



PROJECT MUSE®

Graffiti and the Poetics of Politics in Rosas's Argentina
(1829-1852)

Brendan Lancotot

Hispanic Review, Volume 78, Number 1, Winter 2010, pp. 49-70 (Article)



Published by University of Pennsylvania Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/hir.0.0094>

➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/370247>



GRAFFITI AND THE POETICS OF POLITICS IN ROSAS'S ARGENTINA (1829–1852)

Brendan Lancot

University of Puget Sound

ABSTRACT This article considers the function of writing in Argentina during the mid-nineteenth century by examining graffiti, a scriptural practice that occupies the margins of what Ángel Rama termed the “lettered city.” Against the grain of the durable myth that dissident *letrados* of the Rosas regime wrote in a cultural void, an interrogation of this corpus demonstrates how an array of social actors struggled to establish and define the operative terms of shared political and aesthetic discourses. The inscriptions of political adversaries, despite claims to the contrary, similarly appealed to the emotions of their audiences in order to imagine the nation as an organic, preexisting social field sharply divided between a “we” and an internal other: civilization versus barbarism, or federalists versus unitarians. In other words, graffiti demonstrates how competing models for hegemony were debated through a common aesthetics and a mutually intelligible, modern political language.

In the Andean province of San Juan, Argentina, there is a stone monument that reads *On ne tue point les idées*. It is a durable simulacrum of the defiant, hasty scrawl that Domingo Faustino Sarmiento recalls in the “Advertencia” that opens *Civilización y barbarie, vida de Facundo Quiroga y aspecto físico, costumbres y hábitos de la República Argentina* (1845). In a larger sense, the lapidary inscription is an emblem of the equally longstanding tendency to monumentalize Sarmiento and his fellow *letrados* of the so-called Generation of 1837 as the originators of a national literature and the architects of a modern nation-state. The commemoration of these authors and their works promotes the received idea that Argentine nation-building, in the context of

Spanish America, was an exceptional process. At the core of this myth of exceptionality is the belief that “el progreso argentino es la encarnación en el cuerpo de la nación de lo que comenzó por ser un proyecto formulado en los escritos de algunos argentinos cuya única arma era su superior clarividencia” (Halperín Donghi 8). Concretely, it identifies the resistance to the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas (1829–1852) as the crucible of modern nationhood.¹ In this context, the opening of *Facundo* serves as the point of departure for an entire intellectual tradition; it becomes an origin that “makes possible a field of knowledge whose function is to recover it” (Foucault 143).

On ne tue point les idées demarcates, thus, a nationalist discourse whose boundaries remain relatively stable and impermeable. Such a reading reinforces the basic thesis of *Facundo* that Spanish-American society is starkly divided between two incompatible modes of existence, between civilization and barbarism. In Ricardo Piglia’s words, this opposition “se cristaliza en el contraste entre quienes pueden y quienes no pueden leer esa frase (que es una cita) escrita en otro idioma” (“Notas sobre *Facundo*” 15). The binary logic collapses, however, as soon as it becomes apparent that the phrase is a paraphrase or misquotation, which Sarmiento erroneously attributes to Hippolyte Fortoul. Drawing on Paul Groussac and Paul Verdvoye, Piglia argues that the saying does not serve as a shibboleth, but rather articulates the “double bond” of Argentine literature: “on the one hand, its relation to political discourse; on the other, its relation to foreign forms and genres of an already autonomous fiction” (“Sarmiento the Writer” 131). Sarmiento’s ersatz erudition makes it impossible to fetishize the meaning of the quote; ideas may be untouchable, but they cannot transcend their utterance. The generative force of *on ne tue point les idées* resides in its dislocation, in a narrative that depicts it as hurriedly etched in charcoal beneath the crest of the nation. Though the gesture epitomizes the desire to constitute an independent literary field, it also reveals a conflictive relationship with the public discourse of Rosas’s

1. Recent historians have contested this longstanding commonplace of Argentine exceptionality. Jeremy Adelman’s *Republic of Capital*, for example, examines the intertwined economic, political, and legal reforms of post-Independence Buenos Aires in order to argue that “Argentina was not an exception to a liberal norm derived from an idealized view of a North Atlantic model. . . . Rather, it exemplifies a more extreme and openly conflictual process of legal construction of market relations, because the political machinery to consolidate a liberal regime was itself so contested” (12).

Argentine Confederation, a body of writing that literary and cultural studies have traditionally ignored. In other words, while the scrawl that opens *Facundo* puts into relief the fissures that divided the political field, the histrionic act also reveals the common discursive space that made these oppositions mutually intelligible.

This intervention proposes to reconsider the function of writing in the struggle for national organization in mid-nineteenth-century Argentina by rereading the opening of *Facundo* not as a misquotation, but as graffiti. It thus situates Sarmiento's inscription in a specific sociopolitical context during which visibility and public performance were central to the expansion of a populist hegemony centered on the figure of the *caudillo*. Emphasizing the centrality of gesture in this celebrated anecdote reveals the points of contention as well as the affinities that the foundational works of the Generation of 1837 shared with cultural practices employed by supporters of the Rosas regime. This line of interpretation is encouraged by the fact that Sarmiento employs graffiti at two crucial moments in subsequent works, *Viajes* and *Campaña en el Ejército Grande*, in order to reassert his authority in the overlapping fields of politics and literature. Moreover, as an examination of poetry and pro-Rosas public festivals indicate, these inscriptions do not belong exclusively to a semantic field restricted to a dissident cultural elite, nor to an alternative body of writing. Instead, these Argentine graffiti collectively characterize the struggle to define the operative terms of a shared public discourse, a struggle that conditioned public life and cultural activities, writing included, in mid-nineteenth-century Argentina. That is, by examining graffiti as a provisional corpus, this essay argues that, contrary to the durable myths of Argentine nation-building, an array of social actors, including both opponents and supporters of the Rosas regime, debated competing models for hegemony through a common aesthetics and a mutually intelligible, modern political language.

Before engaging in a close reading of Argentine graffiti, let us first consider the key words of our common critical vocabulary. As a survey of recent titles indicates, scholarly inquiries into intellectuals' role in nineteenth-century Latin America continue to grapple with Ángel Rama's concept of *la ciudad letrada*.² This is especially the case for this intervention because Rama takes

2. A selection of such examples includes Román de la Campa, "The Lettered City: Power and Writing" in *Latin Americanism*; Edmundo Paz-Soldán and Debra A. Castillo, eds., *Latin American Literature and Mass Media*, which contains an introduction titled "Beyond the Lettered City" and

a particular interest in graffiti—as well as other marginal scriptural practices—in his best-known book, *La ciudad letrada* (1984). Rama's consideration of graffiti alludes to the possibility of reorienting (or decentering) the study of Latin American cultural history. A critical rereading of Rama, however, also signals the limits of such an endeavor, because it cautions us that we must work with representations of graffiti, cultural objects mediated by other, more traditional forms of writing.

Graffiti illustrates a central and deeply problematic notion that runs through *La ciudad letrada*: throughout the history of Latin America, a class of intellectuals wielded disproportionate power by using writing to assimilate and neutralize alternative cultural activities.³ Writing is less a treasure house (or a “thesaurus”), than a clearing house, through which all demands must pass:

Todo intento de rebatir, desafiar o vencer la imposición de la escritura, pasa obligadamente por ella. Podría decirse que la escritura concluye absorbiendo toda la libertad humana, porque sólo en su campo se tiende la batalla de nuevos sectores que disputan posiciones de poder. Así al menos parece comprobarlo la historia de los *graffiti* en América Latina.

Por la pared en que se inscriben, por su frecuente anonimato, por sus habituales faltas ortográficas, por el tipo de mensaje que transmiten, los *graffiti* atestiguan autores marginados de las vías letradas, muchas veces ajenos al cultivo de la escritura, habitualmente recusadores, protestatarios e incluso desesperados. (52)

Graffiti marks the fringe of the lettered city, a space comprised of accredited individuals and accrediting institutions that concede aesthetic and political representation to unrecognized groups. Nameless, subaltern subjects may

Ignacio Corona's contribution, “Contesting the Lettered City”; Jean Franco, *Decline and Fall of the Lettered City*; “Homenaje a Ángel Rama,” ed. Alicia Ríos, a double issue of *Estudios: Revista de Investigaciones Literarias y Culturales*; the anthology *Más allá de la ciudad letrada*, ed. Boris Muñoz and Silvia Spitta; Bladimir Ruiz, “*La ciudad letrada* y la creación de la cultura nacional”; Françoise Perus, “¿Qué nos dice hoy *La ciudad letrada* de Ángel Rama?”; Juan Pablo Dabove, *Nightmares of the Lettered City*; and Juan Ricardo Aparicio and Mario Blaser, “The ‘Lettered City’ and the Insurrection of Subjugated Knowledges.”

3. For Carlos Alonso, Rama demonizes writing and, therefore, “there is no way out from the *letrado*'s power, just as there is no way out *for the letrado*, should he wish to apply his mastery of the written word to an oppositional or contestatory practice within his society” (288).

only make visible their exclusion (or make present their absence) from this domain with unorthodox materials and an improper or borrowed code. The anonymity, impropriety and, often, illegibility of these inscriptions irrupt in public space and interrupt public discourse. In defacing the walls of the real city, these writings confirm, time and time again, the unshakable hegemony of the lettered city.

To support this broad assertion, Rama offers three instances, drawn from history at intervals of roughly two hundred years: Hernán Cortés's riposte "pared blanca, papel de necios"; Alonso Carrió de la Vandera's observations in *El lazarillo de ciegos caminantes*; and the proliferation of political graffiti during the second half of the twentieth century (52–55). Each example refers to an unspeakable or *interdit* script, which provokes an official reaction that condemns the act and denigrates its faceless author(s). As it spans the full arc of Spanish American history, this selection of anecdotes posits a stable, complicit relationship between *letrados* and power. Though it is not an entirely static position, "the *locus* of the *letrado* in the history of Spanish American cultural history remains immutable, unaltered" (Alonso 287). Given this configuration, Rama's history of Latin American graffiti is necessarily mediated by lettered sources. The first two examples he cites are canonical works of colonial literature: Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* and Concolorcorvo's narrative. The third example concerns Rama and his audience: "todos hemos sido testigos de la invasión de graffiti políticos" (54). Precisely at a moment where *La ciudad letrada* attempts "to configure a countercanon that expands our sense of colonial and premodern Latin American textuality" by turning to "graffiti as collective writing" (De la Campa 135), Rama conflates the subject and object of his study.⁴ The very strength of the lettered city, paradoxically, restricts the inquiries of a scholar who interrogates the foundation and boundaries of his own place of enunciation.

La ciudad letrada establishes a metahistory of ideas that links figures and intellectual practices from different historical moments and disparate geogra-

4. This conflation captures the expository mode of *La ciudad letrada*, leading Perus to level a critique that overlooks its unfinished, provisional status: "procede . . . mediante asociaciones contiguas entre los signos que ella misma postula, sin que el lector pueda discernir la distancia —si es que la hay— entre lo atribuido a estos y otros autores u la ubicación del propio Rama al respecto. Así mismo, tampoco resulta clara la relación —recta o distanciada— que mantiene la voz enunciativa con sus propios enunciados o con los que reproduce y pertenecen a otros" (365).

phies. Julio Ramos attributes this oft-emulated reduction to the fact that, “while Rama considers a variety of writers as diverse as Rodó and Sarmiento within the category of the *letrado*, based on the (biographical) fact that they occupied public positions, he downplays the transformation of the place of the *literato*-intellectual before the changing configurations of power” (60). Any given conjuncture is subordinated to an autonomy of letters, which gathers visibility in retrospect. The consequence of orienting cultural history in this fashion, which does not escape Rama, is that alternative cultural practices—including graffiti and other forms of popular expression—tend to be suppressed or omitted from the archival record. *La ciudad letrada* engages the same binary logic that informs the traditional reading of *on ne tue point les idées*, which threatens to limit its scope of inquiry to “el campo semántico e ideológico que corresponde a . . . la ciudad como asiento y origen de proyectos civilizadores, y el letrado como matriz de lo que más globalmente se ha llamado la *intelligentsia* latinoamericana, haciendo énfasis en su condición eurocentrista” (Moraña 49). Graffiti, then, serves only as an analogy that demarcates the outer limits of a restricted discursive field: in the case of Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, “le ocurre lo mismo que pasaba con los anónimos autores de *graffiti*” (Rama 59); Simón Rodríguez, exiled from the lettered city, “como los escritores de *graffiti*, hubiera tenido que introducirse en ella para mejor combatirla” (67).

In a book where Sarmiento figures so prominently, the inscription that opens *Facundo* is conspicuously absent from Rama’s considerations about graffiti. At first glance, Sarmiento’s gesture appears to make literal the analogy that Rama uses to characterize the efforts of outliers like Lizardi and Rodríguez: Sarmiento protests the brutality of the Rosas regime with words and, in doing so, epitomizes how dissidents “can effectively assail positions of social power only on a two-dimensional battlefield of line and space,” to borrow from John Charles Chasteen’s translation of *La ciudad letrada* (37). And, like the graffiti that Rama does mention, it conveys the unspeakable, though not because it contains “desahogos innobles, insultos y amenazas” as its initial audience is said to have believed (*Facundo* 32), but because it is written in a foreign language that neither these unnamed officials nor, for that matter, Sarmiento spoke. The anonymous, unintelligible script, which he calls a “hieroglyph,” conveys its author’s repudiation, protest, and desperation in the face of a prevailing political order.

At the same time that Sarmiento’s graffiti reaffirms the implacability of writing in the struggle for power, it also calls into question the fixity of the

intellectual's position in this process, disrupting the neat trajectory that Rama traces through his three coordinates. For, if Sarmiento is an iconic nineteenth-century intellectual, then the opening of *Facundo* less depicts an author marginalized from the *vías letradas* than it signals the marginalization of the *vías letradas* themselves. The autobiographical anecdote would represent a restricted, but unified field of cultural production, whose internal conventions totally disregard external demands.⁵ This neat inversion presupposes that Sarmiento's abandonment of his *patria* and native tongue symbolizes what we might call a wholesale "brain-drain" from Rosas's Argentina. In doing so, it intimates a tendency that Rama resists in *La ciudad letrada*: "the notion that specific texts or authors can be said to alter this relationship between power and signification, or that we can reconstruct the epistemic period solely based on the transgressive qualities of a given text" (De la Campa 132).⁶ For Román de la Campa, Rama's inclusions of noncanonical sources in *La ciudad letrada* constitute an unfortunately truncated effort to resituate the study of intellectual activity in a broader field of inquiry—the social—where the binary logic that underpins the work is dislocated. In other words, Rama calls attention to the civilization/barbarism binary (or writing/speech binary, etc.), neither to reinforce nor to eliminate it, but "to extend the play of differences and semiotic excess to the broadly social and cultural domains" (137–38). This sympathetic reading, together with the call for a more rigorously historicized reading of lettered practices, points to a more nuanced understanding of Sarmiento's inscription: *On ne tue point les idées* captures a particular historical moment when conflicting social groups fought to reroute the *vías letradas*.⁷

5. This language is a rather clumsy pastiche of Pierre Bourdieu's terminology, which serves as a reminder of the chimerical nature of treating the foundational works of Argentine literature as belonging to a self-contained field. See Bourdieu's *The Rules of Art*, especially "The Author's Point of View: Some General Properties of Fields of Cultural Production" (214–77).

6. This would merely repeat the tendency that "can be seen, for instance, in the many dissertations and monographs written in the last ten years that study the role of a particular *letrado* in the process of creating a national discourse; works whose formulaic titles usually run "(Letrado's name) y la creación del discurso fundacional en (country)" (Alonso 290).

7. This assertion is consistent with Tulio Halperín Donghi's observation that the earliest writings of the Generation of 1837 convey an attitude that is, to an extent, reactionary: an acute sense of loss for the traditional position occupied by *letrados* during the colonial era. Halperín finds that these writings are especially concerned with "la hegemonía de la clase letrada como el elemento básico del orden político al que aspira, y su apasionada y a veces despiadada exploración de las culpas de la elite revolucionaria parte de la premisa de que la principal es haber destruido, por

The elitism that the French maxim conveys, after all, is a counterpoint to Sarmiento's abandonment of his native land. This exclusion is not merely geographic or linguistic, but discursive, because, as Josefina Ludmer argues, "con Rosas la patria es *casi* el género [gauchesco]" (111, my emphasis). I underscore the qualifier of Ludmer's assertion because, while gauchesque literature is an emblematic body of writing that provided the dominant idiom for the Argentine Confederation, it was but one of many discursive practices that Rosas and his supporters employed to maintain their hegemony. Contrary to the commonplace image of Rosas as a *caudillo* who ruled by brute force and disdained intellectual activity—which, to be certain, regime-friendly literature promoted—a survey of pro-Rosas journalism reveals that "la oposición simple entre el discurso y las acciones, donde las segundas aparecen juzgadas como verdaderas y el primero como falso, difícilmente pueda sostenerse sin alguna modificación" (Myers 14). Sarmiento, in other words, did not flee a barbarism that left its marks solely on the bodies of its victims ("salía yo de mí patria, desterrado por lástima, estropeado, lleno de cardenales, puntazos y golpes recibidos"), but escaped from a repressive political climate that, in addition to physical intimidation, depended on writing to a great extent. By opening *Facundo*—written and published in Santiago de Chile—with an account of his transgressive scrawl, Sarmiento locates the genesis of his resistance within the territory of the Rosist *patria*, on the same surface that the regime's iconography occupies, beneath "las armas de la patria." It is here—and not in the void of the *desierto*, as common knowledge would have it—that Sarmiento stakes his claims for authorship and political authority.

The opening anecdote of *Facundo* is the most celebrated, but not the only instance when Sarmiento employs graffiti in order to emphasize the relevance of his work within a specific conjuncture. *Campaña en el Ejército Grande* (1852) recounts his involvement with General Justo José de Urquiza's army, which defeated Rosas and brought an end to his regime. At one point during the campaign, Sarmiento was returning to army headquarters in Gualeguaychú from Montevideo by boat, when he took advantage of a brief stop to explore the island Martín García, situated at the confluence of the Uruguay and Plate rivers. Sarmiento had identified Martín García as the ideal

una sucesión de decisiones insensatas, las bases mismas de esa hegemonía, para dejar paso a . . . los jefes del federalismo" ("Prólogo" 10–11).

site for the capital of the “Estados Unidos del Río de la Plata” in his utopian political tract *Argirópolis*, published in 1850. Though Sarmiento sent a box containing copies of *Argirópolis* to Urquiza from Chile, as he recounts in *Campaña en el Ejército Grande*, the general ignored and, on occasion, mocked Sarmiento’s offers to counsel him. Setting foot on Martín García for the first time permits Sarmiento to insist once more on the important place he ought to occupy in national politics:

En un peñasco que está cerca de la playa escribí corriendo estas fechas,
para mi cuento muy significativas:

1850—Argirópolis

1851—Sarmiento (152)

With a gesture that approaches a parody of the colonial act of claiming a territory, Sarmiento employs the title and publication date of *Argirópolis* as a toponym and date of foundation, one that precedes his arrival on the island. Calling attention to an effectively inaccessible—and therefore, unverifiable—sign of past presence, he collapses three distinct moments of writing into one: that of *Argirópolis*, that of the inscription, and that of *Campaña en el Ejército Grande*. By means of an autograph, Sarmiento plots a personal trajectory in discursive and geographic space from the margin to an imaginary center; if *Facundo* is *la ida*, *Campaña* is *la vuelta* of Sarmiento.⁸

Consistent with Sylvia Molloy’s reading of *Recuerdos de provincia*, it could be said that the reprinted signature captures a moment when “el individuo que ha venido apuntalándose con lecturas, con citas, con letras, cede lugar a esas letras mismas, desaparece en favor de sus textos” (Molloy 417). In a sense, it lays bare the fiction that lends signatures an “absolute singularity”: “the pure reproducibility of a pure event” (Derrida 107). If *Campaña en el Ejército Grande*—published originally in installments in Rio de Janeiro and Santiago—narrates the reinsertion of its author into national territory and politics, the episode on Martín García alludes to the rewriting and overwrit-

8. This narrative of epic return and, in a sense, Sarmiento’s literary career, comes to a neat close at the end of *Campaña*, when immediately following the battle of Caseros, he reports that “tomé papel de la mesa de Rosas y una de sus plumas, y escribí cuatro palabras a mis amigos en Chile, con esta fecha. Palermo de San Benito, febrero 4 de 1852” (222). While graffiti reveals the marginalized position of the liberal intellectual, the letter from Palermo, written with more traditional implements, announces Sarmiento’s arrival at a place of political power.

ing of this scene. And, while it alludes to Sarmiento's desire to redraw the boundaries of the *patria* and rename it, the accompanying dates serve as a reminder of the immediate circumstances of the inscription. Thus, as it conveys immediacy and presence, the anecdote underscores Sarmiento's continued efforts to locate himself in the self-elected center of an imagined political community.

The self-referentiality of the episode is heightened when one takes into account that, in *Campaña en el Ejército Grande*, Sarmiento in fact repeats the act of engraving his name on a remote island. In "Mas-a-fuera," a letter to Demetrio Peña from December 14, 1845, which was published in 1849 as part of the first volume of *Viajes por Europa, Africa y América*, Sarmiento narrates a brief excursion to the Archipelago Juan Fernández. Throughout the trip, Sarmiento is mindful of the literary and historical figures associated with the island, namely, Captain Cook, the castaways Juan Fernández and Alexander Selkirk, and Selkirk's fictional version, Robinson Crusoe. Toward the end of the day, Williams, an American inhabiting the island, informs Sarmiento and his companions that "en un árbol estaban inscritos más de veinte nombres de viajeros" (22). It is late in the day, however, and the men must return to their ship. Sarmiento laments the lost opportunity, then resolves to leave a trace of his presence, too:

Acaso hubiéramos tenido el placer al verlos, de quitarnos relijiosamente nuestros gorros de mar en presencia del de Cook i de los de sus compañeros. Pero ya que esto nos fuese dado, encargáramosle [a Williams] gravase al pié de una roca, *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*, los de

HUELIN.

SOLARES.

SARMIENTO.

1845. (*Viajes* 22)

Sarmiento here employs a ghostwriter to supplement the unseen name of Cook and his crew with his own. Contrary to *Facundo*, where he claims authorship of an anonymous scrawl, here the inverse occurs: he reveals the inscription bearing his own name to be another's work. While Sarmiento offers his name in (the) place of Cook, he alludes to the fictitious nature of the gesture, as written by a "real-life" Robinson Crusoe. The opening letter of *Viajes* thus locates the work in the interstices of fiction and history, of Latin American, North American, and European forms of cultural produc-

tion, thus enabling “Sarmiento to situate himself with respect to the multiple cultural referents that impinge upon him” (Pratt 191). At a glance, then, the inscriptions of *Viajes* and *Campaña* characterize the double bond to which Piglia refers: the centripetal forces of Sarmiento’s political aspirations and the centrifugal pull of his literary pretensions.

These are not incompatible impulses in Sarmiento’s writing, but, instead, call attention to the fictitious aspect of political rhetoric and the political dimension of literature. Soon after landing, Sarmiento and his shipmates meet the four Anglo-Americans who inhabit the island, and the men agree to hunt wild goats. As Mary Louise Pratt observes, the scene initially appears to be an idyllic, masculine utopia, free of women and government (191). It does not take long, however, for Sarmiento to notice discord among the men, which leads him to ruminate on the necessarily political nature of human affairs. Rejecting the “sueño vano” of the island hermitage, he ventures that “[s]e nos secaría una parte del alma como un costado a los paralíticos, si nouviésemos sobre quienes ejercitar la envidia, los celos, la ambicion, la codicia, i tanta otra pasion eminentemente social, que con apariencia de egoista, ha puesto Dios en nuestros corazones, cual otros tantos vientos que inflasen las velas de la existencia para surcar estos mares llamados sociedad, pueblo, estado” (*Viajes* 14). What at first appears to be a utopian society, free of state interference, ultimately operates as a kind of case study to examine the central place of politics in human interaction.

Within this model, Sarmiento specifically reflects on the function of language. Prior to embarking on the hunt, the men fashion protective footwear from goat hides, “calzado a la Robinson Crusoe, segun nos complaciamos todos en llamarlo, a fin de cohonestar con una palabra noble, la innoble i bastarda forma que daba a nuestros piés.” The appropriation of a “noble” or proper name reminds Sarmiento that the “secreto de los nombres es mágico, como usted sabe, en política sobre todo, federacion, americanismo, legalidad, etc., etc., no hai nadie tan avisado que no caiga en el lazo” (*Viajes* 16–17). The ostensible thrust of his criticism is that an inadequate form, called by a misleading name, is imposed on a given object: a boot to a foot, a political system to a nation. The phenomenon, for Sarmiento, occurs in multiple contexts, but is most frequent—and perhaps most egregious—in political discourse. The analogy between footwear and politics operates, thus, as a thinly veiled criticism of the Rosas regime and its ubiquitous slogan of ¡*Viva la Santa Federación!* If “Robinson Crusoe” is too dignified a name for the crude footwear of the hunters of Mas-a-fuera, it follows that the domi-

nant political order of the day has misappropriated the term *Federación*. Both cases reveal an ironic meaning that exceeds the intended use of the word because the elevated term ultimately puts into relief the sorry state of the entity. In this sense, the analogy reaffirms the traditional critique of the disjunction between action and rhetoric, between doing and saying, of Rosas and, in a larger sense, of populist regimes.⁹

This reading is complicated by the fact that Sarmiento admits to using language in the same way and recognizes its practical effectiveness. He concedes to the necessity of political rhetoric and its ineffable “magic,” though he protests the misuse of specific words without identifying the guilty parties. There is an incongruence to the analogy, due to the slippage from a proper name (“Robinson Crusoe”) and explicit agents to a series of authorless (or unauthorized) concepts. While the first set of terms suggests a deficiency or an equivocation, the political words point to something more arbitrary and radical, akin to what Ernesto Laclau calls an “empty signifier”: “a constitutive lack, . . . an impossible object which . . . shows itself through the impossibility of its adequate representation” (*Viajes* 40). Words like *federation*, *Americanism*, and *legality* may bring men together, but they do so in a mysterious way, one that seems to defy reason or intelligence, because they are devoid of meaning; any authority may use them for its own ends.

Whereas the “calzado Robinson Crusoe” has an easily recognized, preexisting content (a foot), regardless of the inappropriateness or absurdity of the name, the enumerated concepts do not specify or contain a particular form of political association; instead, they seek to constitute it. By establishing his place of enunciation as a remote locale, beyond the reach of the state, Sarmiento places himself at a remove from the contemporary misappropriation of these terms, a posture that the graffiti at the end of the text underscores in dramatic fashion. At the same time, however, by placing his own name alongside those of Crusoe, Cook, Selkirk, and Fernández, Sarmiento also implicates himself in the same system of signification that his political opponents use; at a remove from Rosist hegemony, the letter from Mas-a-fuera signals how he and his opponents employ similar rhetorical strategies in order to legitimize their respective claims to power. If Sarmiento contests

9. “Sarmiento señalaba una oposición diametral entre aquello que decía estar haciendo el rosismo y lo que realmente hacía: sus proclamados sólo podían entenderse mediante el tropo de la ironía . . . y sólo podían explicarse como producto del cinismo” (Myers 14).

the regime's application of certain terms—such as *legality* and *savage*—and the legitimacy of others—*Federation* instead of *Republic*, for example—these differences are semantic, not structural.

Ironically, it is Juan Manuel de Rosas himself who best explains the special brand of “magic” that Sarmiento detects at the core of political discourse. In a letter to the governor of Tucumán, Alejandro Heredia, dated July 16, 1837, Rosas insists on the importance of employing a codified, but boisterous rhetoric to instill a sense of unity throughout the various provinces of the Federation. The government, he argues, must solicit and, at the same time, orchestrate public participation:

[E]s de absoluta necesidad que en sus oficios y proclamas y en todos los actos oficiales suene siempre la Federación con calor, procurando hacer mención de ella cuantas veces sea posible con especial aplicación al caso o asunto de que se trate, y esto aunque parezca que es con alguna machaca o violencia, porque esa misma machaca prueba ante la generalidad del pueblo que la Federación es una idea que ocupa y reboza el corazón del que habla. (168)

Rosas reminds Heredia that declarations of patriotism are not ancillary, but integral to the affairs of state. Preceding the fervent cries of the *pueblo* are a chain of written documents, private and public, that seek to regulate the spoken word. Rosas's letter accounts for the production of a signifier that does not merely represent, but enacts hegemonic relations. The purpose of public functions is not to harness spontaneous outbursts, but to produce an illusion of spontaneity that creates an affective bond, which doubles as an apparatus of vigilance.¹⁰ Inciting the passions of its citizenry, the state seeks to create a sense of belonging to a preexisting community. A key element of this operation is repetition. A chorus of *vivas* may generate extreme and even violent passions, but in doing so, it constitutes a biopolitics that engages the hearts, throats, lungs, and ears of its participants. The meaning of patriotic slogans is contingent on a specific action (“procurando hacer mención de

10. “El partido federal, siempre atento a medir la extensión de su influencia y popularidad entre la población y a identificar —para hostigar y castigar— a los opositores al régimen, entendía a la política como un compuesto de acciones, voces, rituales y apariencias que . . . debían todas orientarse en un determinado sentido” (Salvatore, “‘Expresiones federales’: formas políticas del federalismo rosista” 193).

ella . . . con especial aplicación al caso o asunto de que se trate”), residing in neither a fixed signified nor a preexisting referent. The collective identity named *federación* is realized precisely when the signifier is “crushed” or “pulverized” by its forceful echo.

The antagonism between an intellectual class and the hegemonic order embodied by Rosas may pit two incompatible ideologies against one another, but both form part of the broader struggle to establish popular sovereignty throughout Latin America in the turbulent wake of independence. If there was a lack of consensus in terms of the internal configuration of national territory, competing models of sovereignty uniformly regarded the state as indispensable in establishing a supposedly organic connection between a people and a geographic entity. As political elites attempted to establish a new order in the vacuum created by the collapse of imperial authority, they realized that “[a] fin de afirmar los nuevos Estados era necesario, en fin, consolidar lo que no era más que un patriotismo americanista vago en una ‘conciencia nacional’ a la que subordinaran otras formas de identidad (regionales, de casta, etc.)” (Palti 151). The failure of ambitious centralist designs throughout the continent, such as Bolívar’s Gran Colombia and Rivadavia’s Unitarian government, gave way to decades of internecine conflicts in which “public opinions were . . . associated with a *pueblo* identified in screaming posters, military barracks, and rural canteens seething with unrest. It was, therefore, not just a mode of production but a mode of legitimation that was in crisis” (Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution* 383). Political instability did not imply a reversion to archaic or premodern societies, but instead gave way to a proliferation of nationalist projects. The coexistence of these designs signals an antagonism as defined by Laclau and Chantal Mouffe: neither a “real opposition” nor a “contradiction,” but rather the “failure of difference” or “the ‘experience’ of the limit of the social” (124–25). This is, of course, not to ignore the often bloody consequences of these antagonistic relations, but to emphasize a mutual intelligibility, the common ground that opposing forces fought to partition. In the case of Argentina at midcentury, Jorge Myers has convincingly demonstrated how pro-regime journalism demonstrates that “los tópicos, símbolos y figuras emblemáticas que servían para articular un sistema de representaciones de lo político conformaban una lengua común, compartido por todas las facciones en pugna” (45). While “civilization and barbarism” may have been—at the time, at least—an axiomatic dichotomy only for a limited subset of social actors, terms like *federa-*

tion, Americanism, and legality belonged to a republican discourse employed by multiple groups vying for power.

A pro-Rosas graffiti of sorts provides a salient example of this discourse and thereby suggests a more complex, reciprocal relationship between speech and writing, as well as between politics and literature, than “civilization and barbarism” would suggest. On September 31, 1836, the regime-friendly newspaper *Gaceta Mercantil* published a poem that had been painted on the walls of the barracks situated on the Plaza de la Victoria (which forms part of the current day Plaza de Mayo). Surrounded by portraits of Rosas, the Santa Fe *caudillo* Estanislao López, and the recently murdered Facundo Quiroga, the verses celebrated Rosas’s return to the governorship of Buenos Aires:

Yo te saludo, día majestuoso,
Con el idioma mudo del respeto,
Lleno de admiración, lleno de gozo;
Tu recuerdo será siempre el objeto
Que vivirá grabado en nuestros pechos
Pues nos distes de libre los derechos. (Blomberg 30)

The poem is authorless, but given its places of “publication,” it is hardly an example of graffiti in the restrictive sense employed by Rama. It pronounces a state-sanctioned discourse of deference and affection from the symbolic center of the city, literally backed by the military strength of the regime. The poem narrativizes the discursive operation that Rosist hegemony employed to structure relations between the leader and his people: the “I” that communicates through a “mute” language, is a featureless and anonymous national subject that not only fills with admiration and joy, but multiplies into a collective object. The articulation between individual and collective, written on the body (politic), is the figure of the *caudillo* himself. The *poema mudo* heralds the expansion and resulting changes to a discourse formerly restricted to the lettered city. As displayed on a wall in a public plaza, it epitomizes how “la política penetra las relaciones cotidianas, introduciendo otros signos identitarios y otros vínculos que parecen modificar el sentido de los intercambios de la población en los lugares de sociabilidad cotidiana” (González Bernaldo de Quirós 203). The poem forms part of a discourse that incorporates not only the written and spoken word, but also visual images, dress, and forms of behavior. Everyday life becomes codified in a series of readily apprehensible signs.

In response to this shift, the exiled dissident José Mármol laments in his historical novel *Amalia* that “la ciudad entera de Buenos Aires quedó pintada de colorado. Hombres, mujeres, niños, todo el mundo estaba con pincel en la mano pintando las puertas, las ventanas, las rejas, los frisos exteriores, de día, y muchas veces hasta en alta noche” (2: 369). The visual changes to the city are the sign of a general disciplining that demands unproductive labor and blurs social distinctions of the populace. Mármol identifies his own resistance to this regime as an act of graffiti, as he recalls in a footnote to *Amalia*: “carbonicé algunos palitos de yerba mate para escribir con ellos, sobre las paredes de mi calabozo, los primeros versos contra Rosas” (2: 64). In contrast to the publicly displayed verses in praise of Rosas, this denunciation is, in practical terms, illegible, scribbled with a fettered hand in a space of darkness, confinement, and isolation. Mármol constructs an authorial figure on the margins of the printed page and the public sphere of Buenos Aires. The gesture evokes his contemporary Sarmiento and, more remotely, Byron and *The Prisoner of Chillon*. The decidedly Romantic graffiti would seem to distinguish Mármol’s literary production from the barbarous practices of his captors.

Read together with the “mute poem,” however, the footnote of *Amalia* signals a consistency between public and private writing, between expressions of adhesion and dissent. In both cases, the writing on the wall underscores the privileged place that poetry occupies in a common politico-aesthetic regime.¹¹ It is important to note that the verses written on the exterior barrack walls do not conform to the conventions of the stylized vernacular poetry that circulated in newspapers throughout the city and province, such as Luis Pérez’s *El Gaucho*, *El Negrillo*, and *El Torito de los Muchachos*, and that was sung or recited in common settings like *pulperías* and *cafés*. Instead, their placement and content indicate that, in all likelihood, they were initially employed as part of a public ceremony. The so-called *fiestas federales* were staged in Buenos Aires and throughout the Argentine Confederation with increasing frequency after Rosas assumed the *suma del poder público* in 1835. Typically consisting of speeches, dances, processions, the burning of effigies, and poetry readings, these events formed “part of a communicative exchange

11. Graciela Batticuore reminds us that, despite later laments about the ineffectiveness of poetry, “al menos hasta entrados los años 40 (época en que se ambienta *Amalia*) la *poesía* seguirá siendo la forma de la escritura elevada a la que aspiran o se ven tentados aunque sea ocasionalmente los autores y autoras románticas que se precian” (58).

between the government and its constituency” that employed “republican ritual practices and symbols” (Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos* 363).¹² The orchestrated demonstrations occurred in public plazas to commemorate national holidays, offering a ritualized display of Federalist fervor with the regularity of the liturgical calendar. Ceremony thus girded the politicization of everyday life, a relationship that the *poema mudo* embodies: revealed and perhaps recited during a festival, the poem remained on the wall and was subsequently printed in a pro-government daily.

The ceremonial poetry of the *fiestas federales* is characteristic of the populist logic of the Rosas regime in that it implies a democratization of participation, though not of opinion or authorship. In *Rosas y su tiempo* (1907), José Ramos Mejía examines the *fiestas* that took place in November of 1839. He pays particular attention to what Adolfo Saldías refers to as “rimas de federal perversidad” (qtd. in Ramos Mejía 21):

La lira de “La cautiva” había ido à parar à las manos de los puesteros y abastecedores, como uno de esos preciosos objetos de arte que después de un saqueo, destina à usos domésticos la torpeza del soldado. No era posible prostituir más el arte de quien cantó las desventuras de *Dido* y las osadías del *Pirata* heroico. El nivel de la cultura y el buen gusto que el poeta, si así podía llamarse al herrero de la feroz octava: *Viérase, ¡oh patria sumergida en llanto!* había obtenido en las parroquias, en medio de las lágrimas de las mujeres la grave admiración de los vecinos y los delirios inconscientes de la turba. (22–23)

Despite Ramos Mejía’s sardonic tone, his appraisal of the scene resonates with Rosas’s letter to Heredia regarding the repetition of the name *Federation*: both regard language as an effective instrument for forging an affective bond that connects the multitude with a larger political community and its leader, a *primus inter pares*. As he enumerates the professions of the participants—market vendors, purveyors, soldiers, and smithies—Ramos Mejía

12. Salvatore performs a close reading of the documents regarding a *fiesta* that occurred in the town of Dolores, province of Buenos Aires. This reading underscores how these events were not spontaneous gatherings, but orchestrated spectacles based on those of the capital: “Far from the center of power, Dolores celebrated a patriotic festivity with a blueprint identical to Buenos Aires”. This shows that the political model embodied in that design was replicable even in mid-size and small towns. The images of the federalist fatherland could circulate in iconic form across the territory of the Confederation” (*Wandering Paysanos* 372).

contends that “subalterns are directly implicated in the subversion of ‘natural’ social distinctions” (Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos* 388).¹³ The “federalist perversion” is that, under the auspices of the state, the masses appropriate the language belonging to poets, such as the Romantics Echeverría and Espronceda. Paradoxically, while the plebe “ransacks” and “prostitutes” poetry through their participation in the public spectacle, the value of poetry as cultural currency appreciates (and is appreciated). Not in spite of, but because of its subjection and debasement, verse proves capable of provoking the tears, admiration, and deliria of its audience. At a remove of over sixty years from the events in question, Ramos Mejía makes the implicit claim that his notions about the acceptable uses of poetry are the same as those of the Romantic writers to whom he refers. By gendering poetry and lamenting its indecent public exposure, he excoriates the Rosas regime for using an elevated, private language to sway public opinion.

Ramos Mejía’s sense of decorum, however, is somewhat anachronistic in that it presupposes that poetry is exclusively meant to be a personal or contemplative form of expression. While the image of Amalia reading Lamartine epitomizes an ideal, Romantic dissidents also regarded poetry as a public discourse capable of forging a collective identity through affect. In this regard, it is notable that Ramos Mejía refers to Esteban Echeverría’s *La cautiva*, which Echeverría’s peers celebrated as a model for national literature. Read by Juan María Gutiérrez at the Salón Literario that took place in Marco Sastre’s bookstore in 1837, the poem offers a sweeping depiction of the pampa, a site that Echeverría calls “nuestro, nuestro más pingüe patrimonio” in the preface to the work (17). In “Originalidad y caracteres argentinos,” the celebrated second chapter of *Facundo*, Sarmiento regards this potential site for national progress and poetry with a deep ambivalence:

Ahora yo pregunto: ¿Qué impresiones ha de dejar en el habitante de la República Argentina el simple acto de clavar los ojos en el horizonte, y ver . . . no ver nada; porque cuanto más hunde los ojos en aquel horizonte incierto, vaporoso, indefinido, más se le aleja, más lo fascina, lo confunde, y lo sume en la contemplación y la duda? ¿Dónde termina aquel mundo

13. In this sense, we could say that Rosism anticipates an aesthetic regime that, as Jacques Rancière understands it, “en suspendant l’opposition entre entendement actif et sensibilité passive, veut ruiner, avec une idée de l’art, une idée de la société fondée sur l’opposition entre ceux qui pensent et décident et ceux qui sont voués aux travaux matériel” (70).

que quiere en vano penetrar? ¡No lo sabe! ¿Qué hay más allá de lo que ve? ¡La soledad, el peligro, el salvaje, la muerte! He aquí ya la poesía: el hombre que se mueve en estas escenas, se siente asaltado de temores e incertidumbres fantásticas, de sueños que le preocupan despierto.

De aquí resulta que el pueblo argentino es poeta por carácter, por naturaleza. (80)

The deleterious effect of the poetic character is not merely limited to gauchos or inhabitants of the pampa, but to any “habitante de la República Argentina” who happens to fix his gaze on the sublime vastness of the pampa. Sarmiento looks to poetry as the antidote for this national malaise and quotes the opening of *La cautiva* as an example. He is quick to add that Echeverría’s work is *about* the pampa, but not *from* the pampa: “es la poesía culta, la poesía de la ciudad” (82). The urban(e) verses promise to transform the solitary experience of regarding the pampa into a collective aesthetic experience. Though the authors of this new, national poetry belong to the urban cultural elite, Sarmiento emphasizes its potentially broader appeal and social utility. To emphasize this point, he recounts how Echeverría, during a stay in the countryside, easily overcame gauchos’ wariness, because “la fama de sus versos sobre la Pampa le había precedido ya: los gauchos lo rodeaban con respeto y afición, y cuando un recién venido mostraba señales de desdén hacia el *cajetía*, alguno le insinuaba al oído: ‘es poeta,’ y toda prevención hostil cesaba al oír este título privilegiado” (83–84). For Sarmiento, the prestige conferred on a poet relaxes, if only momentarily, the social distinctions made immediately apparent by speech and dress, the very conventions that are central to the plot of Echeverría’s own *El matadero*. The poet neutralizes the unruly gaucho and, in turn, restores a social hierarchy that rural violence has disrupted. Like Ramos Mejía, Sarmiento notes that the prestige of poetry (and poets) is immediately apparent to even the least educated of the people. Where Sarmiento differs, however, is that he regards this privileged status as something that ought to be exploited, precisely because poetry operates so forcefully on human emotion. In this regard, the “national literature” advocated in *Facundo* ironically approximates the pro-Rosas publications that Sarmiento denounces elsewhere in the work: both operate on the principle that a noncolloquial language can make evident an organic, preexisting commonality to those that utter it.

Poetry in the hands (or tongues and ears) of the masses affirms a notion that the graffiti penned by *letrados* intimates: during the dictatorship of Juan

Manuel de Rosas, the proponents of competing models for the national state clashed on the terrain of discourse in order to justify and institute these designs. This was not mere semantic quibbling, but an integral part of the internal conflicts that would continue well after Rosas's deposal in 1852. Reading the "public" writings of Sarmiento and Mármol alongside the "mute poetry" of the *fiestas federales* reinforces the findings of social historians that these adversaries employed a shared republican discourse. Moreover, these inscriptions—or their printed reproductions—evidence a common aesthetic regime that divides this social field into a "we" and an internal other: for Sarmiento, civilization versus barbarism; for Rosas and his supporters, *los federales apostólicos* and *los salvajes, inmundos, asquerosos unitarios*. Ironically, these divisions are most apparent when the signifiers that designate the two camps are deformed by shouting, uttered by the illiterate masses, or written in an unintelligible language or in an inaccessible place. Their meaning—not to mention their "magic"—is contingent on the affect that their reiterations produce.

As manifest in graffiti, private correspondence, and publicly circulated documents, as well as the traditional corpus designated as "national literature," writing plays an implacable role in this process. However, against the grain of *La ciudad letrada*, this expanded field of inquiry indicates that, in the context of mid-nineteenth-century Argentina, a variety of social actors contested the propriety (and properness) of scriptural practices. Writing was not the exclusive terrain of a unified lettered class, nor was the relationship between culture and the state stable, in spite of the curiously congruent declarations of political adversaries to the contrary. Reading the writing on the wall suggests the need to search out other instances of graffiti in other sources, such as police archives. At the same time, this reading of graffiti does not propose the existence of an autonomous or alternative canon.¹⁴ Instead, the public writings of the Rosas era, including the *poemas mudos* that claim to limit their own expressive capacity, signal the need to resist mimicking the partitions of sense and sensibilities of the era and, instead, interrogate rigorously the positions inside and outside of the lettered city that produced them.

14. This would be to take literally another commonplace and potentially insist on yet another false continuity, by taking *on ne tu point les idées* to be the origin of all Argentine graffiti.

Works Cited

- Adelman, Jeremy. *Republic of Capital: Buenos Aires and the Legal Transformation of the Atlantic World*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1999.
- . *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2006.
- Alonso, Carlos J. "Rama y sus retoños: Figuring the Nineteenth Century in Spanish America." *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 28 (1994): 283–92.
- Aparicio, Juan Ricardo, and Mario Blaser. "The 'Lettered City' and the Insurrection of Subjugated Knowledges in Latin America." *Anthropological Quarterly* 81 (2008): 59–94.
- Batticuore, Graciela. *La mujer romántica: lectoras, autoras y escritoras en la Argentina, 1830–1870*. Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2005.
- Blomberg, Héctor Pedro, ed. *Cancionero federal*. Buenos Aires: Anaconda, 1934.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. Trans. Susan Emanuel. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1996.
- Corona, Ignacio. "Contesting the Lettered City: Cultural Mediation and Communicative Strategies in the Contemporary Chronicle in Mexico." In *Latin American Literature and Mass Media*. Ed. Edmundo Paz-Soldán and Debra A. Castillo. New York: Garland, 2001. 193–206.
- Dabove, Juan Pablo. *Nightmares of the Lettered City: Banditry and Literature in Latin America, 1816–1929*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2007.
- De la Campa, Román. *Latin Americanism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." In *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*. Ed. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. 82–111.
- Foucault, Michel. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." In *Language, Counter Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Ed. Donald F. Bouchard. Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1977. 139–64.
- Franco, Jean. *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin America in the Cold War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2002.
- González Bernaldo de Quirós, Pilar. "Sociabilidad, espacio urbano y politización en la ciudad de Buenos Aires (1820–1852)." In *La vida política en la Argentina del siglo XIX: armas, votos y voces*. Ed. Hilda Sabato and Alberto Lettieri. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003. 191–204.
- Halperin Donghi, Tulio. "Prólogo: una nación para el desierto argentino." In *De la revolución de independencia a la confederación rosista: historia argentina*. 3rd ed. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2000. 7–107.
- Laclau, Ernesto. *Emancipation(s)*. New York: Verso, 1996.
- Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. 2nd ed. London: Verso, 2001.
- Ludmer, Josefina. *El género gauchesco: un tratado sobre la patria*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1988.
- Mármol, José. *Amalia*. 2 vols. Buenos Aires: El Elefante Blanco, 1997.
- Molloy, Sylvia. "Inscripciones del yo en *Recuerdos de provincia*." *Sur* 351 (1982): 131–40.

- Moraña, Mabel. "De *La ciudad letrada* al imaginario nacionalista: contribuciones de Ángel Rama a la invención de América." In *Esplendores y miserias del siglo XIX: cultura y sociedad en América Latina*. Ed. Francisco Lasarte, Beatriz González Stephan, Graciela Montaldo, María Julia Daroqui. Caracas: Monte Ávila, 1994. 41–52.
- Muñoz, Boris, and Silvia Spitta, eds. *Más allá de la ciudad letrada: crónicas y espacios urbanos*. Pittsburgh: Biblioteca de América, Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, U of Pittsburgh, 2003.
- Myers, Jorge. *Orden y virtud: el discurso republicano en el régimen rosista*. Buenos Aires: U Nacional de Quilmes, 2002.
- Palti, Elías J. *El tiempo del la política: el siglo XIX reconsiderado*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2007.
- Paz-Soldán, Edmundo, and Debra A. Castillo, eds. *Latin American Literature and Mass Media*. New York: Garland, 2001.
- Perus, Françoise. "¿Qué nos dice hoy *La ciudad letrada* de Ángel Rama?" *Revista Iberoamericana* 71.211 (2005): 363–72.
- Piglia, Ricardo. "Notas sobre *Facundo*." *Punto de Vista* 17.3 (1980): 14–18.
- . "Sarmiento the Writer." In *Sarmiento, Author of a Nation*. Ed. Tulio Halperín Donghi et al. Berkeley: U of California P, 1994. 127–44.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Rama, Ángel. *La ciudad letrada*. Hanover, NH: Ediciones del Norte, 1984.
- . *The Lettered City*. Trans. John Charles Chasteen. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1996.
- Ramos, Julio. *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. Trans. John D. Blanco. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2001.
- Ramos Mejía, José María. *Rosas y su tiempo*. 3 vols. Buenos Aires: Félix Lajouane, 1907.
- Rancière, Jacques. *La partage du sensible: esthétique et politique*. Paris: La Fabrique, 2000.
- Ríos, Alicia, ed. *Homenaje a Ángel Rama*. Special double issue of *Estudios: Revista de Investigaciones Literarias y Culturales* 22/23 (2003).
- Rosas, Juan Manuel de. *Correspondencia de Juan Manuel de Rosas*. Ed. Marcela Tervasio. Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2005.
- Ruiz, Bladimir. "La ciudad letrada y la creación de la cultura nacional: costumbrismo, prensa y nación." *Chasqui: Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana* 33 (2004): 75–89.
- Salvatore, Ricardo. "'Expresiones federales': formas políticas del federalismo rosista." In *Caudillismos rioplatenses: nuevas miradas a un viejo problema*. Ed. Noemí Goldman and Ricardo Salvatore. Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1998. 189–222.
- . *Wandering Paysanos: State Order and Subaltern Experience in Buenos Aires during the Rosas Era*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2003.
- Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino. *Argirópolis*. Buenos Aires: A–Z (Secretaría de Cultura de la Nación), 1994.
- . *Campaña en el Ejército Grande*. Ed. Tulio Halperín Donghi. Bernal, Arg.: U Nacional de Quilmes, 2004.
- . *Facundo: civilización y barbarie*. Buenos Aires: Alianza, 1988.
- . *Viajes por Europa, África y América, 1845–1847 y Diario de gastos*. Ed. Javier Fernández. Buenos Aires: Colección Archivos, 1993.