

In summary, through Fuerst's critical lens, the *Royal Commentaries* becomes a political treatise within a historical account, a plan of government and reformation that would have envisioned a new Peru. Fuerst is aware that this perspective is still only a possibility without clearer evidence. As a result, the author often employs expressions like 'possibly', 'seem to be', 'indirectly', 'implicitly', etc., as his arguments rely strongly on intricate interpretations based on potential meanings or connotations from the Indigenous worldview that we must assume the Andean readers not only would have detected, but also would have assimilated to create an alleged critical message that may oppose what Garcilaso was literally stating elsewhere. Besides this caveat regarding its methodology, Fuerst's analysis is valuable and innovative, for it explores a new set of concepts and allusions for Andean readers, and reevaluates and expands previously discussed ones.

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Nicola Miller, *Republics of Knowledge: Nations of the Future in Latin America*

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This powerfully and elegantly written book will spark debate and likely emulation – mimesis, to use one of its author's favourite terms. Taking Argentina, Chile and Peru as her subjects, Nicola Miller explores the aspirations and initiatives of the cultural founding fathers of Spanish American emancipation. 'Republics of Knowledge' refers to the quest for *Ilustración*, the institutions, epistemologies and artefacts of civilised society: libraries, the press, vocational crafts, scholarship, pedagogies, literary and technical skills. While many of them sprang from the European Enlightenment, they also extended into wider precincts to include Peruvian Indigenous remnants and survivals from antiquity like rhetoric, the invention of the Greek Sophists. As an exercise in the promulgation of national self-awareness, Miller's book recalls Madame de Staël's *Corinne* (1807) and *De l'Allemagne* (1813), classic dissections of Italian art and German Romanticism of the Napoleonic era.

Republics of Knowledge pays obeisance to Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (Verso, 1983). Miller hails doyens of the Latin American press like *El Mercurio* in Chile, although her multifaceted concept of 'knowledge' reveals a far wider canvas than Anderson's. She writes against the grain and with great éclat, trumpeting the achievements of under-recognised figures during a period of Latin American history too commonly dismissed as culturally flaccid. She proclaims the imaginative vitality of her subjects, calling them 'secular in orientation, scientific

in method, social in purpose' (p. 41). Meanwhile, she interjects broadsides against so-called diffusionist, Eurocentric renditions of Spanish American culture.

She launches her study with the subject of national libraries, institutions designed as beacons of enlightenment at a time emancipation from Spanish rule remained incomplete. The libraries drew from collections confiscated from Jesuits on their expulsion in 1767. Military leaders and members of an embryonic intelligentsia augmented their holdings, including 600 volumes donated to the Biblioteca Nacional del Perú by José de San Martín in 1821. Miller rightly celebrates these institutions. As a research student, I grew very familiar with the Biblioteca Nacional in Buenos Aires at its old venue in calle México, enjoying several encounters with Jorge Luis Borges, then serving as the director. A world-famous epitome of *Ilustración*, Borges regaled his listeners with his grandmother's memories of Buenos Aires in the days of Juan Manuel de Rosas while expatiating on his fascination for Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Miller writes extensively on education, emphasising early pledges by the leaders of emancipation to universalise primary education. In Argentina at least, the goal finally neared fulfilment in the 1870s thanks to figures like Juana Manso Noronha, one of D. F. Sarmiento's collaborators. Miller dwells on campaigns to eliminate rote learning, quash clerical domination, promote vocational training and modify university curricula, erasing a chronic bias towards the legal profession. She resurrects obscure educators like Diego Alcorta, whose philosophy lectures at the University of Buenos Aires attested to the survival of small pools of cultural freedom during the Rosas era. She explores the nineteenth-century fascination with dictionaries, almanacs and encyclopaedias, and the use of catechisms, widely used pocket books for use as learning props. She writes about artistic education and on art itself. She includes a section on drawing, making the distinction between copying, a mark of cultural subjection, and imitation, 'the gift of seeing resemblances' (p. 91), a sphere in which Chileans proved particularly proficient. In their efforts to transcend European stereotypes, Miller accentuates the ways Latin American creative artists drew upon their own natural environments. She admires Uruguayan-born Marcos Sastre, author of *El Tempe argentino* (1858), for whom the Paraná delta evoked the legendary Vale of Tempe in Thessaly. John Keats celebrated the same paradise, 'Tempe or the dales of Arcady', in his 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' (1820). The magnificent Paraná delta! Endless muddy fluvial channels banked by sylvan wilderness; near cabbage-sized wild avocados; leaping dorados in the Paraná de las Palmas; and for the lucky few, sojourns at the Dorado Club serving the only English breakfasts in South America.

For all its remarkable panache and eloquence, *Republics of Knowledge* raises queries concerning analysis and interpretation. Miller's empathy for her subject sometimes drifts into mysticism. She writes as a putative Latin American nationalist. Aggrandising the achievements of Latin Americans, she overlooks the multiple parallel contributions of outsiders. She seeks to reject extraneous cultural presences but constantly illustrates their pervasiveness. *Ilustración* itself originated as an imported European construct. Heroes of emancipation headed by San Martín and Simón Bolívar evinced pronounced Europhile outlooks and predilections for European institutions. Latin American liberalism bore the stamp of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812; Jean-Jacques Rousseau (a subject of Miller's recent writing

elsewhere), Jeremy Bentham and Benjamin Constant all left permanent marks, as numerous historians have attested.

Alcorta, the *porteño* professor Miller extolls, lectured on the *Idéologues*, the school of philosophy founded by Antoine Destutt de Tracy. His major writings included a commentary on Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois* (1748) that became highly influential in Spanish America. Like other figures in this book, Alcorta appears more an agent of cultural transmission than a paradigm of cultural autonomy. Like her mentor Sarmiento, the liberal educator Manso imported pedagogic practices from the United States while befriending contracted US teachers. Leading literary figures such as the Chilean Alberto Blest Gana, the Colombian Jorge Isaacs and the Brazilian José de Alencar modelled their work on European Romantics led by Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Sir Walter Scott.

Many of Miller's heroes were hyphenated Latin Americans. Examples include the Clark brothers, the Chilean railway engineers, the writers Blest Gana and Isaacs (of part Irish and Anglo-Jewish descent respectively) and the archaeologist Samuel Lafone Quevedo, son of prominent Liverpool-born merchant Samuel Fisher Lafone. Miller admires the Argentine artist Martín Malharro for his willingness 'to take American nature, not European art, as a point of departure' (p. 93). Others will assess Malharro differently. A distinguished art-historian friend pronounced his work 'quite good, influenced by later Monet's work ... he must have spent some time in Paris', (which he had).

Miller's discussion of economic issues, another subject tinged with nationalism in her portrayals, betrays unfamiliarity with major sources. Joseph L. Love demonstrated that 'unequal exchange' credited to the Argentine economist Raúl Prebisch originated in 1930s Romania with Mihail Manoilescu. Miller's extolling of nineteenth-century economic protectionists forgets their isolated, marginal status. She overlooks the obstacles to protectionism among societies birthed in a voracious appetite for European consumption goods. Where protectionism existed as in Argentina from the late 1870s, it subsidised agricultural special interests. Moderate tariffs became necessary universally to raise revenue; in light of revenue needs, fully fledged free trade existed nowhere.

Miller's accounts of late-century infrastructure projects such as the construction of the port of Buenos Aires ignore seminal works like James R. Scobie's *Buenos Aires: From Plaza to Suburb* (Oxford University Press, 1974). Argentine authorities opted to build the new port near the city centre, where importers handling the great bulk of trade erected their warehouses, rather than further south at Boca. Their decision appeared far more economic than political. Miller's description of the locally financed Ferrocarril del Oeste of the 1850s, a nationalist cause célèbre, discounts its unprofitability and reliance on subsidies and therefore its vulnerability to foreign takeover. Her discussion of the development of *frigoríficos* (refrigerators) ignores research by Carmen Sesto exploring the links between the Argentine stockbreeders and the British meat market. Miller omits any mention of the Baring crisis of 1890, one of the most critical and revealing late-century interactions between Europe and Latin America. As that episode underscored, most nineteenth-century Latin Americans aspired to greater rather than less European contact.