# THE VANGUARD OF THE ATLANTIC WORLD
## Contesting Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America

*James E. Sanders*
*Utah State University*

*Abstract: This essay explores the various ways Mexicans and Colombians envisioned and employed modernity in the nineteenth century, especially the flourishing and collapse of an alternative mentalité I call American republican modernity. I argue that in the late 1840s a vision of civilization emerged that privileged political progress, measured by the success of republican projects and the enactment of extensive citizens' rights, as a marker of modernity over older visions, defined by high culture or wealth. Because conceptions of modernity deeply affected the hegemonic rules of political life in Spanish America, I also suggest how such a discourse enabled subalterns to exploit this language to promote their inclusion in new nation-states. The article concludes by exploring the collapse of this alternative modernity in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as Western notions of modernity—involving technological innovation, industrialization, and state power—became dominant.*

In the dusty provincial town of Chihuahua in 1868, a crowd gathered to celebrate Mexico's independence listened as an unremarkable orator made a very remarkable assertion about the origin and spread of modernity in the nineteenth-century world: "the Eagles of American democracy, crossing the Atlantic, will import into the Old World the modern doctrines of political association, thereby emancipating those peoples."[1] This prediction challenged the prevailing notions of the speaker's day and of ours: that modernity originated in Europe and the United States and that it would spread from those centers to the peripheries of the world: Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The speech, made in the context of Mexico's victory over the imported Austrian Maximiliano, who had been installed and maintained on the throne as emperor by an invading French army

Earlier versions of this article were presented at the 2009 Latin American Studies Association International Conference in Rio de Janeiro and the 2009 symposium "Latin American Revolutions and Civil Wars before Mass Politics" at the University of Illinois; many thanks to the participants in both. Research for the article was conducted in part under a Kluge Fellowship at the Library of Congress and faculty research grants from Utah State University. I thank Reid Andrews, Celso Castilho, Jennifer Duncan, Mike Ervin, Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, Marixa Lasso, Aims McGuinness, Len Rosenband, and the *LARR* reviewers for comments on drafts of the article; of course, all errors are my own.

1. Speech of Manuel Merino, September 15, 1868, Plaza Principal, Chihuahua, printed in *La República* (Chihuahua), September 18, 1868.

*Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 46, No. 2. © 2011 by the Latin American Studies Association.

and Mexican conservatives, celebrated the restoration of a republic in Mexico. The speaker equated this transformation with modernity while assuming that the influence of this modern system would eventually spread across the Atlantic to a Europe that monarchies still ruled, equated with the past. To audiences in the United States and Europe, this assertion of Latin America's central place in deciding the future of the world seems a startling claim, but similar statements were common during the mid-nineteenth century. The foregoing orator, Manuel Merino, was not any great intellectual or statesmen, and his audience was made up not of scholars or powerful politicians but of the residents of an isolated and remote province of Mexico, yet this language or argument would not have much surprised them by the 1860s, as a similar discourse had been percolating in society for some time. As a Colombian newspaperman succinctly put it in 1864: "Europe is the past. America the Future."[2]

This article explores the meanings and power of an alternative modernity that emerged in the 1840s across Latin America and became the dominant discourse of modernity in Colombia by the 1850s and in Mexico by the 1860s. In this countervision, Latin Americans did not define a modernity bound to cultured Europe and its civilization but celebrated an imagined modernity located in America, a modernity whose definition was inherently political. Latin America represented the future because it had adopted republicanism and democracy, whereas Europe, under the boot of monarchs and the aristocracy, dwelled in the past.[3] I call this mentalité American republican modernity because (1) it emphasized republican politics as a marker of modernity; (2) it saw these politics as the culmination of a political tradition spanning the Atlantic World coming out of the age of revolution, ultimately bearing fruit in the Americas; and (3) it made claims to Latin America's place as the locus of modernity in the Atlantic World. This moment when Spanish America produced an alternative vision of what the future would be and where it would take place—a countermodernity to the North Atlantic—is both historically and politically important, beyond a quixotic challenge to the intellectual history of the Atlantic World. American republican modernity challenged the dominant tenets of the nineteenth-century world: the primacy of both Europe and the material realities of capitalism in dictating the future. This countervision of modernity also forces a rethinking of the complexities of Latin American liberalism, as it shows that Latin American liberalism did not simply absorb European thought while also revealing subsumed possi-

2. *El Caucano* (Cali), November 3, 1864.

3. Sabato (2006), in an excellent essay, also argues how Spanish Americans thought republicanism put them at the center of modernity in comparison with Europe. Thomson (2007) describes a period of democratic optimism in mid-nineteenth-century Spain and Mexico during which liberal middle classes also assumed the mantle of modernity.

bilities and fractures in liberalism that have since been lost. In this article, I explore the meanings this vision of modernity had for Latin American societies—not as intellectual history that traces how great thinkers influenced one another but more as a history of the culture of politics (or political discourse, if you prefer) dominant in a society, a profound social and cultural mentalité that shaped both high and low politics. Because visions of modernity deeply affected the hegemonic rules of political life in Spanish America, I also suggest how such a discourse enabled subalterns to exploit this language for their own ends—especially by claiming the central identity of American republican modernity: the citizen. To conclude, I argue that American republican modernity collapsed late in the century as a powerful discourse, defeated by what we might call Western industrial modernity (on Western modernity, see Taylor 2004).

Yet if this vision of American republican modernity was not unusual in nineteenth-century Latin America, why does it sound so surprising to twenty-first-century ears? First, most professional scholars of modernity, beginning with G. W. F. Hegel, agree that Europe, and perhaps the United States, created the conditions of modernity and exported it to the rest of the world (Dallmayr 2002). The theorist of modernity Anthony Giddens (1990, 174), asserts that modernity, in the form of the nation-state and capitalism, had its "roots in specific characteristics of European history" and that it swept out of Europe to engulf the globe (for a more complex vision of modernity, see Coronil 1997, 69–75). Bayly (2004, 12) notes how other societies tinkered with European modernity but ultimately sees modernity happening earlier and "more powerfully" in Europe and the United States. If modernity was felt in Latin America, one scholar of world history claims, it "was corrupt and flawed" (Johnson 1991, 701). Landes (1999, 313) mocks the new republics of Latin America as "a penny-dreadful of conspiracies, cabals, coups and countercoups—with all that these entailed in insecurity, bad government, corruption, and economic retardation." These societies, Landes asserts, "were not 'modern' political units" (see also Huntington 1999). Even those harshly critical of modernity as a myth Europe created to justify colonization and violence against "barbarous" peoples to civilize them accept that modernity is European and that Latin America was "the first periphery of modern Europe" (Dussel 1993, 67).

I suppose I should pause a moment to consider the question, What is modernity? Thousands of pages have been spent on this debate, with no consensus but at least some sense that modernity involves industrialization and the politics of citizenship and nation-states (Waters 1999, xii–xiii). However, debating what modernity "really" means does not concern us. Bayly (2004, 10) argues that modernity is something real, involving the rise of the nation-state, nationalism, capitalism's globalization, industrialization, and urbanization, but also simply a mind-set: "the idea that an

essential part of being modern is thinking you are modern." I employ the second, discursive, and emic definition; I would argue that modernity does not exist as anything measurable but is only a normative and judgmental comparison; for our purposes, only what people at a certain time thought and categorized as "modern" is useful for understanding the power of modernity not as an analytical category but as a potent discursive force operating in society.[4]

The second, and more important, reason this discourse has been ignored is that many nineteenth-century Latin Americans, especially the region's most eminent and influential political thinkers, would have agreed with these present-day scholars' definitions of modernity (Thurner 2003, 29). Sarmiento and Alberdi, though so often political rivals, agreed that Europe was the "only known civilization" and that the state of Latin America in the nineteenth-century was not on the cutting edge of the future but more like "Europe in the Middle Ages" (Alberdi 1970, 87, 305). Writers and speakers in the nineteenth century expressed the concept of modernity through use of the term modern (*moderno* or *moderna* in Spanish), but more often via the employment of the word *civilization* or its variants, although this was not without its own tensions, and by combining the two into "modern civilization."[5] Most writers assumed there were more or less civilized societies and that societies were moving toward greater civilization (modernity) or away from it toward barbarism; however, not all agreed on what defined civilization and thus modernity. For Sarmiento (1845/2003, 35), arguably nineteenth-century Latin America's most famous intellectual, the choice was between European progress and civilization or to "be or not to be *savages*." Many historians and literary theorists in general

4. Cooper (2005, 3–32, 113–149) stresses the importance of exploring how historical actors used terms versus accepting modernity as a useful analytical category; however, he is suspicious of alternative modernities. I would argue that I am trying not to impose an analytical category of alternative modernity but to understand the consequences of a discourse and practice of politics developed by nineteenth-century Latin Americans. My approach differs from that of the great François-Xavier Guerra (1992), who also promoted Latin America as a site of modernity in the Atlantic World, but as a marker of a real transformative moment, the independence era, when, for him, Latin America became modern. As I don't think modernity is a useful historical analytical category (as opposed to an endogenous category used by societies, which I think is supremely important), I am less concerned with marking when Latin America became modern. Knight (2007) argues that an emic vision of modernity was not important in nineteenth-century Mexico, that modernity is an etic construct. I argue this was not the case (see Tenorio-Trillo 1996).

5. See Alberdi (1970); *La Alianza de la Frontera* (Chihuahua), September 4, 1862; *Los Amigos del Pueblo* (Mexico City), June 23, 1832; *El Genio de la Libertad* (Veracruz), October 9, 1832; *El Monitor Republicano* (Mexico City), January 8, 1848; *La Gaceta Comercial* (Mexico City), January 15, 1900. For more on the intersection of ideas of civilization and modernity, see Bayly (2004) and Rojas (2002).

have accepted Sarmiento's vision as representative of Spanish Americans' views of modernity; even postmodernist-inclined cultural theorists who are highly critical of Sarmiento's essentialism assume his work defined nineteenth-century thinking (Ching, Buckley, and Lozano-Alonso 2007, 190). A recent volume titled *Imported Modernity in Post-Colonial State Formation* claims that Latin Americans always thought that their societies were trying to "catch up" with Europe (Roldán Vera and Caruso 2007, 9). Studying Colombia, Rojas (2002, 5, 105) argues that *letrados* embraced a "mimetic desire to be European" and that "interests and civilization were perceived as European characteristics." Larrain (2000, 90) declares that Latin Americans' pining for and imitation of European modernity was a "total cultural surrender."[6]

If we move from the so-called great thinkers and their intellectual treatises to the realm of everyday political thought and discourse—most accessible in newspapers and speeches—a different vision of Latin America's place in the modern world emerges. I am not arguing for only class difference among the producers of newspapers, oratory, and formal literary works (indeed, most intellectuals worked in all three media) but for the fact that, when writing for a newspaper or speaking to a public audience, the performer often, if not always, chose to adopt a much different discourse about modernity than he (almost always he) would have employed in more self-consciously literary or scientific texts.[7] The audience was also distinct. Elites and a nascent middle class wrote for newspapers, but they had a readership far beyond the literate. The masthead of the Mexican newspaper *La Chinaca* (meaning "the Plebeians," or a play on *el chinaco,* someone who fought the French) shows a gathering of people, including women and children, some with bare feet, to listen as a newspaper is read. Even Sarmiento (1845/2003) recognized how poor people would gather in taverns for news, spreading knowledge of politics beyond what he called the civilized cities. The newspapers also reprinted public speeches, read as part of national celebrations that included dances, parades, and fireworks and that were attended by a cross-section of society. This is not to say that American republican modernity did not appear in more intel-

6. The argument that Latin Americans sought to remake themselves in the "image of Europe" is still the master narrative for understanding nineteenth-century culture (see Eakin 2007, 253). Even those scholars interested in different conceptions of modernity, such as Julio Ramos (2001), have focused mostly on the writings of dissident elite intellectuals, especially those of José Martí.

7. Of course, many letrados, such as Francisco Bilbao, were part of the intellectual tradition of American republican modernity that I describe. Yet Bilbao (1865a, 184) himself noted the differences between the learned elite and the pueblo, but he privileged the popular, claiming the masses, Sarmiento's barbarians, understood republicanism better than educated professors.

lectual writings (it certainly did) or that the more recognized visions of European modernity did not appear in newspapers, but the dominance of each vision weighed distinctly in different media. If historians rely only on published texts geared to a small elite audience, they miss or underestimate the importance and pervasiveness of American republican modernity in the mid-nineteenth century.

Finally, the third reason that Latin America's or, more precisely, Spanish America's, assumption of the mantle of modernity has been subsumed in historical memory is that the period of Latin America's claim to modernity was short lived. Various visions of modernity competed throughout the nineteenth century, all running parallel with one another; however, in distinct geographic and chronological moments, one vision might become dominant, and in this article, I trace the moments in Mexico and Colombia, when American republican modernity became most pervasive, beginning in the late 1840s. American republican modernity was always in competition with visions of modernity coming from and powerfully associated with Europe (and later the United States); visions that celebrated European high culture and wealth predominated early in the century. As the nineteenth century progressed, what we easily recognize as Western industrial modernity emerges—with its focus on scientific, technological, commercial and industrial advances, and, critically, an increase in state power, often manifested by renewed imperial projects. I use *industrial* in the nineteenth-century sense of any large-scale economic development (be it in commerce, agriculture, or factories). I use *Western*, a concept that only emerges very late in the century, not as an "accurate" marker of world historical space but as an imported parameter from the North Atlantic that might include, but as often excluded, Latin America in its definition (Cañizares-Esguerra 2006). As I develop briefly here, the competing modernities dramatically shaped subalterns' abilities to make claims on state and nation in the nineteenth century. By the 1870s and 1880s, Western industrial modernity would triumph, burying American republican modernity as a vision of the future in the nineteenth century and as a vision of the past for historians working today. However, before this collapse, a generation of Latin Americans created a vision of modernity that profoundly challenged the political, intellectual, and social history of the Atlantic World.

Elements of American republican modernity emerged powerfully in the independence era, when notions of republicanism, liberty, and racial equality stirred public debate (Guerra 1992; Lasso 2007; Guedea 2000; Múnera 2005). However, political chaos and elite obsession with imitating Europe soon overwhelmed alternative discourses of modernity, which would subside in public life in the immediate postcolonial period, as nations and states struggled to define themselves and few openly promoted

a vision of modernity that did not privilege Europe.[8] By the late 1840s, this began to change, and here I want to discuss two moments in Colombia and Mexico that worked to develop a countermodernity of American republicanism.[9] Although precursors of American republican modernity emerged in the 1840s across the Americas (it was especially powerful in 1840s Uruguay), it was not until the 1850s and 1860s that this vision flowered in full, especially in Colombia. Liberals tended to adopt a discourse of American progress and modernity when they secured power, although I am hesitant to state too strong a causal and temporal link. Indeed, in Colombia, some conservatives also adopted much of American republican modernity's rhetoric. Yet the reification of a democratic republicanism in this alternative modernity meant that, generally, more liberals than conservatives embraced this discourse. Although both defined republicanism as a rejection of absolute monarchism, liberals and conservatives differed strongly on the role of the pueblo in politics and society. The intense contradictions between liberalism and republicanism have been explored elsewhere (Thurner 1997; Larson 2004) and eventually would destroy American republican modernity, yet in midcentury Mexico and Colombia, liberals generally promoted, if often incompletely and uncomfortably, a more inclusive role for subalterns in public life than did conservatives. Of course, what this republicanism would mean and how much of a role subalterns would play were open to intense debate, a debate that helped engender and promote American republican modernity. Indeed, it is the unsettled and malleable nature of republicanism that gave it such power as a component of modernity, and as we will see here, allowed subalterns to appropriate it to their own ends.

When in 1849 the Liberal Party came to power in Colombia and began to adopt numerous political reforms, including universal male suffrage and a long list of rights citizens enjoyed, regardless of class or color (Jaramillo Uribe 1964), a new vision of modernity flowered. By midcentury, Colombian elites did not just imagine themselves as mere followers of Atlantic political currents but saw themselves as "the vanguard in America," along with other New World republics, including the United States, in

8. After the initial euphoria of independence, a deep pessimism about the future dominated much of the public discourse until at least the 1840s (and until even later in Mexico). *Los Amigos del Pueblo* (Mexico City), June 20, 1832; *El Genio de la Libertad* (Veracruz), September 28, 1832; *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (Mexico City), January 1, 1845; June 1, 1848; June 20, 1848; December 15, 1848; Martínez (2001, 53).

9. Although this article focuses mainly on Colombia and Mexico, American republican modernity was truly a hemispheric discourse. That said, I did not just pick Mexico and Colombia completely at random (Knight 1992); I suspect this discourse was most potent in those two societies, especially when compared to the limited republicanism of Andean states (Larson 2004).

creating modern political systems.[10] The New World, and perhaps young Italy (which Colombians called the "America of Europe"[11]), was the site of progress and the future in the Atlantic World; the Old World, including even prosperous England, was aged, tired, decadent, monarchical, beset by violence, and weighed down by the feudal past.[12] One writer composing his essays in the tiny tropical town of Cali evoked the Americas versus Europe thus: "The situation of America is dire; the fight is between the colonial system and the modern liberal spirit, between the paganism of the Roman priests and the evangelical Christian idea, between those that dream of re-establishing slavery, privilege, monarchy, theocracy and those that believe that all of those abominations should remain in Europe."[13] Republican modernity in the Americas was thus contrasted with European backwardness: slavery, aristocracy, and monarchy. By embracing equality, both by abolishing slavery as well as noble titles and privileges and by creating republican systems, America was progressing while Europe stagnated.

American writers knew great material gains were being made in Europe and the United States but assumed that by creating politically modern societies, economic modernity would eventually arrive. A Uruguayan paper argued that the U.S. political system "is the true font of the prosperity that country has obtained."[14] A Chilean paper posited that Europe was really not that wealthy anyway, especially if one traveled beyond its great cities, and was doomed to be poor because of its political system: "Therefore, one can say with certainty that in Europe while there is poverty there will be despots, that both evils co-exist, and that the latter will only disappear if the former does as well."[15] Although elite writers aligned with Western industrial modernity tended to equate modernity and civilization with economic wealth and high culture, this quotidian discourse focused on the achievement of the most modern political systems—meaning those

10. *La Unión* (Popayán), October 23, 1864; see also Julián Trujillo, Eliseo Payán, and Manuel del Quijano to Deputies of the Constitutional Convention, Popayán, July 15, 1872, Archivo Central del Cauca (Popayán) (hereafter ACC), Archivo Muerto, *paquete* 116, *legajo* 16, n.p.

11. *El Caucano* (Cali), November 3, 1864.

12. T. C. de Mosquera, "Mensaje del Gobernador de Estado a la Lejislatura de 1859," Popayán, August 11, 1859, ACC, Archivo Muerto, paquete 74, legajo 48, n.p.; *La Unión* (Popayán), October 18, 1863, and January 31, 1864.

13. *El Caucano* (Cali), January 21, 1864. See also *El Ciudadano* (Popayán), June 17, 1848; Jorge Isaacs, Secretary of the Cámara de Representantes to Secretary of the Interior and Foreign Relations, Bogotá, June 15, 1870, Archivo General de la Nación (Bogotá) (hereafter AGN), Sección República, Fondo Congreso, legajo 5, p. 553; *Gaceta Oficial del Cauca* (Popayán), July 23, 1867; *Gaceta Oficial* (Popayán), July 31, 1869.

14. *El Nacional* (Montevideo), March 7, 1846.

15. *Ferrocarril* (Santiago), reprinted in *La Nación* (Montevideo), December 19, 1860.

republics that guaranteed the most rights to the greatest number of people. As Colombian (New Granadan) President Manuel Mallarino asserted, "The Granadan people, if not as prosperous and powerful as others whose existence measures centuries, is without a doubt as free as any in the New or Old Worlds."[16]

The challenge to Europe found its most forceful enunciation in Mexican society during and after the French Intervention. In 1862, Mexican conservatives, who had been defeated in a previous civil war, invited the French to invade Mexico and establish a European prince, Maximiliano of Austria, on the newly erected throne (he arrived in 1864). The elected republican government of Benito Juárez resisted in a long and bloody war that lasted until 1867, when the French withdrew and Maximiliano was executed for his crimes (Quirarte 1993). In the struggle, a Guadalajara paper argued that Mexico "represents the interests of the New World, land of democracy, combating the interests of the Old World, land of tyranny and human degradation."[17]

Conservatives had turned to a European monarch after losing a civil war in which they tried to resist the liberals' project to remake society, called La Reforma. La Reforma hoped to reshape Mexican society by making a radical break with the colonial past—represented by the church, a corporate and caste ordering of society, and monarchy—and by embracing a future based on liberal republicanism. Liberals saw La Reforma, as embodied in the Constitution of 1857, as having made Mexico modern, finally fulfilling the promise of independence. President Benito Juárez declared that, with Mexico's new political system, few peoples could claim to have surpassed the Mexican Republic: "not in the love and commitment to liberty, not in the development of their beautiful principles, not in the realization of the fraternity of men of all people and faiths."[18] Mexico was as modern if not more so than other nations for political reasons: for love of liberty, for having democratic institutions, and for developing ideas of equality. Political liberty was the key aspect of American republican modernity; upon obtaining this, other aspects of civilization—economic and cultural—would follow.

After the French invaded, Mexicans' disillusion with European models increased while their visions of modernity sharpened, especially concerning how civilized societies should comport themselves in international relations. The French had claimed they were invading Mexico to civilize

16. M. M. Mallarino, "Mensaje del Poder Ejecutivo al Congreso de la Nueva Granada en sus sesiones ordinarias de 1857," Bogotá, February 1, 1857, Archivo del Congreso (Bogotá) (hereafter AC), 1857, Cámara, Mensajes y Correspondencia IV, p. 30.

17. *El Voto del Pueblo* (Guadalajara), June 29, 1862, reprinted in *La Alianza de la Frontera—Suplemento* (Chihuahua), July 29, 1862.

18. Speech of Benito Juárez, Mexico City, January 10, 1861, in *La Alianza de la Frontera—Suplemento* (Chihuahua), March 9, 1861.

the locals. But Mexicans claimed the French had brought only "murder and arson, executed as instruments of civilization."[19] Mexicans accused the French of having invaded a sovereign people for no reason and, by murdering, pillaging and ignoring the rules of war, of having behaved in a barbaric manner. This discourse rejected French claims to civilization by force, inserting their own claims that civilized peoples rejected violence and colonial control.[20] A broadside that circulated in Mexico City after the French defeat argued that Europe, and especially the French, had abandoned "modern diplomacy" in their wars of conquest around the globe. The broadside denounced French atrocities in Mexico: "They marched into Puebla, and acted as if they were dealing with a horde of savages, as if they were in Algiers, killing in the name of civilization these independent races that have the indisputable right to live in the land that Providence has placed them."[21] Another paper celebrated 1866 as marking a great year in human progress, with "Europe in particular" learning many lessons. Slavery had been abolished in the United States, Mexico was victorious in its struggle, and in Europe "the pueblos . . . told their sovereigns: enough oppression, enough of armies. When will you allow us to enjoy our liberties and rights?"[22] In this vision, there was a struggle between civilization and barbarism in the Atlantic World, but it was not between cultured, urban letrados and barbaric, backland plebeians; it was an international contest between republicanism and monarchy, between citizens and aristocrats, between freedom and slavery, and between sister republics and European empires.[23]

While Europe was embarking on its second great wave of imperial conquest, creating a colonialism that would define dominant visions of modernity until this day, Mexicans proposed a countermodernity that rejected the right of power and equations of civilization with violence. This critique of modernity sounds very much like that of postcolonial scholars, who point out that colonial people bore European modernity's costs and violence; as Hall (1995) argues, modernity is a product of colonialism. Instead of accepting this modernity, however, Mexico had been able to

19. *La República* (Chihuahua), February 2, 1867.

20. *La República* (Chihuahua), February 15, 1867; see also July 12, 1867, and August 23, 1867.

21. Varios Mexicanos, "La Europa y la Prision de Maximiliano" reprint of *un impreso* that was published in Tacubaya, *El Globo* (Mexico City), June 30, 1867.

22. *La República* (Chihuahua), February 15, 1867.

23. Speech of M. Romero on December 16, 1863, reprinted in Romero (1864, 1) in Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, John M. Schofield Papers, box 77, folder "French Occupation of Mexico: Printed Matter, 1863–1866." See also *La Chinaca: Periódico Escrito Unica y Esclusivamente para el Pueblo* (Mexico City), June 30, 1862; *La Voz Nacional* (Guanajuato), September 7, 1862; *La Alianza de la Frontera* (Chihuahua), November 13, 1862; *La Guerra* (Morelia), January 3, 1862.

reject the neocolonial French project and European assertions of civilization and progress.

Linked with this denunciation of force was a conception of modernity in the international arena that downplayed economic, technological, and cultural accomplishments in favor of moral and political benchmarks. One writer argued: "It is not with cannons that you introduce or foment civilization. . . . Civilization relies on another class of moral force, that illuminates and carries human fraternity unto the ends of the earth." Military force was an important aspect of European modernity but rejected by this American republican countermodernity. The writer continues that the French could not offer modern liberty or rights but only "progress of a dazzling and corrupt materialism." France "wants a monopoly of commerce, [and] the superiority of races to change the destiny of the New World, which is the home and haven of the human species and of democracy."[24] This vision recognizes Europe as having achieved economic development and increased state and technological power, but at the cost of monopolies, racism, and democracy denied.

Mexicans were redefining not just the meaning of modernity but also its locus.[25] The modern world was happening in Latin America. Because of the institutional and political changes of La Reforma, Mexico was "a model that any nation should aspire to realize," given that most European societies still clung to monarchies.[26] "Decrepit Europe retrogresses in all parts," Escobar y Armendáriz argued, adding, "We are heading toward a universal Republic" that had already been achieved in Mexico and much of Latin America, even if Hungary, Poland, and Italy were still struggling against despotism in Europe.[27] Even some Europeans agreed; the Spanish politician and essayist Emilio Castelar proclaimed that, with the defeat of the French, the Mexican Republic was "the favorite child of the modern world."[28] Mexican authors went further, claiming that, in fact, European tyrants feared America because of the modern "future of progress and liberty" it represented: "Luis Napoleon has made war on us because he fears America, because he hates republics, and because he sees in Mexico democracy and the Reform made real." If Mexico "had stayed in a state

24. *La República* (Zacatecas), reprinted in *La República* (Chihuahua), May 10, 1867.

25. Chakrabarty (1992, 17) argues that outside of Europe, modernity is always imagined as something that happens elsewhere. For a critique of Chakrabarty, see Coronil (1997, 13–14).

26. *La Alianza de la Frontera* (Chihuahua), September 26, 1861; see also *La República* (Chihuahua), August 16, 1867.

27. "Discurso pronunciado el 16 de Septiembre en la Villa del Paso del Norte, por el C. Jesús Escobar y Armendáriz, en una fiesta de campo," *La República* (Chihuahua), November 8, 1867.

28. "La situation europea juzgada por Emilio Castelar," Paris, October 15, 1867, *La República* (Chihuahua), December 20, 1867.

of barbarism and fanaticism" and had not "transformed itself through La Reforma and launched itself towards a future of progress and liberty, if [Mexico] had not adopted as dogma the sovereignty of the pueblo and as a lie and sarcasm the divine right of kings," then Napoléon III would not had needed to invade.[29] Mexico was not waiting to receive modernity from Europe or to just develop its own modernity apart from Europe; with victory, Mexico would bring modernity to the Old World. Latin Americans were not blindly imitating an advanced Europe, but through American conquests of modernity, it would be Latin Americans who inspired imitation in Europe. Mexico would not only defeat the French but in the process would "resuscitate the republican genius of France."[30] Historical actors of the nineteenth century were provincializing Europe long before the theoretical contortions of postcolonial scholars (Chakrabarty 2007).

A lengthy quote from an article in a Mexico City newspaper sums up these themes: "Right in the middle of the nineteenth-century, when the North armor plates her warships and gives her squadrons Spencer rifles, when Prussia invents the needle gun [a forerunner of the bolt-action rifle] as the best expression of human progress, Mexico with its youth, still covered with the blood spilt during her glorious fight against France, pierced by the lances of empire, with her youth full of patriotism, of intelligence, and of republican virtue, is prepared to plant in the temple of law, the most democratic and progressive law that our constitutions have ever known."[31] Other societies might have had battleships and cutting-edge weapons to define their futures, but Mexico had the most democratic constitution.[32] Mexicans, as had Colombians before them, rejected wealth, high culture, state power, and technology as the sole measures of modernity, instead claiming that republican (and at times even democratic) politics determined claims to the future.

Did this discourse of modernity matter, however? Did the way people talked and thought about politics affect how they practiced politics and organized their societies? I would like to briefly suggest that it did. In Colombia and Mexico, a discourse of political modernity and the practice of politics tightly intertwined. The reason writers in these Latin American societies embraced a modernity that focused on democratic republican politics and rights is that, at least on paper, but also in reality, they had

29. *El Voto del Pueblo* (Guadalajara), June 29, 1862, reprinted in *La Alianza de la Frontera—Suplemento* (Chihuahua), July 29, 1862. See also *El Aguijón* (Guanajuato), October 8, 1871; *La Guerra* (Morelia), December 27, 1861.

30. *La Libertad de Durango*, July 6, 1862, reprinted in *La Alianza de la Frontera* (Chihuahua), August 28, 1862; *La Bandera Nacional* (Matamoros), August 6, 1864.

31. *El Globo* (Mexico City), July 5, 1867.

32. Thomson (2007) traces some similar visions of modernity in Mexico but tends to see this vision of modernity coming out of rising consumption and technological progress as much as from political change.

achieved much by the 1860s. Although I certainly do not claim that voting is the most important element of democratic republicanism, the right to vote is at least easily measured. Colombia eliminated all property and literacy rights for the suffrage in 1853, enacting unrestricted adult male suffrage. Mexico came close to doing so in 1857, only demanding "an honest way of making a living."[33] The Mexican Constitution of 1857 and the Colombian constitutions of 1853 and 1863 also made liberal promises of a broad range of civil rights enjoyed by citizens: association, press, speech, religion, due process, right to bear arms, right to petition. Both would move to abolish the death penalty. Mexicans and Colombians could claim they had progressed beyond Europe on the path to modernity because they had created political institutions much more republican and democratic. Scholars might assert that the democratic and republican practices of Latin America were replete with fraud and corruption, as Landes argued. However, first, what matters is that Latin Americans thought these political practices, if imperfect, were working and a path to modernity, and, second, any comparison with Europe and the United States reveals considerable corruption and fraud, yet few claim this totally invalidates their political histories.

Who enjoyed these rights was also key. Women were excluded. However, those embracing this vision of modernity generally were reluctant to recognize racial distinctions, at least rhetorically (although cultural distinctions were another matter). Long before the much-celebrated racial democracy of the Cuban War for Independence, the discourse of American republican modernity also stressed the fraternity of man, if also in equally incomplete fashion. In another Independence Day celebration, a Mexican orator declared that there would be a "fusion" of races in the republic to form a "formidable family."[34] Another speaker welcomed "everyone, everyone universally, without notice of sex, nor differences of color, nor unjust preferences of fortune, nor distinction of age" to the independence celebrations, thus emphasizing the universal fraternity that was part of American republicanism, both between nations and, in this case, between people.[35] A Colombian writer embraced universalism even more intently, declaring that race did not exist but was based on "ridiculous accidents" and that societies should extinguish all distinctions based on race.[36] The pride in their societies having advanced, at least institutionally, beyond racism, was a key element of modernity, and that rhetoric

33. *Constitución Federal de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Cumplido, 1857), 37.

34. Speech of Manuel Merino, September 15, 1868, Plaza Principal, Chihuahua, printed in *La República* (Chihuahua), September 18, 1868.

35. Speech of Mariano Murillo, September 15, 1862, Portal Municipal, Chihuahua, printed in *La Alianza de la Frontera—Suplemento* (Chihuahua), September 23, 1862.

36. *El Montañes* (Barbacoas), February 15, 1876.

reflected republican law, which did not recognize racial distinction (even if quotidian life was still highly racialized). "Our Republic is the model for democracies . . . giving a lesson of progress to her powerful neighbor to the North, since she does not organize her social rankings according to tints of color nor racial distinctions."[37] Although the United States was usually recognized as a model republic, given its political stability and economic progress, Mexicans felt North American racism was a fatal flaw in U.S. claims to modernity. The power of modernizing visions is clear here, both as a cause and as an effect, as placing antiracism as a central element of modernity was impossible for most in the United States. There were limits to universalism beyond gender: Indians who insisted on being Indians, and would not abandon their identity as Indians, were often excluded from citizenship and brutally persecuted (Sanders 2004; Safford 1991). Republicanism (and even more so liberalism) of course contained contradictions concerning race—celebrating the supposed rationalism of white, European culture but also promoting a fraternal universalism—however, the discourse of American republican modernity favored the latter, especially in the public sphere.[38]

Although questioning the racism of North Atlantic modernity was quite common, most elite and middle-class proponents of republican modernity did not question the class divisions that underlay much thinking about modernity. However, some did. Public speakers often attacked their conservative or monarchical foes as being representative of the upper class. In 1861, a Mexican liberal orator appealed to his "co-citizens" to resist conservatives, who were the army, the clergy, and "wealthy landholders" who enjoyed "ill-gotten riches"; all those groups were "cannibals who fed themselves on human blood."[39] The speaker probably thought mostly about a political struggle in his oration, but his subaltern audience could easily relate such rhetoric to their own economic struggles against landlords and bosses who lived off their labor power. Subalterns eagerly appropriated the identity of citizen, also linking it with a language denouncing aristocracy and the idle rich. A protest from a small northern Mexico mining town signed by fifty-four men, "and in the name of many other citizens who do not know how to write," promised that the signatories would fight against the French. The undersigned, most probably miners, claimed they were "true republicans" who hated monarchy as it was only fit for "vile slaves" while attacking the "notables" and moneylenders

37. *El Globo* (Mexico City), July 5, 1867. Of course, Latin American critiques of U.S. racism often masked intellectuals' own racist typographies; see McGuinness (2003, 97–103).

38. Liberal elites were much more likely to express openly racist sentiments in literary or "scientific" texts, often in direct dialogue with Europeans, than in newspapers or political oratory (Múnera 2005, 22–32; Sanders 2004, 140–142).

39. *La Alianza de la Frontera—Suplemento* (Chihuahua), October 5, 1861.

who were in league with the French.[40] Concerning class more concretely, the Chilean Francisco Bilbao argued that Latin America's revolutions were incomplete as only political change had occurred. He argued a more comprehensive revolution would involve "the liberty of man, the liberty of the citizen," which could be achieved only by breaking up old feudal property holdings (Bilbao 1865b, 22). Subalterns pushed even harder the link between land and citizenship; in Colombia, landless popular liberals, many of African descent, argued that without land they could never truly be "citizens of a free people."[41]

The reigning vision of modernity played a key role in determining the effectiveness of subalterns' claims to citizenship and nation; many of the poor and working class were able to take advantage of this discourse, asserting their citizenship and claiming rights, to promote their own agendas, be it to protest unfair monopolies, protect landholdings, demand pensions, or simply participate as equals in the political system, claims now well documented in the state and nation formation literature.[42] They were aided by conceptions of modern politics that privileged the popular. During the French Intervention, one town explained its defense of democracy not by citing renowned intellectuals but by simply stating, "Mexicans view Democracy as a new revelation, as a pure manifestation of popular thought."[43] Another paper argued, "The work of democracy is not complete: the circle of human fraternity is broken everywhere: a multitude of enemies attack workers."[44] Workers were considered central to both democracy and human fraternity in this vision, not solely as a source of labor. National Guard soldiers from the small village of Tetela de Ocampo refused to surrender their weapons after a rebellion in 1868, reminding the state that they still enjoyed "rights as free men" whose fellows "were sacrificed while defending republican institutions" (Mallon

40. The undersigned, residents of Guadalupe y Calvo, "Protesta en contra de la intervencion francesa," Guadalupe y Calvo, August 28, 1863, printed in *La Alianza de la Frontera* (Chihuahua), September 12, 1863.

41. The undersigned members of the Democratic Society (more than 180 names, many with rough handwriting or signed for by others) to Citizen President of the State, Cali, June 1, 1877, ACC, Archivo Muerto, paquete 137, legajo 7, n.p. For land claims in general, see LeGrand (1986).

42. Although some of the voluminous nation and state formation literature stresses the exclusion of subalterns from national life in the nineteenth century, much of the newer works also explore the engagement of the lower classes in national life (of course, both processes waxed and waned across space and chronology throughout the nineteenth century). The nation and state formation literature has grown too vast to cite; for an example, see Chambers's (2007) review essay.

43. Presidente Lucas Aguilar and forty-five others, "Protesta de la Junta Municipal y vecindario del Norte," Norte, August 12, 1862, in *La Alianza de la Frontera* (Chihuahua), September 4, 1862.

44. *La República* (Chihuahua), February 15, 1867.

1995, 114). As we will see, for discourses of modernity based on technology, high culture, or economic development, this language of citizenship and rights would not have mattered, but for a modernity based on republican freedom, such appeals carried great weight. In an era when the state was weak to nonexistent and nations were still undefined, discourses of nation, modernity, and republicanism were critical to creating a new political system. Elites did not have the power to ignore the debates in their societies about the structure and meanings of the new nation; thus, they could not simply dismiss subaltern claims to citizenship in an arena where the political systems they sat atop rested on the political discourse of American republican modernity. If citizenship had no meaning, then the new nations had no meaning as well, and their leaders no legitimacy. Elite public orators declared that, though citizenship in the past may have held little value, "today all Mexicans know that the title of Citizen is not a word with no meaning" but a title that guarantees "the rights of man in society" to defend his "dignity, family, life, and interests."[45] Some scholars have dismissed this language as meaningless, but subalterns themselves did not think so. As a petition from a small frontier village in Colombia reminded the state, "liberty and independence are found in the cabin of the peasant too."[46]

Of course, countering the progressive potential of American republican modernity were the competing Eurocentric visions of modernity that had never disappeared in the 1850s and 1860s, as well as the ideology of elite liberalism to which republicanism was linked, if often uncomfortably. Although American republicanism did not measure modernity in economic terms, it did assume that political modernity would bring economic growth, as defined by elite liberals (even if their popular allies had other economic concerns). Ideally, the social peace between elites and popular groups that democracy and republicanism would bring would create a stabler economic base than that sustaining a feudal Europe riven by class conflict.[47] While Juárez in Mexico and his counterparts in Colombia imagined a modernity that subalterns could seize to promote their claims in the public arena, these liberal rulers also planned an economic future that would doom many subalterns to entrenched poverty, especially Indians and smallholders losing their collective or public lands and artisans their workshops to industrial imports. However, we should not assume that this economic liberalism made American modernity meaningless.[48] Quite

45. *La Alianza de la Frontera* (Chihuahua), November 20, 1862.

46. The assembly of Padres de Familia of the Aldea de Chinchiná to Legislators, no place or date noted, received February 2, 1856, AC, Cámara, 1856, vol. 4, p. 20.

47. *La República* (Chihuahua), September 20, 1867; see also Martínez (2001, 309, 312–316, 329).

48. It is not that I disagree with the historiography casting La Reforma's economic program as a precursor to Díaz's regime (or that I think that material life is less important than

the contrary. For a time, American republicanism was more powerful than economic liberalism in both Colombia and Mexico. Ultimately, the contradiction could not be resolved, and for the economic program to achieve some success, the political and social project of American republicanism would have to be subsumed to the demands of capital.

This contradiction also helps explain why many elite liberals abandoned previously cherished notions of American republican modernity for Western industrial modernity in the 1870s and 1880s. Although the reasons behind this change are complex and beyond the scope of this article, in some sense, the movement was a return to the more imitative visions of modernity from earlier in the century (although the form of European modernity being imitated had changed over the course of the century), visions that had always coexisted alongside American republican modernity, each competing for influence. What we think of as a Western vision of modernity would come to dominate in Mexico and Colombia by the 1880s, but there were always those promoting this vision, especially among the letrado class and conservatives. José Manuel Hidalgo (1868, 11), writing from Paris in 1867 and representing a long-standing, high-culture letrado counterpoint to the more popular visions of the quotidian press, condemned the disorder and chaos he saw as central to the republican project in Mexico: "We would like to establish a strong government of progress, that applies, whenever possible considering the principles of order and authority, an enlightened liberty, not that democracy," which he defined as "the tyranny of the mob." Hidalgo argued that only a European monarchy could save Mexico from prostration and ruin, and that true civilization was not found in republicanism but in Spanish culture. This Europhilic vision of modernity had never disappeared in the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s; indeed, it ran concurrently, but as a dissent to the more accepted and popular meanings of modernity in the public sphere. European-centered modernities were more likely to be found in the pages of books meant for a learned audience than in newspapers (although certainly many newspapers did not embrace American republican modernity) aimed at a somewhat broader audience.

Although Hidalgo was primarily concerned with order and a mannered view of European high culture and civilization, another central factor in the displacement of American republican modernity was the obvious potency of the economic growth, technological innovation, and the related rise of state power occurring in Europe and the United States. American republican modernity had rejected this economic and technological power

---

discourse); however, simply ignoring the importance of the political and the discourse of modernity does not allow historians to understand both why Juárez's economic program failed and why political life and visions of the future had to change so significantly under Díaz's regime.

as a marker of modernity, but by the 1870s, North Atlantic progress was harder and harder to ignore. In 1878, a Colombian newspaper—significantly titled *El Ferrocarril* (The Railroad)—argued that "true civilization" was impossible without railroads and steamships.[49] In describing "modern" accomplishments, constitutions, rights, and republicanism no longer held center stage, pushed aside by railroads, telegraphs, and electric lights; some were confident in the bright future these technologies would bring, but there was little doubt this would be an imported modernity.[50] In Mexico, modernity had been completely redefined around economic development: "the time has arrived to leave behind all other concerns in order to unite ourselves in a reciprocal and common interest, of relations of industry, contract, and commerce, that is the urgent necessity of modern life."[51] Politics would not create the conditions for economic progress; instead, commerce would redefine Mexican political and social life.

American republicanism had assumed political modernity would lead to economic progress. However, by the 1870s, this promise seems to have failed. Indeed, some began to argue that the political modernity of democratic republicanism, and the disorder and popular demands that expanded citizenship often entailed, were hindering economic modernity. In 1884, a newspaper editorial criticized old attempts to create a model democracy in Mexico: "The disrepute of the old revolutionary utopias increases daily. Those who still pursue an unrealizable democracy, fight with arms whose point has been broken by the iron-plated armor of reality. The worn-out hot air of speeches that could seduce in a moment the gullible, now does not exercise any sway over people's feelings."[52] A Colombian paper directly disparaged American republicanism's political path to modernity, arguing that "the presumption of being the most free nation in the world" had reduced Colombia "almost to the level of barbarians."[53] A Spanish writer living in Mexico urged his neighbors to abandon their republican experiments: "Political science does not know anything more lamentable than those Republics where everyone leads and no one obeys." If necessary to secure order and develop the economy, "a healthy dictatorship" would suit Mexico fine.[54] A discourse of order

49. *El Ferrocarril* (Cali), February 14, 1878.

50. *La República* (Mexico City), August 10, 1890; *Revista Telegráfica de México* (Mexico City), March 16, 1889; for science as a marker of modernity (Tenorio-Trillo 1996), see *La Libertad* (Mexico City), January 6, 1878; *El Heraldo* (Bogotá), July 25, 1889.

51. *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (Mexico City), September 15, 1884; see also *La Aurora* (Guanajuato), March 31, 1880.

52. *La Libertad* (Mexico City), December 27, 1884; *El Taller* (Bogotá), October 5, 1888.

53. *El Conservador* (Bogotá), March 21, 1882.

54. *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (Mexico City), September 15, 1884; for more on order as synonomous with civilization, see *La Gaceta Comercial* (Mexico City), January 2, 1900; *El Lampacanse* (Lampazos de Naranjo), December 20, 1891.

necessary for economic growth became a way to justify the restriction of citizenship as well as the control of popular political action and influence in both Colombia and Mexico. A healthy dictatorship was a legitimate path to the future, whereas disorderly republicanism only doomed Latin America to barbarism.

Therefore, to achieve economic modernity demanded the sacrifice of a democratic and republican political modernity, which would have to wait until some unspecified time in the future. This was achieved in Mexico and Colombia under two political projects, both called the Regeneration, which sought to promote economic growth and stability via the state's exercise of greater control over the political system and the removal of the masses from politics. There were differences, of course, especially in their relative success. Mexico's regenerators were more liberal, and Colombia's more conservative (and more likely to embrace religion and Spanish culture as a way to control or efface African and indigenous popular participation), although each movement attracted bipartisan support. In Mexico, this movement was personified by Porfirio Díaz, who ruled from 1876–1880 and 1884–1910.[55] Justo Sierra (1900–1902/1977, 396) approvingly noted that, under Díaz, "Mexico's political evolution has been sacrificed to other phases of its social evolution." Although republican rule and expanded citizenship rights still existed on paper, Díaz served the same purpose as a "moderate monarch" in reforming European states, which writers of the Regeneration so admired. Economics should replace politics. Monsignor Guillow feted Díaz in 1884, as he had shaped the Mexican pueblo by fomenting "order and peace," which had drawn the admiration of "the most cultured nations."[56] Now order and peace, not democratic innovation, were the key to engendering the future, a future in which Mexico had to earn the admiring gaze of more civilized nations.

That many Latin Americans began to accept the dominant European–North American vision of modernity had profound effects on the state's relation to the lower classes. Mexican newspapers declared that the poor must turn aside from politics and dreams of a promised land and find their hopes in labor.[57] Modern civilization was no longer a product of the political life of citizens but was produced in the "workshop."[58] In Bogotá, a paper argued that "without work there is neither education in individu-

55. Changing views of modernity were tightly linked with the dominance of positivism. For positivism, see Hale (1989), although he does not much discuss modernity. For political life in general, see Cosío Villegas (1959).

56. Speech of Mgr. E. Guillow, to celebrate Díaz's upcoming birthday, September 11, 1884, at Díaz's residence, in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (Mexico City), September 12, 1884. See also *El Campeón de la Fe* (Guanajuato), May 19, 1895.

57. *La Libertad* (Mexico City), December 27, 1884; *El Taller* (Bogotá), July 21, 1888.

58. *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (Mexico City), September 15, 1884.

als nor civilization in nations" and that "the great nations" are the result of the "gradual accumulation of industrialization."[59] Subalterns no longer needed to be, or even should be, citizens to achieve modernity; only their labor, discipline, and order mattered. In Colombia, a politician exhorted that to achieve these changes, "there is much work to be done in order to make the masses understand what real and true liberty and democracy are."[60] The new Colombian constitution of 1886 rolled back many of the rights of previous constitutions, most notably establishing literacy and property requirements for citizenship but also reducing the frequency of elections, reinstating the death penalty, and outlawing political organizations. It is not that elites and the middle class had ever lost a sense of the necessity to discipline the lower classes, discipline being one of the most powerful tropes of modern liberalism; it is that in the period of American republican modernity, discipline was not the only goal toward the lower class but had gone hand in hand with an idea of inclusion of the lower classes as a hallmark of the modern project. However, when compared to the sense of failure before American republican modernity and the demands for order under Western industrial modernity, discipline became the central concern of the powerful and the state in regard to the lower classes. The removal of subalterns from participation in politics as citizens, either directly via new constitutions or indirectly via changes in electoral practice, politics, or culture, was not limited to Mexico and Colombia but occurred across Spanish America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century (Mallon 2005, 162; Sabato 2001, 180–181). New visions of the meaning of modernity and the nation allowed for the exclusion of subalterns—republican politics were no longer the path to the future or national development—and for the reimagining of citizenship itself from a contested terrain of social and national meaning to an increasingly formalized and empty legal terrain.

In both Colombia and Mexico, this project also entailed an increase in the power of the state—which would guide society along the road to a modernity it had not yet obtained. The rise of state power was closely tied to the decline of democratic and republican pressures from both subalterns and the public sphere. As the editors of *La Gaceta Comercial* argued: "Men of experience care little or nothing if governments are republican or monarchical; what is important is that, under one name or the other, in this or that form, that they *realize the ends of the State—security and justice, progress through order.*"[61] Another paper argued that the state had to take precedent over the nation and its citizens. The state was "superior

59. *El Taller* (Bogotá), July 21, 1888.

60. Juan E. Ulloa to Salvador Camacho Roldán, Palmira, June 19, 1879, AGN, Sección Academia Colombiana de Historia, Fondo Salvador Camacho Roldán, *caja* 13, *carpeta* 166, p. 6.

61. *La Gaceta Comercial* (Mexico City), March 2, 1900.

to society" and could not be the "servant of the nation," for if so, the state would lose its "right" to legislate, judge, and "punish."[62] A stronger and well-funded state could more adequately fulfill its duties: "These duties are greater while the country directed by it [the state] finds itself less advanced in civilization, because then, the State is not only the tutor of society, but also the initiator of all works of progress."[63] To return to Alberdi (1970, 165), this strong state would follow European models, where a powerful central state was "the distinctive characteristic of government born of modern civilization in Europe." Now Mexico and other Latin American nation-states were not at the vanguard of the Atlantic World but simply untutored, barely civilized nations in need of strong states, imitative of Europe, to guide them away from barbarism. Some political scientists lament the weakness of the nineteenth-century Latin American state; however, the strength of the state seemed to grow inversely to the inclusion of subalterns as meaningful citizens in new nations.

The Mexican regenerators did not care if the international community saw Mexico as a leader of liberty and democratic politics; what mattered was their country's reputation as a safe place to make investments and loans. Tenorio-Trillo (1996, 247) writes that, for late-nineteenth-century Mexicans, "To be a modern nation meant to follow, ambivalently but constantly, the paradigmatic model of Europe or the United States." As I have argued, the imitation and fetishistic approbation of Europe had not always been the case for either Mexico or Colombia but by the 1880s had become so. The future was no longer in Mexico; it was only something Mexico would move toward, namely the economic development already achieved in other places.[64] Colombians opposed to the antidemocratic politics of the 1880s and 1890s lamented that the Regeneration had removed their nation from its leading role in modernity by destroying "the institutions that had placed us at the *vanguard of American and European democracy*."[65] That moment had passed. Modernity happened elsewhere, in the "West," and "modernization" pursued by state planners would be the way that Latin Americans tried to catch up with the North. From being the proud bearers of modernity in the Atlantic World, Mexicans and Colombians cast themselves as less civilized, waiting to be tutored by the state to work for an economic modernity that would become increasingly elusive in the following century.

62. *La Libertad* (Mexico City), September 3, 1884; see also October 2, 1884.

63. *La Libertad* (Mexico City), October 23, 1884; see also September 5, 1884.

64. For importing modernity from the United States, see *La Gaceta Comercial* (Mexico City), March 12, 1900. At best, Mexico was only "on the road to progress" but no longer modern. *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (Mexico City), April 16, 1884; *El Anunciador* (Guanajuato), July 15, 1885. See also Thurner (2003, 29).

65. *Diario de Cundinamarca* (Bogotá), October 16, 1891.

REFERENCES

Alberdi, Juan Bautista
1970 *La monarquía como mejor forma del gobierno en Sud América, estudio preliminar y notas de Juan Pablo Oliver.* Buenos Aires: A. Pena Lillo.
Bayly, C. A.
2004 *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
Bilbao, Francisco
1865a "La América en peligro." In *Las obras completas de Francisco Bilbao,* edited by Manuel Bilbao, 2:171–278. Buenos Aires: Imprenta de Buenos Aires.
1865b "Sociabilidad chilena." In *Las obras completas de Francisco Bilbao,* edited by Manuel Bilbao, 1:3–42. Buenos Aires: Imprenta de Buenos Aires.
Cañizares-Esguerra, Jorge
2006 *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550–1700.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Chakrabarty, Dipesh
1992 "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?" *Representations* 37: 1–26.
2007 *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Chambers, Sarah C.
2007 "Political Ideas, Political Cultures: New Works on the Middle Period in Spanish America." *Latin American Research Review* 42 (2): 169–180.
Ching, Erik, Christina Buckley, and Angélica Lozano-Alonso
2007 *Reframing Latin America: A Cultural Theory Reading of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.
Cooper, Frederick
2005 *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Coronil, Fernando
1997 *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Cosío Villegas, Daniel
1959 *Historia moderna de Mexico.* Vol. 1, *La república restaurada, la vida política.* Mexico City: Editorial Hermes.
Dallmayr, Fred R.
2002 *G. W. F. Hegel: Modernity and Politics.* Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
Dussel, Enrique
1993 "Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures)." *boundary 2* 20 (3): 65–76.
Eakin, Marshall C.
2007 *The History of Latin America: Collision of Cultures.* New York: Palgrave.
Giddens, Anthony
1990 *The Consequences of Modernity.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Guedea, Virginia
2000 "The Process of Mexican Independence." *American Historical Review* 105 (1): 116–130.
Guerra, François-Xavier
1992 *Modernidad e independencias: Ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas.* Madrid: Editorial Mapfre.
Hale, Charles A.
1989 *The Transformation of Liberalism in Latin Nineteenth-Century Mexico.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.
Hall, Stuart
1995 "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power." In *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies,* edited by Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson, 184–227. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press.

Hidalgo, José Manuel
1868 *Apuntes para escribir la historia de los proyectos de monarquía en México.* Mexico City: Imp. de F. Díaz de León y Santiago White.
Huntington, Samuel P.
1999 "Political Modernization: America vs. Europe." In *Modernity: Critical Concepts.* Vol. 3, *Modern Systems,* edited by Malcolm Waters, 279–311. London: Routledge.
Jaramillo Uribe, Jaime
1964 *El pensamiento colombiano en el siglo XIX.* Bogotá: Editorial Temis.
Johnson, Paul
1991 *The Birth of the Modern: World Society 1815–1830.* New York: Harper Collins.
Knight, Alan
1992 "The Peculiarities of Mexican History: Mexico Compared to Latin America, 1821–1992." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24 (Quincentenary Supplement): 99–144.
2007 "When Was Latin America Modern? A Historian's Response." In *When Was Latin America Modern?,* edited by Nicola Miller and Stephen Hart, 91–117. New York: Palgrave.
Landes, David S.
1999 *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor.* New York: W. W. Norton.
Larrain, Jorge
2000 *Identity and Modernity in Latin America.* Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press.
Larson, Brooke
2004 *Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810–1910.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Lasso, Marixa
2007 *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia, 1795–1831.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
LeGrand, Catherine
1986 *Frontier Expansion and Peasant Protest in Colombia, 1830–1936.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
Mallon, Florencia E.
1995 *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Post-Colonial Mexico and Peru.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
2005 "Subalterns and the Nation." *Dispositio/n* 25 (52): 159–178.
Martínez, Frédéric
2001 *El nacionalismo cosmopolita: La referencia europea en la construcción nacional en Colombia, 1845–1900.* Bogotá: Banco de la República.
McGuinness, Aims
2003 "Searching for 'Latin America': Race and Sovereignty in the Americas in the 1850s." In *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America,* edited by Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, 87–107. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Múnera, Alfonso
2005 *Fronteras imaginadas: La construcción de las razas y de la geografía en el siglo XIX colombiano.* Bogotá: Planeta.
Quirarte, Martín
1993 *Historiografía sobre el imperio de Maximiliano.* Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
Ramos, Julio
2001 *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Latin America.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Rojas, Cristina
2002 *Civilization and Violence: Regimes of Representation in Nineteenth-Century Colombia.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Roldán Vera, Eugenia, and Marcelo Caruso
2007 "Introduction: Avoiding the National, Assessing the Modern." In *Imported Modernity in Post-Colonial State Formation: The Appropriation of Political, Educational, and*

*Cultural Models in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, edited by Eugenia Roldán Vera and Marcelo Caruso, 7–28. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Romero, M.
1864 *The Situation of Mexico.* New York: Wm. C. Bryant and Co.

Sabato, Hilda
2001 *The Many and the Few: Political Participation in Republican Buenos Aires.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
2006 "La reacción de América: La construcción de las repúblicas en el siglo XIX." In *Europa, América y el mundo: Tiempos históricos*, edited by Roger Chartier and Antonio Feros, 263–279. Madrid: Fundación Rafael del Pino.

Safford, Frank
1991 "Race, Integration, and Progress: Elite Attitudes and the Indian in Colombia, 1750–1870." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 71 (1): 1–33.

Sanders, James E.
2004 *Contentious Republicans: Popular Politics, Race, and Class in Nineteenth-Century Colombia.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino
2003 *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism*, translated by Kathleen Ross. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Originally published 1845)

Sierra, Justo
1977 *Obras completas XII: Evolución política del pueblo mexicano*, edited by Edmundo O'Gorman. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. (Originally published 1900–1902)

Taylor, Charles
2004 *Modern Social Imaginaries.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Tenorio-Trillo, Mauricio
1996 *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Thomson, Guy
2007 "Mid-Nineteenth-Century Modernities in the Hispanic World." In *When Was Latin America Modern?*, edited by Nicola Miller and Stephen Hart, 69–90. New York: Palgrave.

Thurner, Mark
1997 *From Two Republics to One Divided: Contradictions of Post-Colonial Nationmaking in Andean Peru.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
2003 "After Spanish Rule: Writing Another After." In *After Spanish Rule: Post-Colonial Predicaments of the Americas*, edited by Mark Thurner and Andrés Guerrero, 12–57. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Waters, Malcolm, ed.
1999 *Modernity: Critical Concepts.* Vol. 1, *Modernization.* London: Routledge.