana 84).

Publication and dissemination thus coalesce with the institutionalization of geography and create a national forum in which to address issues of territory, of border demarcation, of distribution, each item part and parcel of the modernizing project. For Brazil to assume the status of a modern nation, it must be written into modernity in terms of both history and geography.

Manoel Luis Lima Salgado Guimarães contends that the founding institution, the IHGB in Rio, garnered such acclaim and spawned such offshoots because of its ability to respond to widespread anxiety regarding the nation’s state of affairs; in other words, Brazilians demanded an organization prepared to delineate the nation’s profile and fashion its unique identity, which, in turn, would allow entry into modern occidental civilization (10).⁵³ Under the supervision of the German explorer and botanist Carl Friedrich Phillip von Martius, the organization achieves such a feat, albeit outside the parameters of geography. Rather than sole scientific observation, Martius articulates the model for the Brazilian national symbolic system. This system, explained in the piece “Como se deve escrever a História do Brasil” and published in the *Revista* of the IHGB in January 1845, imagines the synthesis and harmonious integration of three races: the European white, the African black, and the indigenous brown. A true *filho do seu tempo*, Martius attributes this ideal mixture to Divine Providence: “Jamais nos será permitido duvidar que a vontade da providência predestinou ao Brasil esta mescla” (85). This symbolic system does not,

⁵³ See his article “Nação e civilização nos trópicos: O Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro e o projeto de uma história nacional.”

however, embrace the ideal of the modern nation-state, characterized by shifting and impersonal interactions between free citizens; instead, it unfolds as a hierarchical family dominated by the white minority and characterized by fixed and personal interrelations between members. Ultimately shaping the trajectory of the national project, this warped rendition of the nation-state embarks on a less-than-innocent effort to demarcate the national territory through a race-based hierarchy.

Some scholars—Ilmar Rohloff de Mattos in his study *O Tempo Saquarema: A formação do estado imperial* (1994), for instance—even liken the IHGB to a church, something like a site of congregation and devotion where the white elite membership gathers to discuss and document knowledge of, and control over, the national territory. Control over land dictates control over agriculture. To protect the consistency, stability, and hegemony of their agricultural exports—to reaffirm the colonial legacy, in other words—the elite begins to venerate the tenets of liberalism. Mattos insists that the imperial powers espouse such a philosophy to a specific end: a monopoly over territorial control. But, only via a process of geographical description and delineation might the monopoly come to fruition. In their ambition to possess and control the Brazilian land, the elite accumulate a vast collection of cartographic and statistical volumes designed to instrument state action; from here emerges the economic exploitation of natural resources (Mattos 199).

Enter Euclides da Cunha. Contrary to the liberal elite's motives of monetary gain, Cunha's inclinations toward territorial knowledge are far more benign: geographical advances, he believes, can close the nation-threatening distance between the Brazilian seaboard and *sertão*. To know Brazil is to know *all* of Brazil, including that stretch of the barren northeast designated to be the site of state-imposed isolation; emphasizing history's vicissitudes his forte, Cunha wryly instructs in *Os Sertões*, “Não sofismemos a História Causas muito enérgicas determinaram o

insulamento e conservação do autóctone. Destaquemo-las” (69). To begin, he casts the blame for the “insulamento e conservação do autóctone” upon the large land grants that essentially recreate a semi-feudalistic society, “sem raias” and complete with vassals and serfs (69).⁵⁴ Without boundary lines to demarcate them, the *latifúndios* relegate the *sertanejos* to an effective no-man’s-land, where, “divorciados inteiramente das gentes do sul e da colonização intensa do litoral, evolveram, adquirindo uma fisionomia original. Como que se criaram num país diverso” (69). Without the imaginary of an officially delineated national territory—without a national map, in other words—the nation and its citizens stand quite literally divided into north and south and at the brink of civil war.

The state’s reaction to the national divorce extended the royal charter of February 7, 1701, which prohibited and penalized “quaisquer comunicações daquela parte dos sertões com o sul, com as minas de São Paulo. Nem nesmo as relações comerciais foram toleradas; interditas as mais simples trocas de productos” (Cunha 69). Condemned to their backlands corner where, bereft of land or trade or communication, they subsist, the *sertanejos* give rise to a way of life devoid of “ordem e progresso,” indeed, the Positivist motto emblazoned across the Brazilian flag. With a third of Brazil falling outside of the descriptive parameters of the national motto, the nation’s coherency finds itself in an inevitably precarious situation, which Cunha blames on “uma ficção geográfica” (338). This geographic fiction, unpacked in a tone both disappointed and disdainful, alludes to the nation’s fractured state, in which a railway line marks the “ponto de tangência de duas sociedades, de todo alheias uma à outra,” where the soldiers participate in

⁵⁴ Given his profession as land surveyor, Cunha found himself intimately aware of the inequalities begotten by land distribution. Raymond Craib explains, “surveyors were not passive extensions of objective instruments” but rather active recipients of “the influences, threats, and overtures of those around them” (107). Subject to the surveyor’s fear, then, land distribution and demarcation occurred at the behest of those in power, ultimately cementing hegemony through agricultural control. Cunha criticizes the expansive land grants and their contribution to maintaining a set hierarchy; he attempts to undo the surveyor’s creation.

“uma invasão – em território estrangeiro” (338). Split in half, the nation cannot possibly achieve unity:

Discordância absoluta e radical entre as cidades da costa e as malocas de telha do interior, que desequilibra tanto o ritmo de nosso desenvolvimento evolutivo e perturba a unidade nacional. Viam-se em terra estranha. Outros hábitos. Outros quadros. Outra gente. Outra língua mesmo, articulada em gíria original e pinturesca. Invadia-os o sentimento exato de seguirem para uma guerra externa. Sentiam-se fora do Brasil. A separação social completa dilatava a distância geográfica; criava a sensação nostálgica de longo afastamento da pátria. (338)

Cunha acutely diagnoses the national discord as a symptom of exclusion that necessarily favors the elite—in other words, the privileged group responsible for equality- or inequality-ensuring acts such as land demarcation and distribution. Laden with an excess of control from their posh repose on the Rua de Ouvidor, the commercial oligarchy unfairly oversees the material needs of all Brazilian citizens. Cunha’s keen eye correctly locates the nation’s obstacles in the uneven spread, thus in an effort to equalize the factions and thereby approach modernization, he seeks inclusion.

But how does he outline the parameters of an inclusive national community? Cunha appreciates that monetary gain for one group limits the nation’s progress whereas consolidation of all groups advances the thrust toward modernization. I maintain, in this vein, that he looks to the discipline and discourse of geography in order to literarily write a consolidated nation, both politically and aesthetically. He departs, on the one hand, from elite thinking by turning his arsenal of classifying devices away from the urban centers of the seaboard and toward the *caatingas* of the *sertão*. By detailing and disseminating the minutiae of this terrain, Cunha strives to

save the rural northeast from the vicissitudes of state-imposed isolation. His narrative stitches the fractured nation together, creating a whole that exists at least in the textual imaginary, if nowhere else. As was the case with Mexico and Argentina's first national maps, then, Cunha's literary cartography provides a continuous and largely homogenous history, something of a geographic simulation of coherency. As a properly demarcated, unified, and modern nation, Brazil can gain entry into the annals of world geography and, with that, into occidental thinking. Cunha's aesthetic project further cements this sense of inclusion by employing the language of the excluded—this is to say, the poetics of the *sertanejo*, of the primitive man, of the barbarian—to write that very geography.

3.4 CUNHA'S CORRECTIVES, OR THE ILLUSION OF CONSOLIDATION

Cunha constructs the literary cartography of *Os Sertões* to break free from and contest the inaccuracy-laden non-Brazilian land treatises. As the first *Brazilian* geographer, his first plan of action resides in a critique—accompanied by a large dose of incredulity—of the national maps already in existence. Cunha sees the need to rewrite the European/colonial rendition of the land, which lamentably controls his contemporaries' territorial knowledge. Consider his tone upon describing the backlands hamlet of Uauá, for instance:

Este arraial—duas ruas desembocando numa praça irregular—é o ponto mais animado daquele trecho do sertão. Como a maior parte dos vilarejos pomposamente gravados nos nossos mapas, é uma espécie de transição entre

maloca e aldeia—agrupamento desgracioso de cerca de cem casas mal feitas e tijupares pobres, de aspecto deprimido e tristonho. (146, emphases mine)

Superficially, Cunha criticizes the locale itself—for its irregular-shaped plaza, for its lack of definition as it sits in limbo between an Indian camp and a village, for its poorly made houses and dilapidated shanties that fail to inspire in their mournful and depressing state. Below the surface, however, his ambiguity belies his original criticism. I situate Cunha’s ambiguity in the curiously placed adverb “pomposamente,” which appears in a passive structure and thereby leaves the agent to be decided. Who, then, pompously inscribes the names of the villages on “nossas mapas”—that is, on *our maps*? The villagers themselves? Or those individuals—non-Brazilians, surely—charged with constructing *our maps*? On first reading, the villagers seem guilty for assuming entry onto the national maps. Cunha’s harsh description of the hamlets augments this sense of culpability.

On the other hand, through literary subterfuge, Cunha directs his critique toward the colonial powers (and their neocolonial continuation in Republican Brazil) responsible for wreaking such havoc on the Brazilian terrain. Prior to Portuguese arrival, these lands needed no demarcation due to their communal distribution. However, the Global North’s epistemology deemed communal lands unproductive and therefore indicative of the Indians’ veritable “state of nature” (Craib 97).⁵⁵ Craib explains, too, that the state benefited through revenues from the privatization of such lands.⁵⁶ In their haste to “civilize” (in other words, “tax”) the Indians and pretend productivity, the colonial rulers leave the land a near aberration, irregular in form,

⁵⁵ In Humboldt’s view, communal lands bore no opportunity for progress in their state of “perpetual sterility” (142). See *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain*. Trans. John Black. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1811.

⁵⁶ Republican Brazil ultimately practices something akin to neocolonial politics as it seizes Indian lands and extends the landlord monopoly, thereby continuing the imperialist inclinations of the allegedly democratic state of Portugal.

depressing in ambiance, and in a constant state of dilapidated transition. In my reading, accordingly, Cunha avoids explicit incrimination through the passive voice. He directs the adverb “pomposamente” at “those” who he avoids naming, “those” who name the locale and then place it on a map with little regard to its future development; this village and others like it thus maintain their stature as “uma espécie de transição entre maloca e aldeia.”⁵⁷

Cunha’s description harks forward to the well-documented phenomenon of Brazil and, by extension, all of Latin America: Silviano Santiago’s *entre-lugar*, a useful designation of the region as in-between—and often caught between—spatial, cultural, and temporal forces. Though this *inbetweenness* shapes seaboard and *sertão*, it tints the former with positive approbation and the latter, particularly its neglected villages like Uauá, with negative condemnation. But whereas Uauá’s limbo status puts in on the rocky path to modernity, the state relegates other hamlets—Canudos, for instance—to something like pre-history, prior to even the starting-point on the spectrum of modernity, what Cunha ruefully describes as “centuries-old semidarkness” (Putnam 161). For the sake of contrast, then, he writes Uauá (at least a faded speck on the national map) alongside and against the utter wasteland of Canudos (no X marks this spot); the *conselheiristas’* foothold thus flounders outside of the nation both materially and symbolically. Given this exclusion, Cunha observes, the government should not be surprised by the *jagunços’* hostile reaction: “O que surpreende é a surpresa originada por tal fato. Canudos era uma tapera miserável, fora de nossos mapas, perdida no deserto, aparecendo, indecifrável, como uma página truncada e sem número das nossas tradições” (238). For Cunha—like Sarmiento—cartographic

⁵⁷ Later, we see that he simply employs the generic pronoun “those”—to what end? I believe that he avoids accusation because he writes to a specific audience of Europeans and North Americans. In other words, rather than coming off as antagonistic, he aims to portray an image of the smart and authoritative Brazilian. And, most importantly, he acquires a sense of authority from *knowing* (in other words, being familiar with the works of) non-Brazilian scholars instead of openly *criticizing* them (which is to say, presuming superiority by critiquing their works).

inclusion prefigures national incorporation. As the state denies Canudos a position on the national map, it effectively stamps the village with the seal of foreign, exterior, *fora*. This extra-national leitmotiv surfaces several times; Cunha contends that the *jagunços* appear “como que se criaram num país diverso” (69) and explains that the Republican soldiers “[s]entiam-se fora do Brasil” (338). In this foreign territory, the Republican troops unfurl the national colors, suggesting, in fact, that the *sertanejos* fight under the auspices of another country (259).

Cunha’s observations, together with his criticisms of the incomplete maps, reveal a nation on the cusp of territorial division, indeed, of civil strife. His narrative thus illustrates that symbolic inclusion—this is to say, rewriting the national cartography to include Canudos and the *sertão*—necessarily precedes the material benefits of such inclusion: national consolidation. A national map cannot in itself diffuse Brazil’s volatile political climate, he knows. It can elide dissolution by implying integration; to reiterate Raymond Craib, “a national map had as much iconographic as it did instrumental power” (23). Cunha, however, transcends mere suggestion as he imbues *Os Sertões* with these powers; his literary cartography integrates the neglected *sertão* and its hamlets into Brazilian (and, in turn, universal) history. Whereas in Mexico the cartographic impetus aims to “visually affirm what supposedly already existed,” with Cunha the impulse rests in the *textual* affirmation of a unified nation (Craib 23). His rewrite thus negates the exclusion and incompleteness of European-made maps of Brazil, which diminish not only the expanse but also the structural integrity of the national space. Cunha re-appropriates these spaces—and their peoples—into his literary cartography, thereby strengthening the nation against both interior and exterior forces.

For Cunha, Brazilian maps cannot but include Canudos, a paradigmatic, mythical space from where to affirm the national consciousness; its high vantage point—the aerial view from

Mount Favella—exposes the distant opulence of the coast, an illusion, he believes. Yet, the literal mirage and the illusions that define it emerge as a primary characteristic not of the seaboard but of the *sertão*. As the currents of hot air waft and sway across the dry land, they combine with the magnified sunlight and effectively blind all souls in the surrounding area. This very real ailment—*hemeralopia*—contradictorily blinds because of overexposure to light, because of too much sight: “Esta falsa cegueira é paradoxalmente feita pelas reações da luz; nasce dos dias claros e quentes, dos firmamentos fulgurantes, do vivo nodular dos ares em fogo sobre a terra nua. É uma plethora do olhar” (88). I argue that Cunha underscores this disorder for the sake of contrast; another variety of blindness ails the Republican troops, who fail to see the jagunços or Canudos for their true colors. The land’s mirages drape a heavy curtain across the troops’ eyes, inhibit all sight, and thereby prove detrimental to their inglorious battle. On the contrary, the same mirages train the *jagunços* to survive in such inhospitable climes; they train the *jagunço* to see beyond the superficialities of life. In one of many examples of the land as an ally, the mirages force the *sertanejos* to depend on illusions of strength, of satiety. Rather than getting knocked down by a challenge, then, they simply refuse to acknowledge it as such given that they are blind to obstacle. This strategy serves them well. In something like a self-fulfilling prophecy, the *sertanejos* come to believe in their satisfied bellies and quenched thirst; the illusion of satiety transforms the tender stocks of plants and the truffles of wild bromeliads into adequate nourishment: “Ilude-os com essas iguarias bárbaras” (89). Similarly, the settlement of Canudos replicates the *caatingas*; though easy to enter, one quickly becomes entangled in the mess and struggles to exit: “Era fácil investi-lo, batê-lo, dominá-lo, varejá-lo, aluí-lo; era difícil deixá-lo” (219). These fortitudes compete even with European modes of protection of, say, a polygonal citadel of armored walls: “Canudos, entretecido de becos de menos de dois metros de largo,

trançados, cruzando-se em todos os sentidos, tinha ilusória fragilidade nos muros de taipa que o formavam. Era pior que uma cidadela inscrita em polígonos ou blindada de casamatas espessas.”

As Canudos defies occidental norms, it exposes what appears to be a soft underbelly—easy to attack, kill, and gut. The underbelly unfolds as nothing more than an illusion of fragility, however, for the settlement’s entrails twist around and entrap all intruders. In this sense, the *jagunços* abide by the land’s primary tenet: what you see is *not* what you get. Arguably, then, the mirages that characterize Latin American land—be it *sertão*, *pampa*, or *llano*—beget the region’s literary obsession with illusion, a dominant theme that finds its first seeds in Columbus, flourishes in the likes of Cunha, and fully blossoms in the grand master of literary subterfuge, Jorge Luis Borges. In the face of constant and often-insurmountable obstacles, Latin Americans can only explain or resolve the regions’ issues through a tenacious, death-defying illusion of a sort similar to the *jagunços*’. Like the illusion of satiety and, at once, like the illusion of fragility, Latin America cannot be taken at face value. Cunha, too, learns and executes this lesson. In *Os Sertões*, he employs the cartographic narrative to write Canudos into the nation, thereby creating the illusion of consolidation. By foretelling wholeness and integrity through his inclusion of the *sertão*, Cunha writes the model for the nation.

3.5 ZOOM OUT, ZOOM IN: FROM THE GENERAL TO THE PARTICULAR

Much like a large map in relief, *Os Sertões* unfolds at micro and macro levels simultaneously, with precision and generalization at once. Rhetorical finesse coalesces with figurative language to paint a textual geography with strokes so precise yet, at once, so broad and expansive. In

modern terminology, we might say that he provides readers the option to zoom in or to zoom out from his textual map, which, in turn, leads to a clearer, more potent image. Like his movement from the generality of science to the particularity of geography, Cunha's prose tends to begin with the bird's-eye aerial shot that, within paragraphs or even lines, homes in on a particular scene.

This tendency emerges in the narrative's very first sentences:

O Planalto Central do Brasil desce, nos litorais do Sul, em escarpas inteiriças, altas. Assoberba os mares; e desata-se em chapadões nivelados pelos visos das cordilheiras marítimas, distendidas do Rio Grande a Minas. Mas o derivar para as terras setentrionais diminui gradualmente de altitude, ao mesmo tempo que descamba para a costa oriental em andares, ou repetidos socalcos, que o despem da primitiva grandeza afastando-o consideravelmente para o interior. (5)

Cunha begins at the top of Brazil's central plateau and descends, slowly by way of commas. While the interrupted flow of the clause hints at a slow, lengthy descent, the reality is otherwise: upon reaching the edge of the plateau—an overlook of sorts—the sentence, too, concludes with an abrupt period. Cunha, it would seem, valiantly prevents readers from falling over the precipice. Slowly, we peek over the mount with the assistance of a semi-colon, and then our gaze extends out over the north. The descent begins. The altitude gradually diminishes as we approach the end of the paragraph, and we drop down to the east and see the land's "primitiva grandeza." Reminiscent of Sarmiento, this emphasis on expanse treads the whole of *Os Sertões*, from its lengthy prose (at the level of sentence as well as structure) to its direct representation of the vast terrain and endless horizons.

Whereas the narrative's first paragraph includes a gradual descent, a continuous view, and a steady rhythm, the second immediately rears a signpost to indicate not only “notáveis mudanças de relevos” but also notable changes in language:

De sorte que quem o contorna, seguindo para o norte, observa notáveis mudanças de relevos: a princípio o traço contínuo e dominante das montanhas, precintando-o, com destaque **saliente**, sobre a linha **projetante** das praias; depois, no segmento de orla marítima entre o Rio de Janeiro e o Espírito santo, um aparelho litoral revoltado, feito de envergadura **desarticulada** das serras, **riçado** de cumeadas e **corroído** de angras, e **escancelando-se** em baías, **repartindo-se** em ilhas, e **desagregando-se** em recifes desnudos, à maneira de escombros do conflito secular que ali se trava entre os mares e a terra [...]. (5, emphases mine)

The unobtrusive diction and style that starts Cunha's narrative quickly turns into something choppy, more jagged, more protruding. As we get an intimate look at the landscape—indeed, Cunha enacts a veritable zoom—the diction alludes to its discontinuity: “saliente,” “projetante,” “desarticulada,” “riçado,” “corroído,” “escancelando-se,” “repartindo-se,” “desagregando-se”—each adjective and gerund draws attention to the sense of brokenness. This sensation remains through the mountain descriptions and until Cunha leads readers to the coast of Bahia: here, finally, he frees our gaze from the ramparts that have repelled and hemmed. And, alongside the smooth contours of the Bahian coast, the language lengthens and calms, “se dilata em cheio para o occidente, mergulhando no âmago da terra amplíssima lentamente emergindo num ondear longínquo de chapadas...” (5).

Cunha continues this pattern of ascent and descent with a cadence reminiscent of undulating waves that crest and fall with the tide. Like Humboldt and Sarmiento, the Brazilian author contends that the land was once sea, thus his language, too, mimics the waters that once covered the national soil. A few scant pages after introducing this swelling style, Cunha again presents the terrain from the bird's-eye perspective, this time from the top of Favela:

Galgava o topo da Favela. Volvia em volta o olhar para abranger de um lance o conjunto da terra. E nada mais divisava recordando-lhe os cenários contemplados. Tinha na frente a antítese do que vira. Ali estavam os mesmos acidentes e o mesmo chão, embaixo, fundamente revolto, sob o indumento áspero dos pedregais e caatingas estonadas... Mas a reunião de tantos traços incorretos e duros – arregoados divagantes de algares, sulcos de despenhadeiros, socavas de bocainas, criava-lhe perspectiva inteiramente nova. E quase compreendia que os matutos crendeiros de imaginativa ingênua, acreditassem que “ali era o céu...”. (18)

This aerial view renders visible a vague scene from the top of the mountain that quickly homes in on the individual details. Just as from far away facial wrinkles fade, so too do the cracks and furrows of the landscape. Close up, however, we see the “arregoados divagantes de algares, sulcos de despenhadeiros, socavas de bocainas” and the “indumento áspero dos pedregais e caatingas estonadas.” While the solitary characteristics leave little to be desired—indeed, the cracks and pits and furrows keep one at bay—their combination, Cunha notes, “criava-lhe perspectiva inteiramente nova.” Seeing the big picture through the eyes of those “matutos crendeiros” allows him to empathize with them, to understand their perception of this place as heaven, to respect their “imaginativa ingênua”—that is, their naïve imaginations. Like Vico’s

giants, like those first men immersed in the logic of the imagination, the irrational, and the concrete, Cunha's credulous woodsmen find peace on the mountaintop, a peace comparable to that of an imagined heaven. Vico contends that modern man resides in a liminal space far from such peace: "We are likewise incapable of entering into the vast imaginative powers of the earliest people," he writes in *New Science*, continuing, "Their minds were in no way abstract, refined, or intellectualized; rather, they were completely sunk in their senses, numbed by their passions, and buried in their bodies" (147). Vico deems this space impenetrable for modern man; Cunha, on the other hand, *beckons*—indeed, *lures*—modern man toward this imaginary heaven by describing it in such a way that it becomes irresistible. No one wants to miss the stairway to heaven. Cunha refers to Favela again later in the narrative, explaining that, "A sua topografia interessante modelava-o ante a imaginação daquelas gentes simples como o primeiro degrau, amplíssimo e alto, para os céus..." (117).

For Cunha, these simple folk see the big picture instead of harping on the miniscule details. While part necessarily precedes any understanding of whole, only the whole provides perspective. To be sure, however, both part and whole bring to bear on any interpretation of Brazil; in other words, Brazilian nationality might be gleaned from a combination of metonymy and synecdoche. Brazil is rendered meaningless without Canudos. Canudos, similarly, is rendered meaningless without Brazil. Each ascent and descent in *Os Sertões* simulates the waves constituting the oceanic Brazilian terrain. As Cunha guides the lone traveler—this is to say, the reader—up and down each crest, he builds upon the previous one and, in so doing, fashions an intricate and cumulative national story. In fact, he concludes this story best in the last pages of his magnum opus, comparing it, not casually, to climbing a very high mountain: "Forremo-nos à tarefa de descrever os seus últimos momentos. Nem poderíamos fazê-lo. Esta página,

imaginamo-la sempre profundamente emocionante e trágica; mas cerram-la vacilante e sem brilhos. Vimos como quem vinga uma montanha altíssima. No alto, a par de uma perspectiva maior, a vertigem... ” (400). A better perspective, indeed, to see man and land.

3.6 RE-APPROPRIATING BY RECTIFYING

As the first Brazilian geographer, Cunha constructs his magnum opus not only as a national map but also as a corrective interested in supplanting European-led misconceptions. He regards geographical knowledge as the necessary pre-condition for modernization in two important ways: first, the practice of geography reduces concentrated landownership and thereby promotes equality, and, second, geography promotes national sovereignty both aesthetically and politically.⁵⁸ Whereas Sarmiento seeks internal and external national defense through geography,

⁵⁸ For Cunha, much of what goes awry in the *sertão* occurs as a result of the Republican troops' lack of territorial knowledge. The troops attempt to save their "nation" from the backlanders, but they face a grave problem: their uncharted nation proves treacherous to cross with its lengthy distances marked by nothing save a sparse tree and nay a river. Given hardly enough time to create some semblance of a map, the military engineers lead the troops into danger: "Os engenheiros militares Domingos Alves Leite e Alfredo do Nascimento, tenentes do Estado-maior de 1a classe, adidos à brigada, tiveram uma semana para reconhecer a paragem desconhecida e áspera." (198). One week only allows them intimate awareness of the land's lack, sufficient to open their eyes to the land's role in protecting the *jagunços*; indeed, their most effective and resilient armament is the *caatinga*. Irritated with the pomp and prestige of European scientists, Cunha mocks their utter disregard for the *caatinga's* prowess. These "killing doctors" favor the strategic positioning of the forest: "Os doutores na arte de matar que hoje, na Europa, invadem escandalosamente a ciência, perturbando-lhe o remanso com um retinir de esporas insolente – e formulam leis para a guerra, pondo em equação as batalhas, têm definido bem o papel das florestas como agente tático precioso, de ofensiva ou defensiva. E ririam os sábios feldmarechais – guerreiros de cujas mãos caiu o franquisque heróico trocado pelo lapis calculista – se ouvissem a alguém que às caatingas pobres cabe função mais definida e grave que às grandes matas virgens" (152). Despite the knowledge of "sábios," and despite the fact that they "invadem escandalosamente a ciência," these Europeans, according to Cunha, struggle to put aside their continental arrogance even momentarily; in other words, the known of the forest trumps, in their view, the unknown of the *caatinga*. For this very reason, Cunha aims to merge the two categories.

Cunha perseverates on the potential for international encroachment on Brazilian territory.⁵⁹ To “know” the country is, to his mind, to “conquer” the country. This dictum emerges implicitly in several of Cunha’s writings but explicitly in his essay “Plano de uma cruzada,” in which he bristles at the government’s constant recruitment of *non*-Brazilian scientists and travelers to chart the national terrain. His central critique thus revolves around one issue: “strangers” writing Brazil for Brazilians. An avid admirer of several of these scientists, geographers, and geologists—particularly the American-born Orville Derby, who provides great technical support to Cunha during their time at the Serviço Geológico e Mineralógico do Brasil (Freyre 1987)—he nevertheless aims to retrieve these disciplines from the grips of Europeans and North Americans. Derby, for example, studies in Brazil for forty years and even achieves the status of first director of the Comissão Geográfica e Geológica de São Paulo, a position he holds from the institute’s inauguration in 1886 until 1905. Derby’s astounding work in Brazil garners

⁵⁹ Though Cunha expresses immense anxiety with regard to protecting Brazil’s territorial concerns, it is Argentina that behaves obsessively to guard her national interests from friends and foes alike. I refer to the melodramatic situation—with a dramatic name, even, of “o caso do telegrama nº 9”—that involves several key Brazilian and Argentine geographic players. As Argentina begins to dwindle in her regional power, her leaders perceive all actions within the region as a potential threat. A primary perpetuator of propaganda is Estanislau Zeballos, the chief scientist who, under Sarmiento’s guidance, outlines the parameters of Argentine geography and even founds the Instituto Geográfico Argentino in 1879. Convinced of “el odio y el ardor bélico del pueblo brasileño contra la República Argentina,” he decodes said “telegrama nº 9”—written by his arch nemesis, the Brazilian Baron Rio Branco—and claims that its contents reveal Brazil’s readiness to attack Argentina (See Adelar Heinsfeld, “Falsificando telegramas: Estanislau Severo Zeballos e as relações Brasil-Argentina no início século XX” in *Vestígios do passado: a história e suas fontes*, proceedings from the IX Encontro Estadual de História of the Associação Nacional de História, Seção Rio Grande do Sul < http://www.eeh2008.anpuh-rs.org.br/resources/content/anais/1211228384_ARQUIVO_FalsificandoTelegramas.pdf>[4-5]).

Zeballos’s falsifications and subsequent dispersal of such misconstrued information demonstrates the region’s unrest and territorial uncertainty, for ultimately more than one source proves that the telegram contains neither threat nor claims of preparation. Given that Zeballos’s ire with Brazil partially stems from his relationship with Rio Branco, and given that Cunha worked for Rio Branco when the Baron allegedly wrote the telegram, the altercation comes to be a direct one-on-one battle between Zeballos and Cunha. This battle unfolds in Cunha’s letters, in which he describes Zeballos as “o grande cachorrão que tentou enlear-me nas suas traficâncias, ou transformar-me em Capitão Dreyfus do Ministério do Exterior” (388) and accuses the geographer of “travando com imaginários antagonistas, em flagrante contraste com a harmonia nacional brasileira e argentina” (387) [See *Correspondência de Euclides da Cunha*, eds. Walnice Galvão and Oswaldo Galotti São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1997]. I refer to the situation to exemplify geography and geographers’ pivotal roles in constructing a discourse of nationalism while attempting to protect sovereign interests; territorial knowledge and a mission to protect territory drive both Cunha and Zeballos, though neither can look past his particular agenda.

international accolades for its originality and depth; though Cunha commends the North American's innovation and advances, he wishes for *Brazilians* to earn such international recognition.⁶⁰ Far from limited to a question of fame, Cunha's irritation with these "strangers" emerges from skepticism. In "Plano...", he questions the scientists' commitment to Brazil, describing what he considers their disinterested stance with nothing short of disdain. Marking their works as necessarily estranged from the Brazilian point of view, Cunha laments that, until now, this foreign perspective has shaped the ways in which his Brazil situates any understanding of its lands and peoples (73-99).

Cunha's skepticism in "Plano de uma cruzada" regards the potentially imperialist drive of geographers; consider, for example, Thomas P. Bigg-Wither and James W. Wells, both of whom Gilberto Freyre describes as less-than-committed to Brazilian interests. In *Os Sertões*, that same skepticism materializes as doubt regarding practical abilities.⁶¹ To this end, he chooses to rectify these writings through the whole of his magnum opus. I intend to explicate Cunha's revision as a correction, then, for herein we have a primary difference between he and Sarmiento: whereas the Argentine aims *to be* Tocqueville, *to be* Humboldt, *to be* Wappaüs and thereby write the land through his national lens, the Brazilian—trained as he is—strives to *correct* these "strangers" who claim to write Latin America. This rewriting thus more effectively garners the Brazilian *sertão* a

⁶⁰ Derby effectively institutionalizes Brazilian geology, founding the survey in which Cunha participates and directing it between 1907-1915. Finally becoming a Brazilian citizen several months before his suicide in 1915, he was revered in his times as South America's most prominent geologist. The Geological Society of London awarded him the prestigious Wollaston Donation Fund award, for instance, and he worked as associate editor of the *Journal of Geology* and frequently contributed to the *American Journal of Science*. See John Casper Branner, "Notas biográficas de geólogos," in *Revista do Brasil* 20-21 (1922): 340.

⁶¹ Both railroad engineers-cum-travel writers, Bigg-Wither and Wells pen narratives whose titles illustrate the colonial tone of their expeditions: respectively, *Pioneering in South Brazil* (1878) and *Three Thousand Miles Through Brazil, From Rio de Janeiro to Maranhão* (1873). "Pioneering" suggests a lack of inhabitants, and Bigg-Wither indeed writes under the auspices of the Royal Geographic Society to an audience of potential English colonizers whom he wishes to attract to Paraná. Continuing in the vein I began with regard to Sarmiento, then, immigration unfolds as a means by which the "unpopulated" land can gain inhabitants.

self-fashioned entry into the encyclopedia of world geography. This small effort ensures that the excessively local might enter the global, whereby Brazil might enter universal history.

Cunha initiates his rewrite in the narrative's first pages. As he describes the rolling hills that rise to the peaks of the "serra do Espinhaço"—which translates literally to "range of ridges"—he subtly introduces a corrective with regard to the name: "e esta [a serra do Espinhaco] apesar da sugestiva denominação de Eschwege, mal sobressai, entre aquelas lombadas definidoras de uma situação dominante" (6). With uncanny brevity, Cunha disagrees with Eschwege's designation of the hills and indicates, instead, that the minimal protrusion does not coincide with the maximizing effect of the name. The corrective is benign, understated even, on first glance. When taking into consideration Wilhelm von Eschwege's stature in Brazil, however, the passing tone of slight takes upon more meaning. Sent to Brazil via Portugal and upon the invitation of Don João VI, the German engineer and mine director spends nearly fifteen years traversing and documenting the Brazilian land, particularly in the state of Minas Gerais. Orville Derby—Brazil's preeminent naturalist and a man of international standing—reveres Eschwege's research, contending "there is very little that is absolutely new or that was not anticipated by the illustrious German" (Derby 9). Yet this illustrious German leaves no marked impression on Cunha, who includes him not to cite a primary and authority-imbuing source but rather to demonstrate two self-serving pieces of information: first, the depth of his bibliographic knowledge—particularly of European texts—and, second, his disagreement with such texts. The corrective indicates mistrust for the practical (and linguistic) merit of Brazil as it has been written until *Os Sertões*.

But what to make of the European scientists' extended years in Brazil? Indeed, what to make of Eschwege's fifteen years, of Derby's forty years? Cunha contends that the *sertão*, a

ruthless and uncomfortable region, repels to the extent that *no* scientist—Brazilian or not—has yet to endure its discomforts in order to compose a definitive study:

Nenhum pioneiro de ciência suportou ainda as agruras daquele rincão sertanejo, em prazo suficiente para o definir. Martius por lá passou, com a mira essencial de observar o aerólito, que tombara à margem do Bendegó e era já, desde 1810, conhecido nas academias européias, graças a F. Mornay e Wollaston. Rompendo, porém, a região selvagem, *desertus austral*, como o batizou, mal atentou para a teria recamada de uma flora extravagante, *sylva horrida*, no seu latin alarmado. Os que o antecederam e sucederam palmilharam, ferretoados da canícula, as mesmas trilhas rápidas, de quem foge. De sorte que sempre evitado, aquele sertão, até hoje desconhecido, ainda o será por muito tempo. (21, emphases in original)

After rejecting the scholarly opinions of Eschwege and Derby, Cunha takes offense with the work of German explorer and naturalist Martius—incidentally, the non-Brazilian founder of the IHGB and the individual who first articulates the Brazilian symbolic system of miscegenation. Cunha’s rhetoric oozes with not simply rejection but rather judgment; Martius, he contends, pays negligible attention to the “flora extravagante” of the *sertão*, and, like his compatriot Eschwege, employs dubious language—“latin alarmado”—to describe the land. Both Germans, according to Cunha, flee Brazil as quickly as they descend upon it, yet their damage maintains a lingering presence difficult to undo: they have inaccurately named the flora, and the misnomers merit if not correction at least attention. Why, he wonders, are Germans naming all of Brazil? Why aren’t Brazilians naming Brazil? Recall Foucault’s emphasis on the power of naming: first Columbus and then Humboldt name Latin America (as if for the first time, insists González Echevarría), a narrative to which Sarmiento provides the counternarrative in *Facundo*. In Cunha’s

context of consolidation and nationalism, his zest to essentially rename the German-named territory strikes one as fitting, indeed, normal.

Cunha devotes an inordinate amount of textual space on disclaimers regarding *his* own geographical work, however. Recall my original claim: whereas Sarmiento rewrites by revamping, Cunha rewrites by rectification. Yet within lines of critiquing the work of Martius, Cunha inserts several excuses for any shortcomings in his own geographic findings, seemingly minimizing the effect of the correction. First, the Brazilian explains that he crossed the already inhospitable region at its worst, “no prelúdio de um estio ardente” and, as such, “[o] que escrevemos tem o traço defeituoso dessa impressão isolada, desfavorecida, ademais, por um meio contraposto à serenidade do pensamento, tolhido pelas emoções da guerra” (21). His hesitant language fails to convince with diction such as “defeituoso,” “isolada,” and “desfavorecida.” To further complicate the testing situation, Cunha continues, the sparse (and potentially faulty) equipment prevents any certainty in the field:

Além disto os dados de um termômetro único e de um aneróide suspeito, misérrimo arsenal científico com que ali lidamos, nem mesmo vagos lineamentos darão de climas que divergem segundo os menores disposições topográficas, criando aspectos díspares entre lugares limítrofes. (21)

Initially, Cunha’s qualifications come off as something of an excuse for any statistical inaccuracies, particularly for the sake of posterity. Within paragraphs, though, his tone suggests pride in the Brazilian ability to surmount obstacles through innovation, which becomes, in turn, the stamp of originality that can enter Brazil into world geography. Cunha revamps *and* rewrites by departing, due to circumstance and lack of equipment, from classic methodology. He invents a uniquely Brazilian mode of investigation. Instead of resenting or excusing his potentially

shoddy work, he defends its originality; this defense surfaces with concision and rhetorical force in the subsection “Higrômetros singulares”: “Não a observamos através do rigorismo do processos clássicos, mas graças a higrômetros inesperados e bizarros” (23). Indebted to these unimagined and bizarre pieces of equipment, Cunha fashions a Brazilian geography that cannot but reside outside of European norms given their lack of proper machinery. And this first incursion contributes to his status, according to the April 1940 issue of *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, as one of the nation’s best geographers: “Dono de um estilo sem par na nossa literatura, com um amor e um apêgo carinhoso à gleba brasileira, armado de rara cultura científica, ‘o filho da terra perdidamente enamorado dela’, como se apelidou, Euclides da Cunha, havia de ser um grande geógrafo, dentre os maiores do Brasil” (240).

3.7 THE NORTH VERSUS THE SOUTH: INTRA-GEOGRAPHIC DIALOGUE WITH HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE

Perhaps partial due to this innate love for the Brazilian land, Cunha criticizes foreign geographers’ sweeping generalizations, claiming that they paint an unfair picture of the nation. As a proper patriot, he must defend Brazil and its people against the inexactitudes and even outright lies concocted by Europeans and North Americans. In line with his common use of passive voice, on occasion Cunha shies from direct incrimination and opts instead to employ the only mildly cauldron-stirring pronoun, “those.” Peeved at “those” who have unsuccessfully attempted to characterize the Brazilian climate, for instance, he contends that “[c]ontravindo à opinião dos que demarcam aos países quentes um desenvolvimento de 30° de latitude, o Brasil

está longe de se incluir todo em tal categoria” (50). The ambiguous third person “demarcam” applies to scholars who aim to climatically pigeonhole Brazil without considering that Brazil falls outside the norms of science—“[d]e fato, o clima aí inteiramente subordinado aos *facies* geográficos viola as leis gerais que o regulam [...] Define-se, anormalmente, pelas longitudes” (50).⁶² Lacking modern classifying devices, Cunha nevertheless extrapolates his geographic observations from what he already possesses: the tools of innovation in addition to acquired knowledge of national patterns. The geographer documents the climatic periodicity in Brazil and illustrates that certain aspects of weather are the norm rather than the exception; they follow a lilt and flow evident to the long-time inhabitant of the region, who inadvertently conducts a longitudinal study. Foreign researchers, however, neglect this pattern and thus fabricate an overarching generalization for the whole of Brazil: “Daí os erros em que incidem os que generalizam, estudando a nossa fisiologia própria, a ação exclusiva de uma clima tropical” (54). But rather than applicable to the *entire* nation, this “patologia *sui generis*” only exists “em quase toda a faixa marítima do Norte e em grande parte dos Estados que lhe correspondem, até ao Mato Grosso” (54). Why does Cunha wish to contain this negativity to the Northeast? Why does he insist, “Isto não acontece em grande parte do Brasil Central e em todos os lugares do Sul” (55)?

Cunha differentiates between North and South to repudiate the claims of “those” who *generalizam*, “those” who, with one fell swoop, condemn both regions to similar fates and ascribe to them analogous characteristics. Focused on detailing the regional differences, he matter-of-factly asserts the existence of “uma diferença essencial entre o Sul e o Norte, absolutamente

⁶² That Brazil falls outside of already written categories comes up several times, for example under the subsection “Uma categoria geográfica que Hegel não citou,” which I will further analyze later in the chapter (37).

distintos pelo régimen meteorológico, pela disposição da terra e pela transição variável entre o sertão e a costa” (51). That European and North American scientists have neglected this basic distinction between *sertão* and seaboard occupies a large part of Cunha’s critical commentary; he cites non-Brazilian scholars only to disagree with them. Any agreement, then, catches the eye, such as when Cunha uncharacteristically underscores the veracity of Henry Thomas Buckle’s observations regarding Mato Grosso, which appear in his study *History of Civilization in England* (1862). Although the praise includes a trace line of insult regarding Buckle’s tendency to exaggerate, Mato Grosso, according to Cunha, demands hyperbole:

Com efeito, a natureza em Mato Grosso balanceia os exageros de Buckle. É excepcional e nitidamente destacada. Nenhuma se lhe assemelha. Toda a imponência selvagem, toda a exuberância inconceptível, unidas à brutalidade máxima dos elementos, que o preeminente pensador, em precipitada generalização, ideou no Brasil, ali estão francas, rompentes em cenários portentosos. Contemplando-as, mesmo através da frieza das observações de naturalistas pouco vezados a efeitos descritivos, vê-se que aquele régimen climatológico anômalo é o mais fundo traço de nossa variabilidade mesológica.

(52)

Buckle, despite the laudatory parenthetical “o preeminente pensador,” does not escape Cunha’s overarching criticism of non-Brazilian thinkers: the Englishman, too, commits the mortal sin of generalization by ascribing the characteristics of Matto Grosso to the entire nation. This is where Buckle gets it wrong. He gets it right with his exaggerations, however. Cunha concedes that only hyperbolic language suffices to portray Matto Grosso; his concession surfaces in exaggerated language with words and phrase such as “excepcional,” “destacada,” “imponência

selvagem,” “exuberância inconceptível,” “brutalidade máxima.” As he exhibits the ways in which self-perception differs from self-projection, Cunha maintains that this language is a necessary outcome of engaging with the land, that even the “frieza das observações de naturalistas pouco vezados a efeitos descritivos” cannot prevent highly stylized writing. Put plainly, he initially downplays his literary register—in a move that recalls Sarmiento—and attempts to establish a critical difference between Buckle and himself. Whereas the Englishman is given to rhetorical descriptions, the Brazilian’s normally “cool” scientific eye lends itself to more credible observations.

Yet frigid language is a futile effort in Matto Grosso’s surroundings; indeed, the land cannot but heat Cunha’s pen and electrify his stylistic energy, such that, despite the one-line disclaimer paragraph that follows it (“Mal poderemos traçá-los. Esbocemo-los”), he composes a passage worthy of the highest canons of literature (52):

Nenhum se lhe equipara no jogar das antíteses. A sua **feição** aparente é a de benignidade extrema: – a terra **afeiçãoada** à vida; a natureza fecunda erguida na apoteose triunfal dos dias deslumbrantes e calmos; e o solo abrolhando em vegetação fantástica – farto, irrigado de rios que irradiam pelos *quatro pontos cardeais*. Mas esta placidez opulenta esconde, paradoxalmente, germens de cataclismos, que irrompendo, sempre com um ritmo inquebrável, no estio, traindo-se nos mesmos prenúncios infalíveis, ali tombam com a **finalidade** irrestível de uma lei. (52, emphases mine)

Cunha successfully emphasizes the Hegelian antitheses of the region by creating a rhythmic contrast between the positive and the negative: to describe the “benignidade extrema” of Matto Grosso, he crafts lengthy clauses separated by semi-colons and dashes and thereby lends a fluid

cadence to his description. By giving form to continuity, Cunha contributes to the context of life (*vida*), of fecundity (*natureza fecunda*), of blossoming and birth (*abrolhando*), of abundance and fertility (*farto*). However, he immediately shows readers the other side of this coin, the other side of the “placidez opulenta”: brusque and cacophonous, all that follows “Mas” appears as either one word or fragmented phrases separated by six commas within one sentence. An allusion to the climate’s aforementioned periodicity, “um ritmo inquebrável” makes the language pop and burst with the alliterated “p” and the enclosed *irrompendo*, both of which sound as though they wish to escape from the sentence; the commas nevertheless hold them in. Cunha’s halting strategy detracts from any flow as he punctuates and therefore interrupts the reader’s visual and auditory image. By ending each thought before it even begins, the Brazilian author enhances the sense of violent death and disease (*germens de cataclismos*), of apocalyptic endings (*prenúncios infalíveis*), and of inevitable finality (*finalidade*), which appears, not coincidentally, at the sentence’s end. Death must connect with life, however, for dialectically speaking, within the antithetical inheres synthesis. To this end, Cunha unites dark and light through the alliterated “irr,” which appears twice before the dividing line of “Mas” (*irrigado, irradiam*) and twice after (*irrompendo, irresistível*).

As Cunha’s punctuation and rhythmic inconsistencies give the land’s periodicity form, he exhibits rhetorical finesse of a caliber yet to be gauged. He nevertheless attempts to deny any predisposition to the literary and instead relegates Buckle and his exaggerations to that category, not before concurring, however, that Matto Grosso merits such language. Why does Cunha, thus far critical toward non-Brazilian scientists, grant Buckle credibility he normally withholds? Why, moreover, does he emulate the very strategies Buckle uses in *History of Civilization in England*?

If we turn to Buckle's passages on Brazilian geography, I believe we can better understand the nuance behind Cunha's praise, his criticism, and most importantly, his rewrite. Like Cunha, the Englishman also draws attention to the land's antithetical properties, but whereas Cunha's register exudes a respect warranted by the aesthetic sublime, Buckle's tone insinuates something akin to a disdain-filled fear. If the emulated elements are similar pieces of furniture composing the whole of the narrative house, then Cunha reupholsters each piece with a newer, more appealing textual fabric. A close reading demonstrates that even the land's great beauty cannot disabuse Buckle of his unease in the face of the unknown. This trepidation undercuts even the explicitly positive:

Brazil, which is nearly as large as the whole of Europe, is covered with a vegetation of incredible profusion. Indeed, so rank and luxurious is the growth, that Nature seems to **riot** in the very **wantonness** of power. A great part of the immense country is filled with **dense and tangled** forests, whose noble trees, blossoming in unrivalled beauty, and exquisite with a thousand hues, throw out their produce in endless prodigality. On their summit are perched birds of gorgeous plumage, which nestle in their dark and lofty recesses. Below, their base and trunks are crowded with brushwood, **creeping** plants, **innumerable parasites**, all **swarming** with life. There, too, are **myriads of insects** of every variety; **reptiles of strange and singular form**; serpents and lizards, **spotted** with **deadly** beauty: all of which find means of existence in the vast workshop and repository of Nature. (Buckle 74, emphases mine)

Following the now-established pattern of juxtaposing known to unknown, Buckle provides readers not with a measurement of square meters but rather with a comparison between Brazil

and Europe; he aims to foster a welcoming familiarity. But, I argue—and contend that Cunha perceives—that despite Buckle’s hyperbolic observations (*thousand hues, endless prodigality, innumerable parasites, myriads of insects*) and mesmerized descriptions, he recoils from the flora’s indomitable immensity, indeed, its very source, in his view, of human-debilitating power. Bolded in the long citation above, Buckle’s diction reveals dread in the face of potentially lethal disorder; the sibilance augments the tactile imagery by giving lyrical form to the sensation of skin-crawling flora and fauna. In this sense, Buckle transmits distaste for the terrain via his narrative’s undertones.

Within paragraphs, Buckle foregoes subtlety for explicit condemnation of Brazilian barbarity, which he locates—like Hegel—in the land’s physicality: “The whole of Brazil, notwithstanding its immense apparent advantages, has always remained entirely uncivilized; its inhabitants wandering savages, incompetent to resist those obstacles which the very bounty of Nature had put in their way” (75). The obstacles so hinder social progress

that during more than three hundred years the resources of European knowledge have been vainly employed in endeavouring to get rid of them. Along the coast of Brazil, there has been introduced from Europe a certain amount of that civilization, which the natives by their own efforts could never have reached. But such civilization is itself very imperfect, has never penetrated the recesses of the country; and in the interior there is still found a state of things similar to that which has always existed. The people, ignorant, and therefore brutal, practising no restraint, and recognizing no law, continue to live on in their old and inveterate barbarism. (75)

Cunha, to be sure, writes from these very “recesses of the country,” the *sertão* where floods waterlog the soil and where droughts suck all excess moisture from the earth’s top layers; according to Buckle, these fluctuations inhibit civilization’s ability to establish a foothold. In addition to its variability, Brazil’s sheer expanse sabotages any forward momentum: “The progress of agriculture is stopped by impassable forests, and the harvests are destroyed by innumerable insects. The mountains are too high to scale, the rivers are too wide to bridge; every thing is contrived to keep back the human mind, and repress its rising ambition. It is thus that the energies of Nature have hampered the spirit of Man” (76).⁶³ For Buckle, Brazil remains a lost cause despite—and because of—its extreme prowess. His fear impels him to criticize the national land and man, the former through implicit undertones and the latter through explicit overtones. No wonder, then, that Cunha—“o filho da terra perdidamente enamorado dela”—staunchly defends his motherland against false praise tinged with harsh criticism (*Revista Brasileira de Geografia* 240). Buckle makes Brazil out to be a doomed nation destined to failure except, of course, on its European-influenced coast. Compelled to contest this ominous prediction, Cunha must rewrite the Brazilian geography through a lens that can *advance* the national agenda. In light of this, he outwardly downplays his literary aptitude but then rewrites Buckle’s tone rather than his content. If we continue with the domestic metaphor, then Cunha reupholsters Buckle’s scratchy sofas with silk, thereby softening and eliminating any lasting discomfort. Herein appears the contradiction that surfaces in, say, familial situations: as her native-born son, Cunha can

⁶³ Recall, here, Hegel’s insistence that in order to achieve Freedom and to realize Spirit (*Geist*), ease of terrain reigns supreme: “Nature is the first standpoint from which man can gain freedom within himself, and this liberation must not be rendered difficult by natural obstructions” (80). Though *Philosophy of History* appears posthumously in 1899, its contents initially emerge from Hegel’s Jena lectures between 1805-06. Buckle publishes his study in 1862. Despite their immense esteem and popularity, Cunha does not hesitate to tackle both Hegel and Buckle; in fact, he takes something like pride in demonstrating not only familiarity but also disagreement.

complain about the motherland; Buckle, an outsider to the national family, lacks, and therefore ought not employ, the same critical license.

Cunha rewrites the Englishman's technically accurate but tonally charged comments regarding Brazilian geography; he attempts to soften and re-enter that national image into universal history, this time, however, from the Brazilian perspective. Though he criticizes European scientists' tendency to generalize the entire span of the Brazilian nation, Cunha does not presume to foster discord as he stresses regional difference. Rather, he seeks, first, cognizance of the differences and, then, unification despite them—yet another example of Cunha's pioneering ability to think beyond effacement and/or incorporation. Caught in something like tunnel vision, Cunha locates in geographical unification the inevitable seeds of national consolidation. I believe that he articulates this thought by drawing attention to, in Samuel Putnam's brilliant translation, the "four points of the compass." Though Cunha employs several different expressions to communicate the idea of "four points," his destination remains the same: to underscore the distinctions between North and South while pointing, at once, to the man/land characteristics that cross the whole of the nation, characteristics that connect, in other words, the cardinal directions. In the quotation above, for example, he emphasizes the "rios que irradiam pelos quatro pontos cardeais" as though the national land (and therefore the national man) are naturally linked via the rivers that meander in every direction (52). A few pages later, these waterways transform into human waves lapping across the country: "Seguiam sucessivas, incansáveis, com a fatalidade de uma lei, porque traduziam, com efeito, uma queda de potenciais, as grandes caravanas guerreiras, vagas humanas desencadeadas em todos **os quadrantes**, invadindo a própria terra, batendo-a em todos os pontos, descobrindo-a depois do descobrimento, desvendando-lhe o seio rutilante das minas" (58, 65). The human waves then

turn into a solitary soldier capable of connecting north, south, east, and west by killing men in all directions: “Realmente, embora sem o torvelinho dos becos, as casas isoladas, em disposição recordando vagamente tabuleiros de xadrez, facultavam extraordinário cruzamento de fogos, permitindo a um atirador único apontar para **os quadrantes** sem abandonar uma esquina” (222, 264). And, lastly, whereas in Buckle the Brazilian mountain chains hinder progress and unification because “they are too high to scale,” in Cunha the same mountains promote unification as they majestically frame, on all four sides, the national mis-en-scène: “Um rio sem águas, tornejando-as, feito uma estrada poenta e longa, mais longe, avassalando **os quadrantes**, a corda ondulante das serras igualmente desertas, rebatidas, nitidamente, na imprimadura do horizonte claro, feito o quadro desmedido daquele cenário estranho” (287-88, 346).

This last quotation comments directly upon the landscape of Canudos. As Cunha meticulously details each corner of this “cenário estranho,” he attempts, first, to literarily weave Canudos into the four-sided textual blanket composing the national scene. But perhaps more importantly, the Brazilian author employs the metaphorical relation between known/unknown in order to enter Canudos—and Brazil—into the history of Western civilization. Canudos, here, appears “naquela tapera babilônica” with its “paisagem bíblica: a infinta tristura das Colinas desnudas, ermas, sem árvores” (287). By invoking Canudos’s similarity with the known Biblical lands, Cunha fosters a sympathetic reaction to the unknown, which only has one, rather malignant description floating around: that of the European scientists (Buckle, in particular) whom Cunha strives to rewrite. He also gives the picture a certain timelessness, as though explaining to readers that the events occurring in Canudos have happened time and time again—in Babylon, in Jerusalem, in Idumea, in Yemen—and should therefore not be judged: “Era uma evocação. Como se a terra se ataviasse em dados trechos para idênticos dramas, tinha-

se, ali, o que quer que era recordando um recanto da Iduméia, na paragem lendária que perlonga as ribas meridionais do Asfaltite, esterilizada para todo o sempre pelo malsinar fatídico dos profetas e pelo reverberar adusto dos plainos do Iemen...” (288). As he defamiliarizes the known—Canudos to Brazilians and Brazil to non-Brazilians—Cunha constructs geographical comparisons that integrate his nation into the cycles of world history, into the cycles of “idênticos dramas.” He diffuses the original impulse that propels his attack against those guilty of excessive generalization between North and South; this is to say, he moves from contending complete difference between North and South to admitting telluric difference alongside similarity between people and events. This inclusive stance—which, it ought to be mentioned, appears late in the narrative—demonstrates a progressive integration of both Canudos and Brazil into universal history.

Such representation does not come easy, however. Cunha insinuates that Buckle fails to adequately represent Brazil, yet he faults not the Englishman but the Brazilian land; because of the geographical antitheses, he explains, any representation proves challenging—“Nenhum se lhe equipara no jogar das antíteses” (52). Immediately before and after this declaration, Cunha’s “cool eye” not only overcomes the land’s dichotomies but also gives them form. Under a section subtitled “Variabilidade do meio físico,” for example, Cunha portrays a storm literally blowing onto his textual page; his language mimics the variability—the binary opposites—between rain and sun, between floods and droughts. Winds provide the storm’s onset as they fan across the section from, incidentally, every cardinal direction:

Vimos em páginas anteriores que o SE, sendo o regulador predominante do clima na costa oriental, é substituído, nos Estados do Sul, pelo NO e nas extremas setentrionais pelo NE. Ora, estes, por sua vez, desaparecem no âmago dos

planaltos antes o SO que, como um hausto possante dos pampeiros, se lança pelo Mato Grosso, originando desproporcionadas amplitudes termométricas, agravando a instabilidade do clima continental, e submetendo as terras centrais a um régimen brutal, diverso dos que vimos rapidamente delineando. (52)

The culprit for the land's geographical instability, the “rajadas quentes e úmidas” of the northeasterners “soprarem por alguns dias” at which point “os ares imobilizam-se, por algum tempo, estagnados” (52). Cunha attempts to articulate the region's oscillations between the heightened movement of the wind and the motionless, stifling stagnancy of the humid air—in other words, this antithetical pairing that collides in an abrupt change of atmospheric pressure.⁶⁴ As with most change, an explosion ensues: Cunha's storm landfalls with hyperbolic energy and cacophonous devastation. This storm, like Sarmiento's, interrupts both the textual and the telluric space with equal lack of forewarning, what the Brazilian author describes as “um assalto subitâneo” (52). Not even a cloud floats across the blue sky:

Mas, volvendo-se o olhar para os céus, nem uma nuvem! O firmamento límpido arqueia-se alumiado ainda por um Sol obscurecido, de eclipse. A pressão, entretanto, decai vagorosamente, numa descensão continua, **afogando a vida**. (52, emphasis mine)

Within seconds—and within lines—however, the sky darkens and the winds howl:

Por momentos um *cumulus* compacto, de bordas acobreado-escuras, negreja no horizonte, ao sul. Deste ponto sopra, logo depois, uma viração, cuja velocidade

⁶⁴ One of his most prominent strategies, in fact, Cunha often transmits an image of the *sertão* as a stagnant place replete with immobility, paralysis, and a sense of interminability—a work in progress akin to the one that Sarmiento portrays with regard to Argentina. He recounts “a atmosfera estagnada imobilizava a natureza em torno” (24), “as aves que tombam mortas dos ares estagnados” (312), and the pumas that appear midjump, the humans in midscratch, and the oxen in midstand, each paralyzed in their heat-preserved death (313).

cresce rápida, em ventanias fortes. A temperatura cai em minutos e, minutos depois, os tufões sacodem violentamente a terra. Fulguram relâmpagos; estrugem trovoadas nos cues já de todo bruscos e um aguaceiro torrencial desce logo sobre aquelas vastas superfícies, apagando, numa inundação única, o *divortium aquarum* indeciso que as atravessa, adunando todas as nascentes dos rios e embaralhando-lhes os leitos em **alagados indefinidos...** (52 italics in original, emphases mine)

I believe that the most poetic of paragraphs in *Os Sertões* end in ellipses. The ellipses further enhance the never-ending monstrosity of the Brazilian *sertão*, the overwhelming vastness of the flora that takes over it, and the burdening awareness that *no* language will ever suffice to fully explain this enigmatic land. Hyperbole—the figurative device Cunha modestly claims to be incapable of—achieves much the same effect. In Buckle’s footsteps, Cunha perseverates on the unquantifiable magnitude as he speaks of an atmospheric pressure that kills (*afogando a vida*), the earth-shaking hurricanes (*os tufões sacodem violentamente a terra*), the plains that never end (*vastas superfícies*), the solitary wave that washes all away (*numa inundação única*), and the limitless overflow of that flood (*alagados indefinidos*). Save the numeration of one wave, Cunha focuses on the impossibility of quantification in order to stress the land’s expanse and, again, the futility of attempting to represent it.⁶⁵ But in this alleged futility inheres a contradiction: Cunha

⁶⁵ Note that only literary language suffices to express the land’s grandeur. As the storm intensifies, for instance, Cunha personifies the trees as they double over and moan: “É um assalto subitâneo. O cataclismo irrompe arrebatadamente na espiral vibrante de um cyclone. Descolmam-se as casas; dobram-se, rangendo, e partem-se, estalando, os carandás seculares; ilham-se os morros; alagoam-se os plainos...” (52). Such personification naturalizes the trees, making them man’s equal particularly in their explicit naming: “os carandás.” Herein we have geography’s nuances, its antitheses. Rather than an adversary, the trees (one component of the geography) experience the same jolts and bolts as man (another component of the geography). And, most importantly, the jolts and bolts stems from yet another component of the geography—the climate.

successfully represents the land's oscillations, in particular through sounds. The hard alliterated and consonant "c" provides the soundtrack for the storm's touchdown, giving form to its cacophonous lightening and thunder. Cunha follows the initial ruckus with the alliterated "a," which, departing from "aguaceiro," produces the softer sound of the water rushing and the streams overflowing.

The impossibility thus supplanted by his propensity toward literary language, Cunha continues to give form to the land's antitheses. In the same way that his rains fall and waters rise with little warning, their end is equally abrupt. Just as the skies darken within mere lines, they quickly brighten as the sun explodes on the scene with a capital "S" and an exclamation point:

E uma hora depois o Sol irradia triunfalmente no céu puríssimo! A passarada irrequieta descanta pelas frondes gotejantes; **suavizam** os ares virações **suaves** – e o homem, deixando os refúgios a que se acolhera trêmulo, contempla os estragos entre a revivescência universal da vida. Os troncos e galhos das árvores rachadas pelos raios, estorcidas pelos ventos; as choupanas estruídas, colmos por terra; as últimas ondas barrentas dos ribeirões, transbordantes; a erva acamada pelos campos, como se sobre eles passassem búfalos em tropel – mal relembram a investida fulminante do flagelo. (52-53, emphases mine)

Cunha has already transitioned from the consonantal cacophony to the flowing alliteration within the storm itself; he continues to emphasize the climatic triumph with a softly alliterated "s" sound, which stresses, in turn, the repetition of "suavizam" and of "suaves"; instead of the lyrical brutality of the storm, we now have its opposite: the chirping of restless birds (*A passarada irrequieta descanta pelas frondes gotejantes*) and the rustle of gentle breezes (***suavizam** os ares virações **suaves***). The softened tones cannot disguise the damage, however. The evidence abundant, the

land's inhabitants cannot but “mal relembram a investida fulminante do flagelo” as they ponder the bent boughs of trees, the devastated and now roofless cottages, and the flooded fields. But rather than saddened relief in the face of destruction now passed, the inhabitants know their cyclical land; they know the land will not leave them in peace. To no one's surprise, then,

[d]ias depois, os ventos rodam outra vez, vagorosamente, para leste; e a temperatura começa a subir de novo; a pressão a pouco e pouco diminui; e cresce continuamente o mal-estar, até que se reate nos ares imobilizados a componente formidável do pampeiro e ressurja, estrugidora, a tormenta, em *rodeos* turbilhonantes, enquadrada pelo mesmo cenário lúgubre, revivendo o mesmo **ciclo**, o mesmo **círculo** vicioso de catástrofe. (53, italics in original, emphases mine)

Indeed, the land maintains no constancy save its lack of constancy, which, in itself, forms a vicious cycle nearly impossible to survive. Cunha gives form to this cycle by returning to the wind that initiated the storm sequence. The winds then leading to “ares imbolizandos”—in other words, stagnancy—Cunha completes the cycle of alternation between the pleasure of the wind's flow, the suffocation of the humidity that follows, and the collision of the two, which produces the storm. By literarily representing the land's antitheses, the Brazilian author subtly negates his original defense of Buckle. Recall that I argue for his initial rewriting as a softening and reupholstering of Buckle's accurate claims. Here, however, I believe that Cunha attempts to displace Buckle's authority with his own. By first pointing to the land's challenging antithetical disposition and Buckle's inability to overcome it, Cunha sets the stage for a Brazilian—preferably himself—to explain the nearly inexplicable. And only through the formal qualities of

language can he represent the nuances of Brazilian geography in a way that will garner it a position in universal history.

3.8 HEGEL AND HUMBOLDT: FROM THE LOCAL TO THE GLOBAL

Thus far I have demonstrated Cunha's rebuttal to "those" who generalize, "those" who claim knowledge of Brazilian territory without adequate information regarding the different territories. His primary critique: that these unnamed scholars employ allegedly modern scientific methodology to support their claims of *one* Brazilian ethnicity, common across the 3.3 million square miles of national territory. But these non-Brazilian scholars commit a grave error, Cunha insists, for their subjective leanings have tarnished the results of objective data— "[n]ão há um tipo antropológico brasileiro" (59). Cunha's determinism propels him to confirm that variation in land begets variation in man. "Não temos unidade de raça," he explains, and, furthermore, "[n]ão a teremos, talvez, nunca" (49). He thus overwrites the master narrative of similarity by stressing the nation's geographical differences. In Cunha's rendition of Brazil's tale, the nation can thus resist the categorization "those" foreign scientists wish to impose upon her. He literally theorizes *from* within America: Brazil enters universal history because "[p]redestinamo-nos à formação de uma raça histórica em futuro remoto, se o permitir dilatado tempo de vida nacional autônoma. Invertemos, sob este aspecto, a ordem natural dos fatos" (50). Reminiscent of Hegel's infant America as the future of Western civilization, Cunha's declaration attempts to write Brazil into universal history as the historic race of the future. An anomaly, an abnormality, an inversion of the natural order, Brazil *is* the future because it forms part of the world's center,

“América como centro de uma criação desligado do grande viveiro da Ásia Central. Erige-se autônomo entre as raças o *homo americanus*” (47). Cunha’s theory of an autochthonous American race surfaces in stark contrast to the standard (European) theories, which argue that Asian migration into the Americas occurred via the Bering Strait.

Herein the juxtaposition in Cunha’s thought: though he renounces foreign scientists’ perception of a single ethnic group populating a homogenous land, though he steadfastly maintains that Brazil consists of multiple ethnicities distributed across varied lands, and though he delineates a concrete distinction between the civilized South and the barbaric North, he contends that the mixed-race Brazilian—the miscegenation between the South and the North, in other words—will lead Brazil, the Americas, and the world into the future. Cunha simultaneously venerates and berates this unique race of the future in the first sections of *Os Sertões*, but by the narrative’s end he focuses on elevating Brazil’s man to the level of the Cossack, to the level of the Persian. Intent on inserting Brazil into universal history, Cunha pens a tale of Shakespearean proportion and ruminates on the abstract and the concrete in ways that

rival the standards of Western civilization.⁶⁶ Upon pondering the glorification of combat fear, for example, he proudly writes the Brazilian *jagunço* into military history:

A história militar, de urdidura tão dramática a recamar-se por vezes das mais singulares antíteses, está cheia das grandes glorificações de medo. A ânsia perseguidora do persa fez a resignação heróica dos “Dez mil”; a fúria brutal dos cossacos imortalizou o marechal Ney... Íamos enxertar-lhe, idêntico, senão na amplitude do quadro, na paridade do contraste, um capítulo emocionante – porque o tenacidade feroz do jagunço transfigurou os batalhões combalidos do general Artur Oscar. (277)

Like Sarmiento, moreover, Cunha employs metaphor to align the known (European/North American) with the unknown (Brazilian) and thereby make the latter more comprehensible.⁶⁷ He reaps rewards two-fold: first, he inserts Brazil into the canons of world literature and geography,

⁶⁶ Although outside the scope of the present project, Cunha’s allusions to Shakespeare reinforce the literary quality of his narrative. Indeed, who is more literary than the Bard himself? Consider, for instance, Cunha’s descriptions of the knightly business, which he portrays as “cavalheiresco e tumultuoso” – “full of sound and fury,” precisely the lines in Macbeth’s famous soliloquy in Act 5 Scene 5. Later in the narrative Cunha includes another allusion to *Macbeth*, in which the title character arrives at a crucial moment of self-awareness upon the realization that he has killed King Duncan, his grooms, and Banquo—he has little choice but to march on: “I am in blood / Stepp’d in so far that, should I wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o’er” (3.4.135-137). Three centuries after the writing of this pivotal play, the Republican soldiers at Canudos find themselves in a similar situation, “Estavam no centro das operações – e não podiam dar um passo à frente ou, o que era pior, não podiam dar um passo à retaguarda” (278). Trapped in a moment of escalating confusion, the soldiers are “forçadamente heróicos, encurralados, cosidos à bala numa nesga de chão” (277). Like Macbeth, the soldiers too have arrived at a moment of self-awareness; if they are heroes, it is merely due to circumstance and not action, for their enemy—weak both in arms and sustenance—has consistently triumphed over their Killer cannons, their Krupp rifles, and their inexhaustible supplies: “Começaram a vê-lo heróico” (365). In fact, Cunha defines himself according to the qualities of the Shakespearean hero, evinced in a letter to João Luís in which he wants to know if he has irritated his friends: “Agito às vezes este ponto de interrogação sinistro como o Hamlet nas malhas do *ser ou não ser* e como herói Shakespeariano deixo-me dominar pelas mais dolorosas dúvidas. Enfim é possível se hajam perdidos as cartas que tenho escrito. Vou, por isto, heroicamente, insistir na correspondência” (84).

⁶⁷ Cunha again uses this approach to portray the *jagunços’* heroism in the wake of the battle, comparing their underdog stance to that of familiar European political forays: “O espantallo da restauração monárquica negrejava, de novo, no horizonte político atroado de tormentas. A despeito das ordens do dia em que se cantava vitória, os sertanejos apareciam como os *chouans* depois de Fontenay. Olhava-se para a História através de urna ocular invertida: o bronco Pajéu emergia com o *facies* dominador de Chatelineau. João Abade era um Charrete de chapéu de couro” (307). Geographically, too, he includes comparative phrases to contextualize the region, referring to “o antiqüissimo ‘Himalaia brasileiro’” (7) and the “fios de água [que] são uma reprodução completa dos *oueds* que marginam o Saara” (13).

and second, he simulates equivalence through the known/unknown dichotomy. By creating symbolic equality, Cunha initiates the first steps towards material independence. Late in the narrative, for instance, he Brazilianizes a European adage—prefiguring Osvaldo de Andrade’s notion of *antropofagia* by decades, in fact—and thereby firmly plants the stamp of ownership on the national land: “Alterou um verbo na frase clássica do romano e seguiu. Chegou; viu; e ficou” (286). Here, Cunha unpacks General Arthur Oscar’s military strategy as he descends upon Canudos: to exhaust the enemy by never conceding, by never retreating. The Commander does not conquer, then. He came; he saw; he stayed. Both the General and Cunha thus accommodate previously executed modes—of strategy and adage, respectively—to the Brazilian context, taking care to avoid mere superimposition and prefiguring, in a sense, yet another revered Brazilian critic: Roberto Schwarz and his “Ideais fora do lugar.”

Cunha’s alteration of the Roman dictum metonymically relates to his alteration of Humboldtian geography, to which I now turn. He alters both through explicit, and even condescending, correction as opposed to any sort of subterfuge or subtlety. This is not to deny that Cunha emulates and seeks authority in certain Humboldtian strategies. Like the German naturalist, Cunha opts to present first the national landscape and then the national man. This chronology brings to mind *Cosmos* (1849), in which the Baron systematically outlines physical geography but concludes his study with a section on man. Like Humboldt—the primordial Eurocentric man—Cunha views America as *materia prima*. Unlike the European (Humboldt), however, the local Eurocentric (Cunha) aims to theorize that *material prima* from his local Brazilian sphere to the universal. Cunha attempts to localize—that is, nationalize—Humboldt, thereby provincializing universal philosophy.

This attempt appears explicitly in Cunha's comments on Hegel as well as implicitly in his poetic register. Something interesting in the history of Latin American exceptionalism occurs when Cunha casually slips Hegel into his narrative. With Cunha, the tone is of slight, of correction, contrary to the unapologetic agreement often seen with regard to Hegel. The first corrective appears early in the narrative under the subsection "Uma categoria geográfica que Hegel não citou" (37). This dry, almost accusatory heading suggests that despite (or because of) Hegel's exclusion (or ignorance) of the *sertão* in his *Philosophy of History*, Cunha not only demands but rather enacts its inclusion. In other words, he attempts to make the excessively local—the remote, ahistorical Brazilian backlands—into something universal. This unique terrain "compraz-se em um jogo de antíteses," he explains. "Eles impõem por isto uma divisão especial naquele quadro. A mais interessante e expressiva de todas – posta, como mediadora, entre os vales nimamente férteis e as estepes mais áridas" (38). None other than Alexander von Humboldt breaks down this Brazilian geographical nuance, although, as Cunha contends, "Esta explicação de Humboldt, embora se erija apenas como hipótese brilhante, tem um significado superior" (38).

This very intrigue with but simultaneous need to rewrite Humboldt exposes another instance of the Brazilian author's torn relationship with European thinkers. That Cunha appropriates—indeed, nationalizes—Humboldtian geographical discourse indicates two contradictory ideas. First, he sees the Baron as a source of authorization, but second, he sees the Baron as a source to be rewritten and rectified through a Brazilian lens; this rectification occurs more in the realm of content rather than tone, contrary to with Buckle. Cunha's correctives thus begin at the structural level. Recall that like Humboldt, Cunha organizes his narrative into three parts that are further subdivided into synecdochic subsections that function as a microcosm of

the narrative as a whole. One such representative sliver appears within the section titled “A Terra,” a part called “As Caatingas.” As he details this brutal terrain’s strengths and weaknesses, its resilience and its obstacles, readers comprehend the binaries dwelling at the core of his Brazilian reality. His precise diction, halting punctuation, and literary devices lead us through a landscape of language in which the vicious *caatinga*, first deprecated for the horrific repulsion it provokes, becomes something to be admired, respected even, for its ability to prevail despite inhospitable conditions.

This transformation evokes Cunha’s representation of the *jagunços*, thus the *caatinga*—unique to Brazil, we learn—becomes something of a metaphor for this human species particular to the *sertão*. In this Darwinian throwback, Cunha employs metaphor to coalesce land with society. The mediating code between these otherwise incongruent spheres is national consolidation. In other words, the narrative pursues comprehension of the national sphere via a national literature, one in which the same aesthetic material nourishes both man and land. Form and content join to write the Brazilian nation, to explore its nuances, to reveal its dichotomies.

Taking Cunha’s lead, I chose three paragraphs that allow me to illustrate my observation. Recall that, in my reading, Cunha’s most poetic passages end in ellipses; I maintain that the sense of incompleteness intensifies the land’s enigmatic qualities in addition to its exuberance, its endlessness, its grandeur. Each of these qualities pervades the selected paragraphs, the first of which appears at the start of “As Caatingas.” It reads:

Ao passo que a *caatinga* o afoga; abrevia-lhe o olhar; agride-o e estonteia-o;
enlaça-o na trama *espinescente* e não o atrai; repulsa-o com as folhas urticantes,
com o *espinho*, com os gravetos *estalados* em lanças; e desdobra-se-lhe na frente
léguas e léguas, imutável no aspecto desolado: *árvores* sem folhas, de galhos

estorcidos e secos, revoltos, entrecruzados, apontando rijamente no espaço ou
estirando-se flexuosos pelo solo, lembrando um bracejar imenso, de tortura, da
flora agonizante... (28, emphases mine)

The figurative language, much like the *caatinga* itself, slaps readers immediately. Cunha personifies the land, thereby integrating it into the social sphere and transforming it into man's equal. This equality resonates with distinct tones as the narrative advances, for the *caatinga* viciously attacks the Republican troops assigned to fight in the *sertão*. Here, however, the man is a lone traveler navigating the harsh Brazilian terrain. As the *caatinga* stifles the traveler, hinders his sight, strikes and stuns him, enmeshes and repulses him, the land displays its immense power. The land enters all relationships armed—the *caatinga* is its constant companion, its weapon, with “twigs sharp as lances.” This allusion to war, moreover, is the first of many.

The land's power inheres in its enormity. Long and winding, the two-sentence paragraph mimics the endless quality of this terrain, as do the polysyllabic words ending the passage: “apontando rijamente,” “estirando-se flexuosos,” “lembrando um bracejar imenso.” The *caatinga*'s power additionally intensifies because of the narrative's rhythm. Cunha's short clauses consisting of little more than a verb and direct object pronoun punch readers before drawing back with a semi-colon; this pattern includes five semi-colons in the first lines. The halting punctuation and the series of prepositional clauses create a staccato that traps readers in the same way as the *caatinga*. Similarly, Cunha demonstrates his mastery of repetition with the anaphoric “com.” Just as the land is unchanging (“imutável”), so is his language. That is, he repeats words (“léguas e léguas”) and sounds (the alliterated/assonated “a”; the alliterated “es”; the end-rhyme with the gerund “-ando” and the ending “-os”) to heighten the sense of monotony that he then translates to melancholy through a pain-filled diction: “desolado,”

“secos, revoltos, entrecruzados,” “tortura,” “agonizante.” The language also makes the land appear unnatural, replete with leafless trees accompanied by “dried and twisted boughs.” Such is the *caatinga*’s lack of normalcy that Humboldt, we discover some paragraphs later, fails to include one of its plants—no less than the *canudos-de-pito*—in his chart of Brazilian social plants. This exclusion will soon bring to bear on the *caatinga* as a metaphor for the *jagunço*.

Cunha’s word choice repels readers through hard consonants and the resultant cacophony: indeed, “espinescente,” “urticante,” “espinho,” and “estorcido” are each spiny, thorny, prickly, and twisted words. Yet, simultaneously, Cunha’s language beckons us, intrigues us, demands that we read and therefore “see” this Brazilian landscape that he textually paints. Poetic language employed to depict that which is negative, violent, and abhorrent suggests an intrinsic respect for said negativity: if the *caatinga* and the *jagunço* are one and the same, does Cunha in fact respect the primitive prowess of the Brazilian land and man?

In the first paragraph, Cunha’s respect for the *caatinga*’s sublime beauty only bubbles to the surface by means of the poetic devices. In the second paragraph, however, this respect renders itself visible immediately:

Ora, quando, ao revés das anteriores as espécies não se mostram tão bem **armadas** para a reação **vitoriosa**, observam-se dispositivos porventura mais interessantes: **unem-se**, intimamente abraçadas, transmudando-se em plantas sociais. Não podendo revidar isoladas, **disciplinam-se**, **congregam-se**, **arregimentam-se**. São deste número todas as cesalpinas e as *catigueiras*, constituindo, nos trechos em que aparecem, sessenta por cento das caatingas; os *alecrins-dos-tabuleiros*, e os *canudos-de-pito*, heliotrópicos arbustivos de caule oco, pintalgado de branco e flores em espigas, destinados a emprestar o nome ao mais

lendário dos vilarejos... (30, emphases mine)

Upon explaining that certain species of the *caatinga* are not suited to the harsh terrain, Cunha, whose tenor has now become one of attraction as opposed to aversion, indicates that these plants nevertheless surmount their obstacles. They do so by uniting in what amounts to battle formation. In the several paragraphs separating the first two that I have chosen, Cunha speaks of “the struggle for life,” “the enemy,” “combat,” and “battle.” The Darwinian language has transformed into one of war. The various species of the *caatinga*, now personified as soldiers—as *jagunços*—find themselves not “well equipped for a victorious reaction.” As such, they appropriate the force of the collective—an unnatural quality—to survive: they are united, “they discipline themselves, become gregarious and regimented.” Cunha transposes discipline and regiment, words of war, onto the context of the *caatinga*; this implicit metaphor alludes to the land’s constant struggle. Furthermore, the repetition of the aforementioned verbs in close succession and the lack of conjunctions enhances the sense of unification. The species must become “social plants”—they must disregard the individual and instead focus on the whole—in order to survive.

That one of these species—the *canudos-de-pito*—lends its name to the Canudos settlement reveals a rather Barthesian attempt to propel the narrative from answer to question, to advance the progression of the text via a lexia that might well be in the hermeneutic code. Cunha allows us an initial glimpse of his enigma, of his connection between land and man, between the *canudos-de-pito* and the *jagunços* of Canudos. As he personifies the *caatinga* and bestows upon it the tacit qualities of a warrior, Cunha suggests that the *canudos-de-pito* is a metaphor for the *jagunço*. Despite their initial grotesqueness—in other words, their repellant barbarism—they merit commendation for their civilized ability to solve problems, to surmount obstacles in dire

contexts. Both flora and fauna must embrace the mantra of power by numbers; both must unite and become disciplined; both must create a network maybe unnatural but nevertheless indispensable to survival.

This network entangles readers in the third paragraph that I have selected. Cunha continues his description of the *canudos-de-pito* and notes that they do not appear on Humboldt's table of Brazilian social plants:

Não estão no quadro das plantas sociais brasileiras, de Humboldt, e é possível que as primeiras vicejem, noutros climas, isoladas. Ali se **associam**. E, **estritamente** **solidárias** as **suas** raízes, no **subsolo**, em apertada trama, **retêm** as águas, **retêm** as terras que se desagregam, e formam, ao cabo, num longo **esforço**, o **solo** arável em que nascem, vencendo, pela capilaridade do inextricável tecido de radicular enredadas em malhas numerosas, a **sucção** insaciável dos **estratos** e das **arcias**. E vivem. Vivem é o termo—porque há, no fato, um traço superior à passividade da evolução vegetativa... (30-31, emphases mine)

This exclusion limits both their access and exposure to world geography—in other words, this Brazilian social plant fails to enter the realm of the universal (Humboldt) and is subsequently limited to the local (Cunha). Might this not be an extended metaphor for the uniquely Brazilian man—that is, the *jagunço*? In the local context, moreover, both man and land must behave in ways foreign to their nature: isolated and individualistic in other climes, “[a]li se associam.” The four-line sentence following this declaration exposes a language of solidarity and interaction. The series of twelve commas acts like the netting that connects the roots of clauses, while the sibilance lends to the suctioning and working sounds produced by the “numerous meshes.” The repetition of “retêm” contributes to the rhythm of what sounds much like a chain gang working

together to bring in the water, bring in the soil. And, finally, a large part of the diction—“nascem, vencendo, pela capilaridade do inextricável tecido”—personifies the plants with bodies and systems that are distinctly human. As if to cement in readers his belief in the *canudos-de-pito*’s perseverance, Cunha follows this long, intricately constructed, net-like sentence with the punchiest of declarations, one designed, in effect, for the sake of contrast: “E vivem.”

The *canudos-de-pito* lives, Cunha informs us, “porque há, no fato, um traço superior à passividade da evolução vegetativa.” If his representation of the plant functions as an extended metaphor for the *jagunço*, then passive acceptance undoubtedly flounders in the face of active resistance and unification, the defining quality, Cunha seems to suggest, of Brazilian nationality. The author presents the *caatinga* as the resounding exemplification of Brazilian strength and camaraderie, an example—lest we forget—denied entry into Humboldt’s European charts. By metaphorically aligning the *canudos-de-pito* with the people of its region, Cunha elevates those Brazilian citizens to the very level of the land of which he stands in awe, thereby revealing what he acutely describes as “um traço superior” to be discerned.

3.9 O VÍNCULO: OVERCOMING DIVISION

In Cunha’s rectification of the Baron, we might notice that the tone of wonder remains, at least in part. Something of an Edenic Brazil seeps through Cunha’s pages, a land that exudes tinges of paradisiacal grandeur in his lengthy descriptions of the flora and fauna, descriptions entirely entrenched in the Kantian aesthetic sublime; this awe stands in stark opposition to Buckle’s fear. Yet, an element of the matter-of-fact engineer dedicated to precision also surfaces in the dry

statistical analysis, a reflection of the author's time as chief Brazilian representative on a border demarcation expedition. This tendency toward aesthetic production gaining authority—or, at the very least, inspiration—from pragmatic national tasks shares several adherents. Colombian author José Eustacio Rivera, author of *La vorágine* (1924), was legal advisor and member of the Venezuela/Colombia Boundary Commission. Despite training in neither science nor geography, Humboldt himself was lured to the study and aesthetic representation of land from his initial career as a mine inspector (Hartshorne 49-50). Based on this scientific foundation preceding the advent of the literary masterpiece, Cunha invests a disproportionate amount of the narrative's pages to national landscape, and this effort often reveals a sort of pedagogical zeal—that is to say, know the land, know the country. Knowledge of the territory predominates the text, yet it purports to be, as the English translation's title suggests, about a *Rebellion in the Backlands*; the Portuguese original, nonetheless, does not dissimulate with its succinct title, *Os Sertões*, which loosely translates not only into “The Backlands” but also into “a category that Hegel forgot.” Thus, the inclusion of the arbitrary subjective text (Antonio Conselheiro and the Canudos rebellions) to what was initially presented as geographic observation develops late in the narrative as objective conclusion, thereby leaving readers with the sense that Cunha's national narrative is something of a mind-trick designed to engage readers in the way Candido diagnoses as singular to the Brazilian context.

Cunha, I have attempted to demonstrate, employs literature to articulate and to give form to the immensity—and immense importance—of the national geography. By enrapturing readers with the tale of Canudos, by luring them into understanding the *vínculo* that outweighs even the desire to live, the Brazilian author seams together a broken nation both aesthetically and politically. Like the mirage-filled *sertão* that it sketches out and colors in, Cunha's magnum

opus provides the illusion of consolidation through its material and symbolic inclusion of the Brazilian Northeast, of the backlands settlement of Canudos, of the barbaric *jagunço*. He achieves this inclusion at the intersection of form and content. Going full circle, I return to Machado. As contemporaries, Cunha and Machado often elicit comparison, if for other no reason than their mutual dedication to language and nation. Generally speaking, critics tend to assign supreme mastery of form to the one (Machado) and effective execution of content to the other (Cunha). In “A Translator’s Introduction” to *Rebellion in the Backlands*, Samuel Putnam illustrates this tendency:

In literature, likewise, [Cunha] was a pathfinder, being one of the two principal fountainheads of the modern Brazilian novel, the other being Machado de Assis. In the one case (Machado de Assis), the stress is on form; in the other, on content. *Os Sertões* may be said to have posed the problem which faces the twentieth-century novelist in Brazil: that of how to achieve an artistic synthesis of the rich social content which his country affords him. Because he grappled with this problem so valiantly and solved it in so extraordinary and individual a fashion, the author continues to be a symbol and an inspiration to creative writers. (viii)

I wish to highlight Putnam’s contradiction in order to underscore that I have departed from his commonly-held impression: on the one hand, he excludes Cunha from the category of form, yet on the other, he underscores the Brazilian author’s pioneering ability to mediate, as Jameson would have it, between the aesthetic and the social, “to achieve an artistic synthesis of the rich social content which his country affords him.” By extension of this achievement, Cunha, according to the translator, becomes something of a literary role model. But, the one cannot

exist without the other; Cunha powerfully deploys form *and* content in order to draw readers into the sometimes-uncomfortable political context that he aims to highlight. Indeed, the content lives through its form.

Putnam continues in Machado's contradictory vein. He acutely aligns Cunha with the North American Walt Whitman but lines later denies the Brazilian author's sonority: "... [Cunha's prose] is characterized by a definite, brusque avoidance of lyricism and emphasis to the point of appearing overwrought and painful" (ix). The inconsistency startles, for Putnam's characterization of Cunha follows his comparison between the Brazilian and none other than the author of "Song of Myself," the master of lyricism *par excellence*.

Like Whitman, Cunha employs, with equal efficacy, the trope of metonymy. Whitman's accolades of nation in "Song of Myself" might well translate to "Song of My America"; similarly, Cunha's tale of Canudos is, in effect, a tale of Brazil: part represents whole. I have attempted, as such, to explicate the ways in which he integrates Canudos into the national sphere, both symbolically and materially. Aside from the explicit incorporation of Canudos into his literary map, Cunha poetically writes the *jagunços* into the national sphere. Cunha matures as a writer during the heyday of "scientific poetry" in Brazil, which emanated from the works of José Isodoro Martins Júnior (1860-1904), whom Gilberto Freyre describes as the founding father of the genre. The Brazilian writer's tendencies thus stem from both his times and his career, an observation that González Echevarría notes well: "In *Os Sertões*, Euclides made a heroic attempt to stave off the literary by sedulously heeding the voice of the land surveyor in him, and by remembering the scientific authorities he had learned to trust" (130). This attempt, however, is just that: an attempt that ultimately fails, for the text exudes poetry at every moment through its precise diction, its gliding transitions, its inverted metaphors.

Certainly, metaphor is crucial to *Os Sertões* and brings to bear on my interpretation of the narrative. In *Facundo*, Buenos Aires, Sarmiento himself, and knowledge all equal civilization while Córdoba, Facundo Quiroga, and ignorance equal barbarism; in *Os Sertões* these metaphors become mirror images. Cunha painstakingly details the land's ability to transform the representative forces of civilization—the Republican forces—into barbaric creatures far more uncouth than the *jagunços*. Civilization, then, acquires the tacit characteristics of barbarism, whereby the metaphor ceases to exist as before. The Brazilian author appropriates this inversion often, for despite a socially oriented point of departure, his texts' formal structures depend almost exclusively upon the contrast between individual forces (e.g. *Contrastes e confrontos*, 1907; “Os Caucheros,” 1909). Metaphor is, after all, about contrast, about connecting disparate elements in an effort aimed at extracting poetic impact from paradox. In this vein, we have a continuation of the “rapports” initiated in Humboldt—that is, an effort to approach unification. By understanding the component parts of the metaphor and their relationships with each other, we might detect ideology. This ideology appears under the guise of aesthetic intention, yet the core values prescribed to each element of the metaphor contribute to the creation of a cohesive text, one that is simultaneously poetic and political. As Northrop Frye explains in his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), this cohesion comes about because the metaphor is an organizing unit of literature—in other words, a figure of speech employed for the sake of connections (352). The metaphor pertains to the formal stratum of a text due its linguistic origins, yet it simultaneously belongs to the stratum of signification insofar as it supplies meaning to the text. Cunha's metaphors reverse the original dialectic and thus more effectively articulate national consolidation.

Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões* coalesces literary language and disciplinary geography in a three-fold and interrelated attempt to consolidate the nation through discursive strategies. First, he overwrites the exclusionary tactics of previous land treatises composed by non-Brazilian scientists and geographers. He writes the *sertão* and, in particular, Canudos into his literary map, thereby emphasizing the region's integrality to the national sphere. Second—and like Sarmiento—Cunha emphasizes this inclusion by employing the simplified language of the Vichean primitive man in his geographic descriptions; by giving form to the Brazilian geography and creating a politicized landscape, he elevates the nation's barbarism and thereby inches one step closer to a unified nation. As Cunha's metaphors connect man with land, they further exhibit the unification of disparate elements, an act that he strives to model. His stylized writing aims to undo the divisionary strategies implemented by an imperial government intent on maintaining separation and, in turn, power. Third—and unlike Sarmiento—his rewrite of thinkers (e.g. Humboldt, Eschwege, Martius, Buckle, Hegel) and thoughts (e.g. Positivism) unfolds as a corrective designed to re-appropriate Brazilian land and letters from years of occidental influence. By consolidating the nation in the imaginary, Cunha's rectified rendition of Brazilian man and land enters the region into world geography, and more importantly, into universal history. We move, then, from Sarmiento's revision to Cunha's rectification, only to now arrive at Gallegos, whose *Doña Bárbara* demonstrates the narrative formula's evolution into the populist romance; here, land-based disputes continue to hinder the nation's progress. But to what extent does Gallegos's national geography look back to past thinkers?

4.0 FENCING IN OR FENCING OUT BARBARISM? : GALLEGOS'S IDEOLOGICAL PATH TO CONSOLIDATION IN *DOÑA BÁRBARA*

Y lo primero sea esto: cuando me apuntaba el bozo, cuando se me desafinó la flauta de la voz niña y al querer hablar ya como hombre se me escapaban gallos, yo recorrí senderos místicos, contemplando las hermosuras con que auroras y crepúsculos de la crítica transición espiritual me pintaban los cielos y cuando ya así se me había formado sentimiento religioso de la vida, pero al mismo tiempo convicción de que en santo no podría parar, por más que me lo propusiera, bajé la mirada a las hermosuras de la tierra: el apacible valle, el empinado monte, el dorado sol de las alegres mañanas y las moradas sombras de las tardes melancólicas. Eché mano a la paleta para hacerme pintor de aquellas bellezas, pero no acerté con los colores sobre el lienzo; enderecé el oído hacia las dulces melodías y las majestuosas armonías del recogido bosque en el cangilón del monte y de los vastos espacios inmensos de mar o llanura, con todo lo cual iba girando y girando la tierra sonora entre los astros silencios: pero el ambicioso músico se me quedó dormido a las primeras escalas. —Bueno —díjeme— seré literato, entonces.

— RÓMULO GALLEGOS, “La pura mujer sobre la tierra”

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In his 1949 essay “La pura mujer sobre la tierra,” Venezuelan author and statesman Rómulo Gallegos modestly claims that his vocation was pure happenstance. His love for—and need to represent—the Venezuelan land had transformed into an all-consuming “sentimiento religioso de la vida” that demanded an aesthetic outlet. Should he paint “aquellas bellezas”? Or perhaps serenade them? The first democratically elected president of Venezuela, Gallegos arrives at a

prompt conclusion: his best option is to *write the earth* of Venezuela, to paint, with words, “el apacible valle, el empinado monte, el dorado sol de las alegres mañanas y las moradas sombras de las tardes melancólicas”; he resigns himself to the taxing charge of literary writing knowing that, if anywhere, it is there that he will do justice to the land: “seré literato, entonces” (397-98).

Gallegos’s skills as a “literato” enamored with the geographic burst forth buoyancy in his magnum opus, the 1929 novel *Doña Bárbara*. His debt to his literary forbears—in particular, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Euclides da Cunha—cannot be masked, nor does Gallegos attempt to do so with his explicit engagement with the topos of civilization and barbarism. With his admitted literary ambition in mind, however, we might better understand the motivation behind Gallegos’s representation of the Venezuelan land, which exhibits a refined control, an aesthetic finesse that allows the narrative to be a legitimate novel with a proper protagonist (Santos Luzardo) and antagonist (Doña Bárbara). The same cannot be said of Sarmiento and Cunha. Indeed, if we were to apply superlatives to the three works, there would exist a retrogression in language from wild (*Doña Bárbara*), wilder (*Os Sertões*), to wildest (*Facundo*). Yet, *Doña Bárbara* too is a hybrid text that crosses the generic borders between geographical treatise, epic poem, political pamphlet, and historical narrative—albeit within the framework of an allegorical novel that depicts the epic battle between civilization and barbarism on the Venezuelan Llano. The cyclical tale is one of droughts and floods, of crimes and revenges, and of love and war, culminating in the triumphant expulsion of Doña Bárbara—the personification of rural despotism and barbarism incarnate—by Santos Luzardo—the cultured urban lawyer, eliminator of corruption, and civilization embodied.

Though not quite as much as in the Brazilian and Argentine narratives, the human characters of the Venezuelan novel often reside on the backburner, only to be replaced by

inordinate attention bestowed upon representations of the national terrain. Humboldtian in their execution, these descriptions suggest an appeal to the discipline of geography as a force of authorization. But contrary to Sarmiento (who revises) and Cunha (who rectifies), Gallegos appears to reject European, North American, and even Latin American geographic models, Sarmiento and Cunha included; he refuses to cite his major influences—Alexander von Humboldt and the Italian cartographer Agustín Codazzi, for example—while seemingly departing from their strategies. But I will demonstrate that he only partially rejects geographical discourse by employing the narrative structure of the novel in *Doña Bárbara*, in which he articulates a need for the demarcation and distribution of the national land. Gallegos, I argue, literarily contains the land by denying the Llano's hand-drawn maps and movable boundaries, by denying the law of the oligarchy. His straight lines of fences and trains defy the curves of nature, ultimately plotting a specific ideological path to national consolidation and modernization.

Geography maintains an undeniable presence in Gallegos's novel, yet all the same, the author claims in "La pura mujer sobre la tierra" that his intent far surpassed a mere desire to depict the landscape to quench his creative thirst. Rather, he sought meaningful symbolism: "[...] mi tendencia predominante es la de personificar en las figuras de mis novelas—que así vienen a componer símbolos—las formas intelectuales o morales de mis inquietudes ante los problemas de la realidad venezolana dentro de la cual me haya movido" ("La pura mujer en la tierra" 403). By deriving his symbols from personal experience and transforming them to ameliorate his tension-ridden society, Gallegos explains, he found himself better equipped to create the necessary myths whereby the nation could recognize, reflect, and represent itself. He created the character of Doña Bárbara "para que a través de ella se mire un dramático aspecto de la Venezuela en que me ha tocado vivir y que de alguna manera su tremenda figura contribuya a

que nos quitemos del alma lo que de ella tengamos” (“La pura mujer sobre la tierra” 404).

In my view, however, Gallegos chooses instead to carry on “lo que de ella tengamos”—which is to say, “her” barbarism—via a language that is broken down into the poetry, the metaphors, the symbols, and the primary tropes of the Vichean primitive man, thereby suggesting a desire to embrace and to elevate the barbaric elements that form the national population. Form and content coalesce here in the creation of both nation and national literature. Indeed, if “las cosas vuelven al lugar de donde salieron” in *Doña Bárbara*, it is only fitting that this national narrative both stems from, returns to, and creates the Venezuelan landscape by means of its sonorous language (364). Gallegos effectively underwrites his political project with a very real formal strategy, which, I argue, has gone understudied in Venezuela’s national novel. Because critics tend to center on the novel’s allegorical function (González Echevarría 1985; Alonso 1990; Sommer 1991), I believe that we should go beyond the national allegory reading—a reading perpetuated by none other than Gallegos himself—without, however, rejecting it.

The question of national allegory in Latin American narrative of course evokes the name Doris Sommer and her landmark study *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991). Sommer argues that certain canonical works of nineteenth-century Latin America that she denominates “foundational fictions” found—or, at the very least, help to found—the nation and at the same time a national literature. The impetus: heterosexual passion. As the protagonists of the national romance fall in love (or are hindered in their efforts to do so), the reader can imagine an ideal state in which such a union is possible *despite* regional, class-related, or racial differences: the nation-state attempts to homogenize through non-violent consolidation between distinct factions, thus resulting in the resolution of internal conflicts.

Doña Bárbara, then, proves to be the populist reincarnation of the national romance.

Such is the amorous union, contends Sommer, between Santos Luzardo and Marisela—the abandoned daughter of Doña Bárbara and Luzardo’s cousin, Lorenzo Barquero—in which Santos’s “offer of legal and loving status to the disenfranchised mestiza shows Gallegos trying to patch up the problem of establishing a legitimate, centralized nation on a history of usurpation and civil war” (289). As if in response to this heterosexual, incestuous, and interracial passion, Doña Bárbara’s jealousy flares, her dominion disintegrates, and she passively abandons the llano, tail between legs, down the same, barbarous, alligator-filled Arauca from where she first arrived. Sommer reads this departure as the elimination of barbarism from the novelistic and, with that, nationalistic sphere: “The only solution was to eliminate barbarism by filling in the empty space, by populating. In the conjugal instrumentalism of populist romance, civilization was to penetrate the barren land and to make her mother” (281).

Though incisive in many regards, Sommer’s reading unquestioningly accepts Gallegos’s representation of Doña Bárbara’s “passive” departure as the allegorical elimination of barbarism. Rather than bestow any semblance of agency upon Doña Bárbara—who, in fact, actively escapes, in a blaze of glory, money in hand, and thus ensures the survival of barbarism—Sommer acquiesces to Gallegos’s wish to create a national myth, to fashion a didactic tale for Venezuelans such that that they might, and I reiterate, “quit[arnos] del alma lo que de ella tengamos” (404). And this removal entails accepting her elimination as fact as opposed to interpreting and exploring the ambiguity behind her departure. To illustrate the possibility of ambiguity even further, we have Gallegos’s subsequent (and contrary) declaration that “Doña Bárbara desapareció de la noche llanera, después de aquella repentina iluminación de la madre frustrada y reprimida que llevaba a los abismos de su corazón. Yo mismo no sé hacia dónde

cogió camino entre los innumerables de la sabana [...]” (“La pura mujer en la tierra” 420). Gallegos, too, points to the possibility of (and need for) interpretation.

Interpretation is precisely the word Roberto González Echevarría places in quotation marks in his study of the novel. Preceding Sommer’s famous national romance reading by nearly a decade, his book *The Voice of the Masters: Writing and Authority in Modern Latin American Literature* (1985) accepts the notion of the novel as an allegory but at the most superficial, blatant level:

The allegory of *Doña Bárbara*, at the most visible and at the same time most abstract level, consists of the opposition of two forces that together make up Latin American reality: the presumed clash between civilization and barbarity, put forth by Sarmiento in *Facundo*. This conception is evident in the text, which contains enough material put into the words of the narrator to legitimize such an “interpretation.” I put interpretation in quotation marks to emphasize that we are not dealing with a possible meaning extracted by the reader, but with a meaning inscribed in the text itself. The allegory on this level—which is not so much an ideological one as one of the social and political doctrine—carries with it its own implicit reading. (47)

For González Echaverría, the novel fulfills the prerequisites of allegory as dictated by Paul de Man—“allegory consists of saying or interpreting more than what has actually been said; it is a supplement of meaning that escapes the intentions and rules imposed by the text itself”—yet it does so in order to create a new Latin American literary reality, one presented by the author directly, a Barthesian *readerly* text (47).

Though González Echevarría correctly notes that the allegory of *Doña Bárbara* is self-evident, I would like to push against his reading by arguing for the *writerly* undercurrents flowing

through the novel. I believe that there is indeed “possible meaning [to be] extracted by the reader,” meaning far from fixed or inscribed upon the novel by the author himself. Because the allegorical reading is one already elaborated by Gallegos, I ask that we look to the vast horizons of his Venezuelan Llano where there surfaces a quality and intensity of writing that begs to be meticulously analyzed. Gallegos’s prose and techniques recall that of his geographic predecessors, therefore reading his novel in relation to them will allow us to further nuance recent analyses of *Doña Bárbara*. I speak here of the bulk of Gallegos criticism, which reappears in mass quantities between the late eighties and the early nineties and tends to assume a variation of the same reading (González Echevarría 1985; Martin 1989; Alonso 1990): that the novel does not express the total annihilation of the Other (as is often posited of *Facundo*), but that it valorizes certain elements of the barbaric, of the indigenous, of the Other; in this sense, *Doña Bárbara* transforms the Manichean vision of Sarmiento and, at the same time, enriches it. In many senses, these readings color with different shades Antonio Cornejo Polar’s analysis of independence-era Latin America, in which he claims “el impulso transnacionalizador inevitable en la operación modernizadora [se contrapuso] a la voluntad de enraizarse en la especificidad nacional” (Cornejo Polar 110). The need to incorporate rather than eradicate the barbaric thus emerges from the nations’ desire for authenticity, singularity, and specificity.

I do not disagree with such readings. Rather, I wish to extend them by looking to the role of disciplinary geography in the elevation of Venezuela’s barbarism and in its national consolidation—that is, in the valorization of Venezuela’s indigenous inhabitants and their epistemologies as a means to overcome national discord. D.L. Shaw articulates well that

[w]hile there is perhaps a trifle too much symbolism worked into *Doña Bárbara*, so that in the end it becomes rather obtrusive, the fact that all but a couple of the

basic symbols are borrowed from the reality of the *llano* itself increases the effectiveness of the method. What could otherwise have been a hollow rhetorical device instead serves to knit the *llano* into the texture of the narrative, presenting it not as a passive picturesque background, but as an active force with a genuinely functional role. (74)

While the llano is undoubtedly knit into the texture of the narrative, the very texture of the narrative simultaneously weaves together the fabric of the llano; the language does not only borrow from the reality of the llano but also creates it. In other words, instead of merely drawing from nature to create his symbols, metaphors, and allegory, Gallegos *constructs* the actual nature and a particular geography—the interrelation between man and land—by means of his poetic language. If, as Terry Eagleton notes, “‘nature’ [...] is a term which hovers between fact and value, the descriptive and the normative,” then Gallegos attempts to navigate between these designations by allowing his language to exceed descriptive imitation of the land and instead enter the realm of conceptualization—his navigation, then, begs the question: can there be a concept of nature apart from man (4)?

We can turn to Marx himself, who contends in his *Paris Manuscripts* that “taken abstractly, for itself—nature fixed in isolation from man is *nothing* for man” (Marx 191; qtd. in Heyer 80). Certainly, for Marx, nothing exists apart from nature and man, and “that man’s physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature” (Marx 112; qtd. in Heyer 77). Within this schematic, the Venezuelan geography ceases to exist without man’s active participation in its construction, in which it is taken from the abstract and the descriptive to the concrete and tangible.

Like Shaw, other critics that explore Gallegos's representation of land and his appeal to geography—such as Marco Aurelio Vila (*Lo geográfico en Doña Bárbara*, 1986) and Juan Liscano (*La geografía venezolana en la obra de Rómulo Gallegos*, 1970)—tend to stop shy of examining *why* Gallegos incorporates geographic imagery into his novel. Shaw recognizes the Llano's “genuinely functional role” but fails to explain what it is. Vila documents (and apologizes for) the moments in which Gallegos is less than accurate in his descriptions of the Llano, noting that *Doña Bárbara* portrays the big picture better than the small details; he too does not attempt to examine the reasons behind Gallegos's conjoining of the literary and the geographic. Similarly, Liscano compiles a series of land-based passages extracted from Gallegos's corpus and provides pictures that correspond with the descriptions, creating something of a coffee-table book.⁶⁸ Orlando Araujo's *Lengua y creación en la obra de Rómulo Gallegos* (1955) even acknowledges that Gallego's “gran fuerza poética” comes from the land, but it stops short of identifying the impulse as stemming from disciplinary geography:

Las novelas de Rómulo Gallegos se inspiran en la tierra propia, de ella toman su gran fuerza poética y el impulso vital que las libra de todo artificio y las acerca a las obras perdurables creadas por el hombre. Esa obra no se queda, sin embargo, en la poética contemplación del paisaje, sino que refleja también la vida de las gentes que lo habitan y expresa las ideas, los sentimientos, los conflictos y las pasiones que sacuden el alma de esas gentes. (Araujo 19)

⁶⁸ Liscano develops an effective obsession with Gallegos's life and works, finding in him a potential foe for Juan Vicente Gómez. If Gómez is everything that the nation ought to flee, Gallegos embodies all that the nation ought to embrace, “encarnación misma del más allá pacífico y civil al cual aspiraba la nación” (Liscano 298). See Juan Liscano's 1949 letter to Juan Larrea, included in *Gallegos: Materiales para el estudio de su vida y su obra*. Vol. 1. Caracas: Ediciones del Congreso de la República, 1980.

I aim to move beyond these studies in an effort to better understand the political motivation behind Gallegos's engagement with and inclusion of geography in *Doña Bárbara*. By first constructing a disciplinary genealogy of geography in Venezuela, I highlight the ways in which Gallegos is in conversation with his forbears, namely Humboldt and Codazzi. How do these figures appear or disappear in Gallegos? I show that these non-Latin American naturalists ultimately survey the land to determine its use-value, a practice from which Gallegos departs; he reproduces, however, Codazzi's appreciation for the *baqueano*. I thus argue that *Doña Bárbara* aesthetically prefigures geography's institutional switch from exploitation to conservation by articulating a national necessity—the need to move from petroleum-based monoproduction to agriculture-based production, from creative destruction to natural conservation. Both of Gallegos's exile periods (from 1931-35, and then from 1948-58) accompany massive economic growth at the price of exhausted natural resources, increased regional *caudillismo*, and decreased national sovereignty; meanwhile, both of his returns from exile accompany the formation of geographical institutions. In this simultaneity—between geographical institutionalization and the heightened democracies that welcome his returns—I sense a push toward modernization via national consolidation, in other words, via harmony between man (indigenous) and man (occidental), as well as between man and land. Gallegos, I contend, writes with a mission in mind: to introduce his compatriots to the unknown of the national territory, to regions and peoples unfamiliar and thankfully unvanquished. But unlike his primary model Sarmiento, he does so not to familiarize the unknown but rather to acknowledge and publicize the glory of its strangeness. Gallegos thus straddles the line between indigenous and occidental, between pre-modern and modern, between pre-colonial and postcolonial epistemologies. He unifies the national space by employing the metaphorical language and space/time conceptualizations of

the “barbarian” while, at once, insisting that the Llano (and Venezuela) move past abstract land demarcation and toward the concrete disciplinary geography developed by “civilized” man.

4.2 A DISCIPLINARY GENEALOGY: GEOGRAPHY IN VENEZUELA

To understand the ways in which Rómulo Gallegos participates in the institutionalization of Venezuelan geography, we must first unravel the complexities of both the historical drama and the personal tale of exile.⁶⁹ Several actors come to play if not lead roles at least cameos in this nation-building script: German Baron and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt; *el Gran Libertador* Simón Bolívar; Italian cartographer Agustín Codazzi; Venezuelan *caudillo* and long-time dictator Juan Vicente Gómez; and, of course, Venezuela’s national novelist Rómulo Gallegos. These players, I will illustrate, individually contribute to and outline the parameters of a disciplinary geography, which emerges in hand with the political vicissitudes of the young nation. But it is Gallegos, I aim to show, who conjoins the aesthetics of literary writing with the politics of geographical discourse to symbolically demarcate the national land and thereby defend its natural resources.

One primary difference separates the Venezuelan institutionalization of geography from its Argentine and Brazilian counterparts: the territory’s punctuated and staccato-like formation as a nation-state. With its material and symbolic national lines in constant flux, Venezuela cannot assume enough stability to buttress nation-building institutions; indeed, the opposite holds true: the nation-building institutions cannot provide the support-system necessary for stability.

⁶⁹ On page 206 I elaborate on Gallegos’s presidency, his exiles, and his participation in Venezuela’s disciplinary geography.

Though it initially finds freedom from Spanish rule in 1811, Venezuela continues on a nation-building course that historians have come to call four separate republics: the *Primera República de Venezuela* from approximately 1810-1812; the *Segunda* from 1813-1814; the *Tercera* from 1817-1819, at which point Simón Bolívar's Congreso de Angostura decrees the union of Venezuela with Nueva Granada, creating what we now refer to as *Gran Colombia*. This is the *Cuarta República*, lasting from 1819-1930. Whereas Argentina finally attains independence in 1816, and Brazil in 1825, not until 1830 does the fracturing of Colombian unity lead to the current incarnation of the República de Venezuela.⁷⁰

The political prowess of geographical discourse had nevertheless already dictated the course of national formation. Alexander von Humboldt traversed South America and changed, in the words of his staunch advocate Simón Bolívar, the face of the continent: recall that, according to Bolívar, Humboldt, “estará siempre con los días de la América presente en el corazón de los justos apreciadores de un grande hombre, que con sus ojos la ha arrancado de la ignorancia y con su pluma la ha pintado tan bella como su propia naturaleza” (in Humboldt, *Cartas Americanas*, 266). This resounding praise stems from the political and military utility of Humboldt's cartographic knowledge. In effect, the Baron's mappings allowed Bolívar's proposed conquests to become a reality, for they were the most complete vision of the hitherto unmapped territories. Humboldt's original documentation thus facilitates the pro-independence

⁷⁰ Some historians contend that the derogation of the Constitution in 1961 and then the creation of the Carta Magna in 1999 indicate a *Quinta República*, which continues to present day. See http://www.venezuelatuya.com/historia/cinco_republicas.htm.

armies' successful negotiation of the terrain, allowing them to defeat the colonies.⁷¹ Bolívar certainly refers with deference to Humboldt's theoretical and practical knowledge in an 1815 letter entitled "Contestación de un americano meridional a un caballero de esta isla" (more famously referred to as "Carta de Jamaica"):

En mi opinión es imposible responder a las preguntas con que Ud. me ha honrado. El mismo Barón de Humboldt, con su universalidad de conocimientos teóricos y prácticos, apenas lo haría con exactitud, porque aunque una parte de la estadística y revolución de América es conocida, me atrevo a asegurar que la mayoría está cubierta de tinieblas... (in *Cartas del Libertador*, I, 182)

Bolívar recognizes the monumental task remaining for America. Yet his lauding of Humboldt's contributions reveals the manner in which geographic knowledge came to foment and solidify the independence struggles of the newly emerging Venezuelan nation.

During his six-year journey, painstakingly documented in the thirty folio and quarto volumes of *Voyage aux régions équinoxiales du nouveau continent, fait en 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803 et 1804*, Humboldt explores and discursively recreates each nook and cranny of the Capitanía General de Venezuela. This work nourishes not only Bolívar's battles but also the post-independence chartings of Agustín Codazzi, whose statistical-geographical study *Resumen de la Geografía de Venezuela* (1841) condenses all the territorial knowledge heretofore written about the nation, including but not limited to Humboldt, Francisco José de Caldas, Francisco Depons, Sabine Berthelot, François Roulin, and the Spanish maps of brigadier Joaquín Francisco Fidalgo.

⁷¹ Agustín Codazzi's 1840 map shows the 1812-1819 military campaigns for Venezuelan independence; see <http://books.nationalgeographic.com/map/map-day/2008/05/23>; importantly, too, Codazzi himself attributes his cartographic success in Venezuela and Colombia to work Humboldt had already begun. See Longhena, Mario, ed. *Memorias de Agustín Codazzi*. Trans. Andrés Soriano Lleras and Fr. Alberto Lee López. Bogotá: Publicaciones del Banco de la República, 1973, 76-77.

According to Codazzi's most recent biographer Juan José Pérez Rancel, however, it was the "sabio alemán que ocupaba el lugar principal" (74).⁷²

Importantly, Codazzi holds similar esteem in Humboldt's letters; Humboldt venerates the Italian cartographer by insisting that the latter successfully augmented and ameliorated his studies in Venezuela by dedicating more time and energy to the effort: "Lo que yo traté de hacer en un viaje rápido, al recoger algunos datos sobre las posiciones astronómicas y hipsométricas de Venezuela y la Nueva Granada, ha encontrado en sus nobles investigaciones, señor, una confirmación y una ampliación que superan mis esperanzas" (letter translated from the French and reproduced in *Memorias...*, 167). Humboldt himself thus complementarily acknowledges his work as the springboard for Venezuelan geography and Codazzi's as the execution.

Other accounts of the Humboldt/Codazzi relationship are less generous, however. The tone in an 1841 article included in the Italian paper *La farfalla* oozes with patriotic judgment: Humboldt, the author (whom we only know as G.C.) insists, "no dejó sino noticias dudosas," which Codazzi doggedly pursues and completes (article translated from the Italian and reproduced in *Memorias...* 164). Codazzi's work in the Americas is defined not by his successes but rather by the ways in which he improves Humboldt; in fact, of the nameless Italian journalist's twenty-four enumerated claims, five explicitly refer to Humboldt while two inexplicitly speak of other (European) naturalists' investigations.

⁷² Salvador Ordoñez explains that Codazzi even replicated Humboldt's exact footsteps, which other European scientists and naturalists subsequently recreate as well: "En 1835, Agustín Codazzi hizo todo el recorrido que Humboldt adelantó en 1799 y llegó más allá del Paso del Silencio y del Salón del Pechos. Codazzi también escribió sobre esta experiencia a la que describió como un gran espectáculo de la naturaleza. Después de las expediciones de Humboldt y Codazzi, los científicos europeos se interesaron por conocer esta belleza natural" (186). See "Aspectos geológicos del viaje por Iberoamérica (1799-1804) de Alexander von Humboldt," in *Alexander von Humboldt: Estancia en España y viaje americano*, Eds. Mariano Cuesta Domingo y Sandra Rebok, Madrid: Real Sociedad Geográfica, 2008: 177-199.

Rather than analyze all the similarities between the German and the Italian, I have opted to focus on the themes relevant to my reading of Gallegos: (1) the notion of three Venezuelas, which leads to (2) the writing of the land in service of extracting from it. In a recent article refuting the notion of three Venezuelas, José Rojas López touches upon these similarities:

Desde la época colonial hasta principios de la década de 1930, la base económica de la sociedad venezolana giró en torno a los productos agropecuarios de exportación, particularmente cacao y café a finales del siglo XVIII y la primera mitad del siglo XIX. Es en esta Venezuela donde Humboldt, y después Codazzi, “zonifican” el territorio en tres grandes fajas latitudinalmente paralelas, según la aparente dominancia especial de los cultivos, los pastos y los bosques, de norte a sur respectivamente. (76)⁷³

Whereas Brazil most often appears divided in two, Venezuela wears the distinction of a tripartite division courtesy of Humboldt’s observations, which Codazzi subsequently reaffirms. Beyond the notion of three Venezuelas, Rojas López also alludes to the economic context of extraction and exportation surrounding, and supported by, Humboldt and Codazzi. As for Humboldt,

⁷³ That Rojas López, amongst other geographers, continues to refute the findings of Humboldt and Codazzi nearly two centuries after their explorations and documentations strikes me as noteworthy. The current attention to past work suggests, in fact, a gaping hole in the discipline for a substantial stretch of time. In his *Hacia una nueva geografía: esquema arbitrario de la tierra venezolana* (1976), Julio Febres Cordero applauds Humboldt and Codazzi as the true forefathers of Venezuelan geography, only to lament that Venezuela’s primary lack—in 1976—is a modern Geography and national map. Given that at the time of his writing the only “great map” continued to be Codazzi’s, Febres Cordero’s concern is both palpable and reasonable: “Es este un estudio al cual está íntimamente ligado al porvenir de la nacionalidad, el destino de nuestro pueblo. ¿Encabezaríamos una reforma agraria realista careciendo de todo este cuerpo documental?” (208). His premonition astute, Febres Cordero nevertheless remains unheard until 2001, the year in which the recently created Instituto Geográfico Venezolano Simón Bolívar realizes that the nation “ha perdido territorio en sus cuatro puntos cardinales” and decides to contract a new edition of the Mapa Político de Venezuela.

Codazzi's reorganization of the Venezuelan territory ultimately serves utilitarian projects aimed at extracting its natural resources.⁷⁴

If Humboldt shapes Gran Colombia's pre-independence trajectory, then Codazzi merits the recognition of post-independence geographer. Having already participated in the political, military, and scientific effort of charting and solidifying the parameters of the territory, Codazzi chooses to support the consolidation effort on the Venezuelan side of the soon-to-be-drawn border. Pérez Rancel offers an explanation:

Codazzi, nuevamente ante el dilema de una disolución que signifique el fracaso de sus esfuerzos políticos, militares y —esta vez— científicos, decide tomar partido por los grupos que le parecen poseedores de mayor solidez política, es decir, por aquellos que —paradójicamente— le ofrecen con el separatismo una perspectiva de alcanzar la difícil unidad. (68)

The potential for national consolidation—"la difícil unidad"—attracts Codazzi; at the same time, his profound desire for unity through geography makes him all the more attractive to the leading political bodies. On September 29, 1830 the Venezuelan Congress names him *Jefe de*

⁷⁴ Pérez Rancel also notes that this utilitarian focus of geography—in which the discipline is understood as a practical science in service of society—is a Humboldtian inheritance that we see reproduced in other geographical figures such as Francisco José de Caldas, who also appears to have significantly influenced Codazzi (73). Mary Louise Pratt, alternatively, employs the term "industrial revelry" to explain the capitalist vanguard's account of América, but she excludes Humboldt from such designations by stating that the vanguards' "pragmatic and economist [...] rhetorics shared neither the estheticism nor the tolerance of Humboldt and his more courtly followers" (149). Pratt disregards the utilitarian leanings of Humboldt's works despite underscoring his tolerance, both of which are characteristics that Codazzi replicates in his writings.

Estado Mayor, thereby authorizing him to lead the Comisión Corográfica.⁷⁵ Given the charge of constructing maps of the thirteen provinces in addition to a general map, the Comisión's ultimate purpose is to achieve territorial knowledge in service of the physical organization, defense, and economic future of the nation (Pérez Rancel 69). Codazzi fervently labors to these ends for nearly twenty years, writing and recording his geographical findings while boosting Venezuela's infrastructure with highways, canals, and railroads. By developing the "virgin land," Codazzi and his sustained efforts usher the Venezuelan nation into modernity. Pérez Rancel synthesizes the Italian cartographer's efforts concisely:

La obra de Codazzi puede ser considerada como el primer intento sistematizado de ordenar la ocupación territorial, y de *aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales* de Venezuela. El *Resumen...*, además de describir cada fragmento del país, analiza *su vocación productiva*; en segundo lugar, establece las relaciones interurbanas existentes y posibles para la interconexión entre todas las regiones. De ello resulta una trama comunicacional basada en *las posibilidades de la propia naturaleza* (la navegación fluvial y las ventajas morfológicas de cada región) y en *las posibilidades económicas del momento y futuros (la distribución y comercialización de la producción)*. En tercer lugar identificamos su carácter publicitario—o visionario—de *las posibilidades de cada región para desarrollar sus recursos*, atraer población, fundar nuevos asentamientos

⁷⁵ In his *Cosmography*, Ptolemy explains the difference between geography and chorography: whereas the former aims to write the entire known world, the latter focuses on particular places. Walter Mignolo likens this difference to geography as intrinsically related to *space*, whereas chorography is intrinsically related to *place*. See Chapter 6 of *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* (1995), "Putting the Americas on the Map: Cartography and the Colonization of Space" (281-82). Michael Taussig defines it as "this art of concentrating on a small unit detached from the whole" (201). He also speaks extensively about Codazzi and the Comisión Corográfica in the context of meaning- and map-making in the colonial period; in an interesting reading of the map as magic, Taussig addresses the ways in which charting the land often happened not by foot but rather seated in a chair attached to the back of an indigenous peon. See the chapter titled "The Right to be Lazy," in *My Cocaine Museum*, Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004: 197-215.

urbanos y *generar riqueza*. Una especie de *prospecto del país que se quería*, de la Venezuela posible. (77-78, emphases mine)

For Codazzi, writing the earth occurs primarily to reap its fruits. Extraction of natural resources overwhelms the defensive desire for territorial knowledge. Indeed, Pérez Rancel equates *Resumen de la Geografía de Venezuela* to a “prospecto del país que se quería”—*prospecto* defined, according to the Real Academia Española, as “1. m. Papel o folleto que acompaña a ciertos productos, especialmente los farmacéuticos, en el que se explica su composición, utilidad, modo de empleo, etc.; 2. m. Exposición o anuncio breve que se hace al público sobre una obra, un escrito, un espectáculo, una mercancía, etc.” Pérez Rancel’s connotation suggests, then, that Venezuela is a *producto* or *mercancía* that Codazzi advertises to potential consumers; his descriptions are something of an intended market projection.⁷⁶ Whereas his initial mappings of Gran Colombia work in service of military knowledge, Codazzi’s geographic efforts in Venezuela center on demarcating the terrain in ways conducive to profiting from its natural resources.

While *Memorias de Agustín Codazzi*, translated from the Italian to Spanish by Andrés Soriano Lleras and Fr. Alberto Lee López, does not directly address Codazzi’s Venezuelan experiences, the narrative illustrates that the trope of extraction spans much of his corpus. Codazzi’s first impression of Buenos Aires emerges from “el comercio de esta capital, que consiste especialmente en cueros de toda clase, sebo, plumas, quina, aceite de ballena, cobre, estaño, lana de ovejas y de vicuñas” (305). Similarly, in Haiti the Italian geographer finds himself starry-eyed in the face of bounteous and “nuevas producciones de la naturaleza” (318). During

⁷⁶ I tread in dangerous waters here by likening Codazzi’s work to marketing given that I suggest something similar with regard to Sarmiento. I find, however, that while they both attempt to sell a product, their motivations are distinct: while Sarmiento writes the Pampa in ways palatable for immigration purposes, Codazzi highlights the Llano’s productivity for the purpose of encouraging commerce. But also interesting is that he too makes a model *for* the nation rather than *of*, “del país que se quería, de la Venezuela posible” (78).

the course of six beautifully composed pages, Codazzi details the range of natural resources available for export, including sugar cane, cotton, coffee, banana, pineapple, papaya, cocoa, vanilla, and so forth (318-323). And, finally, in Santa Fé de Bogotá, the wheat, grapes, and cinnamon mesmerize him:

Aquí se cultiva el trigo, del que se recoge abundante cosecha dos veces al año. Se siembra en marzo y se cosecha en agosto, se vuelve a sembrar en octubre y se recoge en febrero. Las posición de esta ciudad la pone en condiciones de tener en sus mercados todas las frutas, así las europeas como las de las Indias occidentales, porque en sus cercanías se encuentran los diferentes climas que las producen, y quien quiera puede gozar aquí o de un perpetuo verano... En los alrededores de Santafé nace la frondosa uvilla con sus frutas de un azul oscuro, que sirven para hacer tinta, el árbol de la pimienta con sus bayas, buenas cuando están verdes, el de la canela, cuya corteza masticada da el sabor de ésta. (426-27)

Codazzi emphasizes not only food but also other products ripe for commerce, including leather, copper, wool, and feathers. Codazzi's commercial geography *writes the earth* with an eye toward extraction and exportation; he surveys the land at his behest to determine its use-value. In a sense, Codazzi's early nineteenth-century writings prefigure the agro-imperialism of the twentieth century, what with the United Fruit Company and other foreign entities exploiting Latin America's optimal geographic conditions, natural productions, and inexpensive laborers.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ I refer to Andrew Rice's term from a recent *New York Times* article titled "Is There Such a Thing as Agro-Imperialism?" in which he speaks of the neocolonial pillaging of formerly communitarian lands in Ethiopia. And who does he incriminate? Wealthy, but lacking arable lands, Saudi Arabia. Given their extreme situation of food shortages, the Saudis (amongst other groups across the world) have chosen to "rent" plots of land in Ethiopia at astonishingly low prices; they then "employ" locals to harvest the resultant crops. The irony here hurts: the Ethiopians are historically a food-deprived and famine-suffering people. See <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/22/magazine/22land-t.html>.

Yet although he spearheads the pillaging of America's material goods, Codazzi demonstrates a steadfast respect for the humans of the New World. In *Memorias...* he laments their loss of land, explaining that, “Los indígenas de la América se han retirado al interior del inmenso país y han ido cediendo poco a poco sus tierras a los Estados Unidos bajo contrato o paga. Estos indios son valerosos, de buena estatura, buenos cazadores y bravos guerreros [...]” (254). Thus despite deeming the land “virgin,” and despite beckoning immigrants to penetrate said unspoiled land, Codazzi maintains an unfaltering concern for the indigenous populations of the Americas; we will see this tendency repeated in Gallegos.⁷⁸ Codazzi appreciates the native inhabitants' ability to live in harmony with nature, to take necessary goods—such as medicine—without permanently damaging the ecosystem. In *Memorias...* he applauds such knowledge, indicating that the tribes refuse to abuse the land but rather make every effort to learn from it: “Conocen las virtudes de las plantas, su veneno, y los encantos para atraer toda suerte de animales” (446). Rather than fearing the land's powers, the *nativos* “[t]repan las montañas, atraviesan los torrentes y se divierten sin ningún temor con las olas que vuelan sus débiles canoas. Si hieren a un pez se arrojan inmediatamente al agua y, ágiles como él, se escurren siguiendo la flecha, alcanzan la presa, la capturan y la arrojan a la playa” (446). In stark opposition to his contemporaries' belief that Indian blood infused laziness in the Spaniards, Codazzi deems the indigenous element of *mestizaje* to be replete with positive benefits; indeed, “la bondad natural de los indios” trumps the “innata soberbia y altivez española”:

⁷⁸ In September 1841 Codazzi presents the Venezuelan government with a plan to overcome the lack of population in the budding government. After determining the causes of the faltering census numbers—the Independence Wars, the 1812 earthquake, and the 1818 pestilence—he chooses a locale in the province of Caracas near Victoria to be settled by German peasants. Codazzi's colony—la Colonia Tovar—still exists to this day. See *Memorias de Agustín Codazzi*, pp.94-95, and Oscar Olinto Camacho's “Venezuela's National Colonization Programme: the Tovar Colony, a German Agricultural Settlement,” in *Journal of Historical Geography* 10.3 (1984): 279-89.

Los habitantes de Santafé son de color bellissimo por la blancura de su carne y por el color de rosa que adornan a las mejillas de todos indistintamente. Los hombres son dóciles, de talento, amantes de las ciencias, hospitalarios y dedicados enteramente al bien de su patria. Su origen procede de los españoles y de las indias con quienes ellos se unieron, y esta unión de europeos y nativos ha hecho desaparecer en sus descendientes aquella innata soberbia y altivez española, sustiyéndola por la bondad natural de los indios, a lo que ha contribuido también mucho la dulzura del clima. (428)

His environmental determinism undisguised, Codazzi attributes the indigenous *bondad* to the palatable climate. But he also makes abundantly clear the precipice upon which said *bondad* rests by iterating Humboldt's cautious concern from *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain*: despite their servility and kindness, the indigenous populations are bound to reach a breaking point: "El estado miserable en que se encontraban los colonos de la América española había llegado a tal extremo que no podía continuar así. Una gran animosidad reinaba entre los habitantes de la metrópolis y los de las colonias, pues se miraba a los españoles como a déspotas de estos lugares que abandonaban a los indígenas al envilecimiento y al desprecio" (281). And for Codazzi, abandoning the indigenous inhabitants and their vast stores of territorial knowledge amounts to the ultimate loss. To this end, he passionately insists on writing indigenous knowledge into posterity by including it in his publications, yet one more facet that Gallegos latches on to. Pérez Rancel explains,

Admiraba la forma en que, quienes eran llamados en ese tiempo "salvajes", conocían la naturaleza, obtenían de ella todo lo que necesitaban para sus modos de vida y se mantenían en armonía con el ambiente natural. Muchas

interpretaciones de la vida social y las costumbres de las comunidades indígenas, en las obras geográficas venezolana y neogranadina de Codazzi, así como en sus *Memorias* juveniles, revelan esa disposición a aprender de la diversidad cultural de estas regiones. Asimismo, obtenidas por su comunicación con las comunidades autóctonas, son numerosas las referencias a las aplicaciones de los recursos naturales en los más diversos campos, desde la construcción hasta las medicinas y las especias. (74)

Codazzi directs his accolades specifically toward the *baqueanos*, whom he employs to both confirm and to correct his scientific modes of charting the territory:

Los baqueanos que me acompañan constantemente en todas direcciones, y que conocen con exactitud las haciendas y hatos, son los primeros que me dan noticias de los ganados y bestias (...), sigo tomando informes para confirmar o corregir los primeros conocimientos (...), y en las sabanas durante la marcha se cuentan o calculan los animales que se ve ... (qtd. in and ellipses from Pérez Rancel 74)

Codazzi makes no effort to disguise his reliance on and respect for the *baqueanos'* knowledge; rather, he describes their abilities as precise (*con exactitud*), as anticipatory (*son los primeros*), as confidence inspiring (*para confirmar o corregir los primeros conocimientos*), and as mathematically sound (*se cuentan o calculan los animales que se ve*). He applauds their ability to employ the inhospitable terrain as a protective shield against colonial forces: “El inmenso terreno cubierto de impenetrables bosques, de vastas llanuras, de inaccesibles montañas, fue la salvación de aquellos pueblos que, huyendo aquí y allá, pudieron escapar en parte a la massacre que sus tiranos les preparaban” (287). Codazzi aims to assist indigenous autonomy, even refusing to penetrate their

territory until receiving explicit permission; with this act of courtesy rare for his times, Codazzi succeeds in charting more land than any other European naturalist. In the above article from *La farfalla*, the author G.C. writes,

Que no ha seguido el alto Orinoco hasta Raudos de Guaharibos y que no ha pasado adelante por respeto a aquellas tribus, celosas de su vida impediende y que siempre supieron resistir a la prepotencia española; obedeciendo al gobierno de Venezuela a trueque de dejar indecisa esta cuestión geográfica, para no hacer fuerza a un pueblo tan antiguo y tan aferrado a su libre régimen. (article reproduced and translated from the Italian in *Memorias*, 164).

Rather than assume the veneer of entitlement, Codazzi employs humanity to acquire territorial information: “La humanidad de este hombre se ha hecho proverbial en aquellas regiones hasta en las partes menos conocidas. Gracias a esta virtud pudo avanzar más allá de lo que había hecho cualquier otro europeo y obtener de los mismos indios una escolta de 400 hombres, que con frecuencia lucharon con otras tribus que querían impedirle sus actividades” (ibid, 165).

Yet this concern with Venezuela’s natural inhabitants loses meaning in the face of Codazzi’s geographical impetus: extraction of and profit from Venezuela’s *materia prima*, or, in other words, the country’s natural resources. What to make of such a contradiction? By detailing Humboldt and Codazzi’s contributions, I have attempted to create something of a disciplinary genealogy of geography in Venezuela. And vis-à-vis this history of geography, I aim to explore several critical questions: how does Codazzi’s belief system nourish Venezuela’s geographical discourse? How, in other words, does Codazzi’s reincarnation of Humboldt subsequently appear—or, perhaps more importantly, disappear—in the likes of Rómulo Gallegos?

4.3 RÓMULO GALLEGOS, OR THE VENEZUELAN MOVE FROM EXPLOITATION TO CONSERVATION

I contended above that this drama of nation building via geographical discourse includes several lead actors, three of whom I have discussed. Now the task remains to tell the bitter tale of rivalry, and its very strong relationship with land, between Juan Vicente Gómez and Rómulo Gallegos. As I unravel this epic row's skeletal system, I will bare the bones of Venezuelan geography and the ways in which *Doña Bárbara* fits into, and even advances, its institutionalization.

Unlike Sarmiento and Cunha, Gallegos never assumes straightforward interaction with the discipline and practice of geography. In other words, whereas the former directly participate in the institutionalization of geography in their respective countries (Sarmiento as President of Argentina and Cunha as a Brazilian military engineer), Gallegos indirectly influences the discipline's twists and turns in Venezuela; his works emerge alongside the series of modern geographical societies that follow Codazzi's Comisión Corográfica. His tremendous literary corpus—including *Doña Bárbara* (1929), of course, but also *Reinaldo Solar* (1920), *Cantaclaro* (1934), *Canaima* (1935), *Pobre negro* (1937), and *Sobre la misma tierra* (1943)—consistently puts man into conversation with land while tracing key geographical concerns. Yet I maintain that Gallegos refuses to seek overt credibility in the pioneers of Latin American geography, choosing instead to reproduce the discipline's discursive practices with no mention of either Agustín Codazzi or Alexander von Humboldt. In contrast to Sarmiento's revision and Cunha's rectification, Gallegos opts for an apparent rejection of European, North American, and even Latin American models, Sarmiento and Cunha included. But he only partially departs from

geographical discourse by employing the narrative structure of the novel in *Doña Bárbara*; what Gallegos deems worthy geography finds inclusion; what he deems unworthy finds both alteration and exclusion. Simply put, he disregards any conceptualizations of the three Venezuelas while focusing on the contradictory needs for immigration and indigeneity. Such confluences characterize Gallegos's intellectual trajectory. I maintain, then, that Gallegos's primary push in the modernization effort centers on translating geography's impetus from creative destruction to natural conservation. His work resides in, and prefigures, this productively nebulous middle ground between disciplinary geography as a means to exploitation and geography as a means to conservation.

In a throwback not only to Humboldt and Codazzi but also to Sarmiento and the other great *próceres* of the nineteenth century, Gallegos underscores the importance of populating the vast—and, notably, “unpopulated and empty”—lands. How? Via European immigration.⁷⁹ But whereas Sarmiento realizes too late the hazard of a potential post-independence re-colonization (i.e. the *Italianización* of Argentina), Gallegos's concern surfaces from the starting line. In his famous article “Necesidad de valores culturales” (1912), the Venezuelan writer and statesman reveals his cautious approach, indicating that his interests rest less in “la penetración de la raza europea en nuestro territorio” and more in “la invisible penetración espiritual de la cultura representada por Europa, reconquista del alma, todavía virginal, de América” (86). “Necesitamos población,” he continues, “pero no somos exactos al expresarlo diciendo que nos hacen falta brazos, porque el inmigrante sólo es bueno cuando es portador de alguna cultura [...]” (92).

⁷⁹ Given the nature of North American imperial tendencies at Gallegos's moment, he does not duplicate Sarmiento's desire for Yankee strategies. On the contrary, his hope, which I will demonstrate momentarily, is to rid Venezuelan territory entirely of those who only attempt to profit from its riches, e.g. *Mister Danger* and *El Turco*. He intends to attract strong, and bright, Europeans, whose efforts will help advance the modernization project.

Two threads create a double helix of contradictions in which Gallegos finds himself interwoven. On the one hand, he warily warns against literal *penetración de la raza europea*, hinting at his distaste for foreign, especially North American, exploits of both native women and lands. Yet he yearns, on the other hand, for *la invisible penetración espiritual* of what he describes as the virginal—and therefore untouched—soul of America.⁸⁰ Gallegos discloses something like a personalized request, too: he wants not just brawn (“brazos”) but rather brains (“cultura”). Though he seeks European immigrants to populate Venezuela, he wishes not for the illiterate, uncultured ones, nor those who will isolate and refuse to assimilate, but rather the educated individuals who will successfully channel their culture into the pockets of barbarism bubbling across the Llano. Santos Luzardo iterates such a sentiment in *Doña Bárbara* as he bemoans the futility of eliminating barbarism through effacement instead of incorporation:

Para llevar a cabo todo eso se requiere algo más que la voluntad de un hombre. ¿De qué serviría acabar con el cacicazgo de doña Bárbara en el Arauca? Reaparecería más allá bajo otro nombre. Lo que urge es modificar las circunstancias que producen estos males: poblar. Mas para poblar: sanear primero, y para sanear: poblar antes. ¡Un círculo vicioso! (139)

Through Santos Luzardo, Gallegos can ventriloquize the complicated forces often working against one another in the civilizing effort. To rid the land of its barbaric tendencies, only immigrant populations will conquer its pervasive cycles. A circle straight out of Dante, the challenge of the Llano attracts Gallegos enough to make him dedicate an entire novel to it: “Dantesca era la pintura de círculos infernales que así me iba a quedar,” he writes of the Llano in

⁸⁰ From here we might consider Gallegos’s relationship to ecofeminism in that he creates a direct parallel between the exploitation of women and land. I shall return to this question in Chapter 5.

“La pura mujer sobre la tierra” (415).⁸¹ Two years prior, in a piece titled “Yo querría ser presidente de la concordia nacional” (1947), he hammers the immigration point home by equating economic progress and true modernization with populating “esta tierra despoblada y extensa”: “Primordial y decisiva para la gran obra del incremento económico de la nación y del mejoramiento de las condiciones de vida del pueblo venezolano será la inmigración. Nadie ha discutido su conveniencia,” he explains, and while perhaps inconvenient,

Sepamos de una vez por todas que los miles de inmigrantes que vengan mensualmente, anualmente, al suelo nacional, traerán complicaciones propias de congestión momentánea de la población, pero los beneficios de la incorporación de mayor número de brazos productivos recompensarán con creces los duros sacrificios que ahora se hagan en esta obra de vitalización demográfica. (282-83)

In a sense, Gallegos’s tone has markedly changed from the 1912 “Necesidad de valores culturales” to the 1947 “Yo querría ser presidente...”; in the debate between the culture offered by brains versus the might of brawn, he now appears to side with brawn, with the “mayor número de brazos productivos.” Why has he repositioned his stance?

My response draws on Gallegos’s clear predisposition toward Venezuela’s indigenous populations, particularly the *baqueano* that so impresses both Codazzi and Sarmiento. As he reproduces the discourse of emptiness put forth by his predecessors, Gallegos intimates awareness that the land is not necessarily empty. Without working these populations to death (an issue that pains him, particularly as he depicts the brutal Amazonian rubber trade in *Canaima*), Venezuela cannot modernize as fast as necessary to join the ranks of other Latin

⁸¹ In later pages I will illustrate Gallegos’s emphasis on the circles, curves, and cycles of nature, which he attempts to straighten with the harsh lines of the fence and the train.

American nations. But such labor would imply toiling the land and extracting its natural resources to the detriment and even death of indigenous workers and, equally important, national lands. I posit, then, that Gallegos's discursive transformation from brains to brawn occurs in line with the firming of his ideological posture; in other words, he departs from the Humboldt/Codazzi/Sarmiento model, which sees immigration as a solution to populate the vast, "empty" expanse of the Llano, in favor of geographical practices that benefit the nation by abusing neither man nor land. In this sense, however, he effectively reproduces the very contradiction we see in Codazzi, which surfaces in the Italian's steadfast respect for Venezuela's indigenous populations.

To best limn Gallegos's switch and its role in the institutionalization of Venezuelan geography, we must contextualize his work within the vicissitudes of Juan Vicente Gómez's long-lasting dictatorship. From 1908-1935 Gómez nourishes a fierce tyranny over the Venezuelan peoples, all the while lining his pockets with North American dollars. His major source of revenue: petroleum. Scientifically speaking, Venezuela makes few advances under his leadership save in the realm of training petroleum engineers in the United States.⁸² Orlando Yans explains this unilateral effort and its consequences:

Durante el gobierno de Juan Vicente Gómez se desarrolló la extracción del petróleo, que pasó, según Miguel Izard, de un millón de barriles en 1920 a más de

⁸² In his many travels to the United States, Gallegos ultimately spends the most time in Oklahoma, which his biographer Lowell Dunham documents in *Rómulo Gallegos: An Oklahoma Encounter and the Writing of the Last Novel*, Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1974. This odd venue—Oklahoma rather than, say, New York—can be directly attributed to Juan Vicente Gómez, whose government sends three young Venezuelans to the University of Oklahoma to study petroleum engineering in the 1930s. Among these men was Edmundo Luongo, whom Dunham (then a literary scholar) befriends; Luongo introduces the aspiring Latin Americanist to Gallegos's work. From there Dunham begins to write Gallegos letters regularly, eventually requesting to publish an abbreviated textbook of *Doña Bárbara*. Dunham and Gallegos finally meet at the Bolívar, Missouri dedication of the Simón Bolívar statue, and their relationship flourishes to such an extent that Dunham takes in and effectively raises Gallegos's son Alexis (Dunham 305).

ciento cincuenta millones al final de su mandato. El petróleo estaba comenzando a cambiar la vida de Venezuela y afectaba las actividades industriales y los servicios. La agricultura y la ganadería iban a perder importancia progresivamente.

(36-38)

From 1 million to more than 150 million barrels: Gómez's government boosts the economy through the enormous profits of monoproduction but effectively neglects renewable land resources, including agriculture and cattle-farming. With despotism at its best, the *caraqueños* prosper in their Yankee-fueled coffers while the *llano* sinks deeper into the recesses of lawlessness. Given that, at this historical moment, the honor of the last national demarcation belongs to Codazzi and his 1840 *Atlas de Venezuela*, the vast swaths of land belong to the mightiest sword. Gómez's myopia hinders any advances in charting and distributing the land despite the pronounced need for a government-mandated disciplinary geography; just as the Argentines desperately await Rosas's fall, so too do the Venezuelans put their imprecatory prayers to work.

The year 1935 greets a series of events that shape the trajectory of geography in Venezuela: first Gómez passes away, resulting in Gallegos's return from a four-year voluntary exile. At the same time, the Oficina de Cartografía Nacional joins with the Servicio Aerofotográfico del Ministerio de Obras Públicas to create the Dirección de Cartografía Nacional. The first task on the group's agenda: a map of Guaira, the main port of Venezuela. The sequence nearly reproduces the Argentine experience, what with Sarmiento's exile in Chile brought to a halt by Rosas's ousting, all leading to the first national map. But contrary to Sarmiento, Gallegos maintains an indirect relationship with the Venezuelan events until his 1948 election to President of the Republic. However, his short-lived presidency introduces new

implications given his party affiliation with the Acción Democrática, which bases its platform on the transition from national petroleum production to national land reform. After Gallegos's inauguration, the AD members of the Constituent Assembly pass an extensive land reform bill that Gallegos signs in an effort to standardize land distribution and to ensure the state's sovereignty with regard to its oil reserves.⁸³ According to Judith Ewell in her study *Venezuela: A Century of Change* (1984), "in the first four months of the AD government, over 12,991 hectares were distributed to 30 syndicates with a total membership of 5,700" (105). Effectively, lands formerly owned and operated by Gómez and his vast nepotistic network find themselves in the grateful hands of previously deprived peasants and farmers.⁸⁴

Within a scant few months, the military overthrows the democratically elected Gallegos government on November 24, 1948. Marcos Pérez Jiménez's subsequent dictatorship nullifies the Acción Democrática's implementations, including the land reform bill, while assuming an anti-communist agenda. Such a stance fomented the government's alignment with the United States and attracts U.S. investments in Venezuela, particularly lucrative oil contracts. Despite his atrocious treatment of ordinary Venezuelan citizens, and as if to further cement both Gallegos's ousting and his ire toward *el Norte*, Pérez Jiménez receives the Legion of Merit medal from the

⁸³ I shall replicate Chapter 1's epigraph here, from Gallegos's 1941 piece "Constancia puesta en empeños de iluminación": "No es de ninguna manera imprudente, sino de todo punto necesario reconocer en alta voz el grave riesgo que para la soberanía del país, no ya sólo en el terreno de lo económico incontrovertible sino también en lo político, por obra de los días que corren, constituye el hecho de la preponderancia lesiva de tal industria, controlada exclusivamente por capital extranjero y de aquí que sea aspiración en la integridad de Venezuela como Nación soberana la de que se arbitren los medios legales adecuados para restituir paulatinamente el patrimonio nacional esa fuente de riqueza." See *Una posición en la vida*, 231.

⁸⁴ I agree, in this sense, with John Beverley's contention that *Doña Bárbara* is something of a founding text for the Acción Democrática insofar as its political project includes an ideological renovation: in the forms of ownership and agricultural production, in the integration of the rural labor forces, and in the clear nationalist anti-imperialism. I aim to further extend and problematize these observations by reading such a renovation in relation to the institutionalization of Venezuelan geography and Gallegos's narrative participation in the transition from extraction to conservation. See John Beverley, *Del lazarillo al sandinismo: estudio de la función ideológica de la literatura española e hispanoamericana*. Minneapolis: Prisma Institution and Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literatures, 1987.

Eisenhower administration—the U.S.’s highest honor for foreigners.

Both of Gallegos’s exile periods—the first, due to Gómez, from 1931-35 and the second, attributable to Pérez Jiménez, from 1948-58—thus witness a surge in Venezuela’s economic growth at the expense of its natural resources (particularly petroleum), an intensification of *caudillismo* and its resultant abuses, and a blatant disregard for imperialist overtures and their threat to national sovereignty. Importantly, both of Gallegos’s *return* years also welcome a geographical institution as something of a panacea to reckless government behavior. Consider, first, the 1935 consolidation of the Dirección de Cartografía Nacional, which, together with Gallegos’s return to Venezuela, materializes as a direct response to the culmination of ignorant tyranny and its hindrance to progress. The respite short-lived, unfortunately, Pérez Jiménez’s despotism a decade later continues to feed Venezuelans’ demands for an anti-imperialist and democratic agenda; such needs find nourishment with Gallegos’s 1958 repatriation, which occurs alongside the creation of the Centro de Investigaciones de Geografía. Within months this organization conjoins with the Instituto de Conservación, becoming, on February 17, 1959, the Instituto de Geografía y Conservación de Recursos Naturales. Beginning with the impulse evident in the organization’s name, its founding marks the moment in which *writing the earth* ideologically beckons conservation rather than degradation. The group’s historical overview indicates that, “En el Decreto de creación del IGCNRN se declara que los problemas relacionados con la administración y el deterioro de los recursos naturales renovables, ameritan la creación y funcionamiento de organismos científicos que puedan estudiar estos tópicos para presentar soluciones y promover su aplicación” (*Antecedentes Históricos*, IGCNRN). Diagnosing geographical problems and finding solutions vis-à-vis the parameters of an academic discipline take precedence over exploration for the sake of extraction; the group’s mission illustrates this

inclination to both prevent and correct spatial problems in that it is “orientada a definir los procesos, estructuras y patrones que conforman el espacio geográfico venezolano, con el propósito de prevenir y corregir problemas espaciales y fortalecer las potencialidades geográficas del país” (*Misión*, IGCRN).⁸⁵

Starting with the incidental correlation between Gallegos’s dual returns from exile and the founding of, first, the Dirección de Cartografía Nacional and, second, the, Instituto de Geografía y Conservación de Recursos Naturales, I argue that he implicitly participates in and even advances the formation of Venezuela’s geographical institutions. Within the novelistic space of *Doña Bárbara*, I will demonstrate, Gallegos encourages a shift from environmental exploitation to natural conservation, thereby prefiguring the tenets of Venezuela’s disciplinary geography. This is not to say that he denies the modernizing efficacy of a properly demarcated territory; rather, he conflates the basic premise behind both institutions in an effort to promote national delineation and nationalist anti-imperialism. By locating the nation’s economic growth outside the limiting, and damaging, confines of the petroleum industry, Gallegos rejects the brutally nepotistic ways of Gómez and their continued manifestation in Pérez Jiménez: his novel is a rebuttal against the barbarism of both *caudillismo* and the imperial interests that deny Venezuelans progress. Like the IGCRN, Gallegos encourages appreciation and preservation of

⁸⁵ Although the IGCRN seeks to strengthen Venezuela’s geographic potential—*fortalecer las potencialidades geográficas del país*—and thereby defend the nation from a variety of threats, the lack of a complete and up-to-date national map from the Dirección de Cartografía Nacional allows covetous neighboring countries to encroach upon national territory well into the twenty-first century. Ever aware of U.S. dominance in the hemisphere as revealed in tense sixties-era U.S./Cuba relations, the Dirección suggests in the late 1960s that Venezuela foster “exactitud” and “certeza” with regard to the national border; nevertheless, not until the year 2000 does the nation “despertarse” and realize that it has lost territory on all four corners, leading to the creation of the Instituto Geográfico Venezolano Simón Bolívar. And in 2001, finally, this newest geographical institute contracts a cohesive map of Venezuela as a means to “dar representación total del espacio geográfico y marítimo nacional, logrando así consolidar el espacio geográfico venezolano” (IGVSB). In the same way that the Mexican, Argentine, and Brazilian maps of the late nineteenth century sought to prevent national disintegration by visually affirming the territorial demarcation, so too does Venezuela of the early 21st century need a map that effectively “serves as a model *for*, rather than *of*” the nation (Craib 14, emphases in original).

Venezuela's natural resources as they are embodied in the national geography—that is, in the often-volatile relationship between man and land. These resources are not to be exploited and destroyed by imperial powers but rather elevated and preserved as they are written into posterity.

Via Gallegos's literary production we begin to witness a change in Venezuelan disciplinary geography, something of a reversion from cultural product to natural discovery; Gallegos, I believe, anticipates the contemporary ecocritical turn as his geographical discourse encourages harmony between the human subject and the natural world as opposed to laying the groundwork for primitive accumulation. He departs from Humboldt and Codazzi's commercial geography, which creates an "absolute political space," to use Henri Lefebvre's term for "that strategic space which seeks to impose itself as reality despite the fact that it is an abstraction, albeit one endowed with enormous powers because it is the locus and medium of Power" (*The Production of Space* 94). Lefebvre contends that if a space, or territory, appears self-evident, innocent, and indeed, a mere fact of reality that is simply present, its existence acquires this hue of reality only because the capitalist state produces and reproduces a series of illusions necessary for its existence. And the power undergirding these illusions enables us to turn a blind eye to the construction of that space as a product of culture. For Gallegos's predecessors, this cultural product—geographical discourse in both word and image—surfaces because of a certain need to dominate the space of nature, indeed, David Harvey's basic explanation of geography. But I believe that Gallegos, on the contrary, attempts to retrieve a moment (not necessarily pre-capitalist and pre-enclosure, but certainly not late capitalist) in which there is a constructive overlap between geography as natural discovery and geography as cultural production of space.

By promoting the very real delineation of the Venezuelan geographical space via his narrative's aesthetic demarcation, Gallegos aims to impede the land's degradation; dominating

the space of nature thus takes on new meaning within his political project. His path to modernization involves capitalizing on the land's potential (for example, through dairy farms and agricultural production) by enclosing it (through fences and proper maps), but these efforts arise to defend the national territory from internal and external forces, à la *Facundo*. In this sense, he decries the alleged advantages of civilization (monetary gains and industrial progress as achieved by Gómez) but, simultaneously, he seeks to prevent the lack of order sponsored by barbarism (a territorial free-for-all dictated by the lawless tyranny of Doña Bárbara). Here, civilization and barbarism come to be one and the same. Gallegos instills national order in narrative form by modeling, through the novel, certain desirable national behaviors such as concrete territory lines and proper maps.

Within the textual space of the novel—in other words, by creating a fictional tale and refusing to cite authorities through epigraphs (like Sarmiento) or footnotes (like Cunha)—the Venezuelan author partially rejects the strategies of legitimization embraced by his literary forebears; this apparent rejection allows him to advocate a modernization agenda interspersed with elements of the pre-modern, indeed, with touches of the “barbaric.” Such integration simulates national consolidation through, foremost, the formal qualities of language but also through a return to the space/time relationship of the primitive man. Unlike Sarmiento and Cunha—whose metaphors seek to coalesce the known and unknown and foster “sameness”—Gallegos embraces the “strangeness” of barbarism through Bahktinian strategies of heteroglossia; indeed, he employs the *llaneros'* metaphorical and sonorous language with little attempt to define foreign terms for his non-*llanero* readers. In this vein, the Venezuelan author and statesman aims to introduce his compatriots to the unknown of the *llano*, not to objectify but rather to valorize it.

4.4 GEOGRAPHY AS NATURAL DISCOVERY, OR THE ROUNDED CURVES OF BARBARISM

Through the novelistic confines of *Doña Bárbara*, Gallegos marks the conflation between two sorts of disciplinary geography in Venezuela, one based on cultural production/exploitation and the other on natural discovery/conservation. Territorial knowledge as natural discovery originates with indigenous modes of mapping and tracking, or, in other words, with the *baqueano* so admired by the likes of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Vicente Pérez Rosales, and Agustín Codazzi; Gallegos, as such, embraces both indigenous and occidental tenets of geography in a marked attempt to unify the national sphere, to find value in both pre-colonial and post-colonial epistemologies. This value surfaces as he gives form to the Venezuelan land, as he employs the metaphorical language of the primitive *llanero*, and as he looks to notions of spatiality and temporality found in nature rather than in clocks, in the pre-modern as opposed to the modern.

In imitation of his predecessors—particularly Agustín Codazzi—Gallegos opens *Doña Bárbara* with explicit reference and, more importantly, reverence for the *baqueano*, whom readers meet as Santos Luzardo and company float down the Arauca in the novel's first paragraphs:

En la paneta gobierna el patrón, viejo baquiano de los ríos y caños de la llanura apureña, con la diestra en la horqueta de la espadilla, atento al riesgo de las chorreras que se forman por entre los carameros que obstruyen el cauce, vigilante el aguaje que denunciare la presencia de algún caiman en acecho. (118)⁸⁶

Ever vigilant of any oddities in the spins and the whirls of the currents, the *patrón* guides the

⁸⁶ Although Gallegos employs a distinct spelling—*baquiano*—I will stick with the Sarmentine (and more traditional) spelling, *baqueano*.

boat along while reading the limbs and tree-trunks and eddies, each a signpost to pinpoint his location on the river.⁸⁷ Within moments, the *baqueano* observes a familiar tree that marks something of a natural exit, a rest-stop, as it were: “—Ya estamos llegando al palodeagua—dice, por fin, el patrón, dirigiéndose al pasajero de la toldilla y señalando un árbol gigante—” (119). But while the landscape and even the diction employed to describe it are entirely under the realm of the known for the *patrón*, Gallegos’s city-dwelling, non-indigenous readers must use contextual clues to understand “paneta,” “carameros,” and “palodeagua.”⁸⁸ By employing terminology of the *llano*, Gallegos accentuates the strangeness of the land while emphasizing a certain dependence on the *baqueano*’s geographical knowledge—given the lack of an official regional map, only the *patrón*’s ability to recognize nature’s markings will lead the boat’s passengers safely to their destination. And safety cannot be assumed in the midst of such uncertainty, which Gallegos underscores via the chapter’s ominous title—“¿Con quién vamos?”

To answer this open-ended question, Gallegos employs a tremendous amount of visual and auditory imagery as he introduces the potent sun, the never-ending fields, and the different animals composing the Venezuelan geography:

Un sol cegante, de mediodía llanero, centellea en las aguas amarillas del Arauca y sobre los árboles que pueblan sus márgenes. Por entre las ventanas, que a espacios rompen la continuidad de la vegetación, divisanse, a la derecha, las calcetas del cajón del Apure—pequeñas sabanas rodeadas de chaparrales y palmares—, y, a la izquierda, los bancos del vasto cajón del Arauca—praderas

⁸⁷ Note the circular tendencies of nature that Gallegos repeatedly emphasizes. I shall momentarily analyze the implications behind such repetition.

⁸⁸ With the luxury of footnoted definitions from Lisandro Alvarado’s *Glosarios de voces indígenas y del bajo español en Venezuela, Obras Completas 2.a edición* in the Ediciones Cátedra of Doña Bárbara, contemporary readers understand these words to mean, respectively, a partial covering for a boat; a trunk, tree, or heavy underbrush on the banks of a river; and a giant tree also located on a riverbank.

tendidas hasta el horizonte—, sobre la *verdura* de cuyos *pastos apenas negrea* una que otra *mancha errante* de *ganado*. En el profundo silencio resuenan, monótonos, exasperantes ya, los **p**asos de los **p**alanqueros **p**or la cubierta del **b**ongo. A ratos, el patrón emboca un caracol y le arranca un sonido bronco y quejumbroso que va a morir en el fondo de las mudas soledades circundantes, y entonces se alza dentro del monte ribereño la desapacible algarabía de las *chunchenas* o se *escucha*, tras los recodos, el rumor de las precipitadas zambullidas de los caimanes que **d**ormitan al sol de las **d**esiertas playas, **d**ueños terribles del ancho, mudo y solitario río. (118-19)

Highlighting the llano's power at once, Gallegos begins his description with a sun that blinds one into submission. Its brutal presence resonates through the alliterated "s" appearing in "sol," "cegante," "centellea," and "sobre," a literary strategy that strengthens its spotlight-like force. It shines upon the llano and the yellow waters of the Arauca and the trees that compose its border. Gallegos underscores and aligns these elements into one astounding mise-en-scène by means of the assonated "a" that sounds in "llanero," "*aguas amarillas del Arauca*" and "*árboles que pueblan sus márgenes*" as well as the consonance of the "ll," which lyrically connects the llano (llanero) with the sparkling sun (centellea) and yellow waters (amarillas).

The brief sentence flings its content at readers like the sun that it depicts, and this abruptness is drastic when seen in contrast with the punctuation-halted rambling that follows. The subsequent five-line sentence gives form to the density of vegetation, the immensity of the Araucan basin, and the limitlessness of the vast green pastures through its very expanse of length complemented by commas and dashes. The punctuation strategically allows Gallegos to break the continuity of the vegetation by interrupting the textual landscape with commas and,

then, divide (“divísanse”) the riverbanks into a right and left bracketed by dashes. These dashes first enclose the Apure basin within a circle of chaparral and palm trees and, afterward, limit the horizons of the prairie so as to expose the dappled specks of black herds in their endless fields. By employing a staccato rhythm with the mono- and disyllabic words “una que otra mancha” as well as the hard patter of the consonated “n,” Gallegos emphasizes the dotting effect of the animals upon the plain. Separated, interrupted, and dotted though it may be, the Llano is nevertheless an open and complete space that includes both the Arauca and Apure rivers and their respective basins; this unity is underlined via the continued assonance of the vowel “a,” a sound that bears double importance as the first letter of both rivers.

Until the third line, Gallegos avoids any mention of the surrounding sounds despite employing lyrical devices to engage readers’ perceptions of the land. As if to complement the blinding sun, he leaves readers deaf to the llano’s sonority. He breaks this silence, however, after explicitly describing it by means of diction that is as heavy, polysyllabic, and burdened as the silence itself: “profundo,” “resuenan,” “monótonos,” and “exasperantes” each exude a cacophonous depth and monotony that suggest pain. Unfortunately, the only accompaniment to this sonorous lack is that of the boatmen’s tread on the deck of the boat, which Gallegos quietly pats out with the alliterated “p” in “**p**asos,” “**p**alanqueros,” and “**p**or” as well as the consonance of the “b” in “cubierta” and “**b**ongo.” But, even the sound of the patrón’s conch-horn is weak and groaning—“bronco y quejumbroso”—and it thus comes to an untimely death in the surrounding silence. To replace it, an even more disagreeable sound appears, that of the “desapacible algarabía de las *chenchenas*,” whose name’s onomatopoeic effect intensifies with the repeated “ch” that is heard in “escu**cha**.” And, then, as if to imitate the diving to the end of the sentence, Gallegos picks up the scene’s tempo with the alligators’ “precipitadas

zambullidas,” only to slow it down, drowsily, under the scene’s sun like the alligators themselves, with the heavy alliterated “d” of “**d**ormitan,” “**d**esiertas,” and “**d**ueños” counterpoised with the solitary and mute river, which they lazily own.

In this one paragraph—the sixth of the entire novel, to be sure—Gallegos gives form not only to the Venezuelan land but also to its threats, its uncertainty, its lack of familiarity. He represents, via sounds and images, the unique musicality and power of the land, all the while refusing to define *llanero* terminology, which continues to appear in the words “calcetas,” “bongo,” and “chenchenas.” The heteroglossic diversity of national languages in *Doña Bárbara* does indeed come, in Bakhtin’s words, “to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way” (324). Gallegos puts the competing discourses into conversation for the sake of ideology, in other words, to have them battle in a tension-ridden space that is primarily a Spanish one. Within these first pages of the novel Spanish is tugged away and pulled back in through the tension of what Bakhtin describes as centrifugal and centripetal forces; Gallegos’s multiple discursive practices and their respective utterances mimic the “multicultural”—and conflicted—setting of the emergent nation.

Gallegos thus seeks national consolidation through two strategies, the first a continuation of Sarmiento and Cunha and the second a departure. First, he conjoins form and content in his portrayal of the Llano, thereby employing the language of the Vichean primitive man. The dense diction traps readers like the foliage it portrays, while the alligators’ dives occur in the very words that convey them. But Gallegos’ appeal to the *llanero*’s language continues with the energy of the popular, indeed, with the words and the voice of the Other. By employing a stylized rendition of *llanero* vernacular, the Venezuelan author defamiliarizes the llano and emphasizes its strangeness, contrary to Sarmiento and Cunha, who seek verisimilitude through metaphor and

language. The distinct representations thereby point to very different ideas about authorial presence: while Gallegos's defamiliarizing strategies imply immediacy and transparency, Sarmiento and Cunha's "familiarizing" tendencies call attention to the role of language in fostering an appreciation of difference via strategies of sameness—in other words, via metaphorical connections between known and unknown.

Rather than as a tool for alignments, metaphor surfaces in *Doña Bárbara* as the language of the *llanero*, he who, according to Gallegos, is somehow predisposed to the device because of his often unpredictable and inexplicable geographic surroundings. As Santos Luzardo attempts to readjust to the plains upon returning from the erudition and bustle of Caracas, he receives an update on Altamira from the elderly Melesio. The situation is dire: malaria has consumed all but one (Antonio) of his eleven children, only seven of whom even arrive to adulthood; the children's mother—his wife—has also succumbed to the "gusano":

Escupió la amarga saliva de la mascada y, volviendo a *su lenguaje metafórico* de hombre criado entre reses, concluyó, con fatalismo bromista. —No tiene sino que mirar cómo me he quedado con el mautaje solamente. El ganado grande: los hijos y las mujeres de los hijos, me lo arrasó el gusano. (161, emphasis mine)⁸⁹

Only "lenguaje metafórico" suffices to make sense of the senseless brutality of the Venezuelan plain, of what the "hombre criado entre reses" undergoes on a daily basis. To intensify matters, disease and decimation are only part of his tribulations; other challenges include stampedes and losses of herds. Santos Luzardos remarks on the difficulty of the situation, to which both

⁸⁹ Such vicissitudes amount to what Gallegos describes as "fatalismo bromista." Why, however, does he cut the original declaration's descriptive clause—"ese fatalismo bromista *del pueblo venezolano*"—that appears in the novel's 1929 edition (emphasis mine)? I find both the clause and its subsequent exclusion interesting because Gallegos moves from specifying a certain sense of nationality to focusing, instead, on either (a) a regional fatalism or (b) the *llanero*'s fatalism.

Antonio and Melesio respond with more metaphors:

—Ya me doy cuenta—prosiguió Luzardo—de lo tirante que ha debido de ser la situación de ustedes en *Altamira*.

—Sosteniendo el barajuste, como dicen —manifestó Antonio.

Y el viejo, apoyando, en *el mismo estilo metafórico de ganaderos*: —Y que no han sido pocas las atropelladas. (163, emphasis mine)⁹⁰

Despite tumultuous episodes of malaria and stampede, the *llanero* maintains hope that promise radiates beyond the horizon, that harmony exists between he and the natural world. Like his lamentations, the *llanero*'s faith also unfolds via metaphors extracted from the land. In a chapter titled “La doma,” for instance, Gallegos's introduces readers to the plainsman's “lebruno,” which literally translates to “hares”; in Pajarote's usage, however, the word metaphorically denotes the fluffy clouds that float through the sky and achieve their trace coloring through the wisps of morning light:

—¡Alivántense, muchachos! Que ya viene la aurora con los lebrunos del día.

Es la voz de *Pajarote*, que siempre amanece de buen humor, y son los lebrunos del día—*metáfora ingenua de ganadero-poeta*—las redondas nubecillas que el alba va coloreando en el horizonte, tras la ceja oscura de una mata. (194, emphasis mine)

Ever the poet, the *ganadero* finds in these “redondas nubecillas” the colors of a new day, the softness of a bouncing animal, and the potential for light beyond the “ceja oscura de una mata”—that is, beyond the dark fringe of the thicket. Rather than succumb to the negative energy of uncertainty and death, the *llanero* locates hope in that which lies in the distance, in the horizon.

⁹⁰ The Ediciones Cátedra employs Alvarado's definition of *barajuste* – “embestir, acometer.”

4.5 THE CONVERGENCE OF SPACE AND TIME: HOPE IN THE HORIZON

Like the *llanero*, Gallegos also finds in the horizon something like optimism, something like a positive outlook despite insecurity. In the Llano's vastness he aims to unearth its potential; this urge consumes him from the moment he sets foot on the territory in April of 1927, evident in what was originally the first line of *Doña Bárbara*: "Tierra ancha y tendida, toda horizontes como la esperanza, toda caminos como la voluntad" ("Cómo conocí a Doña Bárbara" 528). In this geographic space, the horizon metaphorically translates to hope, to open paths of free will. The nation must utilize these paths, including its rivers. Like his predecessors—particularly Humboldt, Sarmiento, and Codazzi—Gallegos praises the opportunities offered by Venezuela's rivers but laments their lack of use, going so far, in fact, to describe them as useless. Why? Because not one crop flowers from their irrigation, because not one boat ferries passengers across their waters: "Se ponía el sol, suntuosamente, sobre el ancho río inútil – porque no regaba tierra sembradiza, ni un bongo siquiera navegaba por él – y sobre la sabana inmensa, campo desierto, alimentador de la arrogancia del hombre" ("Cómo conocí a Doña Bárbara" 527).⁹¹

The horizon thus represents the opposite of *inútil*, that which is visible and therefore usable. The horizon also provides an advantage for the *llanero*: because of it, he can anticipate

⁹¹ The same sentiment—lament that the land loses from lack of contemplation while the rivers from a lack of navigation—appears in Gallegos's 1931 talk "Las tierras de Dios" at the Roerich Museum in New York: "La expresión la tomo de habérsela oído hace pocos días a Gabriela Mistral, como habláramos de cosas de nuestra América y ella me preguntase si eran realmente mis tierras venezolanas tal como las he pintado en *Doña Bárbara*. **Tierras** propicias al bárbaro brote, tierras que vuelcan el fondo del alma y abren la jaula a los pájaros negros de los torvos instintos; pero **tierras** recias, corajudas, buenas también para el esfuerzo y para la hazaña. **Tierras** del hondo silencio virgen de voz humana, de la soledad profunda, *del paisaje majestuoso que se pierde de no ser contemplado, como el agua de sus grandes ríos, de no ser navegada*, **tierras** de llano infinito donde el grito largo se convierte en copla, de selva tupida donde asusta el rajeo del pájaro salvaje y mete el corazón en un puño la campanada funeral del 'yacabó', **tierra** de risco empinado y páramo solitario por donde hay que pasar en silencio para no despertar su furor. **Tierras** de hombres machos, como se dice por allá" (119, emphases mine). See *Una posición en la vida*. From the very title of the piece—"Las tierras de Dios"—to the anaphoric repetition of *tierra*, Gallegos emphasizes that the land demands contemplation (and use) on both aesthetic and utilitarian levels. In other words, it demands to be written and used to the nation's advantage.

and overcome threats. Returning to Pajarote's wisdom, we can grasp what this literal foresight means in the face of omnipresent danger: "– Pero si está clarito, como jagüey de medanal. En el llano se aguaita desde lejos y se sabe lo que viene antes de que llegue [...]" (449). Sure enough, Pajarote and his fellow peons can immediately "ver aparecer en el horizonte la comisión que viniera a practicar el arresto del doctor Luzardo" (449). Because the *llaneros* can see the threat, they can presciently resolve it.

Variations of the *horizonte* appear on multiple occasions in *Doña Bárbara* (136, 193, 234, 298). In Gallegos's repetition I perceive a two-fold motivation that emerges from both the temporal and the spatial. On the one hand, the horizon lends itself to temporality, evinced in the notion of hope for the future. But, on the other hand, this figurative temporality transforms into a literal spatiality—that is, the horizon as a concrete geographic marker. Yet, as an unreachable destination, it is necessarily untenable. Is future progress thus an illusion—a mirage, even—to which one can never arrive?

On several occasions Santos Luzardo sees mirages in the horizon, including the trains and fences that are going to, respectively, reduce the land's isolation and demarcate it into proper parcels, thereby contributing to the modernizing effort (234). Gallegos describes Santos Luzardo as a dreamer who is tricked by illusion and convinced that progress will make its way to the plain and banish barbarism. First Santos Luzardo's vision is of a fence:

Mientras tanto, ya tenía también unos pensamientos que eran como ir a lomos de un caballo salvaje, en la vertiginosa carrera de la doma, haciendo girar los espejismos de la llanura. El hilo de los alambrados, la **línea** recta del hombre dentro de la **línea** curva de la Naturaleza, demarcaría en la tierra de los innumerables caminos, por donde hace tiempo se pierden, rumbeando, las

esperanzas errantes, uno solo y derecho hacia el porvenir. (234, emphases mine)

And then, in the distance, he sees a vision of a train:

Era una tarde de sol y viento recio. Ondulaban los pastos dentro del tembloroso anillo de aguas ilusorias del espejismo, y a través de los médanos distantes y por el carril del horizonte corrían, como penachos de humo, las trombas de tierra, las tolveneras que arrastraba el ventarrón. De pronto, el soñador, ilusionado de versa en un momentáneo olvido de la realidad circundante, o jugando con la fantasía, exclamó:

- ¡El ferrocarril! Allá viene el ferrocarril. (234)

In both passages the roundness of the natural world is cut by the linear push of modernization, that is to say, by the straight lines of civilization. Consider, foremost, the dizzying breaking of the wild horse (*la vertiginosa carrera de la doma*), which sends the mirages of the llano spinning (*haciendo girar los espejismos de la llanura*).⁹² But then, in the meantime, the fence (*el hilo de los alambrados*), described as “la línea recta del hombre,” invades “la línea curva de la Naturaleza.” By beating the barbaric curves away, the first passage takes the quest for hope (*las esperanzas errantes*) into the future (*hacia el porvenir*). Gallegos continues to give form to the industrial intrusion upon the national territory by the series of eight commas punctuating the two sentences, thereby creating “los innumerables caminos” offered by the fence’s demarcation of the national space.

In the next passage, the fluid waves of the pastures are rounded with rings (*ondulaban los*

⁹² We have already seen the gyrating motions of the Llano, particularly in this chapter’s epigraph. In “La pura mujer sobre la tierra,” we read that “iba girando y girando la tierra sonora entre los astros silencios” (398), while upon meeting the *baqueano* in Doña Bárbara we understand that he reads the spins and whirls of the eddies to determine whether or not an alligator lurks nearby (118). The land’s natural state is round, curved, circular, what have you, and the *baqueano* can read such designations more so than the straight edges of a map.

pastos dentro del tembloroso anillo de aguas ilusorias del espejismo)—reminiscent, indeed, of Humboldt’s land as water metaphor—and in the distant horizon we see the spiraling plumes of smoke (*penachos de humo*), the funnel-shaped clouds of sand (*las trombas de tierra*) that swirl through the wind (*las tolveneras que arrastraba el ventarrón*). Lost in the circling glory of the llano, Santos Luzardo—“el soñador”—finds himself either tricked by the visions or else purposely playing with fantasy, causing him to see nothing less than the straight line of an imaginary train break the “realidad circundante.” He emphasizes the soft roundness of the land through the assonated “o,” but he equally cuts the vowel sound with the alliterated “t” and, most importantly, the repeated “rr,” which draws attention to the doubly repeated “ferrocarril” and lyrically mimics the roar of the train’s engines.

Santos Luzardo’s visions of the fence and the train are wistful and marked by sadness: “Luego sonrió tristemente, como se sonríe al engaño cuando se acaban de acariciar esperanzas tal vez irrealizables” (234). Indeed, like the horizon, his hopes are perhaps unattainable, “esperanzas tal vez irrealizables.” Yet I believe that the literary devices that Gallegos employs to transmit these passages reveal vacillation: to intrude or not upon the sanctity and the serenity of the national space. In other words, I sense that Gallegos, ventriloquized through Santos Luzardo, does not necessarily *want* to have such hopes fulfilled; he does not necessarily want to force the land’s curves into straight submission. To do so might imply dominating the space of nature in ways similar to the reckless governmental behavior already embraced by Gómez and Pérez Jiménez; at the very least, the modernization effort need not imply losing the force of the primitive, of the pre-modern, of the pre-colonial. In his stylized representation of the land’s curves—nearly feminine, indeed—Gallegos seems dissatisfied with ruining any symbiosis between man and land. In this sense, he appeals to the indigenous ability to converse and

maintain harmony with the natural world.⁹³

Gallegos thus elevates the allegedly barbaric—the indigenous—elements of the national sphere in several concrete ways: first, he employs the metaphorical language of the primitive *llanero* as he gives form to the Venezuelan land. In addition to highlighting the *llanero*'s authenticity, his “strangeness” of language, Gallegos returns to a pre-modern moment in which time is found in the space of nature. Rather than valuing space over time, he places both at the forefront by demonstrating their relationship in the horizon as a point of union for both the temporal and the spatial, for instance. If we turn to Henri Lefebvre's useful study *The Production of Space*, we can perhaps better understand Gallegos's drive to integrate the pre-modern into his narrative, to return to a moment in which

time is apprehended within space – in the very heart of space: the hour of the day, the season, the elevation of the sun above the horizon, the position of the moon and the stars in the heavens, the cold and the heat, the age of each natural being, and so on. Until nature became *localized* in underdevelopment, each place showed its age and, like a tree trunk, bore the mark of years it had taken to grow. Time was thus inscribed in space, and natural space as merely the lyrical and tragic script of natural time. [...] With the advent of modernity time has vanished from social space. It is recorded solely on measuring-instruments, on clocks, that are isolated and functionally specialized as this time itself. [...] The primacy of the economic and above the political implies the supremacy of space over time. It is

⁹³ Gallegos again participates in something of an anticipatory ecofeminism in which the feminine roundness of nature is penetrated by the masculine straightness of civilization, of industrialization, of modernization. Moreover, while I tend to highlight his implicit recognitions of indigenous knowledge, Gallegos also explicitly incorporates the validity of such epistemologies into *Doña Bárbara*. I speak most specifically of El Familiar, el Espanto de Bromador, and la Llorona, examples of moments in which indigenous superstition (visions of these ghostlike figures suggest good things to come) maintains its grip on the Llano in spite of the civilizing project.

thus possible that the error concerning space that we have been discussing actually concerns time more directly, more intimately, than it does space, time being closer to us, more fundamental. Our time, then, this most essential part of lived experience, this greatest good of all goods, is no longer visible to us, no longer intelligible. It cannot be constructed. It is consumed, exhausted, and that is all. [...] This manifest expulsion of time is arguable one of the hallmarks of modernity. (Lefebvre 95-96)⁹⁴

Rather than expulse the land's natural imaginary of time, Gallegos attempts to incorporate it into his modernizing project, thereby conflating pre-modernity and modernity. In so doing, he equalizes both occidental and indigenous epistemologies. In fact, Gallegos employs the land to maintain a temporal rhythm within the narrative space, creating nights and days through the chapter openings and closings. For instance, Chapter 4 of *Doña Bárbara* closes with the setting of the sun, which bolsters the mood of the chapter and the evolution of Santos Luzardo's overall demeanor regarding the plain. He begins to appreciate the Llano rather than to deprecate it, almost as though the setting of the sun demonstrates the passing of his annoyance:

El hermoso espectáculo de la caída de la tarde sobre la muda inmensidad de la sabana; el buen abrigo, sombra y frescura del rústico techo que lo cobijaba; la tímida presencia de las muchachas, que habían estado esperándolo toda la tarde, vestidas de limpio y adornadas las cabezas con flores sabaneras, como para una fiesta; la emocionada alegría del viejo al comprobar que no lo había olvidado el <<niño Santos>>, y la noble discreción de la lealtad resentida de Antonio,

⁹⁴ Lefebvre also notes in *The Production of Space* that time is often located in the circular images of nature, e.g. the rings of a tree or the spirals on a shell. This analysis corresponds in many ways with the multiple times Gallegos refers to the land's roundness, to its circular tendencies.

estaban diciéndole que no todo era malo y hostil en la llanura, tierra irredenta donde una gente buena ama, sufre y espera. Y con esta emoción, que lo reconciliaba con su tierra, abandonó la casa de Melesio, cuando ya el sol empezaba a ponerse, rumbo de baquianos a través de la sabana, que es, toda ella, uno solo y mil caminos distintos. (164)

Natural space and natural time conjoin in Gallegos's passage, and as the night approaches with the setting of the sun, Santos finds peace in this "tierra irredenta." Part of his peace stems from his reconciliation with the land, from his realization that "no todo era malo y hostil en la llanura." Santos's reawakening illustrates a renewed appreciation of this conflated space that exists between the maps of the Occident and the "rumbo de baquianos a través de la sabana," between occidental and indigenous epistemologies, between modernity and pre-modernity.

Given that Chapter 4 ends with the sunset and the approaching night, I might also refer to Santo's *reawakening* as a revival, even a *revision*, set to take place with the rise of the moon. With the turn of a page, Chapter 5 introduces a new day starting with the reflections of twilight: "Distante, en la contraluz de un crepúsculo de colores calientes y suntuosos, se destacaba la silueta de un jinete que iba arreando un rebaño" (165). Santos's perception of the time and the hues that color its passage relate to his perception of space: momentarily satisfied in the geographic space of the Llano, he sees warm, sumptuous colors. However, as the hours pass—and as the sun begins to set—Santos becomes irked with the Llano as he recalls Lorenzo Barquero and the Luzardo/Barquero conflict. To illustrate Santos Luzardo's sudden change of disposition, Gallegos writes in a way that allows time to pass slowly and rather clumsily:

Se ocultó **por** fin el sol, pero quedó largo rato suspendido **sobre** el horizonte el lento crepúsculo llanero **en** una faja **de** arreboles sombríos, cortados **por** la línea

neta **del** disco **de** la llanura, mientras **en** el confín opuesto, **al** fondo **de** una transparente lontananza **de** tierras mudas, comenzaba **a** levantarse la luna llena. Se fue haciendo *más y más* brillante el fulgor espectral que plateaba los pajonales y flotaba como un velo en las hondas lejanías, y ya era entrada la noche cuando llegaron a las fundaciones del hato. (168, emphases mine)

The description suggests that Santos yearns for the end of the day, which is long to come (“por fin”); indeed, the twilight dillydallies as it spreads across the horizon. Slowly, listlessly, “comenzaba a levantarse la luna llena.” Notice the change in speed from the first sentence (the setting of the sun) to the second sentence (the rising of the moon): Gallegos divides the first sentence into six clauses separated by five commas, while a series of twelve prepositions aiding the description slow the sentence and allow it to give form to the sun’s slow descent. The second sentence, however, speeds up with just two clauses and one comma that are interrupted by only three prepositions. The repetition of “más” adds to the sense of speed: space and time literally converge in Gallegos’s sentences, which coalesce form and content to further enhance Santos Luzardo’s need to close the chapter of one day and seek the next.

Gallegos’s portrayal of the space/time relationship not only acknowledges but also attempts to replicate the ritualistic rhythm of the Llano with its language. On a more concrete level, another remarkable moment of rituality appears with the roping and castrating of the bull, which Gallegos simultaneously condemns and praises through his language. His initial depiction deprecates the violent act as such, but I maintain that his rhythmic writing bestows upon the act a sense of rituality—that is to say, a cadence to accompany what is, for the *llanero*, a ritual performance inscribed within the geographical space:

En seguida, Santos *paró en seco* el caballo para **que** templara; pero *se* trataba de un

toro de gran poder, que necesitaba más de una soga para ser derribado, y cuando ésta se tezó, vibrante, al formidable envión del orejano, la bestia, brutalmente tirada la cola, se sentó sobre los corvejones, lanzado un gemido estrangulado, y ya el *toro* se revolvía contra ella, cuando Antonio, Carmelito y *Pajarote* lanzaron sus lazos a un mismo tiempo, y un triple grito al verlo caer los cuernos. (292)

Gallegos invokes the bull through the repetition of disyllabic words ending in “o” (like “toro”), which appear highlighted above. The bull’s strangled breathing spatters through the sibilance of the repeated “s” and “z” sounds, and his strength and anger are intensified via the hard consonance of the “c,” “t,” and “b.” The assonance of the “i” at the passage’s end emphasizes the triple, simultaneous scream, echoing not only the *llaneros*’ victory but also their continued surprise regarding it. The series of twelve commas lilt and halt the sentence in order to construct first the *llaneros* tugging in one direction and then the beast tugging in another: civilization and barbarism wrestle till the grand finale. The sentence comes to a fitting end, which is, in effect, the bull’s end as he falls to the ground, defeated and with rope around his horns.

While it may seem that civilization (man) has conquered barbarism (bull), or, alternatively, that man has assumed the barbarism of nature in attempting to dominate it, I sense that Gallegos conveys a resigned respect for all parties involved in this ritualistic performance. The act forms part of the Llano’s culture, and though Gallegos makes no effort to hide its violent underbelly, his poetics determinedly highlight its beauty, indeed, its rendering of the aesthetic sublime. The *llanero* and the bull participate in a dance at the end of which one is left controlled; the dance is harmonious, however, and is central to the cycles of the Llano. Gallegos thus attempts to entangle and impress with the cyclical patterns that shape the *llanero*’s sense of time, thereby leaving readers with a lasting image of the rounded aesthetics of barbarism.

4.6 GEOGRAPHY AS CULTURAL PRODUCTION, OR THE STRAIGHT EDGES OF CIVILIZATION

Until now I have argued that Gallegos encourages a shift from environmental exploitation to natural conservation, prefiguring the trajectory of Venezuela's disciplinary geography. By endorsing the land's "barbaric" inhabitants and their epistemologies, he posits harmony between the natural world and the human subject. This is not to say, however, that he aims to discontinue the discourse of enclosure that defines modernity. Rather, Gallegos sees and believes in the modernizing potential of a properly demarcated territory, which leads to what I consider a constructive overlap between geography as natural discovery and geography as cultural production of space. If in the last section I illustrated Gallegos's tendencies towards articulating the land as it simply is in *Doña Bárbara*—the land as natural discovery—then now I aim to highlight and analyze the moments in which he reveals the merits of geography as a socially constructed production, replete with positive outcomes.

I will focus on two specific issues in the novel. Gallegos articulates the underlying problems of the *latifundio* system and the resultant lack of equality. Starting with the origins of the dilemma—Don Evaristo Luzardo's giant piece of property—I trace the ways in which the discipline of geography (and more often, its absence) nourishes the narrative flow of the novel. And, second, I further nuance my analysis of Santos Luzardo's proposed fence by closely reading Chapter 12, "Algún día será la verdad," in which the issue of cartography also emerges. Santos Luzardo cannot but respect the ways and the territorial knowledge of the *llanero*, and in particular, the *baqueano*. Nevertheless, his erudition and city-acquired Occidental knowledge leads him to trust that progress cannot be made without modern geographical advances. The key

word here is *modern*. Indeed, Santos Luzardo shudders at the unique and haphazard variations of occidental geography that abound in the Llano, i.e. Míster Danger's hand-drawn maps and Doña Bárbara's movable boundaries. Santos Luzardo's discontent with such ineffective implementations of land demarcation leads him to promote an incarnation of geography that is, in fact, cultural production. In this sense, he effectively resides in—and attempts to promote—a neutral territory between indigenous and occidental modes of knowledge.

Land-based feuds drive the plot of Gallegos's fictional tale, and the land in question originally spans nearly two hundred leagues of fertile savannahs enclosed in a ranch named *Altamira*. Established by the patriarch Don Evaristo Luzardo, *Altamira*'s expansion and subsequent domination of the plain transforms it into perhaps the most important ranch of the country. But with great wealth comes great aspiration, and slowly, one by one, the Luzardo family members migrate to the cities, Caracas in particular.

With the family dispersed throughout Venezuela, Don José de los Santos—the last to own and run the original *Altamira*—rightfully fears the division and resultant devastation of the property. He toils and sacrifices until able to eventually buy out his co-owners. Sadly, and in a demonstration of filial whim and betrayal, his children José and Panchita (married to Sebastian Barquero) decide to divide the enormous property in half. The son's plot maintains the name *Altamira*, while the daughter's becomes *La Barquereña*.

And herein enters the geographical dilemma:

A partir de allí y a causa de una frase ambigua en el documento, donde al tratarse de la línea divisoria ponía: <<hasta el palmar de *La Chusmita*>>, surgió entre los dos hermanos la discordia, pues cada cual pretendía, alegando por lo suyo, que la

frase debía interpretarse agregándosele el inclusive que omitiera el redactor, y emprendieron uno de eso litigios que enriquecen a varias generaciones de abogados y que habría terminado por arruinarlos si cuando les propusieron una transacción la misma intransigencia que iba a hacerles gastar un dineral por un pedazo de tierra improductiva no les dictara, en un arrebato simultáneo: <<O todo o nada.>> Y como no podía ser todo para ambos, se convino en que sería nada y cada cual se comprometió a levantar una cerca en torno al palmar, viniendo así a quedar éste cerrado y sin dueño entre ambas propiedades. (132)

Without proper naming or distribution, the territory's destiny is left to an ambiguous phrase in the will, which indicates that the palm grove (*La Chusmita*) is the boundary line; in geographical terminology, such a marker is considered an *accidente*. Notably, this *accidente* of the State—a quagmire of sorts—devours any living being that attempts to cross it.⁹⁵ I maintain that this consumption represents a lack of governmental control that ultimately produces a literal no-man's-land; here we have an inefficient, even deficient, nation, a political entity incapable of defining and maintaining its interior territories.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Interesting, too, is Gallegos's characterization of *La Chusmita* as cursed land haunted by the tormented soul of a Yaruro Indian woman, the daughter of the cacique whose settlement Don Evaristo Luzardo conquers and transforms into Altamira: "Hombre de presa, *El Cunavichero* [Don Evaristo Luzardo] les arrebató a los indígenas aquella propiedad de derecho natural y, como ellos trataron de defenderla, los exterminó a sangre y fuego; pero el cacique cuando vio su ranchería reducida a escombros, maldijo el palmar de modo que en él sólo encontraran ruina y desgracia al invasor y sus descendientes [...]" (209, emphasis in original). Gallegos writes of the incident through a karmic lens: the Luzardo family defies "derecho natural" upon stealing the land from its rightful indigenous owners, and that land is then properly (albeit slowly) retrieved by the forces of barbarism embodied in the Indian Doña Bárbara.

⁹⁶ With the presence of this no-man's-land we have comparative potential with José Eustacio Rivera's *La vorágine* (1924), in which the jungle setting (on the border between Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil) belongs to none of the countries in question. Instead, a cast of international figures dedicate themselves to exploiting, benefitting from, and subsequently leaving the territory. No state maintains sovereignty by the novel's end, and the jungle territory emerges as a quasi-independent zone straddling three nations but controlled by the Brazilian city of Manaus, the center of the Amazonian economy. This territory ultimately contributes to Arturo Cova's madness, devouring him just as Gallegos's quagmire does with any individual who attempts to cross it.

In Gallegos's running commentary on the lawlessness of the Llano, we see a slew of bureaucratic proceedings based on a series of "litigios." We have the aforementioned "*litigios* que enriquecen a varias generaciones de abogados" followed by "los *litigios* con la famosa doña Bárbara, a cuyos dominios fueron pasando *leguas y leguas* de sabanas altamireñas, a fuerza de arbitrarios deslindes ordenados por los tribunales del Estado" (132; 138, emphases mine). These, subsequently, lead to

Leguas y leguas diéronles los *litigios*, y entre uno y otro el lindero de *El Miedo* iba metiéndose por tierras altamireñas, mediante una simple mudanza de los postes, favorecida por la deliberada imprecisión y oscuridad de los términos con que los jueces comprados redactaban las sentencias y por la complicidad de los mayordomos de Luzardo, que se hacían de la vista gorda. (151, emphases mine)

In order for Santos Luzardo to move back to Caracas and rid himself of the Llano's coarse and lawless ways, he must first sell Altamira. But he refuses—as a matter of principle—to accept the reduced territory of the ranch, miles of which Doña Bárbara has slowly (and illegally) acquired for her neighboring property, El Miedo. From the top down, the entire system reeks of corruption; starting with the high-ranking Colonel Apolinar (who advises Doña Bárbara to acquire Lorenzo Barquero's drunken signature, which grants her ownership of the property that she then renames El Miedo), the state tribunals base their decisions on arbitrary and fluid premises, indeed, on movable boundaries. A lack of State-sponsored demarcation—a lack of a map—allows for State-mandated demarcations of land in which one parcel of land can effectively encroach upon another. But how does a movable boundary even exist?

Meet the Mondragon brothers. Having previously defied territorial demarcations at Doña Bárbara's behest, the brothers construct a house on stilts conveniently placed at the cusp of the

El Miedo/Altamira border. The tribunal judges agree that the house marks the border. But with each midnight moving of the house on stilts, Altamira loses territory while El Miedo gains “leguas y leguas” of land.

Through his fictional tale, Gallegos represents the need for a legally, and textually, demarcated territory as a necessary priority in the march toward modernization. In this effort Santos Luzardo proposes the construction of a fence—a novel idea in this epoch of large swaths of limitless land—to distinguish Altamira’s flora and fauna from the rest of the Llano. That Míster Danger has invented a new means to steal Altamira’s unbranded cattle—by moving the watering holes off of Luzardo territory—prods him to take action quickly and without attempting to retrieve his lost lands. But Santos maintains an unwavering faith in the Ley del Llano, which he intends to study alongside his property deeds in order to determine the boundary lines. Upon hearing these plans, his loyal peon Antonio wryly suggests that such action might be a waste of time given the depth of governmental corruption: “— ¿La ley del Llano? —replicó Antonio socarronamente—. ¿Sabe usted cómo se la mienta por aquí? Ley de doña Bárbara. Porque dicen que ella pagó para que se la hicieran a la medida” (231).

Despite Doña Bárbara’s alleged omnipotence, Santos finds satisfaction in at least attempting to rid the Llano of its communitarian legacy—plots of land without *written* and *recorded* demarcation lines—while moving toward capitalist modes of production. National progress can only occur by growing the economy through internal modes and by offsetting external threats, which are embodied in both Míster Danger (Yankee oil extraction) and El Turco (European rubber extraction). To thwart internal threats, Santos Luzardo seeks to establish dairy farms while halting the practice of “cachilipiar,” which Gallegos describes as “esta forma primitiva de adquirir” loose cattle: “Como en aquellas sabanas sin límites las fincas no

están cercadas, los rebaños vagan libremente, y la propiedad sobre la hacienda es una adquisición que cada dueño de hatos viene a hacer [...]” (233). The *vaqueros* see the activity as entertainment rather than work; Santos, on the contrary, finds it a hindrance to breeding—“destruye el estímulo,” he explains (233). Convinced that “todo eso desaparecería con la obligación que las Leyes de Llano les impusieran a los propietarios de cercar sus hatos,” Santos Luzardo strives to fence out productivity-hindering methods and men by fencing in his productivity-producing land and cattle. By analyzing the property deeds, he can lawfully demarcate, and capitalize on, the Altamira land that belongs to his family.

Or so he thinks. Antonio sharply contests Santos Luzardo’s decision, stating, “—Puede que usted tenga razón, pero para eso sería menester cambiar primeramente el modo de ser del llanero. El llanero no acepta la cerca. Quiere su sabana abierta como se la ha dado Dios, y la quiere, precisamente, para eso: para cachilapiar cuando bicho le caiga en el lazo” (233). The *llanero* cannot accept contained land, for such limitations signify an end to his freedom. And here we have the ultimate clash between civilization and barbarism: the vastness and barbarian-producing isolation of the Llano, not just a luxury but a vital necessity for the *llanero*, will be overcome by (1) constructing railroads and trains and (2) by enclosing the land in manageable plots. Santos Luzardo welcomes the challenge: “No obstante, Luzardo se quedó pensando en la necesidad de implantar la costumbre de la cerca. Por ella empezaría la civilización de la llanura; la cerca sería el derecho contra la acción todopoderosa de la fuerza, la necesaria limitación del hombre ante los principios” (233). In Gallegos’s novelistic space, then, the fence emerges as a literal outline toward national progress, “el derecho” and “la necesaria limitación” that will control both man and land from their naturally “savage” ways.

The straight line of the fence foreshadows the straight line of the train; the simplicity of the barbed wire anticipates the complexity of industrial-strength steel. These lines of metal, as I signal above, will straighten the curved barbarism of nature. But how to straighten the corruption of Míster Danger, Doña Bárbara, Ño Pernalete, Paiba, and the rest of the Llano's cast of incorrigible characters? Santos Luzardo believes in the power of the written law, which he looks to upon constructing a barricade at *Corozalito* that will prevent Míster Danger from stealing Altamira's cattle. With his red skin ("piel roja"), flax-colored white hair ("unos cabellos color de lino"), and blue eyes ("con un par de ojos muy azules"), Míster Danger symbolizes the greedy, lust-filled, and brutal "americano del Norte" who wishes to exploit all of Venezuelan geography, both land and man (235).⁹⁷

Despite Santos Luzardo's repeated efforts to find recourse in the law, Míster Danger maintains that he has his legal rights as well—hence the chapter title, "Los derechos de Míster Peligro"—and those too are documented on paper. Significantly, the Yankee oil baron's paper appeals to nothing less than amateur cartography: indeed, his documentation is a hand-drawn map. Upon hearing Santos Luzardo's contention—" —Pues creo que usted está equivocado, señor Danger, respecto a los linderos de *La Barquereña*"—Danger quickly retorts, " —¡Oh! No, doctor [...]. Yo no soy nunca equivocado cuando digo alguna cosa. Yo tengo mi plano y puedo mostrárselo a usted. Aguarde un momento. [...] Aquí tiene, doctor. *Corozalito* y *Alcornocal de Abajo* están dentro de mi propiedad y usted puede verlo con sus ojos" (241). Santos Luzardo proceeds to see unfolded "un plano, dibujado por él, en el cual aparecían como pertenecientes a *La Barquereña* los sitios a que se había referido" (241). Like Sarmiento's maps of Argentina, and

⁹⁷ In fact, Gallegos creates an explicit alignment between Marisela and the land. In this sense, his representation of land constructs a parallel oppression of women and nature that stems from race and coloniality. I will elaborate on this anticipatory ecofeminism in Chapter 5.

like Cunha's maps of Brazil, Míster Danger's map strives to visually affirm the existence and parameters of his plot of land. But unlike the national maps, Danger's is a model *of* rather than *for* his territory. Put plainly, Míster Danger, whose wherewithal repeatedly brings Santos Luzardo's legal missions to a halt, has enough business acumen to get Lorenzo Barquero's signature on a contract. The signature, "escrita con caracteres ininteligibles, desiguales y tortuosos," cedes ownership of *Corozalito* and *Alcornocal de Abajo* while "comprometiéndose además el de *Altamira* a no levantar cercas ni estorbar con ninguna otra clase de construcciones el libre paso de los ganados por aquel lindero" (242).⁹⁸ Thus the Yankee's map, despite its slapdash appearance, depicts an adequate and instrumental image capable of foiling Santos Luzardo's plans to begin the fencing (which is to say, civilizing) project.

Through *Doña Bárbara* we discover the merits of geography as cultural production of space as well as the hurdles posed by the dearth of the discipline. The Venezuela of Gallegos's moment desperately needs an official seat for managing the cartographic projection of the nation-state; indeed, the nation continues to rely on Codazzi's 1840 map at the time of Gallegos's writing. I argue, as such, that Gallegos employs *Doña Bárbara* as a means to unify the aesthetic and the social insofar as he depicts a fictional tale in which a legally constructed map would expedite the expulsion of both internal and external national threats. The only individual armed with such a tool, however, is the Yankee Míster Danger. The barbarism that Gallegos finds so repulsive is, then, a variant of imperialism: *Doña Bárbara* flourishes because of the

⁹⁸ Gallegos dwells on the relationship between language and civilization and, alternatively, between barbarism and the lack of language. Notice that Míster Danger speaks grammatically questionable Spanish (e.g. "soy" instead of "estoy"), that Lorenzo fails to produce a coherent, written signature (despite his elite education), and that Marisela grunts and groans through her incorrect Spanish at the novel's start. With a chapter titled "Los puntos sobre las haches," even, Gallegos illustrates to readers that proper communication might not guarantee but certainly assists the nation's progress. Allegorically, then, Marisela learns to speak with words rather than grunts, and Lorenzo's "palabras ininteligibles" (245) are counterpoised with moments in which he can speak: "Sí. Hablaré. ¡Hablaré, por fin! ¡Qué cosa tan grande se poder hablar, Santos Luzardo" (217).

assistance of individuals like Mister Danger, yet her corruption is due, in no small part, to her exploitation from the likes of El Turco.

Because the governmental has left the land defenseless and in effect lawless, foreign intruders have successfully exploited the nation to their gain since they have no natural predator. Venezuelan barbarism thus stems from an inability to monitor its large expanse, which therefore needs to be reined in and demarcated with the assistance of disciplinary geography. Santos Luzardo finds a solution to national exploitation in the simple enclosing abilities of a barbed-wire fence. The quest to build the fence, together with a nearly comical series of random territory markers, drive the plot of Gallegos's novel, from Santos Luzardo's initial beef with Mister Danger and Doña Bárbara to Carmelito's death as he attempts to trade heron plumes for the fence's barbed wire. But the fence allows Santos to at least imagine organizing the land in a way that will encourage creative production rather than creative destruction. Tired of imperialist powers exploiting both human subject and environment—which is to say, determined to defend his manhood and protect both the Llano and Marisela—Santos Luzardo sees in the fence a means of utilizing yet simultaneously conserving the nation's natural resources, in particular, its vast quantity of cattle, lands, and native inhabitants. By building dairy farms, the country ceases to rely on monoproduction and degradation of its citizens and thereby resists imperial influence. In his land of hand-drawn maps and moveable boundaries, Santos Luzardo strives to add a touch of modernity to advance the national project. His fence thus transforms into an ideological path to national consolidation, simultaneously enclosing in and closing off the volatile elements of barbarism.

4.7 THE VENEZUELAN HANDBOOK FOR MODERNITY

Ever the “literato,” Rómulo Gallegos employs the generic construct of the novel to articulate a consolidated nation-state. On the most immediate level, this consolidation occurs within the parameters of the national allegory, an observation critically made and undeniable. On a more profound level, Venezuela’s national consolidation takes place in the realm of the geographic. Like Sarmiento and Cunha, his literary predecessors, Gallegos emulates figures crucial to disciplinary geography in Latin America, particularly Alexander von Humboldt and Agustín Codazzi. But Gallegos makes no attempt to evince respect for or imitation of such figures, choosing instead to apparently reject these past geographical models. Indeed, his extensive literary corpus bears no citation of geographic authorities, yet certain shared threads cannot but make their mark. But whether Gallegos opts to verge or diverge with Humboldt and Codazzi, he consistently maintains a dialogue with their studies.

The Europeans survey the Venezuelan land for extraction; the Venezuelan, on the other hand, sponsors a sort of disciplinary geography that aims for natural conservation. As Gallegos’s narrative writes against petroleum and/or rubber-based extraction (embodied in *Míster Danger* and *El Turco*) and toward an agriculture-based economy, the author displays his ire with the destructive policies of U.S.-influenced Juan Vicente Gómez; he rightly anticipates the subsequent Communism-hating and U.S.-loving dictator, Marcos Pérez Jiménez. The administrations of these individuals accompany Gallegos’s two periods of exile; the closing years of their dictatorships welcome Gallegos’s return from exile not once but twice. And, incidentally, these returns occur together with the formation of Venezuela’s two central geographic institutions. In this alignment of events, groups, and narratives, I locate Gallegos’s

indirect participation in the institutionalization of Venezuelan geography. With its 1929 publication, *Doña Bárbara* prefigures the tenets of disciplinary geography in Venezuela, which ultimately comes to focus on conservation through eliminating monoproduction and promoting an anti-imperialist nationalism.

In sum, then, Gallegos finds a formula for modernization in the discipline and discourse of geography, and it involves acquiescing to the dual pull of Venezuelan society: the indigenous and the occidental, the pre-modern and the modern, the barbaric and the civilized. As he *writes the earth* with the formal, particularly metaphorical, qualities of the *llanero's* language, Gallegos adopts the space/time conceptualizations found in the land. In this sense, he intimates appreciation for the nation's "barbarians." Yet, simultaneously, he insists that progress will be rendered impossible if the nation continues to accept the law of the oligarchy—that is, the Llano's hand-drawn maps and movable boundaries. Gallegos thus promptly promotes the tenets of occidental geography, indeed, the vast bounties of knowledge available from "civilized" man. In this crossroads between epistemologies destined to be at odds, Rómulo Gallegos employs his literary skills to fence the path toward a philosophy of *both/and* instead of *either/or*, thereby writing the Venezuelan handbook for modernity.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS: TOWARD AN ECOCRITICAL READING OF GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE

La Inglaterra se estaciona en las Malvinas. Seamos francos: esta
invasión es útil a la civilización y al progreso.

- DOMINGO F. SARMIENTO, in *El Progreso* November 28, 1842

I opened with Hugo Chávez's accusatory broadcast (from 2010) and Rómulo Gallegos's prescient observations (from 1941); both Venezuelans gravely insist that all nations must control their natural resources in order to maintain sovereignty. Explicit in Chávez and implicit in Gallegos, nations must accordingly organize and maintain jurisdiction over their geographic space.

While Domingo Faustino Sarmiento comprehends—even ensures—that a national map will visually affirm and thereby protect the Argentine territory from internal and external threats, his eyes are so set on progress that he often behaves in ways that belie his faith in disciplinary geography. In the November 28, 1842 issue of *El Progreso*, he boldly praises the useful possibilities offered by England's invasion of the Islas Malvinas. With two brief sentences Sarmiento undermines one basic premise of his civilizing project: to define the nation as distinct from, and even better than, Europe. His late nineteenth-century welcome to England's civilization and progress—in defiance of the national map's etched demarcations—spawns an entire history of consequences. Sarmiento's lax attitude toward international encroachment on

Argentine lands leaves its deepest mark here and now in this era of energy crisis. The most coveted land is, indeed, the land with the most non-renewable resources, as suggested by Argentina's strong reaction (taxes and tariffs and *tramites* like never before) upon seeing the Ocean Guardian oil platform float into the nation's Atlantic waters.

Sarmiento invites Europeans and North Americans to populate, even invade, the Argentine *pampa* and maritime territory. Euclides da Cunha dismisses non-Brazilian scientists from the Brazilian *sertão*, claiming that their geographic analyses are not only mistaken but a continuation of colonial epistemologies. Gallegos fluctuates somewhere in the middle, despising *los Yanquis* while finding value in occidental modes of demarcating and distributing the Venezuelan *llano*.

With this trajectory I illustrate the evolving perceptions and contradictory impulses that drive the geographical projects of *Facundo*, *Os Sertões*, and *Doña Bárbara*. These narratives' authors embark on a civilizing mission that they locate in the discipline and discourse of geography; yet, they construct their national lands—which, they insist, require demarcation and distribution—with the poetics of Vico's primitive man. Form and content coalesce in ways undergirded by the push toward national consolidation; by giving form to a consolidated geographic space, these authors create the outlines *for* the nation rather than *of* nation, taking care to include the formerly excluded: the *pampa*, the *sertão*, the *llano*. The politics of geography surge through the poetics of the literature in the manner already predicted, indeed, demanded by the ancient Greek Strabo. Through the dialectic force of civilization and barbarism, Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos meld literary writing and geographical discourse into a uniquely Latin American discursive process that translates *writing the earth* to *writing the nation*. Part of this process, I have demonstrated,

unfolds as a re-appropriation of land and letters; as they revise, rectify, and reject previous non-Latin American geographical discourse in their narratives, these authors reclaim a lost territory.

Their geographic renditions (of Alexander von Humboldt, Henry Thomas Buckle, and Agustín Codazzi, to name just a few) accompany a moment in which geography institutionalizes as a means to a very specific end: national consolidation. From the 1875 Sociedad Científica Argentina to the 1879 Instituto Geográfico Argentina, from the 1838 Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro to the more localized 1894 Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo, from the 1935 Dirección de Cartografía Nacional to the 1958 Instituto de Geografía y Conservación de Recursos Naturales: each of these organizations solidifies with the intent to discern and document the exact parameters of the national territory. The initial impetus is to determine the contents of the territory, i.e. petroleum, rubber, metals, and any other quantity of natural resources. With time, however, the original institution spawns an offshoot that privileges territorial knowledge as imperative to national defense. With a heightened awareness of potential encroachment in pursuit of natural resources, Latin American nations ponder and execute a disciplinary shift from exploitation to conservation. Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos effectively house this transition in their narratives—this, despite questionable actions along the way—as they build independent, and modern, nations committed to the push toward progress.

In this sense, I maintain that we might benefit from reading their geographical discourse through the contemporary lens of ecocriticism. In its call for cultural change, ecocriticism embarks from and updates geography's basic definition—the interrelations between man and land (Hartshorne 1939)—as it considers the interactions between the human subject and the environment. Geographical discourse thus lends itself to an ecocritical reading, but the studies are few. Most recently, Alice Jenkins argues that Humboldt defies the Wordsworthian model

defining contemporary ecopolitics while prefiguring the very tenets of ecocriticism.⁹⁹ Starting with Humboldt, then, I see the opportunity to interweave an ecocritical analysis into my study of Latin American geographical discourse. By rethinking the ways in which Sarmiento, Cunha, and Gallegos envision (or, in some cases, fail to envision) an ecologically sustainable human society in their geographical treatises, we might better understand the ways in which past geographical decisions influence present environmental issues.

Such issues abound across the Latin America of March 2010. The need to protect national sovereignty by guarding natural resources strains even the strongest of administrations. Clifford Krauss and Elisabeth Malkin's recent *New York Times* article recounts the touchy politics surrounding Mexico's oil supply, which finds its production diminishing by the day. Though a vast field most likely exists in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the nation lacks the technological ability to reach the oil. Asking for foreign assistance is out of the question, however. Indeed, a civic holiday honors the March 18, 1938 expulsion of foreign oil companies and nationalization of Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex), through which Lázaro Cárdenas's leftist government rid the national territory of exploitative, and imperialist, corporations built upon the pillaging of Mexican lands. Krauss and Malkin explain that,

[The nationalization] occurred amid rising tensions between foreign oil interests, including American companies, and Mexican workers who felt they were being exploited. Schoolchildren learn about it as one of the great assertions of Mexican sovereignty. [...] An outright reversal of that act is unthinkable in Mexican politics. Carlos Fuentes, the Mexican novelist and former ambassador, said any

⁹⁹ See her 2007 article "Alexander von Humboldt's Cosmos and the Beginnings of Ecocriticism" in *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 14.2 (2007): 89-105.

government leader who would try to change the legal status of oil “would be hanged in the Zócalo,” referring to Mexico City’s main square, though he personally would like to see some arrangement with foreign oil companies worked out. (B1)

Fuentes’s claims aside, the point remains: Pemex symbolizes nationalism and sovereignty, precisely what Hugo Chávez fears intrusion upon in his eager defense of Argentina’s Islas Malvinas. In Chapter 1, I cite Chávez, who makes clear that Venezuela, too, is at risk, and he warns his Telesur viewers, “Ahora, imagínense ustedes, nosotros tenemos la reserva de petróleo más grande del mundo.”

Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela: what about Brazil? The Wall Street Journal informs us that, under the Obama administration, the United States has financed offshore oil drilling in Brazil to the tune of two billion dollars. Unable to drill off its own coasts because of environmentalists’ relentless lobbying, the U.S. government has chosen instead to contribute to the decimation of Brazil’s coastal ecosystems (“Obama Underwrites Offshore Drilling”).

Thus, if history proves reliable in determining future patterns, we might conclude that the Mexican, Argentine, and Venezuelan fear is founded and is, significantly, related to the discipline and discourse of geography. In particular, cartography lays out the legal basis for class-based privileges. But what is mapmaking’s role in (a) extraction of goods from nature and (b) labor within well-defined spaces? These issues appear in Latin American narrative, such that we might consider three texts that deal with Latin America’s rubber trade: Euclides da Cunha’s *A margem da história*, particularly the piece “Os caucheros” (1909), José Eustacio Rivera’s *La vorágine* (1924), and Rómulo Gallegos’s *Canaima* (1935). Each of these texts speaks, either directly or indirectly, to cartography’s participation in the environment’s ecological collapse. But the

collapse is human as well, seen in the deaths of indigenous workers or in the coupling of madness and the impossibility of creative representation (say, for example, the failed poet Arturo Cova) in the context of creative destruction and imperial ontology.

If we consider border demarcation and land distribution as imaginary lines etched in based on the use-value of a territory, we might draw interesting conclusions about these issues as they appear in *La vorágine* and *Os sertões*. In the former, a multinational conglomerate rather than individual nation-states directs the primitive accumulation in an Amazonian no-man's-land, while in the latter, a royal charter prohibits any communication between seaboard and *sertão*, leaving one-third of Brazil to wallow in a drought- and flood-afflicted desert bereft of commercial potential. What to make of these geographical spaces and their representations from an ecocritical vantage point? What, furthermore, of the fenced-in and unclaimed *palmar* serving as an unofficial boundary between Luzardo and Barquero property in *Doña Bárbara*?

We might also problematize the distinction between nature and land, a blurry distinction starting with my dissertation's very cornerstone: Humboldt. With Humboldt surfaces the question of commercial geography. We could thus reread his charting and naming of American lands as a colonial continuation of "the discourse of enclosure," which begins in seventeenth-century England as communal properties become private lands; this turn, explains Robert P. Marzec, transforms the *inhabitant*—a human coexisting within the environment and community—into an individual subject removed from the natural world: a worker, a tenant, a landlord (424). At this crux, the inhabitant exchanges precapitalist concern for habitat in favor of capitalist extraction for survival. This cessation of concern emerges with particular resonance in *Facundo* and *Doña Bárbara*. Surveillance, mapping, and demarcation of the land occur to the end of commercialization: Sarmiento obsesses over charting the rivers and promoting free

navigation, while Gallegos's Santos Luzardo finds in fences and boundaries the pillars of civilization. Neither narrative questions the damage such changes—trains, in particular—enact upon their respective ecosystems.

Yet as they look to geography for modernization, Sarmiento and Gallegos often exhibit something like unease regarding their stance toward the physical environment. How are these authors caught between two worlds, the former precapitalist/precolonial and the latter capitalist/neocolonial? Sarmiento reveals his intrigue with the gaucho *baqueano* who gently reads the nooks and crannies of the earth; simultaneously, however, he commissions cartographers, makers of signs and possessors of meaning. The *baqueano*'s footsteps fade within moments, whereas the mapmakers chart the land for commercial and military pillagers: their carbon footprint, as we say now, leaves an irrevocable stamp.

Gallegos looks to another sort of legacy. Though he perceives in occidental geographical modes a path to civilization, his representation of land constructs a parallel oppression of women and nature that stems from race and coloniality. Gallegos aligns Doña Bárbara's potential purchase by El Turco—a leprous European who not only infects Indian women in his harem but acquires them with money earned from the rubber trade—to underscore Latin America's exploitation. He fashions a similar alignment with Marisela—symbol of a wild, albeit tamable, physical environment—and her near acquisition by the North American Mister Danger. Gallegos's commentary anticipates ecofeminism by nearly a century: in what ways does he exhibit and/or defy dominant cultural attitudes regarding the relationship between gender and the physical environment?

I thus end with a series of questions provoked by the original thesis. To only have answers would suggest that the intersection of geographical discourse and literary writing has

been tapped of all its political potential. But I suggest, rather, that past and present convene in fascinating, if ugly, ways as the geographical ventures and decisions of the late nineteenth century determine the Latin American environment of today and tomorrow.

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