

Artiguista, White, Cosmopolitan and Educated: Constructions of Nationhood in Uruguayan Textbooks and Related Narratives, 1868–1915

JENS R. HENTSCHE*

Abstract. Uruguay's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century economic modernisation and political institutionalisation were accompanied by the education reform led by José Pedro and Jacobo Varela, which was extended to the whole country during the administrations of José Batlle y Ordóñez. Schools were to insert future generations into the capitalist world market and a more liberal polity. This article explores how official manuals and related texts constructed the nation. They invented a foundation narrative that made José Artigas a protagonist of independence; converted Amerindians into extinct ancestors; represented European immigrants as dynamic elements who, rightly mixed, would form a new ethnic group and help the cosmopolitan lettered city to civilise the gaucho; and taught children that hard work and education held the key to prosperity.

Keywords: Uruguay, education, immigration, José Batlle y Ordóñez, José Pedro Varela, José Artigas, race and ethnicity

Introduction

Only in the last three decades have primary school textbooks become the subject of systematic research. These manuals give us an excellent insight into how states have framed national time and space, justified their claim to

Jens R. Hentschke is professor of Latin American history and politics at Newcastle University, UK. Email: j.r.hentschke@ncl.ac.uk.

* I wish to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Banco Santander and Newcastle University for funding research on this project; William Acree, José Basilio, Dora Borges Child, Jorge Bralich, Luís María Delio Machado, Cristina Hernández, Gladys Figueroa, María Hortiguera, Susana Luzardo, Emilio Marenales, Susana Monreal, Agapo Palomeque, Cristina Rizzi, Graciela Sobrino, Marcelo Sosa, the Biblioteca Pedagógica Central, Escuela y Liceo Elbio Fernández, Museo Pedagógico and Sociedad de Amigos de la Educación Popular for their generous support; and the five anonymous reviewers and three editors of the *JLAS* for their comments. Translations are my own. 'Public schools' are defined as institutions run by municipalities, *departamentos* and central government.

authenticity, defined the boundaries of the imagined community, ignored or limited popular agency, and tried to socialise the citizenry.¹ Representations of the past reveal the anxieties of the present. For Latin America, where, in contrast to Western Europe and North America, state formation preceded nation-building, the challenge consisted in a post facto forging of national culture and historical conscience. The formation of a public school system from the 1860s onwards proved to be instrumental in accelerating this process.

Research on the state-led canonisation of knowledge in Latin American textbooks during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has highlighted four characteristics that will guide the analysis of the understudied Uruguayan case that is the focus of this essay.² First, manuals drew a direct line from the creole ‘liberators’ of the independence period, represented as proto-nationalists, to post-1860 liberal nation-builders. These teleological accounts omitted conflicts between the ‘great men’, warned against caudillo anti-heroes and condemned independent subaltern mobilisation.³ Second, Amerindians and Afro-descendants were depicted as an obstacle to modernisation that could only be removed through their extermination, the promotion of European immigration, or cultural *mestizaje*. While Argentine texts justified the first two options, post-revolutionary Mexico’s policy of acculturation offered countries with a more sizeable and less territorially confined indigenous and black population an alternative way of ‘whitening’ the national

¹ Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal and Hanna Schissler, ‘Teaching beyond the National Narrative’, in Schissler and Soysal (eds.), *The Nation, Europe, and the World: Textbooks and Curricula in Transition* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2005), pp. 1–2, 7–8.

² Pioneering texts were Michael Riekenberg’s edited volumes *Latinoamérica: enseñanza de la historia, libros de texto y conciencia histórica* (Buenos Aires: Alianza/FLACSO, and Frankfurt am Main: Georg Eckert Institute, 1990); and *Politik und Geschichte in Argentinien und Guatemala (19./20. Jahrhundert)* (Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1994). See also Mary Kay Vaughan, *The State, Education, and Social Class in Mexico, 1880–1928* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982), chap. 7; Gabriela Ossenbach and Miguel Somoza (eds.), *Los manuales escolares como fuente para la historia de la educación en América Latina* (Madrid: UNED, 2001); Jean-Louis Guereña, Gabriela Ossenbach and María del Mar del Pozo (eds.), *Manuales escolares en España, Portugal y América Latina (siglos XIX y XX)* (Madrid: UNED, 2005); Héctor Rubén Cucuzza, *Yo Argentino: la construcción de la nación en los libros escolares (1873–1930)* (Buenos Aires: Miña y Dávila, 2007); and Matthias vom Hau, ‘Unpacking the School: Textbooks, Teachers, and the Construction of Nationhood in Mexico, Argentina, and Peru’, *Latin American Research Review*, 44: 3 (2009), pp. 127–54.

³ Argentina’s national pantheon is exemplary: it includes independence heroes such as José de San Martín, Mariano Moreno and Bernardino Rivadavia, and the architects of ‘national reconstruction’ in the 1860s and 1870s, Bartolomé Mitre and Domingo F. Sarmiento. These were opposed to anti-heroes such as Juan Manuel de Rosas and Facundo Quiroga. Juan Bautista Alberdi, who drafted the 1853 Constitution but became an opponent of Mitre and Sarmiento, did not figure in this pantheon: see Ángel J. Bassi, *J. Alfredo Ferreira: el pensamiento y la acción del gran educador y filósofo* (Buenos Aires: Claridad, 1943), p. 231; and Cucuzza, *Yo Argentino*, pp. 80–7.

community.⁴ Third, textbooks in most countries followed the elites' equation of 'civilisation' with urban culture, or *civitas*, and depreciation of the 'barbarian' hinterland.⁵ However, the ruralisation of historical images in early twentieth-century Argentina, where mass immigration had resulted in new fears of alienation, does offer a contrast to this trend. Instead of allowing for cultural pluralism, in Argentina the nationality was to be kept pure, as in the *patria vieja*. The emerging cult of the gaucho was to bind together immigrants and domestic dependent groups, with textbooks praising the authentic traditions of country folk and suggesting foreigners' assimilation.⁶ Finally, readers and manuals reveal the liberal elites' long-standing conviction that education could improve the 'moral condition' of subaltern groups and instruct them in hard work, self-restraint and patriotism.

The absence of Uruguay from comparative textbook analyses and the limited number of case studies is surprising, given the centrality of popular education in the country after the late 1860s.⁷ Its expansion over two generations helped transform a notorious theatre of war into the continent's first welfare-state democracy. Yet the leading school reformer, José Pedro Varela (1845–79), and his followers have remained relatively unknown outside Uruguay. This study explores a significant aspect of their paradigmatic project to erase frontier backwardness.

⁴ The success and meanings of *mestizaje* differed from country to country. Elites in the central Andes considered *indios* to be 'unalterable', as Ecuador's first textbook in the 1870s had stated, and lacked Mexico's resources for a sustained programme of acculturation: see Brooke Larson, *Trials of Nation-Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810–1910* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 120. In the Dominican Republic, *mestizaje* hid a racist, anti-Haitian nationalism, as Manuel de Jesús Galván's 1882 *Enriquillo*, required reading in schools, shows. Being an acculturated *mestizo*, children learned, freed the Dominican of colour from the stain of Africanness: see Doris Summer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 251–2; and Teresita Martínez-Vergne, *Nation and Citizen in the Dominican Republic, 1880–1916* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 102–4. By the late 1910s Brazilian texts no longer depicted *mestiçagem* as a stigma; instead, the new Brazilian would unite the best features of the country's formative 'three races'. See Fernanda Lucchesi, 'Criando a nação: os livros didáticos de História do Brasil de Rocha Pombo (1857–1933)', *Educação On-Line* (PUCRJ), 3 (2008), available at www.maxwell.lambda.ele.puc-rio.br.

⁵ Vaughan, *The State*, p. 218.

⁶ In early twentieth-century Chile, middle-class professionals and politicians also responded to urbanisation, industrialisation and labour militancy by stylising the *huaso*, or cowboy, as a national cultural icon. However, the absence of mass immigration made them choose less chauvinist language than in Argentina. The *criollismo* movement included teachers, but their stories seemed to have entered classrooms only in the 1930s: see Patrick Barr Melej, 'Cowboys and Constructions: Nationalist Representations of Pastoral Life in Post-Portalian Chile', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 30: 1 (1998), pp. 35–61.

⁷ Jorge Bralich, *Los textos escolares como instrumento ideológico* (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 1990); Verónica Leone, 'Manuales escolares e imaginario social en el Uruguay', in Gerardo Caetano (ed.), *Los uruguayos del Centenario: nación, ciudadanía, religión y educación (1910–1930)* (Montevideo: Santillana, and Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2000), pp. 139–215.

From the independence wars until Uruguay's involvement in the Federalist Revolution in southern Brazil (1893–5) and the last armed party political conflict in 1904, internal and external fronts overlapped. In their political and military battles against liberal Colorados in greater Montevideo, conservative Blancos in Uruguay's rural north sided consecutively with the Argentine dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas, the caudillos in Entre Ríos, and Rio Grande do Sul's opposition. Colorados, in turn, found common ground at times with Liberals in Buenos Aires and Porto Alegre's Republican government. Uruguay's eventual pacification and consolidation are associated with José Batlle y Ordóñez (president in 1903–7 and 1911–15) and other 'Young Turks' in the Colorado Party, the Batllistas.⁸ However, as recent historiography has begun to show, continuity in change prevailed over the alleged rupture of 1903–4. Fernando López-Alves argues that young Colorados were able to build upon increasing polity formation and compromises with the more patrician and reform-wary Blancos under the military regimes of Lorenzo Latorre (1876–80) and, to a lesser degree, Máximo Santos (1882–6) and Máximo Tajes (1886–90), which they so much despised. The army, strengthened after the Paraguayan War (1865–70), imposed orderly peace and legal codes, rebuilt and consolidated the state, provided services and financial stability, and allowed for economic and infrastructural modernisation without being able to form a durable hegemonic bloc.⁹

The Reforma Vareliana, which unfolded in several stages from 1876 onwards, formed part of this transformation. Its purpose was twofold: on the one hand, it was to complement political centralisation with belated nation-building. On the other, Uruguay was to gain access to the capitalist world market and attract immigrant labour. Public primary schools became sites to generate national allegiance in future citizens, domestic and 'foreign', and discipline the workforce. Readers and textbooks in geography, history, and civic and moral education reveal the image of Uruguay and the values that

⁸ Milton I. Vanger's biographical trilogy attributes Uruguay's transformation to Batlle's ability to use and reform his party and state institutions: see Milton I. Vanger, *José Batlle y Ordoñez of Uruguay: The Creator of His Times, 1902–1907* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963); *The Model Country: José Batlle y Ordoñez of Uruguay, 1907–1915* (Hanover, NH, and London: University of New England Press, 1980); and *Uruguay's José Batlle y Ordoñez: The Determined Visionary, 1915–1917* (Boulder, CO, and London: Lynne Rienner, 2010). Other studies have explored the Batllistas as an alternative generation of leaders and emphasised structural changes such as uneven economic modernisation, divisions within the landholding classes, immigration, urbanisation and relative state autonomy: see José Pedro Barrán and Benjamín Nahum, *Historia rural del Uruguay moderno*, 7 vols. (Montevideo: Banda Oriental, 1967–78); and *Batlle, los estancieros y el imperio británico*, 8 vols. (Montevideo: Banda Oriental, 1979–86); and Francisco E. Panizza, *Uruguay: Batllismo y después* (Montevideo: Banda Oriental, 1990).

⁹ Fernando López-Alves, *State Formation and Democracy in Latin America, 1810–1900* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2000), pp. 90–5.

political decision-makers and their officials wanted to inculcate in children. It will be argued here that the country was depicted as innately autonomous and democratic (Artiguista), white, cosmopolitan and educated: in short, as civilised and modern.

Unsurprisingly, such a representation was not out of line with those being put forward by other Latin American countries. As the world society school points out, the convergence of textbook contents with regard to internationally accepted models of development results from 'global cultural and associational processes'.¹⁰ Education officials, textbook authors and historians were part of a transnational community in which the Enlightenment's demiurgic understanding of popular education and the prevailing paradigms of the time, positivism and Darwinism, reverberated. However, this should not make us overlook significant particularities of the Uruguayan case concerning all four dimensions of the argument here: the invention of a 'liberator', José Gervasio Artigas, whose political project had failed and could not be confined to the national territory; the very denial of racial heterogeneity; the celebration of urban cosmopolitanism in spite of mass immigration; and the role of popular education as not only a means to generate national identity but also a vital part of it. While the construction of a foundation myth represented a bipartisan project and the claim to whiteness was undisputed, the remaining characteristics reflect primarily Colorado positions.

This article draws on 25 readers and geography, history, and civic and moral education textbooks published in Uruguay between 1868 and 1915, written by authors of more than one manual, and approved by the Dirección General de Instrucción Pública (General Directorate of Public Instruction, DGIP), which was founded in 1877.¹¹ Altogether they constituted more than two-thirds of the texts in circulation. In contrast to other studies, I will go beyond their content analysis and also use *historias patrias* and foundational fiction, which supported or modified the textbook messages, as well as the DGIP's widely read pedagogical journal *Anales de Instrucción Pública*, which reveals post-1903 controversies surrounding the suitability and quality of these materials.¹² However, Batlle's double presidency did not represent a radical break with established textbook interpretations and adoption practices, in

¹⁰ John W. Meyer, John Boli, George M. Thomas and Francisco O. Ramírez, 'World Society and the Nation State', *American Journal of Sociology*, 103: 1 (1997), pp. 144–5.

¹¹ These authors are Eduardo Acevedo, Enrique Antuña, Orestes Araújo, Braulio Artecona, Francisco A. Berra, Emma Catalá de Princivalle, Luis Cincinato Bollo, José Henriques Figueira, Alejandro Lamas, Joaquín Mestre, Julián O. Miranda and Francisco Vázquez Cores.

¹² *Anales de Instrucción Pública* (hereafter *Anales*) was an official publication. The DGIP sent it, free of charge, to every school in the country. The precise print run is unknown, but it was certainly high.

consonance with the continuity in change that marked 1910 Mexico and 1916 Argentina.¹³

Before analysing the actual manuals, we need to look more closely at the factors that conditioned their production, dissemination and impact: the dynamics of Montevideo's intellectual society; the nature and reach of the *Reforma Vareliana*; and the reformers' ability to assimilate new philosophical-pedagogical currents.

The Reforma Vareliana: Origins, Impact and Textbook Production

José Pedro Varela's 1867–8 journey to the United States and meeting with the Argentine envoy, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, led him to find his vocation in life. Following the example of Horace Mann in Massachusetts, Sarmiento and Varela aimed at the organisation of a public school system, the professionalisation of teachers and the standardisation of curricula in their countries.¹⁴ Both returned on the same ship in early September 1868, the former to accept the presidency of a largely consolidated Argentina, the latter to a country in turmoil. Uruguay faced not only its most severe economic crisis since independence but also, after the assassination of both the Colorado and Blanco leaders on 19 February that year (the latter, Bernardo Berro, was Varela's uncle), a power vacuum.¹⁵

This situation provided opportunities. Montevideo experienced an unprecedented associational fever, and a number of young idealistic intellectuals defending the principle of absolute liberty (*Principistas*) were soon propelled into government. By early October Varela had set up the *Sociedad de Amigos de la Educación Popular* (Society of Friends of Popular Education, SAEP), which would soon appoint *socios* in many countries. Its 206 founding members represented Montevideo's kindred cultural elite and included, apart from Varela and his brother Jacobo, Francisco Berra, the society's leading pedagogue, Alfredo Vásquez Acevedo, a future university rector, and Carlos María Ramírez, a co-founder of the Club Universitario (University Club). This organisation, which was also founded in 1868 and merged with other associations nine years later to form the Ateneo del Uruguay (from 1886 Ateneo de Montevideo), helped launch the SAEP and critically accompanied its early

¹³ Leone, 'Manuales', p. 159; Vaughan, *The State*, pp. 237–8; Carlos Escudé, *El fracaso del proyecto argentino: educación y ideología* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Torcuato DiTella, 1990), pp. 63–4, 83–4.

¹⁴ Claudio Caballero (pseud. Bartolomé Mitre y Vedia), 'José Pedro Varela y Domingo F. Sarmiento: una carta a Sarmiento', *Revista Histórica* (Montevideo), 63: 118–20 (1969), pp. 670–9; José Pedro Varela, *Obras pedagógicas: la educación del pueblo*, 2 vols. (Montevideo: Biblioteca Artigas, 1964).

¹⁵ Juan José Arteaga, *Breve historia contemporánea del Uruguay* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2008), pp. 81–90.

efforts at reform. The SAEP's objective of disseminating popular education throughout the national territory in order to tame the gaucho, break the cycle of violence and generate wealth found the support of not only the urban middle class and entrepreneurs but also the *hacendados* in the Littoral, who, with the spread of wire fencing, had begun to capitalise their production. Varela's further agenda of promoting social progress and democracy was received less enthusiastically, and his attack on elitist university *letrados* and his religious free-thinking pitted him against some of his SAEP colleagues such as Carlos María Ramírez, a law professor, and Francisco Bauzá, a Catholic historian.¹⁶

Varela was convinced that a school system had to be built from the bottom up, beginning with free, lay and compulsory primary instruction. The SAEP's own Escuela Elbio Fernández, founded in 1869, became a laboratory for the reform of public schooling; it was here that Varelistas tested revised programmes, applied advanced didactics, used new textbooks and provided courses for practising teachers. However, offshoots of the SAEP and the 'Elbio' outside Montevideo remained short-lived.¹⁷ Varela realised that the state agnosticism of the Principistas was misplaced and that active government was needed. After his appointment as national inspector in 1876 he established a framework in which public education could develop, including a normal school that trained primary school teachers. Due to his death from tuberculosis in 1879, it was left to his successor, Jacobo Varela, to implement this plan. The new national inspector chose to found separate boarding schools for girls and boys from rural areas, who were to return to their home departments after graduation: the Internato Normal de Señoritas was inaugurated in 1882 and the Internato Normal de Varones in 1889, the last year of Jacobo's term.¹⁸ Simultaneously, Vásquez Acevedo reformed the university. His long-time rectorship in the 1880s and 1890s saw the introduction of scientific curricula, the organisation of secondary and preparatory education, and engagement with the DGIP.¹⁹

¹⁶ Diosma Piotti, *El Elbio, una institución privada con vocación pública: la historia de la Escuela y Liceo Elbio Fernández y la Sociedad de Amigos de la Educación Popular* (Montevideo: SAEP/ Escuela y Liceo Elbio Fernández, 2000), pp. 70–3, 243–5; Jorge Bralich, *Varela: sociedad burguesa y reforma educacional* (Montevideo: Nuevo Mundo, 1989), pp. 9–61, 65–7; José Pedro Varela and Carlos María Ramírez, *El destino nacional y la universidad: polémica*, 2 vols. (Montevideo: Biblioteca Artigas, 1965).

¹⁷ Bralich, *Varela*, p. 33; Piotti, *El Elbio*, pp. 74–81, 101–34.

¹⁸ Raúl Montero Bustamante, *Jacobo A. Varela: su vida y su obra* (Montevideo: Mercantil, 1922); Emilio Marenales and Gladys Figueredo, *Internatos Normales de Montevideo* (Montevideo: Somerver, 2002); Luis María Delio Machado, *Historia de la formación docente: la enseñanza normal nacional desde sus orígenes hasta la instalación del Consejo Nacional de Enseñanza Primaria y Normal*, vol. 1 (Montevideo: Cruz del Sur, 2009).

¹⁹ Juan Oddone and M. Blanca Paris de Oddone, *Historia de la Universidad de la República* (2nd revised edition, Montevideo: Ediciones Universitarias, 2009–10), esp. vol. 1, pp. 58–63, 72–90, and vol. 2, pp. 13–41.

Yet a quarter of a century after Varela's reform, inspector Abel J. Pérez expressed disappointment: statistics revealed that, in 1903, only 7.9 per cent of the population had attended school. It seemed to have been of no consolation to Pérez that Uruguay ranked second in Latin America, with Argentina faring only marginally better (9.4 per cent); a country that aspired to core status had to compare itself to the United States and Switzerland, which had percentages of 20.3 and 20 respectively. Pérez attributed Uruguay's deficit to the limited infrastructural power of the state.²⁰ In 1900 58.6 per cent of Montevideo's 52,091 born or naturalised Uruguayans aged between 6 and 14 were literate, but among the 158,857 in the same age group who lived in the 18 *departamentos*, the rate was only 37.6 per cent.²¹ Progress had certainly been made under the first generation of reformers: from 1882 to 1900 enrolment in public primary schools had risen from 26,169 to 52,474, while there was only a moderate increase from 19,244 to 22,276 in private institutions. It was actually in the interior where the state had made most progress, as a comparison of the ratios of public to private schools in 1883 and 1900 in Montevideo (22:78 versus 27:73) and outside the capital city (54:46 versus 78:22) shows. During the same period, the number of active teachers in public schools rose from 541 to 1,131, compared with an increase from 796 to 924 in private institutions. However, these figures disguise the fact that most schools operated in small towns and offered no more than four grades, and that normal school graduates made up only 8 per cent of their staff.²² In rural areas access to education remained precarious and children left school early. On the northern border, literacy rates among Uruguayans aged 6–14 were as low as 23.4 (Rivera) and 30.6 per cent (Artigas).²³ In 1900 the government reacted by converting the Internatos Normales into Institutos Normales with external students only, most of whom were urbanites, and suggesting the creation of teacher training facilities in the departamentos.²⁴ However, only after Uruguay's pacification was it possible to extend public schooling to the whole country, as the construction of approximately 300 primary schools under President Claudio Williman (1907–11) and the foundation of provincial *liceos* (secondary

²⁰ The DGIP compiled figures from different years: Argentina's are from 1900, Switzerland's from 1901, and the United States' from 1901–2; Abel J. Pérez, *Memoria correspondiente á los años 1902–1903* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1904), pp. 168–9.

²¹ *Anuario Estadístico de la República Oriental del Uruguay: Años 1902–1903*, vol. 1 (Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1905), pp. 110–12.

²² Marenales and Figueredo, *Internatos*, pp. 102–7 (tables 1–6).

²³ *Anuario Estadístico*, p. 112.

²⁴ In 1903, three-quarters of students in the female institute came from Montevideo: see 'Libro de Matrícula, 1882–1917', Archivo Histórico de los Institutos Normales de Montevideo, Colección Instituto Normal de Señoritas. On the creation of the teacher training facilities, see Carlos Vaz Ferreira, 'Proyecto sobre organización de la enseñanza normal', *Anales*, 1: 1 (1904), pp. 54–62.

schools with attached normal school sections) during Batlle's second term demonstrate.²⁵ These conditions set limits to the production and dissemination of textbooks and their use by qualified teachers.

Varela initially believed in decentralising education, but confronted with resistance from clergy, political bosses, school boards and teachers, he eventually accepted a centralised apparatus which also took responsibility for textbook production.²⁶ To begin with, SAEP pioneers translated US manuals and wrote their own pedagogical works. These received prizes at the 1875 international exhibition in Santiago de Chile.²⁷ By the 1880s the DGIP had invited authors to submit textbooks and had made its final choices.²⁸ Nationalist instruction was the decisive criterion. Textbook authors included founders of the SAEP (Vásquez Acevedo, Berra), DGIP inspectors (Julián O. Miranda, José Henriques Figueira), faculty and graduates of the Institutos Normales (Orestes Araújo, Emma Catalá de Princivalle), and other teachers (Braulio Artecona, Luis Cincinato Bollo). Most penned manuals on different subjects, which appeared in several editions, with Bollo winning gold medals in Geneva, Chicago and San Francisco. Yet, none of these individuals could make a living solely from textbook writing.²⁹ National booksellers and publishers Barreiro y Ramos and Dornaleche y Reyes specialised in didactic material, with the former also printing *historias patrias* by Ramírez, Bauzá and Juan Zorilla de San Martín. One textbook author, Francisco Vázquez Cores, had his own book and print shop.³⁰ Innovation came with Pérez's long reign over the education bureaucracy (1900–18). During the first 15 years, he was supported by a young philosopher, Carlos Vaz Ferreira, the DGIP's intellectual motor. In 1901 Vaz became the first president of a designated textbook commission, but he also assessed teaching programmes and, after its launch in 1903, contributed to *Anales*.

Institutional and policy changes reflected a gradual shift of philosophical-pedagogical paradigms. By the late 1870s Varela had completed a personal journey from French eclectic rationalism to Herbert Spencer's positivism, with its emphasis on scientific, moral and physical education. Yet, while he still defended a US-style practical school, Berra reduced pedagogy to rigid

²⁵ Vanger, *The Model Country*, pp. 11, 157–60.

²⁶ Bralich, *Varela*, pp. 50, 61–78, 96–104, 113–20.

²⁷ The SAEP's work continued to receive praise and awards at exhibitions in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Chicago: see Piotti, *El Elbio*, p. 96.

²⁸ Diana Dumar, 'La política educativa de la reforma vareliana en la promoción de textos escolares: innovación y ruptura', unpubl. ms., cited in Roberta Paula Spregelburd and María Cristina Linares, *El control de la lectura: los textos escolares bajo la supervisión del Estado Nacional (1880–1970)*, chap. 3.4, available at www.histelea.unlu.edu.ar/pdf/Linares.pdf.

²⁹ Leone, 'Manuales', pp. 162–71, 179–82.

³⁰ William Garrett Acree Jr., *Everyday Reading: Print Culture and Collective Identity in the Río de la Plata, 1780–1910* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), pp. 100, 106–11.

methodologies. Other Varelistas, influenced by social Darwinism, believed in natural selection and curricula which took into account Ernst Haeckel's formula of ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny, meaning that the development of an individual from embryo to adult repeated the consecutive stages in the evolution of the species. Therefore, sciences would have to be introduced gradually.³¹ During Uruguay's national consolidation in the 1880s and 1890s, positivism predominated in the DGIP, the normal schools and the university, though idealism developed in its shadow and was embraced by the Batllistas, who never forgave the Varelas for their collaboration with the military.³² From the late 1890s the positivists' normative understanding of education and national confinement of culture were also critiqued by both José Enrique Rodó and Vaz Ferreira, who wished to reconcile Spencer with new philosophical currents such as vitalism and pragmatism.³³ However, given the lack of teaching aids and the subtle resistance of normal school teachers to attempts at undermining their positivist world view, the enforcement of changes to or bans of manuals was not always possible.³⁴ Therefore textbook contents, to which we now turn, remained largely unchanged.

Excavating Artigas, or Inventing a Foundation Narrative

In Uruguay the construction of a national pantheon to unify and energise the populace proved to be a difficult enterprise. The country lacked both a 'liberator', like Simón Bolívar in Venezuela and Colombia, and a shared political philosophy, such as the 'American Creed' in the United States. The Banda Oriental, the 'eastern bank' of the River Uruguay, owed its independence in 1828 to the need for a buffer state between Argentina (until 1826, the United Provinces of South America) and Brazil. This solution was also conducive to British economic interests. 'Orientales' themselves had never

³¹ Bralich, *Varela*, pp. 86–95; Jorge González Albistur, *José Pedro Varela: el hombre y el mito* (Montevideo: La Plaza, 1997), pp. 116–27; Carlos María Pena, 'Pro Herbert Spencer: influencia en el Uruguay de algunas ideas de Spencer sobre educación', *Anales*, 1: 5 (1903), pp. 497–507; Carlos A. Echenique, *Las ideas pedagógicas del Dr. Francisco A. Berra y su aporte al americanismo filosófico* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1981), pp. 23–65; Thomas F. Glick, *Darwin y el darwinismo en el Uruguay y en América Latina* (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 1989), pp. 80–4.

³² Arturo Ardao, *Espiritualismo y positivismo en el Uruguay* (3rd edition, Montevideo: Biblioteca Artigas, 2008).

³³ Luís Delio Machado, 'Carlos Vaz Ferreira y la educación pública primaria', *Que Hacer Educativo*, 14: 66 (2004), pp. 68–74; Gerardo Caetano, *La República Batllista* (Montevideo: Banda Oriental, 2011), pp. 252–7; Helena Costáble, 'Rodó y la educación en Uruguay', *Prisma*, 17 (2001), pp. 107–14.

³⁴ The teachers' positivist credo and ignorance of Vaz's reform pedagogy is apparent in the farewell speech of the director of the Instituto Normal de Señoritas: see DGIP, *Homenaje a Doña María Stagnero de Munar* (Montevideo: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1914), pp. 18–26.

contemplated full separation from the United Provinces. Artigas' 1811–20 guerrilla campaign developed into a war on three fronts: starting as an anti-colonial rebellion, it soon refocused on thwarting the hegemonic ambitions of the revolutionary *directorio* in Buenos Aires and, after 1816, expelling Portuguese invaders who had converted the Banda Oriental into Brazil's southernmost outpost of Cisplatina. A Federal League, or league of free peoples, was to bring a maximum of autonomy for the Banda (which in 1815 briefly became the Provincia Oriental Autónoma), but Artigas stopped short of advocating its independence. The same applies to the 'Thirty-Three Orientals', a group of (predominantly) Uruguayan émigrés in Buenos Aires under the leadership of Juan Antonio Lavalleja, who launched a 'crusade' in 1825 against the occupiers of their land. At the Assembly of Florida on 25 April that year, they declared independence from the Brazilian Empire, but also the return of the Banda into the United Provinces. Yet, as with Artigas' project, their hopes for a federalist system collided with the *directorio*'s unitarianism.³⁵ Brazil, in turn, did not accept Buenos Aires' control over Cisplatina and declared war on the United Provinces, thereby prompting London's diplomatic intervention.

The 'accidental' nature of Uruguay's political emancipation not only posed problems for post-1876 historians concerned with finding national heroes and a suitable Independence Day; it also caused policy-makers to worry about the country's continuing vulnerability. After all, the 1828 Preliminary Peace Convention left borders undefined and was never followed by a formal peace treaty. Until the end of the century Buenos Aires continued to dream of restoring the boundaries of the former Viceroyalty of the River Plate, and Rio de Janeiro of having a Platine sphere of influence, with both powers persistently interfering in Uruguay's domestic conflicts. Public debates surrounding the inauguration of an independence monument in Florida in the late 1870s showed how closely the academic interpretation of the past and the current political problem of strengthening Uruguay's capabilities for an autonomous existence were interwoven. Intellectuals who rightly pointed to the 1825 Assembly's federalism continued to advocate a merger of Uruguay, the *patria chica*, with Argentina, the *patria grande*. Military state-builders prohibited such discussions.³⁶ Batllistas later began to propagate 18 July,

³⁵ John Street, *Artigas and the Emancipation of Uruguay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), esp. pp. 179–87, 341–2.

³⁶ These debates are explored in Arturo Ardao, *Etapas de la inteligencia uruguaya* (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 1968), pp. 175–208; see also Carolina González Laurino, *La construcción de la identidad uruguaya* (Montevideo: Universidad Católica del Uruguay and Taurus, 2001), pp. 78–9; and Ana Frega, 'Uruguayos u orientales: itinerario de una síntesis compleja', in José Carlos Chiaramonte and Carlos Marichal Aimer Granados (eds.), *Crear la nación: los nombres de los países de América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2008), pp. 100–2.

the day in 1830 when the country adopted its first constitution, as Independence Day. However, given that Fructusoso Rivera, the founder of the Colorado tradition, defeated Lavalleja, a Blanco icon, in the presidential elections later that year, this plan was divisive.

Realising the weakness of Uruguay's frontier society and the need for an 'imagined community', Varelistas searched for a national father figure who could be revered by all parties.³⁷ Artigas proved to be the obvious choice, but this required correcting the 'black legend' surrounding him, passing over his social programme, and inventing a foundation narrative that linked him to both Lavalleja and Rivera.³⁸

The black legend, a negative image of Artigas, had its origin in defamatory pamphlets published by unitarians during the independence wars and found its full elaboration in the writings by Sarmiento and Bartolomé Mitre that depicted nation-building in the River Plate area as an epic battle between civilisation, represented by Europeanised Buenos Aires, and barbarism, personified by 'federalist' gauchos. The social Darwinism underlying such interpretations found an echo in Uruguay. In the 1881 edition of his *Bosquejo histórico de la República Oriental del Uruguay*, Berra called Artigas Uruguay's incarnation of indigenous barbarism. For Ramírez, this was a Manichean view of history; Berra failed to appreciate that the barbarian attacks on the Roman Empire gave birth to Christian civilisation and those of the River Plate caudillos to the liberty, power and progress of Buenos Aires.³⁹ In Ramírez's perspective, Artigas was

the initiator and precursor of the social decompositions that would transform the atrophied authorities of a vast colonial empire into a federative, lasting, and insuperable democracy. He is the first who enrolled and unified the rural masses of the River Plate region behind the banner of revolution; the first who taught them to fight and die for an idea in this heroic battle of [Las] Piedras which the Argentine anthem commemorates and which is an indisputable glory of Artigas.⁴⁰

Ramírez praises the early Artigas, who, far from being a traitor of the patria grande as the Argentines claimed, would have fought alongside Buenos Aires and been crucial in inflicting defeat on the Spanish in 1811. Furthermore, Ramírez's Artigas was not a bandit, but the champion of a democratic federation. Berra defended himself, emphasising that his *Bosquejo* would

³⁷ Varela himself pointed to the need to forge a nationality: see José Pedro Varela, *Obras pedagógicas: la legislación escolar*, vol. 1 (Montevideo: Biblioteca Artigas, 1964), pp. 147–51.

³⁸ A first biography of Artigas, Isidoro de María's *Vida del Brigadier General D. José Gervasio Artigas*, appeared in 1860, but its author was criticised for linking Artigas to Rivera and not mentioning Blanco patriots: see F. A. Berra, 'Catecismo histórico de la República Oriental del Uruguay, por Isidoro de María', *El Club Universitario*, 2: 33 (1872), pp. 409–13.

³⁹ Carlos María Ramírez, *Juicio crítico del Bosquejo histórico de la República Oriental del Uruguay: por el Dr. D. Francisco A. Berra* (Buenos Aires: Porvenir, 1882), pp. 101–2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

narrate the heroic history of the people but that his opponent had picked the brief critique of Artigas in the text and had tried to whitewash him.⁴¹ Argentines lauded Berra's work.⁴² Uruguay's government, however, considered it to be subversive and, in 1883, banned the *Bosquejo* from schools. Teachers were advised not to discuss alternative interpretations of independence, because 'teaching the history of the Republic must aim at strengthening the innate sentiments of the fatherland in young souls who need noble inspirations, rather than a reflexive criterion, in order to appreciate the course of historical events'.⁴³

When on 23 September 1884, 34 years after Artigas' death in Paraguay, Máximo Santos declared a day of national mourning and organised a funeral for the 'hero' in Montevideo's cathedral, this debate assumed a stronger trans-Platine dimension. Once again, Ramírez defended the tribune. His *Artigas*, published later that year, portrays him as a visionary and now justifies his appropriation by Uruguayans.⁴⁴ Together with Francisco Bauzá's 1882 *Historia de la dominación española en el Uruguay [sic]*, Ramírez's book pioneered a revisionist historiography and was still recommended for additional reading in schools in 1913.⁴⁵ The new appraisal of Artigas found its way into textbooks. In one of them, we read:

Some writers, mainly Argentines, say that Artigas was an ignorant gaucho, a cruel, ferocious, and bloodthirsty barbarian; other writers, mainly orientales, consider him to be quite educated for his time, with noble feelings, an independent character, a great patriot, reckless and courageous to the degree of heroism. The truth is that even the most impartial and well-intentioned Argentine cannot see in a good light the man who fought against them and was the main reason why today the Banda Oriental does not belong to the Argentine Republic. Orientales, in turn,

⁴¹ Francisco A. Berra, *Estudios históricos acerca de la República O. del Uruguay: defensa documentada del 'Bosquejo Histórico', contra el 'Juicio Crítico' que le ha dedicado el Doctor Don Carlos María Ramírez* (Montevideo: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1882), esp. pp. 209–19.

⁴² Sarmiento compared Artigas with Rosas, and J. Alfredo Ferreira considered him a caudillo who could have perceived modern Uruguay as nothing less than Utopia: *Obras completas de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 38 (Buenos Aires: Mariano Moreno, 1900), pp. 144–5; Bassi, *J. Alfredo Ferreira*, pp. 255–6.

⁴³ Minister Carlos de Castro to DGIP, 13 Sep. 1883, in Orestes Araújo (ed.), *Legislación escolar: cronología de 1881 a 1891*, vol. 2 (Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1898), pp. 119–20. On the manipulation of Artigas' legacy to the present day, see Guillermo Vázquez Franco, *Francisco Berra: la historia prohibida* (Montevideo: Mandinga, 2001).

⁴⁴ The funeral triggered a debate between *Sud América* in Buenos Aires and Ramírez's *La Razón*. The Uruguayan then published his articles in *Artigas* (Montevideo: Barreira y Ramos, 1884). Tomás Sansón, 'Un debate rioplatense sobre José Artigas (1884)', *Anuario del Instituto de Historia Argentina* (Universidad Nacional de La Plata), 4 (2004), pp. 187–216; Carlos Demasi, 'La figura de Artigas en la construcción del primer imaginario nacional (1875–1900)', in Ana Frega and Adriana Islas (eds.), *Nuevas miradas en torno del artiguismo* (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 2001), pp. 341–51.

⁴⁵ Comisión de Textos, 'Lista de los libros de texto adoptados para el uso de los alumnos de las escuelas primarias durante el año 1913', *Anales*, 11: 1–15 (1913), p. 737.

must do their best to prove that their compatriot Artigas was a man of superior qualities.⁴⁶

This evaluation is illuminating both for what it says and for what it omits. Artigas was celebrated for his decisive stance on the national question, against 'Argentina'; textbooks avoided delving into the Federal League, defined by Artigas as a unitary and indivisible nation of individual states (the free peoples of *argentum*).⁴⁷ Nothing is said about his social programme. Artigas' campaign represented an armed mass movement that aimed at an agrarian democracy. Land was redistributed among the rural poor of any skin colour, and the new class of smallholders was to gain political participation in a republican and representative polity. Faced with threats to their social position and economic monopolies, hacendados, merchants and intellectual elites made common cause with Buenos Aires and, like the latter's directorio, even with Portuguese occupiers, thereby facilitating the conversion of the Provincia Oriental Autónoma into Cisplatina.⁴⁸ It is no surprise that these divisions, renditions and betrayals do not figure in the textbooks.

The Assembly of Florida's decision to return to the United Provinces is either concealed or transfigured in the manuals. In dictionaries by Araújo, the 1830 Constitution appears as a consequence of the Assembly, which would have proclaimed an independent 'republic' and then allied itself, on equal terms, with the Argentine 'Confederation' or 'Republic' against the undefeated Brazilian colossus. In other words, the 'Oath of the Thirty-Three Orientals', immortalised in a monumental 1878 painting by Juan Manuel Blanes, which was reproduced in textbooks, found its ratification in the constitutional oath. By converting the patriots of 1825 into combatants against both Brazilian imperialism and Argentinean unitarianism and extending their campaign until 1828–30, it was possible to link them with Artigas, the Independentista, as portrayed in the school texts. However, Artigas emerged as the 'precursor of nationality' since the Banda Oriental had not yet gained statehood.⁴⁹ Miranda calls the Assembly of Florida 'national', stresses the 'free and independent' character of its decisions and describes the final battle as one

⁴⁶ Francisco Vázquez Cores, *Geografía de la República Oriental del Uruguay* (revised edition, Montevideo: Librería Vázquez Cores, n.d.), pp. 147–8.

⁴⁷ Héctor R. Olazábal, 'La idea de nación en Artigas', in Frega and Islas (eds.), *Nuevas miradas*, pp. 295–7.

⁴⁸ López-Alves, *State Formation*, pp. 73–7; M. Blanca París Oddone, 'Presencia de Artigas en la revolución del Río de La Plata', in Frega and Islas (eds.), *Nuevas miradas*, pp. 65–85.

⁴⁹ Ariadna Islas, *Leyendo a Don Orestes: aproximación a la teoría de la historia en la obra de Orestes Araújo* (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 1995), pp. 81–5, 98–9, 106–10. In José Henrique Figueira's readers, both Artigas, a 'Uruguayan general', and the Thirty-Three 'patriots' fought for independence: see José Henrique Figueira, *¿Quiéres leer? Lecciones y ejercicios normales (sistemáticos y graduados) de lectura, escritura, corriente y ortografía usual* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, n.d.), p. 136; and *Lectura elemental y ortografía: obra*

between the 'imperial army' (Brazil) and fraternised 'republicans'. A note points teachers to the National Museum, where they could find the flag of the Thirty-Three Orientals, which would resemble Artigas' after 1815.⁵⁰

With the Batllistas in power, the imposition of a liberal polity became a strategic objective and social reforms were no longer feared. At the same time, the civil war of 1904, with Brazilian involvement, and a border conflict with Argentina in 1910 highlighted persistent threats to the country's territorial integrity. For these reasons the significance of Artigas as the symbol of national unity increased. The Artigas of the Battle years was a man of the people, a statesman, and a messiah whose message had only in recent decades been gradually understood. In 1909–10 a former university rector, Eduardo Acevedo, a cousin of Alfredo Vázquez Acevedo, published his *José Artigas: jefe de los orientales y protector de los pueblos libres*, which elevated the 'precursor' of Uruguay's nationality to the pre-eminent liberator of the River Plate area.⁵¹ These messages were reinforced through other publications, commemorations and statues. Héctor Miranda's 1910 *Las instrucciones del año XIII* converted Artigas into an enlightened caudillo who early on reflected on the constitutional organisation of the fatherland, while Juan Zorrilla de Martín's emotive opus *La epopeya de Artigas*, published that same year, described his hero's trajectory as a biblical story. The 1911 centenary of Las Piedras gave the new-found 'imagined community' a chance to celebrate itself and its father figure.⁵² A project to erect a statue to Artigas had been launched as early as 1883, but it was only in 1913 that the government chose the winner of an international competition to design the statue – an Italian, Angel Zanelli – and it would be another decade before the colossal monument on Independence Square could be inaugurated. It showed a noble gentleman on a classicist horse, riding from the Old (colonial) Town towards 18 July (1830) Avenue.⁵³ However, textbooks rarely went beyond 1830 in order to avoid exposing five decades of armed conflict between Artigas' heirs.⁵⁴

adoptada á las escuelas primarias de los Estados del Río de La Plata (4th edition, Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1904), pp. 251–3.

⁵⁰ Julián O. Miranda, *Apuntes sobre historia de la República Oriental del Uruguay para uso de las escuelas primarias* (2nd edition, Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1891), pp. 60–7.

⁵¹ Eduardo Acevedo, *José Artigas, jefe de los orientales y protector de los pueblos libres: su obra cívica. Alegato histórico*, 3 vols. (Montevideo: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1909).

⁵² Carlos Demasi, 'La construcción de un "héroe máximo": José Artigas en las conmemoraciones uruguayas de 1911', *Revista Iberoamericana*, 71: 213 (2005), pp. 1029–45; Leone, 'Manuales', p. 202; Eduardo Piazza, 'Héroes y aedos en la Epopeya de San Martín', in Frega and Islas (eds.), *Nuevas miradas*, pp. 367–80.

⁵³ Susana Ántola and Cecilia Ponte, 'La nación en bronce, mármol y hormigón armado', in Caetano (ed.), *Los uruguayos del Centenario*, pp. 220–3.

⁵⁴ In the fourth edition of his *Apuntes* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1897), Julian O. Miranda broke down this barrier but avoided judgements. Regarding history texts for

White and Civilised: The Cathartic Reburying of Amerindians

The rebirth of Artigas coincided with the cathartic reburying of the country's Amerindian population and the imagination of a racially homogeneous community. The alleged absence of an 'Indian problem', together with political stability and socio-economic prosperity, seemed to justify Batllista Uruguay's self-portrayal as 'Latin America's Switzerland'. While elites in Chile and Costa Rica constructed a similar image of their nations, Uruguay's claim to uniqueness was founded on two specific factors. First, its geopolitical situation resembled that of the Central European model. José Pedro Varela was the first to allude to Switzerland, which, like Uruguay, was squeezed between two powerful neighbours but had maintained its territorial integrity: 'In our opinion, then, small nations, which are surrounded by big nations, are only viable if they are always an example of liberty, happiness, and wisdom: that is, if they are always happier, freer and more educated than the nations that surround them.'⁵⁵ This rationale guided both the Reforma Vareliana and Batlle's welfare state with a Swiss-style plural executive, the Colegiado, which was to prevent a presidential dictatorship and safeguard the Colorados' reforms.⁵⁶ Second, Varelistas and Batllistas shared the belief, widespread in Latin America, that the emulation of Western values and the exclusion of non-European ethnic groups were vital for forging a prosperous nation, such as Switzerland. However, Uruguay's elites went further by denying the very existence of an indigenous population and its specialist knowledge. The critical event in the creation of what Gustavo Verdesio calls an 'amnesic nation' was an officially sanctioned genocide in the hour of birth of the republic: Rivera's army had exterminated the last survivors of the Charrúas in an ambush in 1831. Post-1870 nation-builders considered semi-nomadic and unruly gauchos the inheritors of indigenous barbarism and therefore an obstacle to modernisation, leaving their elimination as a social group through the redemptive power of education and the colonisation of rural areas with immigrants as the only solution.⁵⁷

preparatorios, see Pablo Acevedo Blanco, *Historia de la República Oriental del Uruguay* (Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1900), pp. v–vi.

⁵⁵ Varela and Ramírez, *El destino*, vol. 1, p. 161.

⁵⁶ Vanger, *Uruguay's José Batlle y Ordóñez*, vol. 1, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Gustavo Verdesio, 'An Amnesic Nation: The Erasure of Indigenous Pasts by Uruguayan Expert Knowledges', in Sara Castro-Klarén and John Charles Chasteen (eds.), *Beyond Imagined Communities: Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, and Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), pp. 199–203; Bralich, *Varela*, pp. 11, 19. For the first comprehensive and well-documented history of the 1831 genocide, see José Eduardo Picerno, *El genocidio de la población charrúa: documentación y análisis* (Montevideo: Biblioteca Nacional de Uruguay, 2008).

Pedagogical journals and textbooks demonstrate how Amerindians were written out of Uruguay's national community, but it is valid to juxtapose these sources with the representation of *indios* and mestizos in a key literary text which most schoolchildren knew intimately: the poem 'Tabaré' (1888) by Zorrilla. His excavation of these ethnic groups as 'ancestral ghosts' and 'self-destructing, sterile hybrid[s]', respectively, did not contradict, but instead reinforced, the message that they could have had no place in a modern nation.⁵⁸

Francisco Vázquez Cores' textbook *Geografía de Sudamérica*, published in 1888, is typical in the way it deals with race. Vázquez Cores admitted that the continent was multiracial but left children in no doubt as to which direction evolution was heading: 'The most potent race in South America is the white one. It is growing rapidly and dominates all others. The other races will gradually disappear, and the day will come when whites, slightly mixed, remain as the unlimited master of South America.'⁵⁹ With the scene set for the region as a whole, Uruguay's favourable position could be celebrated:

The República Oriental has about 600,000 inhabitants. These inhabitants are almost all white, of Spanish origin ... There are some blacks, children of those who were once transported from Africa to serve as slaves, but only very few are left and they will disappear rapidly ... The primitive race, or the so-called indios, has been completely extinguished. The Republic's population as a whole is a beautiful, intelligent, progressive, and enterprising race.⁶⁰

Little changed over time; three decades later, Bollo claimed that Uruguay had 'no indios and very few blacks', adding: 'Only Argentina has such a select race as ours.'⁶¹

The social Darwinist matrix that informed the teaching of human geography and history as evolutionary sociology transpires in textbooks but becomes explicit only in the Varelistas' *historias patrias*. An example is Araújo's 'Historia compendiada de la civilización uruguaya', which was first published in *Anales* in 1906 and would have been read by educators. It seems that teachers needed a 'reflexive criterion'. In order to achieve the highest societal organisation, Araújo stated, all peoples had to pass through three different stages: savagery, barbarism and civilisation. However, not all would progress at the same pace.⁶² A closer look at different countries,

⁵⁸ The first quote is from Verdesio, 'An Amnesic Nation', p. 210; the second is from Sommer, *Foundational Fictions*, p. 245.

⁵⁹ Francisco Vázquez Cores, *Geografía de Sudamérica, con nociones de historia de todos y cada uno de los países* (2nd edition, Montevideo: Tribuna Popular, 1888), p. 13.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁶¹ Luís Cincinato Bollo, *Geografía de la República Oriental del Uruguay* (12th edition, Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1919), p. 14.

⁶² Orestes Araújo, 'Historia compendiada de la civilización uruguaya', *Anales*, 3 (part 1): 12–15 (1906), pp. 150–1.

he argued, revealed the simultaneity of the non-simultaneous: civilised nations coexisted with barbarian and savage peoples. Araújo's aspired objective of evolution, civilisation, allowed for no plurality but was based on European models:

As *civilised* must be considered those peoples who are governed by rulers who are scrupulous in the fulfilment of their duties; have just laws; develop culture, sciences and arts; promote trade, industry, agriculture, and navigation; respect the people's rights; and, even in the case of war, know how to harmonise humanitarian feelings with the sad condition of the defeated.⁶³

In contrast, savage peoples were defined as those 'who have only confused and incomplete notions of justice and religion, dedicate themselves to hunting and fishing, and produce no arts whatsoever. In warfare, they are vengeful and cruel, not knowing the most elementary principles of humanity'.⁶⁴

These historical 'laws' could now be applied to the indigenous population of the Banda Oriental, which was depicted, in words and illustrations, as ugly, dangerous and lawless. While, according to Araújo, a division of labour along gender lines existed, none of the tribes had a permanent chief, and societal censorship was absent.⁶⁵ The arrival of the Spanish, he continued, produced a 'natural antagonism between the races' and consequently absolute rule of the superior intruders.⁶⁶ Araújo attributed the disappearance of indios to inter-tribal warfare and invasions from São Paulo but also gave educators an explanation for the 1831 genocide of the Charrúas: Rivera 'was faced with the harsh decision to exterminate them ... in order to put an end to the assassinations and robbery to which the people north of the Rio Negro had fallen victim'.⁶⁷

In a later article in *Anales*, Araújo justified this act by the Charrúas' 300-year cycle of violence, lasting from the killing of conquistador Juan Díaz de Solís to the attacks on settlers. Cruel as the final battle was, for Araújo it proved the principle of the survival of the fittest: 'The numerical superiority, better quality of arms, and military discipline [of Rivera's soldiers of civilisation] triumphed over those barbaric hordes that had always been an obstacle to progress and the tranquillity of the country'.⁶⁸

Textbooks described the assassination of Solís.⁶⁹ However, they usually avoided discussions of 1831. Miranda depicted the Charrúas as brave but barely socialised warriors and insinuates that they were responsible for their

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 151–67.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 167. José Henriques Figueira, an authority for Araújo, was the first to justify Rivera's action in his *Los primitivos habitantes del Uruguay* (Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1892), p. 33.

⁶⁸ Orestes Araújo, 'Un país del continente americano que no tiene indios', *Anales*, 6 (1909), pp. 114–19 (citation on p. 119).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁶⁹ Figueira, *Lectura elemental*, pp. 232–3.

own extinction.⁷⁰ Figueira even classified them as anthropophagi; on that point, Araújo differed from his colleague.⁷¹ The contradiction between Figueira's readers and the approved history texts, including Araújo's, caused the DGIP to intervene and demand changes to the former in 1901.⁷² Explanations were not given, but the association of the Charrúas with cannibalism would have certainly undermined simultaneous attempts, in literature and fine art, to depict these tribesmen as indefatigable defenders of their natural habitat (the Uruguayan territory). This resistance against intruders, these narratives conveyed, made them the earliest representatives of *orientalidad*, though not of the patria (in contrast, semi-barbaric gauchos, the anonymous followers of Artigas and the Thirty-Three, appeared as primitive patriots, but not, like *ganaderos*, as citizens of the civilised nation-state).⁷³

Once schoolchildren had learned that the Charrúas were extinct and that this outcome was inevitable, the native could be romantically revived 'for a while, long enough to produce the catharsis that comes from renewed and alleviating loss'.⁷⁴ This was the likely purpose of Zorrilla's epic poem 'Tabaré', set in the early colonial period, long before the genocide and creole Hispanophobia. Its hero is a blue-eyed mestizo, born to a captive Spanish Catholic woman and a pagan Charrúa chief. This ambiguous character meets his counterpart in Blanca, the (rather dark-skinned) sister of a Spanish officer, who is reminiscent of his dead mother and whom he saves from the captivity of another Charrúa chief; a misunderstanding then leads to Tabaré being killed at the hand of Blanca's brother. The relationship between the couple is unequal and doomed to failure: while Blanca is free to display, but not to follow, her feelings for Tabaré, the native has to suppress his intimate desires altogether. Even so, Gustavo San Román points out, 'Tabaré/America is seen after all as a source of fascination to Blanca/Spain'.⁷⁵ At the height of national organisation, Zorrilla, a Catholic and Hispanophile, evoked both sympathy for the victim, or ancestor, and relief at the absence of such a

⁷⁰ Miranda, *Apuntes* (1891), pp. 5–8. Students in preparatorios learned that Rivera quelled a Charrúa uprising; see Acevedo Blanco, *Historia*, pp. 139–40.

⁷¹ Araújo, 'Historia compendiada', p. 165.

⁷² Comisión de Textos to Abel J. Pérez, 11 Jan. 1901, in *Anales*, 2: 6–7 (1904), pp. 368–9. Araújo's 1911 *Historia de los charrúas y demás tribus indígenas* was accepted as supplementary reading for fifth-grade students. Comisión de Textos to Abel J. Pérez, 24 Oct. 1911, in *Anales*, 10: 1–12 (1912), p. 623.

⁷³ Symptomatic in this respect is the work of Bauzá, a historian, Blanes, a painter, and Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, a novelist: see González Laurino, *La construcción*, esp. pp. 73, 98–102, 149–205.

⁷⁴ Sommer, *Foundational Fictions*, p. 244.

⁷⁵ Gustavo San Román, 'Negotiating Nationhood: The Repressed Desire of the Native in Tabaré', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 29: 4 (1993), p. 307.

'stranger to the [national] community' (the translation of the Guaraní word *tabaré*).⁷⁶

Afro-Uruguayans attracted less attention. Textbooks welcomed the abolition of slavery, but did not explore the current situation of a race that was allegedly 'scarce' in Uruguay.⁷⁷ Only two blacks populated Vázquez Acevedo's series of reading books: a male who carried a white man on his shoulders through a river, and an ignorant female cook who was taught by her white mistress how to bake.⁷⁸ Once again, *historias patrias* reveal the whitening ideal of their authors. Araújo's *Historia compendiada* described Carnival, with its African roots, in a patronising way, and concluded that this 'exotic leisure' of a bygone era 'was decaying in parallel with the decrease of the race'. At least Uruguay's black population, which was mainly urban and domestic (and therefore visible), was considered to be less malicious than Amerindians in rural areas, allowing for its assimilation.⁷⁹

Cosmopolitan and Dynamic: Integration of Immigrants and the Country

The clash between Artigas' army and Montevideo had already pitted rural areas against urban, and the Great War (1839–51), during which Uruguay became once again a bone of contention for its mighty neighbours, further cemented this divide. From 1843 President Rivera found himself encircled by the troops of Manuel Oribe's counter-government, a siege that would last for eight years. Montevideo and the hinterland formed different political entities, embodied by liberal Colorados and 'nationalist' Blancos respectively, and with the end of the conflict the state would further weaken to the benefit of caudillos and party political machines. Though the Colorados, initially dependent on the military, gained influence and eventually civilian control, it would not be until the defeat of the last caudillo in 1904 before Batllistas could incorporate the opposition into the polity. Colorado discourses reflected the two challenges that nation-building faced: the integration of immigrants and the 'conquest' of the interior. Schools and textbooks played a vital role in meeting them.

Towards a cosmopolitan nationalism

While in 1830 no more than 18.9 per cent of Uruguay's population lived in the capital city, by 1908 Montevideo's share had risen to 50 per cent.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Sommer, *Foundational Fictions*, p. 244.

⁷⁷ Miranda, *Apuntes* (1891), p. 8.

⁷⁸ Alfredo Vázquez Acevedo, *Serie graduada de libros de lectura, Libro 2* (4th edition, Montevideo: Galli, 1889), Lectures 27 and 48, cited in Bralich, *Los textos*, section 3.

⁷⁹ Islas, *Leyendo a Don Orestes*, pp. 124–6, 130–1 (citation on p. 125).

⁸⁰ López-Alves, *State Formation*, pp. 60–1.

Immigration was of paramount importance in Uruguay's population explosion and urbanisation. According to the 1860 census, 48 per cent of Montevideo's inhabitants were foreigners. Between 1889 and 1908, the capital city's population grew from 215,061 to 309,231, with 47 per cent and 30 per cent of them, respectively, being immigrants. Few Europeans lived outside greater Montevideo. The overwhelming majority of newcomers, around 55 per cent in 1860 and 80 per cent from the late 1880s, were Italians and Spaniards, but their regional composition changed. While the share of southern Italians increased, Galicians and Catalans became the most important contingents on the Spanish side, replacing the previous Basque majority. Many of the Basque and Galician immigrants came from rural regions, and the former tended, more than others, to settle in Uruguay's countryside, thus becoming a support base for Blanco caudillos. However, most immigrants sided with the Colorados, who were dubbed the 'party of foreigners'.⁸¹ Moreover, immigrants became a major group among landowners in the coastal region and, through their integration into the Asociación Rural del Uruguay, worked towards economic modernisation, social peace and strong government.⁸² This made them an ally of the Varelistas and Batllistas.

While 1890 legislation outlawed the immigration of Asians and Africans, Europeans were seen as catalysts for the civilisation of the gaucho. However, the near absence of assimilationist policies did not mean that fears of mass immigration, the emerging 'social question', and an increase in crime did not exist.⁸³ Public schools were to counter these fears, as textbooks demonstrate. In his *Geografía de la República Oriental del Uruguay*, Vázquez Cores went to considerable length in explaining the benefits of immigration:

There are those who maintain that the worst people from Europe come to our American countries. This is completely wrong, and it is easy to prove that the best people come here, not only from Europe, but from the entire world.

First of all, the majority of those who come to this country are from the seaports and their surroundings, and all of us know that the inhabitants of the coasts, for their frequent business and relations with seafarers and travellers from the whole world, are better educated and more resolute in everything than those of the interior.⁸⁴

The association of the Littoral with dynamism dated back to Greco-Roman theories of the environment which found an echo in Montesquieu's linking of mountainous areas and democracy, on the one hand, and plains and despotism, on the other. These theories had already influenced Sarmiento,

⁸¹ Michael Goebel, 'Gauchos, Gringos, and Gallegos: The Assimilation of Italian and Spanish Immigrants in the Making of Modern Uruguay, 1880–1930', *Past & Present*, 208 (2010), pp. 196–201, 207. On Basque immigration, see José Manuel Azcona Pastor, *Los paraísos posibles: historia de la emigración vasca a Argentina y Uruguay en el siglo XIX* (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto, 1992), pp. 181–256.

⁸² López-Alves, *State Formation*, p. 89.

⁸³ Goebel, 'Gauchos', pp. 204–5, 223–5.

⁸⁴ Vázquez Cores, *Geografía*, p. 136.

a supreme authority for the Varelistas.⁸⁵ How, then, should Vázquez Cores deal with the undeniable fact that many immigrants came from the Spanish hinterland, given that military and Colorados had traditionally equated Uruguay's interior with 'barbarism'?

If immigrants are from the interior, the simple fact of them knowing that thousands of leagues from the place where they were born there is a richer country than their own, where they can live without problems, shows that they are not very ignorant.

If they leave their home and their family in order to come to this country, they must have much courage and strong will-power.

If over there they do not resign themselves to their fate of living and dying poor, and wish to achieve more, it demonstrates that they have aspirations of progress.

If there, where earning a living requires so much work, they save enough to pay for the passage and the expenses of the voyage, they must be hard-working, very economical, or in a better-paid job.

If, after all this, they risk a long voyage to countries which for them are so distant, they have to be courageous and determined.⁸⁶

In other words, these new arrivals represented the most dynamic elements in their regions of origin. However, Vázquez Cores revealed concerns about the criminal and anarchist activities of immigrants from Romance countries and a preference for Anglo-Saxons (some of which came from landlocked areas!):

Since the large majority of those who come to our countries are Spaniards, Italians, and French, they are admittedly too hot-tempered, slightly extremist, and even a little rebellious. However, fortunately, new arrivals always include Germans, English, Swiss and others who are more peaceful, sensible, and reflective. By mixing one with the other group in this country of abundant resources and benign climate, they form a beautiful community and a vigorous and intelligent race, as few nations can claim.⁸⁷

While racial miscegenation was anathema, Vázquez Cores advocated the mixture of different ethnic groups.

During the Batllista governments, the representation of immigrants and their incorporation into society seems to have become more contentious. Eduardo Acevedo's *El libro del pequeño ciudadano*, published in 1907, admitted that immigrants had contributed to Uruguay's prosperity but added: 'Only Orientales form the Uruguayan nation or the Uruguayan fatherland, though foreigners who meet certain requirements can also become part of it.'⁸⁸ This nativist differentiation, which contradicted the Colorados' integrative agenda, Verónica Leone assumes, must have been one of the reasons why Acevedo's book was initially prohibited.⁸⁹ For National Inspector Pérez, the

⁸⁵ Oscar Terán, *Historia de las ideas en la Argentina: diez lecciones iniciales, 1810–1930* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 2009), p. 76.

⁸⁶ Vázquez Cores, *Geografía*, p. 136.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 136–7.

⁸⁸ Eduardo Acevedo, *El libro del pequeño ciudadano: nociones de historia, de constitución y leyes electorales, de economía política y de derecho usual, aplicables a las escuelas de 2° grado* (Montevideo: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1907), p. 73.

⁸⁹ Leone, 'Manuales', pp. 202–3.

country's exceptional conditions allowed for 'a special case of cosmopolitanism'. Foreigners who came to Uruguay would form a 'new ethnic group' (white, of course) in which the strongest elements of their nationalities would survive.⁹⁰

Towards incorporating the rural population

The 1904 pacification enabled the government to complete what Varela had failed to achieve under conditions of almost permanent warfare: to extend public schooling to the countryside and transform the northern frontier into consolidated borderlands. Four years earlier, the political boss and school inspector of the municipality of Rivera had already required the building of schools to stop the region's denationalisation by foreign settlers who imposed their Portuguese language and Brazilian habits on Uruguayans.⁹¹ Ironically, Williman's expansion of primary schools to rural areas was so successful that in the late 1930s Brazil complained about the denationalisation of Rio Grande do Sul's Campanha, where children, in order to get access to schools, had to cross the border; as a result, they soon spoke Spanish more fluently than Portuguese and knew Uruguay's national pantheon better than Brazil's.⁹²

Vaz Ferreira's textbook commission introduced changes after 1901. It highlighted the fact that most rural schools did not teach beyond the third grade and that students were usually older than in the cities; therefore, these schools would have to use designated texts in the highest grade. Moreover, given the ignorance of Uruguay's Constitution among the rural population and the fact that many children left school after only two years, every second-grade pupil was to receive a copy of Julián O. Miranda's *Educación cívica*, published in 1903 as a digestible introduction to the nation's political institutions (something the history books failed to provide). Hopefully, adults at home would also read this text and become familiar with their citizenship rights.⁹³ By the second Batlle administration, the commission had adopted different readers for urban and rural schools. Both contained stories on

⁹⁰ Inspección Nacional de Instrucción Primaria (National Inspectorate of Primary Instruction, INIP), *Memoria correspondiente al año 1907*, vol. 1 (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1908), p. 9.

⁹¹ Islas, *Leyendo a Don Orestes*, pp. 154–5.

⁹² 'Extrato do relatório apresentado pelo Senhor Dr Dulphe Pinheiro Machado ...', Rio de Janeiro, 18 July 1940, Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação da História Contemporânea do Brasil, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro, GC 34.11.30/g, filme 27/folhas 0084–0085; John Charles Chasteen, *Heroes on Horseback: A Life and Times of the Last Gaucho Caudillos* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), p. 53.

⁹³ Comisión de Textos to Abel J. Pérez, 11 Jan. 1901, pp. 363, 366. Julián O. Miranda, *Educación cívica: obra destinada a la enseñanza de la constitución de acuerdo con los programas escolares vigentes y adoptada como texto para las escuelas del estado* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1903).

patriotism, education and alcohol abuse.⁹⁴ Children in city schools were offered a text by Bolívar and an extract from Rodó's essay, 'Ariel', published in 1900 as a critique of pure rationalism and increasing utilitarianism. Obviously Uruguay's youth were to link the noble aspirations of the political emancipator and their compatriot's vision of a culturally rejuvenated Latin America. The reader also included Batlle's condemnation of bullfighting as a remnant of the gauchos' barbarism. Fifth- to seventh-grade pupils in rural areas read about land, work, climate, vaccination, tobacco consumption, disinfection and water purification. Their reading book also contained fragments from Leon Tolstoy's fable 'The Poor Rich', which stressed that wealth did not bring happiness.⁹⁵ In these texts, poverty was individualised and collective resistance absent.

The letrados of the civilised city had heard the call from the 'barbaric country' to 'discipline' it, as Islas expresses it, and they disseminated its standards across the national territory.⁹⁶

*Hard-Working and Educated: Forming the Civilised Adult
and Everyday Hero*

José Pedro Varela believed in the natural goodness of the child and was convinced that schools could rein in bad instincts, form civilised adults and thereby forge a cohesive national community. His 1877 Ley de Educación Común banned corporal punishment, but the implementation of this policy proved to be problematic, as conflicts in the Escuela Elbio Fernández show.⁹⁷ Many distinguished maestros, like Catalá, who had embraced Berra's methodological dogmatism, still considered the child a *pequeño salvaje* (little savage).⁹⁸ Its taming took different forms, first and foremost what José Pedro

⁹⁴ Alcoholism is attributed to the lower classes. Alejandro Lamas, *Elementos de anatomía: fisiología e higiene* (2nd revised edition, Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1913), p. 46.

⁹⁵ Joaquín Mestre, *Lecturas suplementares para las escuelas urbanas* (Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1914); Juan María Aubriot and Joaquín Mestre, *Lecturas suplementares para las escuelas rurales* (Montevideo: Escuela Nacional de Artes y Oficios, 1912). The story 'Rich and Poor' in a reader by Figueira taught students they should judge individuals by their thoughts, feelings and behaviour rather than their wealth: José Henriques Figueira, *Trabajo: lecciones y ejercicios normales de lectura expresiva y literatura* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, n.d.), p. 252.

⁹⁶ Islas, *Leyendo a Don Orestes*, p. 155.

⁹⁷ One high-profile case in 1880 is described in Archivo Histórico de la Sociedad de Amigos de la Educación Popular, Escuela y Liceo Elbio Fernández, Montevideo, documents 0535–0536, 0541–0544, 0546, and 0548.

⁹⁸ Emma Catalá de Princivalle, *Lecciones de economía doméstica, 7° año* (Montevideo: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1906), Lección X, cited in José Pedro Barrán, *Historia de la sensibilidad en el Uruguay* (Montevideo: Banda Oriental, 2008), p. 75. A whole generation of *normalistas* had embraced Berra's pedagogical laws, outlined in his *Apuntes para un curso de pedagogía* (Montevideo: La Nación, 1878). For their systematic application to hygiene instruction, see Francisco A. Berra, *Una lección de higiene (preparación – enseñanza – inspección)* (Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1889).

Barrán calls the ‘repression of the soul’ through encyclopaedic learning and the memorising of given answers to sets of questions (catechisms).⁹⁹ Until well into the twentieth century textbooks contained *decálogos* which, like secular versions of the paternoster, were to inculcate in the offspring of subaltern classes the values, sensitivities and behaviour of the hegemonic societal sectors.¹⁰⁰

Top of the agenda was a new work ethic which would allow for the insertion of the new generation into an emerging capitalist world market. As early as 1880 Jacobo Varela introduced a new programme in ‘Morality and Manners’ which was to teach children the ‘necessity of work’ and the ‘morality of cleanliness, order, and economy’. It warned them against the sins of idleness, amusement and gambling.¹⁰¹ When Francisco Simón, the second director of the Instituto Normal de Varones, published his *¿Cómo debe enseñarse la moral?* in 1907, he seconded Spencer in stating that moral education lagged behind intellectual education, thereby preventing the school from achieving its mission. He suggested a gradual approach to tackling the three obstacles to moral instruction: inheritance, physical and social environment, and the complexity of the subject itself. Teachers were to adjust their didactics to the laws that guided a child’s development, influence at least the school environment, and focus on concrete incidents that could awaken positive instincts and appeal to emotions. Making pupils feel satisfaction after altruistic acts would yield better results than the excessive use of prohibitions, repression and utilitarianism.¹⁰² Of course, this meant that children would be tormented by guilt if they did not meet societal expectations.¹⁰³ These expectations were reflected in the textbooks. Figueira’s *Trabajo* reminded pupils that ‘work is necessary to be useful’ and that attending school was the first step to becoming a valuable citizen.¹⁰⁴

The ignorant man cannot efficiently utilise his strengths, nor can he help other people. He must, then, be unhappy and live at the cost of the learned man and the work of other members of society.

Therefore, the state does not give anybody the right to be ignorant.

In order to be a citizen, it is indispensable at least to be able to read and write.

And for the people to be instructed and educated, the state founds free schools and *requires* that all children between the ages of 6 and 14 attend these, whenever they cannot learn in other ways what they must know.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Barrán, *Historia de la sensibilidad*, p. 75.

¹⁰⁰ An example is the ‘Decalogue of the Woman’ in Figueira’s *Trabajo*, pp. 245–7.

¹⁰¹ Barrán, *Historia de la sensibilidad*, p. 227.

¹⁰² Francisco Simón, *¿Cómo debe enseñarse la asignatura moral para que dé mejor resultado del que da actualmente?* (Montevideo: n.p., 1907).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 23; Barrán, *Historia de la sensibilidad*, pp. 313–4.

¹⁰⁴ Figueira, *Trabajo*, p. 18. ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

Eduardo Acevedo placed work into an evolutionist context:

In civilised societies, the struggle for survival and natural selection acquired more human forms. Men do not kill one another in order to steal food. But the person who does not work or works badly is exposed to die of hunger, while the individual who works hard or works well can make a fortune which allows for a comfortable life.

This, then, means that work, or the effort to secure the necessary goods for the development of life, constitutes the great law of life itself, from inferior organisms to Man.¹⁰⁶

In civilised societies, Acevedo continued, ‘the struggle begins in school’.¹⁰⁷

Every individual who fulfilled his duty, the reading books conveyed, could become a hero (social classes or popular masses did not populate these stories). The pantheon of military and civilian leaders was now also occupied by practical scientists (a positivist attribute), entrepreneurs and simple heads of family. In his *Perfiles biográficos*, Araújo introduced children to the founder of the National Library and personalities who excelled in geography, engineering, history, medicine, law and philanthropy.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Antuñas wrote in the preface to his *Temas de moral cívica*:

In the planning and writing of my book, I have given soldiers and statesmen the credit they deserve for their exploits and great actions, respectively, but at the same time I have extolled the value and civilising role of eager intellectual improvement, industry, and spirit of progress, thereby inculcating in children’s hearts the idea that the modest action of an ordinary citizen, however humble his sphere of activity, can, if well guided, contribute to the aggrandisement of the fatherland ...¹⁰⁹

Given the key role that schools played in Uruguay’s political consolidation, it was vital to elevate José Pedro Varela to the status of national hero. In public discourse, he and his reform did not appear as part of a historical conjuncture; instead, Varela was made an apostle and martyr who did not just give new form to existing schools but sacrificed himself.¹¹⁰ The emerging Sarmiento cult south of the River Plate (the teacher-president was now dubbed Argentina’s ‘ideological and literary genius’) prompted Uruguayans to construct their own cultural *Übervater*.¹¹¹ Moreover, they could use Sarmiento, who had defended Varela against his critics, as a source of legitimacy. The myth-making started right after Varela’s death at the age of 34, when Jacobo required photos of his brother to be hung in each classroom and the

¹⁰⁶ Acevedo, *El libro*, pp. 132–3. For Acevedo’s social Darwinist PhD, see Glick, *Darwin*, pp. 81–2. ¹⁰⁷ Acevedo, *El libro*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁸ Orestes Araújo, *Perfiles biográficos* (2nd edition, Montevideo: Dornaleche, 1899), pp. 251–2.

¹⁰⁹ Enrique M. Antuña, *Temas de moral cívica, ilustrados con ejemplos tomados de la historia nacional* (Montevideo: Escuela Nacional de Artes y Oficios, 1903), p. ix.

¹¹⁰ Bralich, *Varela*, pp. 133–4; Emma Catalá de Princivalle, *Ejercicios progresivos de lectura, ortología y ortografía por el método analítico-sintético de palabras normales: libro quinto. Cuarto año* (Montevideo: El Siglo Ilustrado, 1908), p. 34; Figueira, *Lectura elemental*, p. 264. ¹¹¹ On Sarmiento, see Bassi, *J. Alfredo Ferreira*, p. 231.

commemoration of the anniversary of his death with school mourning.¹¹² In literary-musical matinees, children would present compositions and sing an anthem dedicated to the 'Reformer'.¹¹³

Textbooks provided the material upon which students could draw for their essays.¹¹⁴ For instance, Araújo's *Episodios históricos* contained a story entitled 'The King of the School' featuring an old schoolmaster who, with abnegation and prudence, had carried out his 'sacred office' over decades, never complaining about demands from officials or arrears in the payment of his salary. Loving his disciples, he would not resort to corporal punishment but still wielded a cane 'as symbol of his authority and profession'. The classroom, with a crucifix on the wall, conveyed order, cleanliness and simplicity. One day a delegation attended class. The old teacher took off his cap and offered his chair to the guests. The head of the delegation, however, insisted that the maestro should cover his head and take a seat 'because it is necessary for these youngsters to understand that in the classroom the teacher is king. And there is nothing above the king ...'¹¹⁵ The story ended:

That personality who visited the humble school we have described, with the respect and duty of a priest who visits a sacred temple; that man who in this form praised through the modest personality of a poor rural maestro all of Uruguay's teachers; that citizen who in his ideas, feelings, and behaviour was superior to most people of his times and wanted to make the teaching profession an apostolate and the maestro an element of social regeneration, was José Pedro Varela, the zealous defender of the cause of popular education.¹¹⁶

This text exemplifies Varelista myth-making. Terminology, from 'social reorganisation' to teaching as an altruistic priesthood, reveals the positivist philosophy that drove both the Reformer and the textbook writer. Varela's school was to be compulsory and free, but education remained largely religious (until 1909, only children adhering to other beliefs would be exempted from instruction in Christianity). Moreover, the story points to the authoritarian approach which continued to prevail in classrooms and extended to the relationship between teachers and education authorities, as Jorge Bralich has shown. The maestro was not expected to question officials; if he did, Varela would not hesitate to fire him.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Bralich, *Varela*, pp. 134–5.

¹¹³ Entry for 23 Oct. 1895, in *Diario* no. 3 (1895–99), *Archivo de la Escuela* no. 2 (former *escuela de aplicación* of the Internatos Normales), Montevideo.

¹¹⁴ Miranda's *Lecturas escogidas en prosa y verso para los años superiores de las escuelas públicas* (5.º, 6.º, y 7.º años) (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1912) contained texts by José Pedro Varela.

¹¹⁵ Orestes Araújo, *Episodios históricos* (2nd revised edition, Montevideo: Dornaleche y Reyes, 1901), pp. 179–83, citations on pp. 179, 180, 183.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹¹⁷ Bralich, *Varela*, p. 116.

Figueira's *Trabajo* drew a direct line from the leaders of independence to the architect of the education system: 'Our fatherland is the cradle of Artigas, the Treinta y Tres, José Pedro Varela, and many other heroes and philanthropists who sacrificed themselves for freedom.'¹¹⁸ The plan to erect a monument to the Reformer goes back to 1894, but it would take until 1918 before it was realised.¹¹⁹ The timing is important: despite their criticism of Varela's collaboration with Latorre, Batllistas never debunked the myth surrounding him. It served their purpose. They would remove crucifixes from schools, but not Varela's photograph. All that changed was the commemoration of Varela's birthday, rather than the anniversary of his death.¹²⁰ Subtle as this might seem, it undermined the message of Varela's martyrdom.

As early as 1888, textbooks praised Uruguay's public schools. Vázquez Cores stated that their teaching staff were highly competent and distinguished and applied the most modern methods and systems known at the time.¹²¹ For Bollo, primary instruction was 'more advanced than in any other country of South America'.¹²² This image was central to Uruguay's claim of exceptionalism. The nation's future citizens, Inspector Pérez wrote in 1907, were valuable, cultured and industrious; in short, the synthesis of Uruguayans' deep-seated aspiration of independence, the eradication of savages, and the amalgamation of the best traditions of all white peoples.¹²³

Conclusion

In 1859, on the eve of his 1860–4 presidency, Bernardo Berro described Uruguay's independence as imposed and questioned the possibility of generating, as Pablo da Silveira put it, 'a sense of belonging to a mere artificiality'.¹²⁴ His words struck a chord with Montevideo's cultural elite. At the end of the decade José Pedro Varela and like-minded intellectuals founded the SAEP to promote popular education as a means of belated nation-building, and after 1876 a reform-minded military enabled them to implement their project. These officials and practitioners, linked to international circuits,

¹¹⁸ Figueira, *Trabajo*, p. 63.

¹¹⁹ Bralich, *Varela*, p. 135.

¹²⁰ Law no. 5,182 (19 Dec. 1914) is published in DGIP, *Legislación escolar*, vol. 7 (1906–18) (Montevideo: Imprenta Nacional, 1921), p. 462. Courtesy of Emilio Marenales.

¹²¹ Vázquez Cores, *Geografía*, pp. 74–5, 135, citation on p. 96.

¹²² Luis Cincinato Bollo, *Primeras nociones de geografía* (Montevideo: Elzeviriana, 1888), p. 49.

¹²³ INIP, *Memoria*, pp. 9–16.

¹²⁴ Pablo da Silveira, 'La nacionalidad uruguaya como problema entre Habermas y San Agustín', in Francisco Colom González (ed.), *Relatos de la nación: la construcción de las identidades nacionales en el mundo hispánico*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Iberoamericana, and Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2005), pp. 919–20, citation on p. 920.

constructed a national imaginary that traced the origins of orientalidad back to colonial times and projected the vision of a Latin American Switzerland. This imaginary was transmitted through teacher training, textbooks and the educational press, though before 1907 these barely reached beyond the greater Littoral. It was left to a second generation of reformers, the Batllistas, gradually to extend state infrastructural power to the country, while also incorporating waves of immigrants into the emerging welfare-state democracy.

Uruguay's post-colonial nation-builders had particular difficulties with what global history specialists have called the 'container model', in which nations appear as naturally given and free-standing subjects.¹²⁵ This is why the 'model country' that the Varelistas and Batllistas eventually built embraced cosmopolitan nationalism.

The creation and reworking of the Artigas myth is illuminating in this respect. Within the Viceroyalty of the River Plate, ethnic and cultural differences between the heartland and its eastern periphery were non-existent. No wonder that 'Oriental' leaders of the anti-colonial movement never envisioned an independent Banda Oriental. What separated Artigas from Buenos Aires' directorio was his confederate political project. Yet, this project failed in both the patria grande, which despised him, and the patria chica, to which he would never return from exile. His excavation as 'precursor of nationality' decades after his death was a bipartisan effort to find an icon that predated decades of civil war and allowed for national consolidation. Uruguay's textbook authors were not alone in glossing over the failures of their country's father figure. Argentines were similarly generous with regard to José de San Martín's defeat in Guayaquil and Venezuelans with Bolívar's 'journey of disillusion'.¹²⁶ After the turn of the century, Artigas' legacy could be interpreted in new ways: textbooks and fiction began to depict him not only as the liberator of the River Plate area but also, in contrast to other independence leaders, as the precursor of a democratic and united America. Artigas' patria grande seemed to find its extension in the Pan-Hispanic (American) *magna patria* of Rodó's *Ariel*, an invocation of the region's spiritual and aesthetic culture as opposed to US materialism. Extracts from it became recommended reading in Uruguay's city schools, despite its author's later critique of Batlle's state-driven modernisation. From the 1920s Batlle's

¹²⁵ Hanna Schissler, 'World History: Making Sense of the Present', in Schissler and Nuhoglu (eds.), *The Nation*, p. 229.

¹²⁶ For San Martín, see Cucuzza, *Yo Argentino*, p. 81; for Bolívar, compare chap. 11 in John Lynch, *Simón Bolívar: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), with Nikita Harwich Vallenilla, 'Imaginario colectivo e identidad nacional: tres etapas en la enseñanza de la historia en Venezuela', in Riekenberg (ed.), *Latinoamérica*, pp. 84–8.

own Krausist ideas of (Pan-)American ‘solidarity’ and peaceful arbitration of conflicts (including over Uruguay’s borders) began to appear in school texts.¹²⁷ They also guided the Argentine president Hipólito Yrigoyen after 1916, without prompting a revisionist historiography on Artigas in his country.¹²⁸

Uruguay, textbook authors claimed and taught at normal schools, would be the hemisphere’s only country without an indigenous population (and with almost no blacks), making ‘whitening’ strategies such as those employed in Mexico (or Brazil) superfluous. Even in Argentina some educators, like Pedro Scalabrini at the Escuela Normal de Paraná, refused to tolerate ‘superficial or perverse observations’ that negated the equality of the human species, and demonstrated the significance of indigenous knowledge in many disciplines.¹²⁹ These contrasting attitudes might have been due to the fact that Scalabrini applied a more regionalist perspective to the construction of national identity, while Uruguayans wrote history from the urban centre of Montevideo. In Rodó’s *magna patria*, Amerindians did not figure either. Yet it was Arielismo, rather than José Martí’s appreciation of indios’ contribution to Latin American cultures or José de Vasconcelos’ vision of a hybrid but acculturating *raza cósmica*, which appealed most to regional elites.¹³⁰

If there was an heir to indigenous barbarism in Uruguay, Colorados identified him in the gaucho who refused to subordinate to the capitalist economy and the liberal state, who had supported Blanco caudillos and who now also symbolised *argentinidad*. This ruled him out as a rural icon that could help to ‘nationalise’ the immigrant. Uruguayan-style *mestizaje*, textbooks reveal, consisted of mixing hot-blooded newcomers from Romance countries with level-headed Anglo-Saxons to produce a new ethnic group that would tame the country. Eager to increase their political leverage, even Blancos left behind creole nationalism and wooed the immigrants’ support.

Finally, as elsewhere, textbooks instilled in children the values of hard work and self-control. However, in contrast to what Carlos Escudé noted for post-1908 Argentina, Uruguay’s educators did not abandon the liberal-‘developmentalist’ imperatives of the Sarmiento era to form a ‘homo

¹²⁷ Leone, ‘Manuales’, pp. 190–2.

¹²⁸ Until today, history textbooks have depicted Artigas as an Argentine nationalist when describing his fights against the Spaniards and Portuguese, and as a foreign caudillo when he stood up against Buenos Aires: see Luis Alberto Romero (ed.), *La Argentina en la escuela: la idea de nación en los textos escolares* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 2004), p. 65.

¹²⁹ Hugo E. Baigini, *La generación del ochenta: cultura y política* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1995), p. 82, also n. 52.

¹³⁰ Verdesio, ‘An Amnesic Nation’, pp. 204–5; Caetano, *La República Batllista*, pp. 263–80.

patrioticus' with authoritarian, militarist and chauvinist attributes.¹³¹ This may be explainable by Varelistas' roots in Spencerian, rather than Comtean, positivism and the impact of Vaz Ferreira's anti-systematic philosophy and critique of pure 'scientism' after 1901.

It was only with Uruguay's socio-economic and political crises of the 1960s and early 1970s, producing 12 years of bureaucratic-authoritarian rule, that homogenising cosmopolitan nationalism and exceptionalist claims lost credibility. The resurrection of democracy in 1985 saw a recuperation of Varelistas' and Batllistas' vision of an open-minded nation that remains committed to popular education, but textbook contents have begun to reflect new global trends. Societal cohesion is increasingly sought in ethno-cultural diversity, and supra-national regionalisation questions the old stereotypes of 'self' and 'other' and their historical construction.¹³²

Spanish and Portuguese abstracts

Spanish abstract. La modernización económica e institucionalización política de Uruguay a fines del siglo XIX y comienzos del XX estuvieron acompañadas por la reforma educativa encabezada por José Pedro y Jacobo Varela, misma que se extendió a todo el país durante la administración de José Batlle y Ordóñez. Las escuelas habrían de insertar a futuras generaciones dentro del mercado mundial capitalista y de un régimen político más liberal. Este artículo explora cómo los manuales oficiales y sus textos relacionados construyeron a la nación. Estos crearon una narrativa fundacional que hicieron de José Artigas un protagonista de la independencia; volvieron a los amerindios ancestros extintos; representaron a los inmigrantes europeos como elementos dinámicos que, correctamente mezclados, habrían de formar un nuevo grupo étnico y ayudar a la ciudad letrada y cosmopolita a civilizar al gaucho; y enseñaron a los niños que en el trabajo intenso y la educación estaba la clave para la prosperidad.

Spanish keywords: Uruguay, educación, inmigración, José Batlle y Ordóñez, José Pedro Varela, José Artigas, raza y etnicidad

Portuguese abstract. A modernização econômica e a institucionalização política uruguaia no fim do século XIX e no início do século XX foram acompanhadas pela reforma educacional, liderada por José Pedro e Jacobo Varela, e foi ampliada para todo o país durante as administrações de José Batlle y Ordóñez. O papel das escolas seria de inserir as gerações futuras no mercado capitalista global sob um regime político mais liberal. O artigo explora como manuais oficiais e textos relacionados formaram a nação. Inventaram uma narrativa fundadora que estabeleceu José Artigas como protagonista da independência, converteu os ameríndios em ancestrais extintos,

¹³¹ Escudé, *El fracaso*, pp. xxii–xxiii, 10.

¹³² Gerardo Caetano, 'Uruguay y su transición de imaginarios', *Todavía*, 11 (2005), available at www.revistatodavia.com.ar/todavia11/notas/caetano/txtcaetano.html.

enquanto representou imigrantes europeus como elementos dinâmicos que, miscigenados corretamente, formariam um novo grupo étnico e ajudariam a cidade cosmopolita e letrada a civilizar o gaúcho, ensinando às crianças que a chave para a prosperidade residia em trabalho duro e educação.

Portuguese keywords: Uruguai, educação, imigração, José Batlle y Ordóñez, José Pedro Varela, José Artigas, raça e etnia