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“¡Pobres Negros!” The Social Representations and Commemorations of Blacks in the River Plate from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the First Half of the Twentieth (and Beyond)

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

“¡POBRES NEGROS!” THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND
COMMEMORATIONS OF BLACKS IN THE RIVER PLATE FROM THE MID-
NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH (AND
BEYOND)

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY

by

Roberto Pacheco

2015

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts and Sciences

This dissertation, written by Roberto Pacheco, and entitled “¡Pobres Negros!” The Social Representations and Commemorations of Blacks in the River Plate from the mid-Nineteenth Century to the First Half of the Twentieth (and Beyond), having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

John Clark

Noble D. Cook

Aurora Morcillo

Víctor Uribe, Major Professor

Date of Defense: May 1, 2015

The dissertation of Roberto Pacheco is approved.

Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts and Sciences

Dean Lakshmi N. Reddi
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2015

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my beloved mother, Aurora Cruz, whose passing I still grieve,
and for my father, Ubaldo Roberto Pacheco, and my siblings and nephew and nieces.

“Nuestra historia

está hecha

de mi versión.

De lo que decimos

y lo que ocultamos.

De la Memoria y el Olvido.

Algunos afirman

que jamás abrazaremos

la Verdad:

espejismo de aguaceros

en el Sájara.

Pero yo

lo buscaré

dentro de mí.

O en el rincón

más recóndito

del Universo.

Kaidara existe.

¡Recuperemos la Memoria...

Y también el Olvido!”

Rogelio Martínez Furé, “Ultima advertencia” (2009)

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All too often, readers of books, theses, and dissertations simply overlook or, at best, gloss over these pages. The acknowledgments pages are regarded as pro forma, de rigueur, non-substantive, and/or just plain boring. While not altogether an unfair assessment of these pages in a text or manuscript, I, however, unfailingly read them to get a sense of not only intellectual and other debts, in itself of some import, but more so for a given work's genealogy or archaeology of knowledge in a broadly Foucauldian sense. Often, whom an author acknowledges affords the reader insights into the backstory and intellectual development (not to mention ideology) of their research. While in no way placing any of the academics I am about to thank under culpability for this dissertation's numerous shortcomings, solecisms, or ideological orientation, I trust that some of my acknowledgments nevertheless somewhat reflect my work's intellectual content.

To begin with, I have to recognize the tireless efforts of my doctoral dissertation committee. Drs. John Clark, Noble David Cook, Aurora Morcillo, and my chair, Víctor Uribe, all endured reading and commenting on my exhausting (not to be confused with exhaustive) manuscript. Their respective edits and observations substantially and substantively improved the final product. However, I would be remiss to only acknowledge their many fine contributions to my dissertation. More importantly, individually and collectively, Drs. Clark, Cook, Morcillo, and Uribe have proven to be true mentors and have afforded me unfailing support, encouragement, and solidarity with my cause to finish what I started so many years ago. Dr. Cook has in fact been with me on this entire journey; we both started at Florida International University at about the same time, during the Clinton presidency. If memory serves, I was Dr. Cook's first

teaching assistant at Florida International. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Clark joined the University faculty and we bonded almost immediately thanks to some mutual friends (and a beverage or two). He, too, has often evidenced his support of me over these many years. In addition, thanks to Dr. Morcillo, I found a dissertation topic when I had just about given up hope of doing so. Dr. Morcillo really encouraged me to follow up on a research paper I wrote for her seminar on memory and history, which in fact constitutes the basis of the current dissertation. Her support and enthusiasm were contagious!

Of course, my dissertation chair, Dr. Víctor Uribe, bore the unfortunate brunt of both my poor writing and at times even worse moods. Through it all, however, Dr. Uribe demonstrated unflinching resolve to see me finish this project. To say that he “edited” my manuscript would be an understatement and gross injustice to him. Dr. Uribe redacted, rewrote, reworked, and reimagined large tracts of this text, all to its benefit. I have often, only half-jokingly, told Dr. Uribe he should appear as this dissertation’s co-author. Certainly, what is best about this work owes as much to him as to this author. I will be eternally in Dr. Uribe’s debt for his labors on my behalf. I will also never forget how kind and generous he was to my late mother many years ago at a Latin American and Caribbean Center event, where we all shared a table for that evening. Often, my mother would genuinely inquire to me about Dr. Uribe. I am sure she would have been very pleased we collaborated on this project.

So many other faculty members at Florida International University, inside and outside the Department of History, have also shown me various degrees of support and solidarity. Professor Emeritus Mark D. Szuchman, a first-rate historian of Argentina, whom I first met as an undergrad while at New College, was very encouraging of me

over the years and served (with saintly patience) as the chair of my MA thesis, also on Afro-Argentines. Two Africanists in the Department, the late Dr. Christopher Gray and Dr. Akin Ogundiran, allowed me to delve into and explore African and African-Diaspora history in their seminars, which I really both enjoyed and greatly benefitted from. Perhaps some of my most memorable seminars were with the late Cuban historian and slavery expert, Dr. Manuel Moreno Fraginals. Dr. Moreno Fraginals was a real wit and raconteur, who seemed to have known every important intellectual in the Western world of his day personally. Thanks to Manolo and his insights I furthered my understanding of the New-World African Diaspora. Other members of the Florida International University History Department who have had a personal and/or professional impact on me include Drs. Sherry Johnson, Brian Peterson, Darden Pyron, and Chantalle Verna. Staying within the History Department of Florida International University for an additional moment, I need to thank the efforts on my behalf of Drs. Gwyn Davies, Bianca Premo, and Kirsten Wood, who, in their respective capacities as directors of the Department's Graduate Program, have gone well beyond to make sure I got the time I needed to finish the dissertation, and often fought on my behalf against the University's proverbial powers that be. Truly, their championing of my at times seemingly lost cause was heroic!

Outside the Department of History, I would also like to recognize especially Dr. Jean M. Rahier, director of the University's African and African Diaspora Studies program, who never fails to personally invite me if there is a speaker or event that he thinks I would enjoy or benefit from.

Furthermore, the History Department's secretaries, namely, María Ferrer Young, Hayat Kassab-Gresham, and Emily Carreras, have also proffered much help with all

kinds of sundry bureaucratic matters, the very things that annoy me the most about modern academia. María and Hyatt especially have rescued me many times over these many years from many an egregious paper-work nightmare. I truly appreciate all of them and all they have done for me in the past.

I would be remiss if I forgot to also acknowledge some dear friends made in the History Department, past and present. In this regard, I would like to recognize Drs. Amanda Snyder, Carolina Zumaglini, Erika Edwards, Joseph Holbrook, Quinn Dauer, and Renzo Honores. I am especially close to Carolina, in spite of her loyalty to River Plate, Renzo, who always drops by my office when in town, and Quinn, who is like a brother to me. Speaking of those who are like family, how can I fail to mention Dr. Mayra Beers, a godly woman, sister in Christ, and dearest friend. Along with her husband Randy, Mayra has been so supportive over the years that it would be impossible to list the numerous ways both of them have helped me grow in Christian faith and as a human being. The entire Beers (and Magluta) clan have treated me and my mother as true family. Then, there is (literally) my compadre, Dr. Jesse Hingson, my mother's favorite. Jesse is as close to me as any blood relative I have, and he welcomed me into his own family as his youngest daughter Estella's padrino. He is, along with Carolina and Quinn, another of my mentors when it comes to Argentine history. Other colleagues in the History Department that merit especial recognition are Lindsey Maxwell, Michelle Pérez, Jennifer Sheran, Sven Kube, Micah Oelze, René Silva, Gregory Weimer, and, a friend for many moons, César Vásquez, all of them promising scholars in their own right.

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Here, I want to make an unusual acknowledgment. As I started writing this dissertation, I was introduced by philosopher friends to iconoclastic Slovenian (post-Marxist) philosopher and cultural critic, Dr. Slavoj Žižek. Dr. Žižek holds many academic appointments throughout the world and is the author of dozens of books. He

reminds me a lot of my late mentor Dr. Moreno Friginals, another Marxist critic of classic Marxism. Also like Moreno Friginals, Žižek's wit and humor are equally engaging and penetrating, even if often assuredly politically incorrect. Thanks to Dr. Žižek (who hates academic politics and titles, as did Manolo) I was reintroduced to the so-called Frankfurt School, especially the writings of the late Walter Benjamin. Many of Benjamin's ideas are present behind or underneath my dissertation. When I was often depressed about my doctoral thesis and ready to quit, Drs. Benjamin and Žižek came to my rescue, and I drew inspiration from their talks and books (available online now).

All of these fine academicians have thus variously influenced my understanding of historical processes in general, the African Diaspora, and Latin American and Argentine history in many ways. In the text, moreover, where appropriate, I have acknowledged additional intellectual contributors to my dissertation. Let me reiterate, however, that their many contributions do not render them liable in any way for whatever faults or intellectual deficits persist on the following pages.

Returning to Florida International University, I would like to thank all my colleagues (past and present) in the Reference Department of the Green Library for their years of encouragement. In this regard, I would like to especially acknowledge Adis Beesting (who has been very supportive of this project), fellow historian Cynthia Dottin, Beatriz Fernández (who has done some editing for me), Douglas Hasty, Patricia Pereira-Pujol, and fellow Latin Americanist Gayle Williams. Patricia represented the Reference Department at my mother's wake, for which I will be eternally grateful. A former colleague, since retired, is my good friend Steve Morris. I especially miss our theological discussions at Taco Bell, although our weekly phone chats somewhat compensate for his

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Pérez, and Dr. Ziyuan Meng. Martín, a direct descendant of Aparicio Saravia, the last gaucho caudillo in the River Plate, and Gus both introduced me to Žižek. Brothers Bill Harvelle, Chris Jiménez, Gary Cohen, Al Valdés, and Steve Morris are all mentors in things theological. Brother Bill is a true friend who also helped me deal with my mother's death. Darío is like a brother to me as well, and a walking encyclopedia of Argentine culture and soccer. He stayed with me throughout the night of my mother's wake and allowed me to stay with him in the days after. Pablo Valdés and Tinku both cared very much for my mother and she reciprocated their affection.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my beloved mother, Aurora Cruz, whose death still hurts too much to describe. It honors as well my father, Ubaldo Roberto Pacheco, and my sister, brothers, nieces, and nephew. I love them all and thank them for their love in return and their support of me and my studies throughout the years.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“¡POBRES NEGROS!” THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND
COMMEMORATIONS OF BLACKS IN THE RIVER PLATE FROM THE MID-
NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH (AND
BEYOND)

by

Roberto Pacheco

Florida International University, 2015

Miami, FL

Professor Víctor Uribe, Major Professor

To counter regnant arguments in the historiography about the putative historical forgetting of Afro-Platines in their nations, “¡Pobres negros!” explores the various social representations and commemorations devoted to blacks in the River Plate over the period from the mid-1800s to the 1930s. While never uniformly or consistently positive, over the nineteenth century these social remembrances nevertheless experienced a radical transformation. Early intellectual nation builders among the Generation of 1837 associated blacks with the forces of social, political, and cultural barbarism. These representations remained a part of the national memory until well into the late 1800s in liberal and progressive circles. For these thinkers, European immigration was the solution to all of Argentina’s ills.

However, starting in the middle of the nineteenth century, blacks in Argentina and Uruguay became the objects of more favorable remembrances, especially among nationalists. Blacks were now often depicted and historically remembered (and

reimagined) as Platine Creoles and national heroes. Their white compatriots remembered that Afro-Platines, for instance, fought for and died defending their nations, and often lamented the fate of the “Poor blacks!” By dying for the cause of national sovereignty, blacks were seen as having vanished from the national scene and became the convenient objects of Creole nostalgia. National leaders like Bartolomé Mitre, the founder of the modern Argentine state and its historiography, nostalgically recalled and reimagined them as loyal patriots and heroes. Especially in Argentina, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, this nostalgia was further encouraged by the social and political problems often blamed on foreigners, Jews, and radicals (i.e., non-Argentines). In this socio-political climate, therefore, Afro-Platines were fondly depicted in sites of social memory as loyal sons of the nation, as opposed to foreign anti-patriots and subversives. Even if incorporated as inferiors into the national imaginary, Afro-Platines were nonetheless variously commemorated by Creole elites at the turn of the nineteenth century (and, indeed, beyond).

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PREFACE

Whence the Memory Boom?

“The undisputed waning of history and historical consciousness ... [has] been accompanied in the past decade and a half by a memory boom of unprecedented proportions.” Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995), 5.

Why is there so much interest in memory today? Memory is a topic of fascination not just in academe’s ivory tower but also in mass culture. From “Main Street” to Wall Street to K Street, and from Hollywood Boulevard to Madison Avenue to Rodeo Drive, memory is a veritable popular culture and commercial success, enjoying popularity with both men and women of all ages and among peoples of different classes, ethnicities, and walks of life. For example, one of satellite television’s most popular channels with Americans of all backgrounds is the *History Channel*, whose highest rated shows (“American Pickers,” “American Restoration,” or “Pawn Stars”) take viewers back to a “Golden Age” of all things Americana. A more appropriate name for the channel would be, therefore, the “Nostalgia Network”. In fact, in late 2014 or early 2015, the *History Channel* debuted a commercial for its hit reality series “American Pickers,” where one of the show’s leads, Mike Wolfe, explicitly invokes nostalgia (complete with the word’s etymology) as what he and his business partner and co-host, Frank Fritz, buy and sell.¹

¹ Go to the *History Channel*’s website at www.history.com for more information about these and other feature shows, many of which include nostalgia or memory as important thematic elements. In fact, the motto of Rick Dale’s successful antiques restoration shop (and *History Channel* show, “American Restoration”) is “restoring memories for over twenty eight years.” My own personal favorite nostalgia show is on the *Travel Channel*, “Toy Hunter,” featuring expert toy dealer Jordan Hembrough. Go to www.travelchannel.com/tv-shows/toy-hunter. As an amateur collector of vintage toys from my childhood, I can personally understand the interest in memorabilia, as well as how expensive nostalgia can be! Nostalgia, simply put, sells. Just ask

Hollywood, moreover, has also been paying attention to what is popular on the small screen, and has recently produced a large number of big-screen, feature films and remakes which center on memory (or “false memories,” as the case may be, e.g., in both the late 1980’s and the early 2010’s versions of *Total Recall*) as a central theme or at least leitmotif.²

What, then, accounts, at least as far as students of memory are concerned, for the so-called “memory boom”? Of course, one obvious explanation for the “surfeit of memory”³ is simply its economic success, Andreas Huyssen’s concerns about the commercialization of commemoration notwithstanding.⁴ In a global capitalist society, simply put, whatever sells or drives market shares is selected for and further promoted by financial elites. The “memory boom” may be nothing more than a profitable bottom line for modern-day money movers turned today’s “memory makers.” However parsimonious or simplistic this financial explanation seems, it only partially answers the

the executives at eBay, the world’s largest online retailer of memorabilia, and one of the internet’s most profitable business ventures.

² Go to the “International Movie Database” (IMDb) for additional details about these and other films and television programs using memory as a plot element. www.imdb.com. Most recently, in *The Monuments Men* (2014), George Clooney, Matt Damon, and an all-star ensemble relive the harrowing World War II story of American memory specialists (scholars, artists, architects) charged with recovering art and other mnemonic artifacts stolen by the Nazis. In pilfering art and other treasures, Hitler in effect wanted to steal Europe’s memories, thereby facilitating the forgetting of the past so as to be able to re-write its history. This is what Paul Ricoeur calls the “effacing of memory traces.” Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, trans. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), 418-27.

³I take this term from Charles S. Maier, “A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial.” *History and Memory* 5, 2 (Winter 1993): 136-51.

⁴ Cf., Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995). Huyssen is often credited with coining the phrase “memory boom.”

question posed above. Most scholars interested in memory studies have identified other reasons for the “memory boom” or “turn to memory.”⁵ For example, Joan Tumblety in the introduction to her recent anthology on memory as both source and subject for historians examines the “history of memory.” According to Tumblety, trends inside and outside of the academy explain the recent boom in memory studies. Inside academe, she points to revised historiographical practices, in particular the “cultural turn” of the 1970s, as enabling a move towards memory studies. In this new historiographical milieu, ideas and discourses loomed large, and the constructed-ness of the past became the dominant position among social and cultural historians. This new social historiography, modeled after British labor historian E. P. Thompson, at least according to Tumblety, also allowed for other social agents, laborers, for instance, and not just great men of the past, to become the focus of historical study. Oral history, intimately connected to the rise of social history and memory studies, further allowed historians and other scholars to have access to peoples too often said to be without a past, or who were assumed to be voiceless.⁶ As for factors outside the academy influencing the development of the

⁵ Geoffrey Cubitt opts for the phrase “turn to memory.” Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2007), passim. Elsewhere, Huyssen uses the expression “hypertrophy of memory.” Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2003), 3.

⁶ In addition to Thompson, Tumblety cites the oral history work of the Italian Marxist historian Luisa Passerini as significant for the historiography of memory studies. E. P. Thompson’s magnum opus is *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1991 [1963]). See also Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987). The Africanist Jan Vansina is considered one of the pioneers of the field of oral history. His classic 1961 *Oral History* is esteemed as a landmark text in ethno-historiography. Vansina has revised his seminal text as *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

“memory boom,” Tumblety adduced the powerful role played by the Holocaust and other recent genocides and political struggles conveying to society “a duty to remember.”⁷

David W. Blight, professor of American History at Yale University and director of the prestigious Gilder-Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition, also adduces the Holocaust and its commemorations as factors in explaining the emergence of memory studies. According to him, the bloody history of the twentieth century has made contemporary society more concerned than ever with how the past is organized and presented. Another factor to explain the why and when of the “memory boom” according to Blight includes the late-modern world’s obsession with commemorating anniversaries or “anniversary consciousness.” In this respect, the end of the Cold War “politicized and proliferated” various expressions of memory and identity, not only in the former Soviet bloc, but throughout the world, after 1989-1991. There is also the urge to repair and to rage for (or against) restitution for past traumas in many parts of the developing world today, which does not mean to suggest that developed countries such as the United States are free from struggles over memory (especially post 9/11) or debates about reparations for past injustices to certain groups. Academically speaking, Professor Blight, similar to Tumblety, also points to the rise of “new histories” and historical methods that challenge the idea of “objective knowledge” of the past and also incorporate memory as a concept to understand how groups socially engineer identity.

⁷ Joan Tumblety, “Introduction.” In *Memory and History: Understanding Memory as Source and Subject*. Joan Tumblety, ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 3-5.

Other factors arising within the academy or historical profession accounting for the recent “memory boom” are multiculturalism, museum display controversies, heritage tourism and the commodification of memory, and the growing distance between professional history and public memory. As for this last point, Blight suggests that memory and nostalgia seem more relevant to larger audiences than academic historiography; perhaps, wanting to reach wider audiences and fearing growing irrelevance, more than a few academic historians are appealing to memory to expand the range of those reading or listening to them, thereby furthering the “memory boom.”⁸

Professor of Anglophone literature and culture at the Goethe University in Frankfurt and memory specialist Astrid Erll maintains that the “memory boom” is a by-product of the convergence of three major factors over the last two decades or so. As per Erll, these three factors are historical transformations, changes in media technology and the increasing role of the popular media, and, of course, internal developments within academia. Erll asseverates that the end of the Cold War and the democratization of large parts of the developing world, not to mention the need for truth and reconciliation in places like South Africa and Argentina, have all propelled social memory to not only the front pages of newspapers and magazines but also to the forefront of historical scholarship. Furthermore, the technological revolution and advent of the internet have further disseminated remembrances across the world, albeit with some problems determining what is worth remembering and how to store the vast amounts of virtual

⁸ David W. Blight, “The Memory Boom: Why and Why Now?” In *Memory in Mind and Culture*. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), 243-50.

memorializations in the digital age. Global media cultures and popular representations of the past in movies such as the Oscar-winning *Schindler's List* (1993), for instance, play an equally important role “as both expression and driving force of the current ‘memory boom’,” maintains Erll. As for developments within the academy promoting the rise of scholarship on the social frameworks of memory, Astrid Erll highlights the importance of post-structural and postmodern theories of history. She points especially to the writings of Francis Fukuyama (“the end of history”) and Jean-François Lyotard (“the end of the grand narratives”) as further undoing visions of objective, monolithic historiography.⁹ In short, as a consequence of these factors, Erll concludes: “It is under the memory paradigm that the study of the past can be combined with these insights of postmodern theory, because the focus of memory studies rests, precisely, not on the ‘past as it really was’, but on the ‘past as a human construct’.”¹⁰

In the introduction to their anthology on theories of memory, Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead adduce two additional factors for the recent “memory boom,” one,

⁹ Francis Fukuyama is an American political scientist and senior scholar at Stanford University. His book *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992), has itself spawned intense interest inside and outside academia. Jean-François Lyotard was a well-known French philosopher, sociologist, and literary critic, whose writings, along with those of Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze, were highly important for the development of postmodernism. See, e.g., his seminal *Phenomenology*. Brain Beakley, trans. (Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 1991).

¹⁰ Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*. Sara B. Young, trans. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1-5. Many other academics and students of social memory have weighed in on the reasons for the “memory boom.” For the recent interest in memory studies in the United States and the factors contributing to it, consult Michael Kammen’s review of Iwona Irwin-Zarecka’s *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (1994) in *History and Theory* 34, 3 (1995): 245-62. Kammen, in keeping with the analyses of those above, cites Holocaust remembrances, wide spread interest in anniversaries, the end of the Cold War, and the rise of multiculturalism as among the nine leading factors explaining the “memory boom” in United States historiography from the 1980s on.

the debates in the early 1990s surrounding the so-called “False Memory Syndrome,” and two, the central role of postcolonial criticism. “False Memory Syndrome” questioned the reliability of memory and its susceptibility to distortion by individuals and groups. The legal and academic debates surrounding the viability (or not) of “False Memory Syndrome” continued the work on trauma and memory that was fundamental in the “memory boom.”¹¹ According to Rossington and Whitehead, a further contributing factor accounting for the surge in academic interest in memory and remembrance in the 1990s was the academic discourse of postcolonial studies, which had experienced its own “boom” in the previous decade. Rossington and Whitehead cite the studies of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabba as not only foundational for postcolonial studies but for their relevance to memory as well. Thus, for Spivak, the memories of “subalterns” are vitally important historical resources often missing in official sites of memory such as archives and consequently dismissed by westernized academics. For Bhabba, moreover, mimicry represents not only colonial ambivalence concerning the subaltern “Other,” but is itself a kind of repetition or remembrance. Therefore, for “both [Spivak and Bhabba],” write Rossington and Whitehead, “memory is central to postcolonialism and they drew out the ways in which personal and cultural memory can be used to analyse, and potentially to undermine or contest, the structures of empire.”¹²

¹¹ On trauma and its importance to memory and its study, consult Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse.” *Representations*, no. 69 (Winter 2000): 138-40.

¹² Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead, “Introduction.” In *Theories of Memory: A Reader*. Michael Rossington and Anne Whitehead, eds. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2007), 6-7, 8-9. See Benjamin Wilkomirski, *Fragments: Memories of a Childhood, 1939-1948*. Carol Brown Janeway, trans. (London: Picador, 1996) as an example of “fake” or “false” memories, in this case concerning the Holocaust. For more on this topic, refer to Daniel L. Schachter, ed., *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past*

Other sources for the “memory boom” documented by memory specialists include the increasing importance of the heritage trade and tourism and nostalgia in late-modern societies.¹³ For instance, David Lowenthal investigates the reasons why heritage has loomed so large in Western societies over the last several decades. Among his many conclusions, Lowenthal points to the destabilizing effects of the technological revolution and the massive migrations of the last part of the twentieth century which serve to “sharpen nostalgia” as a means to “keep our bearings.”¹⁴ Other memory specialists have cited civic anniversaries and war commemorations, as well as those who protest them, as additional factors accounting for society and academia’s need to remember. Thus, Barbara A. Misztal links the re-emergence of interest in memory in the social sciences in the 1980s and 1990s to the “commemorative fever” brought on by national anniversaries in the United States (e.g., the Bicentennial on United States independence) and Europe (e.g., the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II).¹⁵ T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper also support the notion that war memorialization has been a contributing factor in the rise of memory studies to importance within and outside the

(Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1997), especially ch. 3 by Stephen J. Ceci, “False Beliefs: Some Developmental and Clinical Considerations,” On Spivak, consult his *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1998). For Bhabba on colonial mimicry, see *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹³ Heritage and its import for the national and international preservation of the past coincided with the rise of both nationalism and global capitalism in Western Europe. See Astrid Swenson, *The Rise of Heritage: Preserving the Past in France, Germany and England, 1789-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013).

¹⁴ David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 6, 9.

¹⁵ Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead, UK: Open Univ. Press, 2003), 2-3.

academy. For them, the increasing numbers and high profiles of such martial commemorations to remember the start and end of wars, as well as their major episodes, constitute a key component in the broader “memory boom.” A bonanza of World War II anniversaries in Europe propelled into public consciousness the duty to remember the sacrifices of so many. Ashplant and his collaborators point to the increasing role of the media as a site of remembrances of war. The media produces investigative reports and documentaries which pretend to preserve the memories of those who endured the arduous days of combat and place those recollections in broader social and political contexts. “In this way,” intimate Ashplant, Dawson, and Roper, “war commemoration is transformed into a media event.”¹⁶ Almost all commentators on the social dynamics of memory thus agree on the importance of modern technology and the media as key resources in both starting and maintaining the “memory boom.”¹⁷

Regardless of the multiple, inter-related factors adduced by memory specialists to explain the genesis of the field and the fascination with remembrances throughout the world, the practical outcome of the “memory boom” for academics is a voluminous amount of scholarship across the disciplines that is impossible to gloss or document in its entirety. Therefore, the present study will not even pretend to proffer any kind of

¹⁶ T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, “The politics of war memory and commemoration. Contexts, structures and dynamics.” In *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*. T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, eds. (London: Routledge, 2000), 4-5.

¹⁷ While the recent “memory boom” or academic interest in memory dates back a few decades, as Frances A. Yates demonstrates, the interest in memory itself is, of course, as old as human consciousness and civilization. Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966) traces mnemonic practices from ancient to modern times.

comprehensive survey or analysis of this immense and multifaceted research into social or collective memory. Rather, key works for the dissertation will be discussed in a broad overview in the literature review chapter and cited, along with other secondary sources, in footnotes throughout the text.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“Memory is the raw material of history.” Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman, trans. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1992), xi.

This dissertation on the historical memory or remembrances concerning blacks in Argentina and, to a lesser extent, neighboring Uruguay, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth (and beyond), seeks to redirect studies of memory in the field of history away from an almost exclusively European and North American perspective and emphasis. It is fair to say that since its modern genesis in the social sciences with the works of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs on the social construction or framework of group recollections in the late 1930s and early 1940s, memory studies have been predominantly Euro-centric. Over time, the United States also came to occupy a central place in the literature of social or historical memory studies. A major focus of the scholarship on social memory is how certain elite sectors of the population selectively represented a given nation’s past and mediated conflicts over the meanings of such representations.¹ Jacques Le Goff, for one, however, is convinced that the historical study of memory, as a subject in its own right, can assist scholars and researchers of societies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to understand better and

¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. Lewis A. Coser, trans. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992 [1941]). Halbwachs was a student of Émile Durkheim and is often credited with pioneering the modern social framework of remembrance approach. The statements about the Eurocentric and elite-oriented focus of the academic literature on social memory or remembrances is attested to by even a casual glance at the tables of content, notes, and bibliographies of any of the standard primers in the field. See, e.g., Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, eds., *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2010); and Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011).

document how and why certain remembrances were selected by competing “memory makers” to make sense of conflicting pasts, as well as of past conflicts. Le Goff has thus opined that the field of collective memory studies can assist historians in liberating the historiography of the emerging world from its colonial shackles and in “de-Europeanizing history.”²

Heeding such sage advice, then, this dissertation pretends to undertake a “double move” away from the Euro-centric historiography criticized by Le Goff and other luminaries in the field. The “double move” consists of, first, shifting the geographical focus to Latin America and, second, concentrating on the representations of and remembrances about people of African descent rather than white Europeans. Moreover, this work also challenges the regnant historiographical notion that Afro-Argentines are totally forgotten in their nation’s collective memory and history.³ Consequently, it seeks to contribute to both memory studies, on the one hand, and the field of New-World-African Diaspora scholarship, on the other. I will document shifting social remembrances, and in some cases even nostalgia, concerning blacks and blackness in the

² Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman, trans. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1992 [1977]), 207-8.

³ More on this position in a later. For now, I cite the following as indicative of this school of thought: “Look carefully at most Argentinian history books and you will find nothing on the presence and participation of Africans and their descendants in the formation of the nation... Nothing except ‘forgetting’.” Lucía Dominga Molina and Mario Luis López, “Afro-Argentines: ‘Forgotten’ and ‘Disappeared’ – Yet Still Present.” In *African Roots/American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas*. Sheila S. Walker, ed. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 332. One has to seriously wonder about what history books these authors are reading or, more precisely, not reading. Molina and López also ignore the common finding in the field of memory studies that remembering and forgetting are inextricably linked, meaning that there is no forgetting without some recalling, and vice versa.

Río de la Plata, especially between the middle of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth. The non-nostalgia and negative representations of the Generation of 1837 about blacks eventually gave way to the pro-Afro-Argentine “imperialist” nostalgia of Creole nationalists during the 1890s and early 1900s (and beyond). The mnemonic shift has to do with various socio-political changes endemic to modernity in Argentina over the course of the nineteenth century, especially considerable European immigration and the attendant demographic changes. These population shifts in the River Plate in the late 1800s and early 1900s generated social and political problems for governing elites and fomented a “mood of nostalgia” for the pre-modern, one that included favorable memories of Afro-Argentines. The way the historical memories of given social groups work are always contingent on their so-called “present pasts.”

Thus, what a given society elects to recall (or forget) about its past is often a historically contingent phenomenon, usually revealing more about the subjects undertaking the collective remembering than it does about the historical objects being commemorated.⁴ The notion that historical remembrances are dependent on those doing the remembering, i.e., “memory makers,” is arguably the only common denominator in the emergent field of memory studies. In fact, many scholars would posit that authentic remembrance is concerned with the past only in so far as it is constitutive of the present and as a summons to the future.

⁴ Here, commemoration is understood as by definition both a social and political activity, involving the coordination of individual and group memories. The results of commemorative activity appear consensual; however, they are in fact the product of intense social and political contestation, struggle, and even, at times, annihilation. See John R. Gillis, “Introduction. Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship.” In *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. John R. Gillis, ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), 5.

Over the last twenty to thirty years, students of memory, an inter- or even trans-disciplinary field of studies in the social sciences and the humanities, have examined from varying methodological, epistemological, and theoretical perspectives how the past is collectively remembered and represented in particular social and historical contexts. For many scholars in history, political science, anthropology, sociology, religious studies, and literature (not to mention social psychology), memory constitutes a viable concept or category to understand how different individuals and/or groups across time and space have socially constructed and employed (for ideological or political ends) their shared, recollected past. Currently, memory is as common a paradigm in the social sciences and humanities as are class, race, or gender. In fact, such other familiar social categories as class or race are often themselves studied and explained by means of collective memory; in other words, students of gender or race, for instance, document how these social categories have themselves been represented in the past and remembered per the interests of “memory makers.”

A veritable mnemonic cottage industry or “memory boom” in the social sciences and humanities in the last two or three decades has left scholars a dizzying array of learned conference papers, articles, monographs, anthologies, and dissertations across the disciplines. Often, however, these academic sources, too numerous to detail or synthesize here even in part, have also bestowed upon students of memory a confusing (some would argue confused) cacophony of terminology. Any list of titles on memory in the social sciences and humanities reveals works on collective memory, social memory, historical memory, cultural memory, public memory, official memory, and their active cognates, such as collective remembrances, commemorations, and historical

memorializations, as well as studies on public history, heritage sites, nostalgia, and counter-memory.⁵

Critics of the “memory boom” in academia have questioned both memory’s validity as a category of social analysis and its usefulness in understanding the past on its own terms. Some scholars, for example, have challenged the essentially Durkheimian ways of studying memory that effectively reify the concept, giving it a life of its own.⁶ These critical scholars of memory would argue that groups as a whole do not have collective memories over against or above and beyond those of the individual; at most, what different social groups articulate are shared remembrances of the past and how these are represented in tangible ways such as monuments or performed in ceremonies and rituals.⁷

Other scholars, moreover, have accused students of memory of conceptual slippage or fuzzy language. These critics will point to the overlapping and often

⁵ There is an abundant and growing literature on each these subjects. A few examples include: Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brain Ott, eds., *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2010); Niamh Moore-Cherry and Yvonne Whelan, *Heritage, Memory, and the Politics of Identity: New Perspectives on the Cultural Landscape* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007); Paul Grainge, *Monochrome Memories: Nostalgia and Style in Retro America* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002).

⁶ French sociologist and philosopher Émile Durkheim has been criticized by many past and contemporary social theorists for allegedly essentializing and totalizing cultural phenomena, while overlooking or eschewing the individual as agent. Theodor W. Adorno, for instance, sharply rebuked Durkheim’s notion of a collective conscience. For Adorno’s critique of Durkheim on the “conscience collective,” consult Tobias G. Hagens, “Conscious Collective or ‘False Consciousness’,” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 6, 2 (July 2006): 215-37.

⁷ See especially Pierre Nora, dir., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, vol. 1. *Conflicts and Divisions*. Arthur Goldhammer, trans. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996 [1992]) on the tangible sites of memory; and Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989) on ritual and ceremony as memory preservers and transmitters.

uncritical use of different terminologies, as if collective memory and social memory were not merely related but often (false) cognates.⁸ Still others complain about the problem of the complex, often conflicting, relationship between autobiographical or personal memory and that of the group or collective memory, or, alternatively, asseverate that in many contemporary memory studies the difficult matter of memorial reception is overlooked in favor of the more facile analysis of how mnemonic artifacts are represented in a specified social-historical context.⁹

Such, often valid, criticisms notwithstanding, historians in particular have undertaken the study of memory as a viable means to understand the past. While there is still tension in some quarters among historians—primarily between those who favor a strictly “social science” approach to history writing and those who appreciate the “cultural turn” in the field advanced by post-modernist and post-structuralist theorists—many historical scholars today acknowledge that memory is indeed a useful framework from which to study and write about the past(s).¹⁰

⁸ Let me plead guilty *ab initio* on this count. I will be employing terms such as collective, social, and historical memory/remembrance interchangeably. The theoretical and methodological contributions to and critiques of memory studies by Jan and Aleida Assmann, Alon Confino, and Jeffrey K. Olick, among many others, cited in the footnotes and bibliography will have to suffice as corrections of this study’s own conceptual slippage.

⁹ Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method.” *The American Historical Review* 102, 5 (1997): 1390, 1395. Wulf Kansteiner agrees and maintains that historians are responsible for the difficult assignment of connecting past representations to specific social groups. Wulf Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies.” *History and Theory* 41, 2 (May 2002): 190, 192.

¹⁰ Amos Funkenstein for one connects memory to the “turn to language” preferred by the post-structuralists. For Funkenstein, collective memory in fact can be seen to function as a language system. Amos Funkenstein, “Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness: *History and Memory* 1, 1 (1989): 7, 10. Confino and Kansteiner, cited above, also link collective memory to language.

Increasingly, historians understand that when referring to memory they are in fact addressing two distinct, albeit related, phenomena. First, some historical scholars understand memory solely in terms of those resources available to them for the (selective) representation of the past.¹¹ These “raw materials” are the artifacts or realms of memory, to use Pierre Nora’s memorable construction, that allow historians to investigate how a specified social group in the past remembered its own history and brought it forward in time to their present to provide inspiration and instruction to future generations. Such sites or realms of memory are multiple and go beyond the texts (i.e., historical, biographical, and/or literary documents) favored by historians to include also material objects such as monuments, works of art and music, and collective actions such as ceremonies and rituals. All of these have served as proper vehicles for past remembrances in different historical and social contexts. Second, other historians opt to study memory on its own terms, effectively historicizing it. For these scholars, memory or commemoration is not just about artifacts from the past—important as they nonetheless are to any study of social remembrances, and their representations—but is relevant as a historical subject in its own right. These historians want to know more about how the memories of the past were selected, (re-)produced, and received in their

¹¹ Here, representation should be understood with Stuart Hall as a social group’s production of cultural meaning through language, discourses, and images, to which one can add, as per Roland Barthes, music as means to transfer cultural signification. Stuart Hall, “The Work of Representation.” In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Stuart Hall, ed. (London: Sage, 2009 [1997]), ch 1; Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977). I bring this up simply because this dissertation will rely on discourses, texts, images, and music as sources for remembrances/representations of the past. I do not mean to endorse either Hall’s or Barthes’ specific applications or interpretations of said discourses, iconography, or music as agents of cultural meaning.

respective socio-historical context(s) and subsequently memorialized. In short, what these historical scholars research is not just the sources of memory, or “works of memory,” but more significantly the why and how the complicated past was selectively recalled by a given social group or groups.¹²

My own interest in this subject is itself a study in autobiographical or personal memory. I was born in Cuba but left with my parents while still an infant. My earliest childhood was spent in Argentina, with my father’s relatives. When my parents immigrated to the United States with my younger brother and me in tow, we settled in Miami. This is when I first remember noticing people of African descent. My dear, departed mother used to recall and tell us stories about how horrified and mortified she was when we children first encountered black people in public and would playfully touch them, as if to see if their color had rubbed off on our hands. Over time, of course, I became accustomed to people of color in school, as friends, and as neighbors. I never

¹² The information for these paragraphs was gleaned from various academic sources and then summarized. Chapter two of this study will proffer a cursory review of some of the salient recent literature in the field of memory studies. Footnotes and the select bibliography will adduce further resources for the interested reader. Some helpful, monograph-length primers and anthologies recently published include (from the most recently published): Joan Tumblety, ed., *Memory and History: Understanding Memory as Source and Subject* (London: Routledge, 2013); Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*. Sara B. Young, trans. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, eds., *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2010); Anne Whitehead, *Memory* (London: Routledge, 2009); Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2007); and Susannah Radstone, ed., *Memory and Methodology* (Oxford: Berg, 2000). Two profitable readers recently published are Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011); and Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, eds., *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010). Among the most influential theoretical studies in the field of memory, at least by, for, and among historians, are the works of Jacques Le Goff, Pierre Nora, and Paul Ricoeur. See, et al., Le Goff, *History and Memory*; Nora, dir., *Realms of Memory*; and Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, trans. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006).

really thought much about race again until I started studying history in high school and, later, college becoming cognizant of how race has played a vital role in the historical development of so many countries all over the world.

Being from Cuba originally, I was fascinated by the history of slavery and race relations on that island, and by the legends of Cuban heroes of African descent, especially Antonio Maceo. Argentina, however, was for me, at least in my adolescent memories of it, a pale place (pun intended), where everybody was white and of some kind of European ancestry; whatever boats our European *rioplatense* (River Plate) ancestors got off from, I knew that they were not slave traders' vessels, unless, of course, they were themselves slavers. Further, what little Argentine history I knew then simply reinforced my understandings of that South-American country as demographically, socially, and culturally European. I looked at my own Argentine relatives and, unlike many of my Cuban family members, they were mostly all fair skinned and European-looking (many are even blondes).

Imagine my surprise, then, when as a college undergraduate I took a class on Latin-American post-colonial literature and discovered that Afro-Argentines existed. It was in Dr. Terry Palls's seminar at New College that I read short stories, poems, and novels by nineteenth-century Argentine literary giants such as José Mármol, Esteban Echeverría, José Hernández, and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. In these "foundational fictions" or "guiding fictions" of the Argentine nation, black characters were omnipresent.¹³ Granted, as will be shown in Chapters four and five, these representations

¹³ I borrow the terms "foundational fictions" and "guiding fictions" from the studies of Doris Sommer and Nicolás Shumway, respectively. Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The*

of blackness and blacks were not always favorable. In fact, these early Argentine literati and cultural nation-builders were largely responsible for demonizing Afro-Argentines and promoting the European as the essential element in the *imaginario nacional* (national imaginary). However, Afro-Argentines were there, on the pages of those national literary classics—blacks in Argentina’s past (at least past for me, but very present for Sarmiento and company). I did not really think about this topic again until I took a graduate seminar with Mark D. Szuchman at Florida International University on modern Argentine history. It was in Dr. Szuchman’s class that I read George Reid Andrews’s seminal study of blacks in Buenos Aires and learned that Afro-Argentines indeed survived the colonial era and independence struggles.¹⁴ Subsequent research on the topic furthered my understandings on Afro-Argentines, their history, culture, and numerous contributions (forgotten by many Argentines) to their nation, culminating in a master’s thesis on this subject.¹⁵

In December 2004, my father and I traveled to Argentina. It was my first time back since I left as a child decades earlier. In Buenos Aires, Dr. Alejandro Frigerio of the

National Romances of Latin America (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991); Nicolás Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991). It should be noted, however, that Sommer and Shumway employ “fiction” slightly differently. For Doris Sommer, as the subtitle of her book indicates, fictions are works of literature. These fictions in turn generate meta-narratives about race, gender, class, national identity, etc. For Nicolás Shumway, these national meta-narratives or myths are precisely what he calls guiding fictions. Shumway, too, spends much time and effort exploring the foundational literature of nineteenth-century Argentina.

¹⁴ George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

¹⁵ Roberto Pacheco, “Invisible But Not Forgotten: The Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan Experience from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries.” MA thesis, Florida International Univ., 2001.

Catholic University of Buenos Aires introduced me to other scholars of Afro-Argentines and to members of the surviving Afro-descended community of the capital city.

However, what I most remember about the hiatus relating to my studies of blacks in Argentina (thus relevant to this dissertation) was a sight-seeing trip to General José de San Martín's tomb in the National Cathedral of Buenos Aires. San Martín was Argentina's liberator from Spanish colonial rule and is that country's most renowned national hero. What is often forgotten, however, by many Argentines (albeit not by scholars) is that more than half of San Martín's forces that liberated Argentina, Chile, and Peru were composed of black soldiers, many slaves and ex-slaves from throughout the Río de la Plata.¹⁶ At San Martín's tomb in the National Cathedral, two sentries, cadets from the national military academy, dressed in nineteenth-century period uniforms, stand watch over the liberator's mortal remains. I approached one to ask him what he remembered of the legendary "negro de San Martín," "Falucho."¹⁷ To my surprise, and to my father's shock and outrage, neither of the two guardsmen knew to whom I was

¹⁶ A good survey of this period in Argentine military history is Peter Blanchard, *Under the Flags of Freedom: Slave Soldiers and the Wars of Independence in Spanish South America* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2008). Some blacks even attained the officer ranks in the armies of independence and during the national era. See George Reid Andrews, "The Afro-Argentine Officers of Buenos Aires Province, 1800-1860." *Journal of Negro History* 64, 2 (Spring 1979): 85-100.

¹⁷ "Falucho" is the name associated with Antonio Ruiz, supposedly a second corporal in San Martín's Army of the Andes. Roberto Pacheco, "Falucho (?-1824)." In *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Cultures*, vol. 2. Carole Boyce-Davies, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 427-8. The title "negro de San Martín" comes from a poem composed in honor of Falucho's memory by one of Argentina's most celebrated poets, Rafael Obligado, and recited at the dedication of the monument to Antonio Ruiz in 1897. Initially, this monument was placed opposite the one for San Martín in the large plaza in downtown Buenos Aires dedicated to the memory of the national liberator. Since then, the "Falucho" monument has moved a couple of times to different spots in Buenos Aires, and now currently resides in Palermo.

referring. In fact, the one I first approached asked his comrade: “Che, what [soccer] team does ‘Falucho’ play for?” To this day I believe the sentries at San Martín’s tomb were pulling my leg, so to speak. I cannot really believe that in all their schooling they never encountered the name and exploits of the black hero. Regardless, their ignorance of or indifference to the memory of “Falucho” is indicative of a kind of selective historical amnesia concerning blackness in the River Plate, even among the educated.

After leaving San Martín’s tomb, I immediately asked my father if we could go find the “Falucho” monument in Palermo (a popular Buenos Aires neighborhood). The monument now resides in a small plaza very close to a military academy and headquarters. Again, to my surprise, several taxi drivers said they did not know of or about either the monument to or “Falucho” himself. Eventually, we found an intrepid driver who, after much driving around and asking for instructions from the locals, got us to the small “Falucho” plaza. There, my father and I were able to take in the handsome tribute in stone and bronze to one of Argentina’s black heroes. I took a few pictures of Lucio Correa Morales’s sculpture of “Falucho” and scribbled down some notes (sadly, both the photographs and notes have long since been misplaced) from the plaques on the monument’s base.¹⁸ It was getting late in the day and we still had other sites to see and family to visit, so we bid adieu to the black “hero of Callao,” “Falucho.”¹⁹

¹⁸ The Correa Morales monument to the memory of “Falucho” was “el primer monumento argentino” (“the first Argentine monument”), that is, the first public memorial executed by a native artist and forged entirely in the country, using local labor and materials. The irony of the first truly Argentine monument honoring the memory of a black man should not be overlooked. Eduardo Balliari, *Los monumentos* (Buenos Aires: Min. de Cultura y Educación, 1972), 11-14.

¹⁹ Callao is the port of the city of Lima, once the capital of the Spanish Viceroyalty of Peru, and still the capital city of that country. In early February 1824, legend and history record that

I recall that the taxi driver who picked us up to take us back to our hotel was a gregarious older gentleman. We told him about our experiences at the National Cathedral with the sentries and our problems with finding “Falucho’s” monument. He was appalled! He could not believe that taxi drivers in Buenos Aires were ignorant of “Falucho’s” plaza and monument. To him, this was as much a national shrine as San Martín’s sepulcher in the cathedral. He was less shocked, however, by the ignorance of the guards at San Martín’s tomb and went into an impassioned tirade about the loss of historical memory among his younger compatriots. What amazed me then, and still does, was that this humble, working-class man knew so much history; in fact, he recited from memory Rafael Obligado’s poem about “Falucho.” He told me that in his day, all school children learned about “Falucho” and proudly recited Obligado’s poem in honor of the black martyr on patriotic holidays before local dignitaries, school administrators, teachers, and parents. At the end of the day, upon reflecting on my experiences in San Martín’s tomb with the young cadets and with the taxi drivers of different ages before and after visiting “Falucho’s” monument, I could not help but think to myself (not knowing then that this would ever be relevant to me) that there is an undeniable generational component to collective memory.²⁰

“Falucho” died resisting a rebellion at the port’s fort, dying shouting “Long live Buenos Aires!” Pacheco, “Falucho,” 427-8.

²⁰ The social phenomenon of generations was brilliantly studied by Karl Mannheim in his *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, third imp. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), ch. VII, “The Problem of Generations.” More recently, G. Thomas Goodnight has intimated that a generation “preserves its initiating experience of history in memory,” this historical memory thus serving as an “anchor” of group identification, “upon which a reflexive interpretation of the present is built, inviting a puissant reconstruction of social forces to a perfect future.” G. Thomas

This autobiographical excursus simply serves as a prologue to the weightier matters of the study's introduction. The first point to make is that this dissertation **is not** a study of Argentine history generally, although some background knowledge is useful and will no doubt be proffered at appropriate times. Neither is it, even more specifically, a work on African-descended peoples in the Río de la Plata or their historical experiences there. There is an ample and growing corpus of historical and other social-science and humanities literature on the subject of blacks in the River Plate region.²¹ Instead, the dissertation will mainly study commemorations and/or past representations of black Argentines, and some black Uruguayans, over the course of the last century or so, focusing mostly on the middle to end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries. It will attempt to examine official memorializations (but also negative remembrances) of Afro-Platines, especially those commemorations of a few black national heroes—namely, Joaquín Lenzina (Lencina)/Manuel Antonio Ledesma

Goodnight, "Generational Argument." In *Argumentation: Across the Lines of Discipline*. Frans van Eemeren et al., eds. (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Foris, 1987), 135.

²¹ In addition to Andrews's seminal study, already cited, a brief but useful survey of the history of blacks in Argentina is Erika D. Edwards, "Argentina: Afro-Argentines." In *The Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Cultures*, vol. 1. Carole Boyce-Davies, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2008), 92-96. For a cursory survey of Afro-Uruguayan history, see Roberto Pacheco, "Uruguay: Afro-Uruguayans." In *The Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Cultures*, vol. 3. Carole Boyce-Davies, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2008), 932-37. My MA thesis at Florida International University provides lengthy bibliographies of the Afro-Platine experience published until the early 2000s. Pacheco, "Invisible but Not Forgotten," 170-256. I update and expand sources in "Estudios sobre negros en Argentina y Uruguay en el nuevo milenio: bibliografía afro-rioplatense (1999-2003)." In *Cultura y sociedad afrorioplatense*. Gustavo Goldman, ed. (Montevideo: Perro Andaluz Ediciones, 2008), 49-58.

(“Ansina”)²², Colonel Lorenzo Barcala, “sargento” Juan Bautista Cabral, and the aforementioned Antonio Ruiz (“Falucho”).

Official or elite commemoration represents a subset of social or collective memory. Collective memory was significant for the emerging imagined communities of the second part of the nineteenth century, as Ernest Renan emphasized in his memorable 1882 lecture on “what is a nation?” Also, John R. Gillis notes that new nations were initially so fragile that commemorative efforts were intensified by their leaders.²³ Thus, collective memory is usually associated with the representations and appropriations of the past by social elites or national leaders, and is often accompanied by state-sponsored sites or other social markers of memory such as memorials or monuments. Using France as a case study, Pierre Nora’s work, already cited, highlights that mid- to late-nineteenth-century nascent national states artificially manufactured “realms of memory,” such as national commemorations, monuments, and medals, among many others, to attempt to stave off the vicissitudes of modernity, especially the socially disconcerting demographic upheavals produced by immigration, for instance.²⁴ Some scholars seem wary of official commemorations or memory, preferring instead popular remembrances of the past over

²² There is some debate as to who “Ansina” really was. Roberto Pacheco, “Ansina (1760?-1860).” In *The Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Cultures*, vol. 1. Carole Boyce-Davies, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 90-91.

²³ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?” In *Becoming National: A Reader*. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 41-55. Gillis, “Introduction,” 9.

²⁴ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.” Marc Roudebush, trans. *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 7-25. The English translation and abridgement of Nora’s monumental seven-volume French classic is Pierre Nora, dir., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols. Lawrence D. Kritzman, ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996-97).

those of elites. They consider such “vernacular” commemorations as more historically authentic or legitimate; however, as Alon Confino points out: “Not only is vernacular memory not as saintly and official memory not as brutal, but they constantly commingle.”²⁵

A second important point to make is that this study will mostly focus on memory as a source as opposed to a subject in its own right. I will try to avoid the theoretical pitfalls associated with either reifying or historicizing memory. Instead, I will limit the work to how blacks in Argentina (and Uruguay) were actually represented in the past, both positively and negatively, by official elites and others over the last century, from the middle of the nineteenth century to about the late 1920s or early 1930s (with a few additional examples of commemoration until the present in Chapter twelve and a brief Postscript).

In the process, the dissertation will attempt to answer the following research questions. Have Afro-Argentines (and Afro-Uruguayans) been socially forgotten or remembered? If remembered, then how have they been commemorated and by whom? Finally, why did different social and state sectors, especially in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, decide to socially memorialize black compatriots at this juncture of their national history?

My over-arching contention is that blacks in the Río de la Plata, but especially in Argentina, were by the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century the

²⁵ Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History,” 1402.

objects of a kind of “imperialist nostalgia,” to cite Renato Rosaldo’s influential concept.²⁶ That is, whereas intellectual nation-builders such as Sarmiento once viewed Afro-Argentines anti-nostalgically as racially, socially, and culturally backwards, and also as socio-political threats, by the end of the nineteenth century, with their numbers greatly diminished as a result of war deaths, disease, and inter-marriage with Europeans, and their attendant threats to centralizing state-founders mitigated, they were re-imagined and romanticized as national heroes and loyal members of the national state.²⁷ By the time of Argentina’s centennial (of the start of the anti-colonial struggle) in 1910, blacks were then nostalgically remembered and represented by both national elites and state sectors as contributors to the preservation of the country’s sovereignty over against, first, Spanish colonialism and, later, foreign, European interlopers, namely, immigrants, and their radical socio-political ideologies (e.g., communism, syndicalism, but especially anarchism). As will be demonstrated, the largely nostalgic social and historical remembrances of blacks in Argentina and Uruguay by Creole nationalists continued well

²⁶ Renato Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia.” *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 107-122. Chapter two will more fully develop Rosaldo’s ideas. Halbwachs also understood the importance of nostalgia as social memory. Suzanne Vromen, “Maurice Halbwachs and the Concept of Nostalgia.” *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present* 6 (1986): 55-66.

²⁷ Richard W. Slatta has intimated that something similar happened to the gaucho (cowboy) with the vanishing of his frontier. The same Creole nationalists and xenophobes who at the end of the nineteenth century reimagined Afro-Argentines also reinvented the Argentine cowboy as a patriotic symbol and national myth. Richard W. Slatta, *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier*, 1st paperback ed. (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1992), especially ch. 10, “Immigration and Xenophobia,” and ch. 11, “Man to Myth: Literary and Symbolic Images,” respectively. Slatta, however, seems unaware of the concept of “imperialist nostalgia.” Leopoldo Lugones was fundamental in romanticizing the gaucho and turning him into an icon of national identity. See, e.g., Leopoldo Lugones, “National Identity in a Cosmopolitan Society.” Patricia Owen Steiner, trans. In *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2002), 209-13.

into the twentieth century (and beyond into the present in some quarters), even as they have been recently challenged in certain academic sectors in Argentina and Uruguay as simultaneously paternalistic and patronizing. For example, recent Afro-centric scholarship in the River Plate challenges past imperialist nostalgic representations of negritude as furthering, rather than mitigating, the “olvido” (forgetting) and invisibility of peoples of African ancestry.²⁸

A third important issue in regards to the dissertation concerns sources and methodology. In order to attempt to answer the above research queries, this study appropriates various ideas and resources from different academic specialties. In addition to the influential studies of Halbwachs, Nora, and Rosaldo already mentioned on the social framework of remembrances, their externalizations in the forms of sites or realms of social memory, and nostalgia, the research of other scholars in the field of memory studies will be consulted and acknowledged where appropriate. For instance, Cambridge anthropologist Paul Connerton has written many important books on the social dimensions of both remembering and forgetting. Connerton places a great emphasis on the social performance or performativity of memory, i.e., social rituals in fact constitute the basis of any authentic collective remembering or memory.²⁹ In Argentina after independence, patriotic rituals were both sites of memory and national identity, and were

²⁸ See, e.g., Anny Ocoro Loango, “La emergencia del negro en los actos escolares del 25 de mayo en la Argentina: del negro heroico al estereotipado.” *Pedagogía y Saberes*, no. 34 (Jan.-June 2011): 33-50.

²⁹Connerton, *How Societies Remember*; and, more recently, Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009).

thus promoted by national elites.³⁰ Often, these rituals coincide with other realms of memory, such as national holidays or the inauguration of public monuments. Eviatar Zerubavel especially has emphasized the almost liturgical quality of national commemorations, with their respective patriotic holidays, intended for “mnemonic socialization.”³¹ In the case of the social remembrances of Afro-Argentines, public performances during patriotic events, for example, represented an important conduit for their memorializations in the past century and a half.

Furthermore, this study relies on secondary sources on Argentine history and the African-New World Diaspora. These sources play a dual role. On the one hand, they provide salient historical and other background data for the dissertation. On the other hand, and more significantly, they can also constitute realms of memory in their own right. Scholars in different fields studying a variety of social actors, settings, and times attest to the “presentist” quality of so much past historical or social memory. In light of this, it is therefore appropriate and useful to view some current historiography on blacks

³⁰ Hans Vogel, “Fiestas patrias y nuevas lealtades.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 25, 287(1991): 42-50; Juan Carlos Garavaglia, “La nación por la fiesta: las fiestas mayas en el origen de la nación en el Plata.” *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. Emilio Ravignani* 3, 22 (Second Semester 2000): 73-81; Alejandro Grimson et al., “La nación escenificada por el el Estado. Una comparación de rituales patrios.” In *Pasiones nacionales. Política y cultura en Brasil y Argentina*. Alejandro Grimson, ed. (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2007), ch. 9.

³¹ Eviatar Zerubavel, “Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory.” In *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection*. Jeffrey K. Olick, ed. (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003), 317. See also Gabrielle M. Spiegel, “Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time.” *History and Memory* 41, 2 (May 2002): 149-62.

in the Río de la Plata as resources of recent collective memory about and representation of the African “Other” in Argentina and Uruguay.

To proffer but one recent example of a treatise that pulls double duty in this dissertation as both historiography and commemoration, consider the book by retired Argentine Army colonel Juan Lucio Torres, *El soldado negro en la epopeya libertadora argentina. Integrando el ejército argentino y de otros países*.³² The explicit purpose of Colonel Torres’s monograph is to overcome what he claims is the systematic “olvido” (forgetting) of black soldiers in Argentina and elsewhere in the Americas. His monograph thus constitutes an official act of commemoration by the Argentine military, written by a former army officer, with a prologue by retired army general Dr. Pacífico Luis Britos (then president of the Historical Institute for Argentine Military History), and published by the Argentine military’s official in-house press.

Apropos of the Jacques Le Goff epigram cited above, I prefer to think of this dissertation’s “primary sources” as rather the raw materials of the collective memory about Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans in the past. In an excellent study of artistic and ritual performances in the Atlantic world from the eighteenth century until the present, Yale University drama professor Joseph Roach encourages scholars to transcend traditional sources of documentation (e.g., narrative texts) and where they are found (e.g., libraries and archives) and to get creative in how we retrieve and employ other forms of

³² Juan Lucio Torres, *El soldado negro en la epopeya libertadora argentina. Integrando el ejército argentino y de otros países* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Historia Militar Argentina, 2003).

evidence.³³ Given my limited access to important archival resources, I have had no choice but to do as Dr. Roach says. While I do have some traditional historical sources to work with, such as newspapers and magazine articles from different time periods relevant to my study, I have also expanded my resources to include iconography (e.g., medals and postcards) and song and music. Such raw materials of memory as I have been able to retrieve by various means, including the internet, inter-library loan, and by self-purchasing, will have to suffice and hopefully carry the weight of my arguments.³⁴ I will also try to be as thorough as possible in my description of the sources. That way, perhaps more diligent or adroit researchers will be able to track down the documents in Argentina or Uruguay. Lastly, all paraphrases and translations from my “primary” and secondary sources are mine, unless otherwise indicated. I have tried to follow the advice of the late sage Walter Benjamin when it comes to translating. According to Dr. Benjamin, the translator’s task consists of finding the “intended effect” upon the language into which he is translating so as to produce an “echo of the original.”³⁵ Of

³³ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996).

³⁴ At the risk of shameless self-promotion, Dr. Alejandro Frigerio has recognized my collection of Afro-Platine resources as the most complete, privately owned archive he is aware of. See Alejandro Frigerio, *Cultura negra en el Cono Sur: representaciones en conflicto* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Univ. Católica Argentina, 2000), 23. In addition to Dr. Frigerio, my personal archive of Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan sources has been freely consulted by numerous scholars, sadly at times without due acknowledgement, from both the United States and Argentina. I bring this up, not to beat my own drum, so to speak, *autobombo*, as Argentines and Uruguayans would say, but simply to try to minimize my lack of additional materials for the dissertation due to limited financial resources and time to travel to Argentina and Uruguay.

³⁵ Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the translation of Baudelaire’s *Tableaux Parisiens*.” In *The Translation Studies Reader*. Lawrence Venuti, ed. (London: Routledge, 2000), 19-20. Actually, Walter Benjamin was himself a student of memory.

course, Professor Benjamin's recommendations should not be taken as license for either sloppy translations or ideologically-motivated readings. In the case of works of literature, especially poetry, I have tried to use published, English-language translations. If I could not find reputable translations, then what you get from me is more akin to a crude transliteration of those works of literature.

As to the dissertation's method, it is largely descriptive and narrative in shape and content. It is a qualitative study. Whatever numbers or statistical data appear in this study will, therefore, come strictly from secondary sources. While I would take great pride in being able to claim that my dissertation is a shining example of Geertzian "thick description," for instance, this is not the case, though.³⁶ In the final analysis, my dissertation is mainly a work of intellectual or cultural history. Hopefully, what it lacks in terms of analytical, methodological, and/or theoretical depth, it makes up for in thematic breadth.

One last point of order or caveat before moving on to a chapter-by-chapter summary of the dissertation's contents. Let me be crystal clear from the onset about what this dissertation **is not** arguing for or suggesting. One, I am not saying that at any point

See, e.g., the relevant discussions of memory in his *The Arcades Project*. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, trans. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1999).

³⁶ Here I am of course referring to the approach of anthropologist Clifford Geertz to socio-cultural analysis. See, e.g., his *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). A brief definition of "thick description" is "... to thickly describe social action is actually to begin to interpret it [by] recording the circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations, and so on that characterize a particular episode." Consult T. A. Schwandt, comp., *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001). Joseph G. Ponterotto, "Brief Note on the Origins, Evolution, and Meaning of the Qualitative Research Concept 'Thick Description'," *The Qualitative Report* 11, 3 (Sept. 2006): 538-49, outlines the history and usages of this term.

in its past or present was Argentina a “racial democracy,” a place where people of color were free from prejudice. Two, neither am I suggesting that Argentina today is a multi-cultural paradise, where the racial prejudices of the past are exactly that, past tense. Three, I am also not implying that any amount of historical commemoration of blacks in the River Plate forgives centuries of racial inequality. A thousand monuments cannot undue a legacy of racism anywhere in the world. Four, I am not suggesting that official memory is the only valid form of historical remembrance, or that Afro-Platines themselves have been silent on the matter of their own history and legacy. As I attempt to document, people of color in the River Plate in fact resisted marginalization and recorded their pasts in myriad ways, for example, through Afro-centric literature and black owned, managed, and edited newspaper publications.³⁷ Finally, I do not mean to imply that elite nostalgia about blacks in the past constitutes either proof of the valorization of negritude on its own terms among national leaders or that it means blacks have disappeared along with the nostalgic memories about them. In fact, a growing Afro movement in Argentina and Uruguay struggles against the idea that blackness is a matter

³⁷ For Afro-Argentine literature, consult Marvin A. Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse: Another Dimension of the Black Diaspora* (Columbia, MO: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1996). I will often resort to Dr. Lewis’s translations of works of black Argentine poets from the 1800s. Two recent compilations of Afro-Argentine newspaper articles and editorials are Norberto Pablo Cirio, comp., *Tinta negra en el gris de ayer: los afroporteños a través de sus periódicos entre 1873 y 1882* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Teseo, 2009); and Tomás A. Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros: La Broma y otros periódicos de la comunidad afroargentina (1873-1882)* (Buenos Aires: Inst. Histórico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2004). I will be using both these compilations in Chapter five. It is important to note that both these sources also represent official sites of memory of and about blacks in Argentina, given that Argentina’s National Library appears on the publication page of Cirio’s compilation as a co-publisher and also copy-right owner. Cirio’s tome appeared just in time for the country’s bicentennial in 2010. In addition, Platero’s study was published by Buenos Aires’s official historical institute and a major sponsor of academic research on the city’s and country’s past.

of only nostalgia or Creole folklore. They resist the segregation of blacks to the pages of history, a safe distance from the present. However, much like the “Falucho” monument in downtown Buenos Aires for many today, who walk by it without acknowledgement, people of African descent in Argentina (and to a lesser extent in neighboring Uruguay) are indeed somewhat socially vanished (or at least invisible). This is a condition, however, which many, white and black, academic and lay, are nonetheless trying to mitigate through various means, including black-run NGOs, social and political mobilizations, and through academic writings and conferences.³⁸

This dissertation is basically composed of three parts. Following a brief preface on the interest in memory in modern times and its possible sources, part one proffers the reader background information on the dissertation, its sources, and the history of blacks in the River Plate. Chapter one serves as an introduction to the dissertation, its central ideas and findings, and its structure. A literature review of salient themes will follow this introduction and serve as Chapter two. The survey of scholarship will limit itself to just a few key works on memory, including Rosaldo’s article on “imperialist nostalgia,” memory of and about the African-New World Diaspora, and Afro-Argentines. Footnotes both in this chapter and throughout the study (and the select bibliography) will have to do in terms of providing additional commentary and sources on these topics. Following the literature review chapter, in Chapter three I will provide a background history of blacks

³⁸ A triumph for people of African ancestry in Argentina in their battles against both marginalization and their invisibility was the inclusion of a category for race in the national census for the first time since the late nineteenth century. See the online article by Marcela Valente for Inter Press Service News Agency, “Argentine Census to Count Blacks for First Time in a Century,” Oct. 25, 2010, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2010/10/argentine-census-to-count-blacks-for-first-time-in-a-century/>.

in the River Plate, mostly focusing on Argentina, even more precisely, Buenos Aires, from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century. Here, too, footnotes will proffer additional academic resources for those interested in further or contrasting points of view on the subject of Afro-Argentines and their history. Given its particular significance, a separate background chapter (Chapter four) is entirely devoted to the history and contributions of black soldiers to the nation-states of Argentina and Uruguay. It closes out the dissertation's first part.

Part two of the dissertation delves into the representations and commemorations of black Platines from the middle of the nineteenth century to mostly the first few decades of the twentieth. Chapter five covers the abiding relationship between the black community of Buenos Aires and strongman Juan Manuel de Rosas and serves as background for the non- or un-nostalgia of blackness in Argentina as espoused by members of the so-called Argentine Generation of 1837. This generation is the focus of Chapter six. This cohort was comprised of the intellectual architects of Argentina. Their writings, both fiction and non-fiction, fashioned the national imaginary (*imaginario nacional*) of Argentina as modern, white, and European. These men, especially Mármol, Echeverría, and Sarmiento, mostly remembered/represented Afro-Argentines in their writings as racially inferior and culturally backward, puppets in the hands of political strongmen (*caudillos*) such as Juan Manuel de Rosas, Buenos Aires's dictator for most of the first half of the nineteenth century. These intellectual nation-builders believed the solution to Argentina's racial, social, cultural, economic, and political backwardness was European immigration, to not only "whiten" the nation's population but also provide much needed labor for farm and factory.

However, it was not too long before a new generation of national intellectuals challenged the views of their predecessors. As will be documented in Chapter seven, Creole nationalists at the end of the nineteenth century became increasingly xenophobic and anti-immigrant.³⁹ They saw Europeans as interlopers and radicals, as opportunists and terrorists. In turn, they nostalgically reinvented Afro-Argentines as national heroes and myths over and against the European menace. White and black Creoles in Argentina, as well as in neighboring Uruguay, variously commemorated black heroes, while also nostalgically recalling Carnival and its past associations with negritude in the River Plate. These ideas constitute the basis of Chapter eight.

Part three, beginning with Chapters nine and ten, examines how memorializations of several Afro-Platine military heroes subsequently became national myths. In effect, the black heroes were the principal objects of Creole nationalist nostalgia at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century. Chapter nine looks at “miniature memorializations,” notably stamps, postcards, and medals, of Juan Bautista Cabral, Lorenzo Barcala (the latter described by Sarmiento as “*el caballero negro*,” a double entendre meaning both colored cavalryman and gentleman), and “Falucho.” It also more briefly examines how Uruguayans have commemorated their “*fiel payador de Artigas*” (“loyal troubadour of [José Gervasio] Artigas,” Uruguay’s San Martín), “Ansina.” Chapter ten examines the history and legend of the afore-mentioned “Falucho,” as well as some more sites of memory about him in the fin de siècle. Chapter eleven looks

³⁹ For an excellent survey of racial ideology and politics in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Argentina, see Aline Helg, “Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction.” In *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, 2nd paperback ed. Richard Graham, ed. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1990), 37-69.

specifically at the “Falucho” monument, arguably the most important and impressive site of historical memory about a black person in Argentina. Chapter twelve further documents and brings the commemorations of blackness closer to our own day and in effect stands for the “(and beyond)” part of the dissertation’s subtitle. In the Conclusion, I will not only summarize my findings but fill them out with some additional thoughts and resources. A brief Postscript looks at the “political career” of the long-dead “Falucho” (and Cabral) in the near present, further evidencing the nexus between collective memory and social-political concerns. This dissertation includes a select bibliography arranged thematically (e.g., collective memory, Argentine and Uruguayan history, Afro-Platines) of sources **not cited** in the text, to both supplement and, more importantly, complement the footnotes. Taken together, the footnotes and bibliography will keep the interested researcher busy for some time. Appendices include a map, tables, other figures and illustrations, and a select list of internet resources to round out the dissertation.

To acknowledge that blacks in Argentina (and Uruguay) were not forgotten as historical agents, once more, is not a value judgment, neither is it an attempt to minimize their past and present problems. While scholars can certainly talk from a post-colonial or subaltern approach about the racism and other social and economic injustices faced by African-descended peoples in the River Plate, it stretches a good point too far to insist on them in effect representing some kind of Orwellian “un-persons,” decimated physically

and representationally.⁴⁰ In fact, one need not belittle at all the challenging past or current plight of blacks in the countries of the Río de la Plata by documenting and appreciating both the quantity and quality of commemorations devoted to them. Instead, such an acknowledgment of the memorializations of blacks in Argentina and Uruguay serves to in fact highlight their importance to their respective nation-states, and the debt owed to them by their governments and fellow citizens. While, with Ralph Ellison, one might well lament the social invisibility and marginalization of persons of African ancestry in the Americas, especially in Argentina, they were not, however, entirely forgotten as historical actors or agents.⁴¹

⁴⁰ In George Orwell's *1984*, an "unperson" (an Orwellian neologism or "newspeak") is someone who has been both physically destroyed as well as had their history (and memory of it) stolen from them. George Orwell, *1984: A Novel* (1949, rpt.; New York: Plume-Harcourt Brace, 1983).

⁴¹ Ralph Ellison wrote about the social, economic, and political discrimination faced by blacks in the United States in his *Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1952).

CHAPTER 2

Memory, Afro-Latin Americans, and Afro-Platines: Three Historiographical Fields

“[Recollection] is synthesis, reassembling the bits and fragments which can be found in the distorted humanity and distorted nature.” Herbert Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon, 1972), 70.

Introduction

This chapter addresses three different historiographies. First, it deals with a body of works concerning memory as a field of historical research. In this section of the chapter, I will summarize the main ideas of key studies of memory that are particularly relevant to the dissertation, including Renato Roslado’s notion of “imperialist nostalgia.” Second, this chapter will survey how the memory paradigm has been applied to the field of African-New World Diaspora studies in general, followed by a briefer discussion of the limited literature on the historical memory about blacks in Argentina (and Uruguay). The collective remembrances of and about Afro-Platines thus constitute the third historiographical field alluded to in the title above.¹ It shall become clear that as far as historical memory goes, my study endorses the idea that memory is a collective creation and is also driven by dominant elite’s interests to serve their particular views on state- and nation-building during critical periods in the history of their society. Concerning Afro-Argentine history, the study’s main contribution consists of showing that while the

¹ A disturbing trend in academia is the forgoing or reduction of literature review chapters in many contemporary dissertations. While often tedious to write, and no doubt even more tedious to read, literature reviews or historiographies are an essential scholarly apparatus establishing that a scholar has done due diligence surveying the field and thus identifying what is novel and/or challenging about his/her own research. In my own, sub-, sub-field of Afro-Argentine studies I have encountered more than one dissertation that is totally derivative in its scope and content, making outlandish claims to novelty that any casual review of the literature would disabuse.

testimony of this particular social group was not really silenced, celebrations of their accomplishments did reflect the “imperialist nostalgia” of dominant segments of Argentine society at the turn of the twentieth century (and indeed beyond).

Literature Review on Collective or Social Memory

Despite the reservations about memory in some quarters of the historical profession, represented and/or documented by Alon Confino, Kerwin Lee Klein, and John Nerone, among others, the social dimensions of remembrance are now an established part of historical scholarship in the United States and Europe, as well as growing in prominence in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.² An obvious place to begin a review of the most salient literature on the social aspects of memory is with the works of prominent early-twentieth-century French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, considered by most specialists the father of modern memory studies.

A student of both Émile Durkheim and the philosopher Henri Bergson, Halbwachs also collaborated with the psychiatrist Charles Blondel and the historians Marc Bloch and Philippe Ariès. His first major work on memory was published in 1925 as *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, *The Social Frameworks of Memory*. In 1941, Halbwachs published a second important treatise on the social aspects of memory, *The Legendary Topography of the Holy Land*, partly a retort to Bloch’s critique of his earlier

² Confino, Klein, and Nerone all provide useful syntheses and critiques of the field of memory studies from the perspective of practicing historians. Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method.” *The American Historical Review* 102, 5 (Dec. 1997): 1386-1403. Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse.” *Representations*, no. 69 (Winter 2000): 127-50. John Nerone, “Professional History and Social Memory.” *Communication* 11 (1989): 89-104.

work. A third volume on memory was published after his death under the title *The Collective Memory* and featured essays Halbwachs published in the 1930s and 1940s. Halbwachs' speculations on the social frameworks of memory, the criticisms of Blondel and Bloch notwithstanding, influenced an entire generation of social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s, especially the French anthropologist Roger Bastide.³

Ricoeur states that scholars owe to Maurice Halbwachs “the bold intellectual decision to attribute memory directly to a collective entity, which he names a group or society.”⁴ Indeed, in his *The Collective Memory*, Halbwachs holds that “a person remembers only by situating himself within the viewpoint of one or several groups and one or several currents of collective thought.”⁵ This idea encapsulates much of what

³ The brief biographical sketch of Halbwachs is derived from Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 139. For a major review of Halbwachs' *The Social Frameworks of Memory* see Marc Bloch, “Mémoire collective, tradition et coutume. À propos d'un livre récent.” *Revue de synthèse historique*. New Series, XIV (1925): 118-120. This review is translated by Jennifer Marie Silva and reproduced in the Olick et al. reader. Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader*, 150-55. For Bastide's use of the social frameworks of memory paradigm, consult Roger Bastide. “Mémoire collective et sociologie du bricolage.” *L'Année sociologique* (1970): 65-108. Also, the excerpt from Bastide's *The African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpretation of Civilizations* (1960), in Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader*, 156-62. For more on the dialogue between Halbwachs and Ariès on collective memory and history, see Patrick Hutton, “Collective Memory and Collective Mentalities: The Halbwachs and Ariès Connection.” *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 15, 2 (Summer 1988): 311-22.

⁴ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, trans. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004), 120.

⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*. Francis J. Ditter and Vida Yazdi Ditter, trans. (New York: Harper Colophon, 1980 [1950]), 33. I have made no attempts to update or modernize the language of my primary or secondary sources, for instance, their politically incorrect use of gendered pronouns.

Halbwachs refers to as social frameworks of memory or collective memory: “The individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory.”⁶

Despite the criticism of some on this account, Halbwachs did not completely dismiss or disavow the individual and his/her recollections of the past from his model of collective memory; on the contrary, he asseverates that the individual memory and the collective memory are intimately related to and interpenetrate one another so that “remembrances [are]... organized in two ways,” the personal and the collective, his “two types of memory.”⁷ Furthermore, collective memory is always multivalent since there are as many memories as people and groups in a given society. Simply put, different social groups, such as distinct generations, classes, religious communities, or families, have different collective memories of the same event(s), person(s), process(es), etc.⁸ Finally, Halbwachs maintains that collective memory is foundational for group identity and unity. Collective memory ensures that “the group remains the same,” thereby reconstructing “an image of the past which is in accord ... with the predominant thoughts of that group.”⁹ Documenting the collective remembrances and public commemorations of past black Argentine heroes from the late 1800s and early 1900s for the purpose of national cohesion in the midst of social and political crises is this dissertation’s main intent.

⁶ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. Lewis A. Coser, trans. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992 [1941, 1952]), 182.

⁷ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 50.

⁸ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 23.

⁹ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 84, 86.

First and foremost, this dissertation draws from Halbwachs the significance of the social aspects of memory. More specifically, it follows his idea that social groups, but especially national elites, turn to commemoration to preserve unity and foster identity.¹⁰ Dominant social groups in particular go to great lengths to collectively commemorate a history that agrees with their own views of the past. Far from “objective history,” Maurice Halbwachs recognized that collective memory is about group consciousness and solidarity, a guiding idea of this dissertation. According to Halbwachs, what is remembered or forgotten by a given social group has nothing to do with the impersonal forces or periodizations of history. Instead, collective memory is communal, lived history, and stands opposed to Halbwachs’ own quasi-positivist understanding of history as an intellectual mode of knowledge about the past predicated on objective methods and access to primary source materials.¹¹ In short, what a social group in the past chose to commemorate is an important subject for historians since it provides insights into what was then perceived as foundational and worthy of remembrance by that group. Building on Halbwachs, the work of Pierre Nora and his collaborators equally establish that what

¹⁰ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 77.

¹¹ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 57, 78, 84. Halbwachs’ outdated idea of an objective history that can literally reconstruct the past has been largely rejected by modern historiography as naïve. For a discussion of the debates about historical objectivity among historians, consult Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988). In opposition to Halbwachs, some historians are also increasingly wary of making too fine a distinction between history and memory as opposites of each other. See, e.g., Patrick Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover, VT: Univ. Press of New England, 1993). Ironically, the French historian Philippe Ariès was far more sympathetic of memory’s possibilities, especially as a person’s or group’s primary point of entry into the past. See Hutton, “Collective Memory and Collective Mentalities,” 312 ff.

is collectively remembered, and how it is represented, in differing sites or realms has as much to do with what a given social group was experiencing and reacting to in its own time and place.

French historian Pierre Nora was the driving force behind, inspiration for, and editor of the monumental, seven-volume *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, published in France between 1984 and 1993, to coincide with the bicentennial of the French Revolution.¹² The idea of places, sites, or realms of collective memory is foundational to Nora's work and is one that this dissertation will liberally borrow from. Rather than systematically look at the 134 essays of the three-volume American edition, this brief survey of Nora's contribution to collective memory studies will instead draw on his landmark article from spring 1989 published in the journal *Representations*.¹³

Nora begins his oft-cited article by arguing that the acceleration of history has entailed a "rapid slippage of the present into the historical past," a past that is forever un-accessible, thereby creating "a general perception that anything and everything may disappear... indicate a rupture of equilibrium" for modern societies. This rupture of temporal equilibrium is why, according to Nora, moderns speak so much about memory, because, in fact, there is so little "spontaneous" memory left in the post-industrial or

¹² Paul Ricoeur is sure that Nora is in fact the inventor of the notion of "places of memory" in the historical field. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 401. Nancy Wood. "Memory's Remains: *Les lieux de mémoire*." *History and Memory* 6, 1 (Spring-Summer 1994): 123-49.

¹³ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*." Marc Roudebush, trans. *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24. Pierre Nora, dir., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols. L. D. Kritzman, ed. A. Goldhammer, trans. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996-98). A recent, updated translation of Nora's ideas on realms of memory is Pierre Nora, dir., *Rethinking France: les lieux de mémoire*, 4 vols. M. Trouille and D. P. Jordan, trans. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001-10).

modern world. It is precisely this dearth of communal places of spontaneous memory (*milieu de mémoire*) that demands the creation of sites of collective memory (*lieux de mémoire*) by modern national states. In effect, Nora distinguishes a pre-modern France before the French Revolution with its communal environments of memory and a modern, post-industrial France where historical remembrance demanded the generation of realms of memory. Nora maintains that late-modern national societies in Europe have especially fallen victim to the loss of collectively remembered values as a result of social and political forces endemic to modernity, such as rapid industrialization and globalization.¹⁴ Therefore, these modern, industrial national societies and states have most felt the need to promote artificially constructed places of remembrances, and for Nora and later his collaborators everything from monuments to medals and stamps serve as sites or realms of collective memory.¹⁵

With Halbwachs, Nora agrees that memory and history are opposed and irreconcilable. “Memory and history, far from being synonymous,” avers Nora, “appear

¹⁴ Along similar lines, Richard Terdiman has also pointed to a late-nineteenth-century “memory crisis” as a byproduct of the political, social, economic, and cultural turmoils plaguing European national states and societies at that time. Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993). For Nora, in effect, this nineteenth-century crisis of memory in European society prompted the transition from the organic *milieu de mémoire* to the state contrived *lieux de mémoire*.

¹⁵ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 7-8, 12. According to Nora, the “acceleration of history” is responsible for undermining spontaneous environs of communal memory and destroying traditions. Nora cites globalization, democratization, and mass culture as modernity’s causes for the acceleration of history that undermined traditional society and generated sites of memory instead. Pierre Nora, “Introduction.” In *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols. L. D. Kritzman, ed. A. Goldhammer, trans. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996), 6. Monuments, medals, currency, and other artifacts of collective memory are featured throughout the different chapters in *Realms of Memory*.

now in fundamental opposition.”¹⁶ Memory is organic and living; history is at best an incomplete reconstruction of the past, always subject to reinterpretation and debate. Nora argues that history is about the representation of the past and not memory. History is always suspicious of memory, sustains Nora. Every historiographical innovation for Nora amounts to a “subversion of memory-history [i.e., collective memory] by critical history [i.e., academic historiography].”¹⁷ At this point in his article, Nora launches into an impassioned critique of contemporary French historiography. The outcome of (then) recent historiographical trends in France leads Nora to posit that the study of sites of memory is possible as a result of two intersecting developments: the turning of history upon itself and the end of a tradition of memory that roughly coincides with the end of the nation.¹⁸ The loss of the national numinous generates “ritual-less” rituals and a false nostalgia for an artificially (i.e., state) constructed past. Modern societies lack the spontaneous memory Nora associates with the communal environments of (past) collective memory, and instead these are replaced by state-sponsored museums, archives, libraries, and other socially engineered official sites of memorialization. According to

¹⁶ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 8.

¹⁷ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 9-10.

¹⁸ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 11. For Nora, the nation is sacred space, and the nation’s memory unifies: “The holy nation thus acquired a holy history [e.g., through sites of memory-history such as school textbooks that proclaimed its foundational dogma]; through the nation our memory continued to rest upon a sacred foundation.” Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 11.

Pierre Nora, the archive is the principal site of modern, ersatz memory for the current “nation-less” states.¹⁹

These sites of memory are for Nora simultaneously material, symbolic, and functional. Even a material site like a monument can be imbued with a symbolic aura. Every site of memory is consequently a subject of (and subject to) semiotic interpretation and not just some physical object to be passed over or passed by. Sites of memory were created with the explicit intent to bring to memory, i.e., to remember, for: “Without the intention to remember, *lieux de mémoire* would be indistinguishable from *lieux d’histoire*.”²⁰ The most important functions of these sites are to block the work of forgetting, to freeze time, to materialize the immaterial, suggests Nora. In contradistinction to historical objects, Nora’s sites of memory are their own referents: “In this sense, the *lieux de mémoire* is double: a site of excess closed upon itself, concentrated in its own name, but also forever open to a full range of its possible signification.”²¹

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of Pierre Nora’s ideas about collective memory to the field. Many have nonetheless criticized Nora for his own brand of nostalgia and even romantic ideas of and ideals about memory and the nation, or for overstating the impacts of historical, social, and political forces affecting contemporary Europe, especially France, that give rise to socially constructed sites of collective

¹⁹ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 12, 13

²⁰ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 19.

²¹ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 23-24. For a much better and more detailed summary and analysis of Nora’s scholarship on collective memory than found above, consult Peter Carrier, “Places, Politics and the Archiving of Contemporary Memory in Pierre Nora’s *Les Lieux de mémoire*.” In *Memory and Methodology*. Susannah Radstone, ed. (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 37-57.

memory at the expense of past, organic environs of communal memory. I personally believe that Nora too often comes close to envisioning the Frenchmen of the past as members of an “imaginary community,” a homogenous, monolithic society, united by a common faith in the nation, as opposed to Benedict Anderson’s influential understanding of the cultural construction of the modern nation-state as an “imagined community.”²² Along similar lines, in a trenchant review, Benedict Anderson’s younger brother Perry Anderson chastises Nora for romanticizing and privileging the nation and maintaining it as the central mnemonic unit of analysis. In light of Nora’s own nostalgia for France’s loss of empire and putative national unity, his dubious overarching purpose is, at least as per the critique of Perry Anderson, “the creation of a *union sacrée* in which divisions and discords of French society would melt away in the fond rituals of ... remembrance.”²³

However, such critical appreciations of his sites of memory notwithstanding, several of Nora’s ideas about collective community and its remembrance sites are relevant for my dissertation. First, his understanding of sites of memory as both physical and symbolic undergirds my own study of different memorial realms about blacks in Argentina and Uruguay. Second, Nora’s idea that societies in transition are prone to generate sites of memory to manufacture identity and consensus is congenial to my own

²² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991). In the 1991 edition, Anderson added a concluding chapter on the importance to the nation of memory and forgetting. For Anderson, some kind of collective memory is an important part of all imagined communities and is produced and reproduced through the symbolic re-enactments of the past in the form of rituals, e.g., as well as in both narrative and other non-narrative, material forms. In this regard, Anderson is drawing extensively from Nora, albeit without acknowledgment.

²³ Perry Anderson, “Union Sacrée.” *London Review of Books*, Sept. 23, 2004, 10. If this analysis of Nora is in fact correct, then I can readily understand why his work has been so well-received by arch-conservative, anti-immigrant Jean-Marie Le Pen and his supporters.

understanding of commemorations in late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Argentina. Third, his idea that nostalgia is endemic to such communities also informs my study. Thus, this invocation of nostalgia leads me to examine the influential concept of “imperialist nostalgia” proposed by the Harvard-educated cultural anthropologist Renato Rosaldo.

New York University professor Renato Rosaldo’s primary field work in the 1970s was among head-hunting tribes in the Philippines. Rosaldo’s concept of “imperialist nostalgia” was derived from his own field experiences and was, ironically, developed in an essay published in the very same issue of the journal *Representations* that features Nora’s article on *lieux de mémoire*.²⁴ The term nostalgia is etymologically derived from the Greek word for returning home, *nostos*, and from the Greek word *algia*, which means a painful condition. The word, tantamount to a kind of “homesickness,” was first used by seventeenth-century Swiss physician Johannes Hofner to diagnose and describe a mental disorder among Swiss mercenaries with a host of symptoms, ranging from melancholy and depression to suicidal thoughts.²⁵ However, Rosaldo uses nostalgia sociologically and for a very specific analytical purpose. In a similar manner to this dissertation’s

²⁴ Renato Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia.” *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 107-122. Rosaldo’s article is an inexplicable omission in the otherwise comprehensive reader edited by Olick et al. cited above. The concept was more fully developed in an important theoretical work titled *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

²⁵ Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 1; Paul Grainge, *Monochrome Memories: Nostalgia and Style in Retro America* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 20. Susan Stewart characterizes nostalgia as a “social sickness,” a view consistent with understanding memory in general as not merely a personal but also a social phenomenon. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984), 23.

Preface, Rosaldo starts his *Representations* essay by mentioning popular culture's fascination with memory and remembering. In particular, he angrily laments the commercial and critical successes of movies that glamorize empire such as *The Gods Must be Crazy* (1980), *A Passage to India* (1984), and *Out of Africa* (1985). These films represent the kind of nostalgia that Rosaldo labels "imperialist" and develops his article around. According to Rosaldo, in these films "a mood of nostalgia makes racial domination appear innocent and pure."²⁶

Renato Rosaldo posits that agents of colonialism (or other social elites) mourn for what they themselves have destroyed (or silenced and relegated to the margins of society). In Rosaldo's development, these agents of empire "often display nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was 'traditionally'." The mourning for the passing of the traditional, often found under imperialism, but also under times of social stress in other political settings, constitutes what Rosaldo labels "imperialist nostalgia." Rosaldo claims that "imperialist nostalgia" goes alongside the "White Man's Burden," or "civilizing mission," where European powers felt called to uplift "savages" (Africans, Asians, and other indigenous peoples) in their colonies. Ironically, the "civilizing process" often produces a sense of loss of tradition and solid footing for not only its subaltern objects, but also among its very own colonial agents. The so-called "civilizing process" destabilizes traditional forms of life, and the agents of the changes experience these transformations as if they were personal losses, leading to a nostalgia or sense of

²⁶ Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia," 107.

mourning or a yearning for a better, idealized past.²⁷ Rosaldo claims that this kind of nostalgia was characterized as relatively benign; yet, if “such recollections were not fairly harmless, the imperialist variety would not be nearly as effective as it [was]” in transforming the colonial agent into an innocent bystander, who lamented the “vanishing savage.”²⁸ In effect, this kind of nostalgia attempted to conceal a sense of guilt among European colonialists.

For Renato Rosaldo, “imperialist nostalgia” is an ideological fiction, but a useful one nonetheless. He rebukes scholars who belittle or attempt to “demystify” this important colonial ideology.²⁹ Regardless of “imperialist nostalgia’s” inconsistencies and contradictions, Rosaldo avers that it is an important aspect of European imperialism, one too often overlooked or underestimated by other academics.³⁰ I concur with Rosaldo. In particular, his work influences my own understanding of commemorations of black

²⁷ Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia,” 108. Perhaps the most important work on the “civilizing process” was undertaken by German sociologist Norbert Elias, first published in Germany in 1939. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process. Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2000).

²⁸ Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia,” 108, 116.

²⁹ Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia,” 109. Alon Confino, however, is critical of any attempt to relativize memory to the status of merely ideology. Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History,” 1393.

³⁰ For a critical evaluation of Renato Rosaldo’s notion of “imperialist nostalgia,” consult Ruth Behar, “What Renato Rosaldo Gave Us.” *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 37, 1 (Spring 2012): 205-11. Others critically appropriating Rosaldo’s concept of “imperialist nostalgia” include: Jennifer Wenzel, “Remembering the Past’s Future: Anti-Imperialist Nostalgia and Some Versions of the Third World.” *Cultural Critique*, no. 62 (Winter 2006): 1-31; Robert Fletcher, “The Art of Forgetting: Imperialist Amnesia and Public Secrecy.” *Third World Quarterly* 33, 3 (2012): 423-39; William Cunningham Bissell, “Engaging Colonial Nostalgia.” *Cultural Anthropology* 20, 2 (May 2005): 215-48; and Robyn Morris, “Reading Photographically: Translating Whiteness through the Eye of the Empire.” *Hecate* 27, 1 (Oct. 2001): 86-96.

Argentines at the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, many Creole nationalists in the River Plate acted like Rosaldo's colonial agents and lamented the passing of their own traditional post-colonial or early national society at the end of the nineteenth century. In particular, they nostalgically recalled their own "vanishing savages," namely, the gaucho and loyal blacks, especially those who shed their blood for the nation's freedom from Spain. Artists, intellectuals, and folklorists all contributed to nostalgically re-inventing and commemorating Afro-Argentines at the end of the nineteenth century, a time period coinciding with much social and political upheaval in Argentina. With Rosaldo, I, too, question the innocence of Argentina's Creole nostalgia agents at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries. In any case, their sense of guilt (or not) over their own "vanishing savages" should not lead to dismissing the historical significance of commemorations and other "elegiac postures"³¹ towards Afro-Argentines (and Afro-Uruguayans) at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s.

Implicit in Renato Rosaldo's analysis of "imperialist nostalgia," however, is the notion that it is in fact exclusively conservative and backward looking. Most often, nostalgia as a whole has been understood by those who study it in various sociological and historical settings as possessed only by social elites who are opposed to progress. Alain de Benoist defines progress as a cumulative process in which the most recent stage of development is always regarded as preferable to and better, i.e., qualitatively superior, than what came before. For Alain de Benoist, despite differing understandings of progress among social theorists, three key ideas about this concept are universally

³¹ I derive the elegant phrase "elegiac postures" from Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia," 109.

adhered to: 1) a linear conception of time and the idea that history is future oriented; 2) the fundamental unity of humanity, evolving in the same direction together; 3) the idea that humanity is sovereign over nature and must transform the world.³² As such, then, progress and nostalgia are irreconcilable. Frequently in the academic literature, nostalgia is portrayed as a sentimental reaction to some kind of loss of tradition or security by a given social group.³³ Therefore, nostalgia is said to be melancholic, reactionary or romantic.

While I agree that nostalgia is often a collective response to present vagaries of life and the sense of loss experienced by many different social groups (especially those in power) in late modernity, it can also have contradictory meanings. Thus, nostalgia can also embody a projection into the present and future of a collectively (re-)imagined past. In the words of Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley: “Nostalgia can be seen as not only a search for ontological security in the past, but also as a means of taking one’s bearings for the road ahead in the uncertainties of the present.” Pickering and Keightley’s observation consequently open up a positive dimension for nostalgia.³⁴ My

³² Alain de Benoist, “A Brief History of the Idea of Progress.” Greg Johnson, trans. *The Occidental Quarterly* 8, 1 (Spring 2008): 7-8. Originally published as Alain de Benoist, “Un brève histoire de l’idée de progrès.” In *Critiques-Théoriques* (Lausanne, Switzerland: L’Age d’Homme, 2002), 55-62.

³³ See, e.g., several essays in Tammy Clewell, ed., *Modernism and Nostalgia: Bodies, Locations, Aesthetics* (New York: Palgrave, 2013).

³⁴ Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley, “The Modalities of Nostalgia.” *Current Sociology* 54, 6 (Nov. 2006): 921. Along similar lines, Stuart Tannock maintains that while nostalgia has tended to be associated with dominant and conservative social forces, dismissive of progress, it can nevertheless be a valuable way of approaching the past, important to all groups in a society. Stuart Tannock, “Nostalgia Critique.” *Cultural Studies* 9, 3 (1995): 453-64.

own research also views nostalgia as simultaneously past-, present-, and future-oriented. Indeed, nostalgia, like all other collective forms of remembrances, is usually about an imminent and usable past for the present as well as the future. Nostalgia is not merely about some historical “Golden Age” fantasy of a particular group; it is also about inculcating values for future generations by a society’s nostalgia agents.

In addition to Halbwachs, Nora, and Rosaldo, innumerable other academic sources have informed parts of this dissertation. It would stretch the patience of my readers to fully develop each one in detail. However, at the risk of bibliographic self-indulgence, I would like to make a few points about some of these additional resources and how they have contributed to my own ideas about the memorialization of blackness in the River Plate. For example, the aforementioned British cultural anthropologist Paul Connerton’s work is highly suggestive on how it is that societies actually remember.

While borrowing from Halbwachs, Connerton is less interested in the abstract qualities of social or collective memory and more interested in how social agents actually recall (as well as forget) their past in the present. He assumes that everyone experiences his/her present in the context of the past(s). How society experiences its collective memory is through what Connerton calls “incorporated memory” or embodied rituals and commemorative ceremonies. These commemorations are explicitly performative, moreover.³⁵ I owe many insights on commemoration to Connerton, as well as the

³⁵ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), 2, 3, 4. Connerton distinguishes between “social memory” and what he calls “historical reconstruction,” which is independent of memory. Historical reconstruction is the work of historians trained to deal with written sources. For Connerton: “... historical reconstruction is still necessary even when social memory preserves direct testimony of an event.” Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 14. According to Olick and his co-editors, Connerton’s ideas about incorporated or

contributors to the anthology edited by John R. Gillis on the politics of commemoration and national identity. In the River Plate, the commemoration of blackness was often associated with embodied and public rituals glorifying the nation and its citizens.³⁶

Furthermore, the notion that memory needs to be transmitted or represented has also influenced my own conception of the subject. In effect, there is no true memory without its attendant representation and subsequent reception. That is precisely why memory needs to fasten to narrative as well as material sites. Memory is socially and culturally constructed, and it operates through representation. Often, this mnemonic representation is a process correlative to and coincident with the production of images and other genres of memory. Therefore, students of memory, as Nora and others have intimated, need to examine a wide arrange of mnemonic artifacts to understand what and how a given social group remembered.³⁷ In line with these views, my own study of the

embodied memory compares to the insights of other memory experts, including Aleida Assmann and Ian Hacking. Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader*, 338.

³⁶ See John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984). Gillis writes: “The relationship between memory and identity is historical; and the record of that relationship can be traced through various forms of commemoration.... Commemorative activity is by definition social and political, for it involves the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation.” John R. Gillis, “Introduction.” In *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. John R. Gillis, ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), 5. For more on the politics of memory and national identity see also, Jeffrey K. Olick, ed., *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003).

³⁷ In addition to Nora, many works have examined the range and importance of cultural artifacts of collective memory. See, e.g., Susanne Küchler and Walter Melion, *Images of Memory: On Remembering and Representation* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 1991); Marius Kwent, Christopher Breward, and Jeremy Aynsley, eds., *Material Memories: Design and Evocation* (Oxford: Berg, 1999); Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin, eds., *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge:

commemoration of blackness in Argentina, especially during the late 1800s and early 1900s, will avail itself of several diverse sites of memory, both narrative and iconographic (as well as musical), as suggested by the secondary literature on social memory.

The idea that the past is immanent to the present is central to memory studies and to this dissertation. The immanent past takes on many forms, including texts, ruins, and monuments. Most scholars of memory concur that the immanent past influences the social reproduction of knowledge and subjectivity, as much as present concerns can and do shape the understanding of the past.³⁸ Scholars of memory increasingly appreciate how this immanence of memory in the present shapes social identities of different groups throughout the world, past and present.³⁹ This work shall establish that fin-de-siècle Argentina was not an exception and that the memorialization of African-descended peoples represented a case in point.

Memory is increasingly central to an understanding of almost all fields of human knowledge. Not surprisingly, therefore, the social framework of memory approach has increasingly been appropriated by an inter- or multi-disciplinary array of academics

Cambridge Univ. press, 1995); and Ray B. Browne and Marshall Fishwick, eds., *Icons of America* (Bowling Green, OH: Popular Press, Bowling Green St. Univ., 1978).

³⁸ Kevin Birth, "The Immanent Past: Culture and the Psyche at the Juncture of Memory and History." *ETHOS* 34, 2 (2006): 169-91.

³⁹ See, for example, the articles on memory and group or cultural identity formation by Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125-33; Allan Megill, "History, Memory, Identity." *History of the Human Sciences* 11, 3 (1998): 37-62; and Naomi Norquay, "Identity and Forgetting." *The Oral History Review* 26, 1 (Winter-Spring 1999): 1-21.

specializing in the area of African Diaspora studies, including those researching and writing about the experiences of *afrodescendientes* (African-descended peoples) in the Americas. These are the descendants of black slaves from sub-Saharan Africa (mostly from the Slave and Gold Coasts of western Africa and the Angola and Congo regions of central Africa) imported to the New World beginning in the sixteenth century.⁴⁰ As a growing body of scholarship attests, African-descended peoples throughout the Americas have been both the objects and subjects of collective remembrances.

Memory and the African-New World Diaspora

⁴⁰ By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, the slave trade was terminated throughout most of Ibero-America. Slavery itself was abolished throughout most of the New World, with the exception of large “plantation complex” societies in the southern United States, Cuba, and Brazil, by the middle of that same century. Leslie B. Rout, Jr. proffers a very good, if now dated, over-view of the history of peoples of African descent in Spanish America from the early sixteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century. Leslie B. Rout, Jr., *The African Experience in Spanish America, 1502 to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976). George Reid Andrews updates Rout and expands the focus to the rest of Latin America in *Afro-Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004). Two important works on the slave trade to the New World are Philip D. Curtin’s seminal *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1969), and, more recently, Herbert S. Klein’s *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999). Klein also provides a very informative comparative survey of New-World slavery. Herbert S. Klein, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986). The classic study of the “plantation complex” is also by Curtin. Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999 [1990]). A general discussion on abolition and the transition from slave to free labor in the Spanish Caribbean is Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Frank Moya Pons, and Stanley L. Engerman, eds., *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1985). The historical literature on slavery and slaves in the southern United States, Cuba, and Brazil is innumerable. My advice for anyone starting research on this subject is to find a good bibliography or other reference source. For instance, the journal *Slavery and Abolition* (London: Frank Cass, 1980-) annually publishes extensive bibliographies on slavery, the slave trade, slave labor, slaves, and abolition from different historical epochs all over the world. The *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*, edited by Patrick L. Mason (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2013) also includes current and useful bibliographies on this subject.

While scholars of social memory mostly focus, as Le Goff suggests, on Europe (and the United States) and generally overlook the black experience in the New World, experts on the African Diaspora have increasingly begun to explicitly appropriate methods and findings from the field of memory studies.⁴¹ Still, as Paul Gilroy intimates, literary manifestations memorializing the modern black experience in the Atlantic, such as the works of scholars like W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James or novelists like Toni Morrison, reveal inherent tensions. He alludes to tensions in the individual black consciousness and the race's collective memory concerning chattel bondage, "with the desire to forget the terrors of slavery, and the simultaneous impossibility of forgetting."⁴² Recently, the distinguished Africanist Patrick Manning maintains that Gilroy's points notwithstanding, "creating memory" is one means by which to correct past oppression. While fashioning memory is a contentious area in the historiography of race relations in the Atlantic, he suggests that songs, images, and stories indeed can create and have created historical memory. Some countries in Europe, Africa, and Latin America have

⁴¹ A survey of recent primers in memory studies reveals little or no interest in the African Diaspora, however. Among those consulted were those by Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*. Sara B. Young, trans. (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011); and Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader*. Moreover, none of the contributors to a special edition on the black Diaspora in the *African Studies Review* 43, 1 (2000) register memory as a field for future research. Peter Wade's synthesis of Afro-Latin American studies also contains no mention of memory as a research agenda. Peter Wade, "Afro-Latin Studies: Reflections on the Field." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 1, 1 (2006): 105-24. Nor does George Reid Andrews, who ironically insists on the perpetual "forgetting" of blacks in Latin America, address collective memory in his general study on the subject cited above. Ironically, David Scott's "That Event, This Memory: Notes on the Anthropology of African Diasporas in the New World." *Diaspora* 1, 3 (1991): 261-84, does not really engage either the theories or methods of memory studies.

⁴² Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 4th printing (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996), 222.

even “designated holidays to celebrate the emancipation of slaves and as a reminder of past oppression, and memorials to slaves are being constructed and are opening for view all around the Atlantic.”⁴³ Although still in its infancy and thus insufficient to afford large-scale conclusions or consensus, other than the obvious call for employing collective or social memory as a means to understand the black experience in the Americas, there is already an estimable amount of scholarship on the collective remembrances of and about blacks in Latin America. In this regard, not surprisingly, cultural historians and social anthropologists have provided many of the leading examples surveyed of race and collective memory in Latin America.

However, the collective remembrances about *afrodescendientes* among nineteenth-century social elites, then experiencing not only mnemonic crises but social, economic, and political ones as well, were far from fair. Neither were they uniform. In light of the binary pattern of race relations in Latin America after independence, where blacks and other social subalterns existed somewhere between exclusion and inclusion in the *imaginario nacional*, it is perhaps therefore not surprising that national collective memories about *afrodescendientes* have also oscillated between remembrance and oblivion.⁴⁴

⁴³ Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History Through Culture* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2009), 346.

⁴⁴ This paradigm of post-independence inclusion-exclusion of blacks in Latin America is both surveyed and applied by Helen Creighton, “How Far is the ‘Rhetoric of Inclusion; Reality of Exclusion’ Argument Applicable to the Relationship of Afro-Latin Americans to the Nation-State?” *History Compass* 6, 3 (2008): 843-54.

By examining anthropologist Roger Bastide's Afro-Latin American "memory networks" in an introductory essay on memory in *History and Anthropology*, for example, Nathan Wachtel became one of the earliest advocates of applying Halbwachs's social frameworks of memory approach to study the African Diaspora to the New World.⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, the bulk of the academic writings concentrate on the memory about and of *afrodescendientes* along the circum-Caribbean and in Brazil, areas historically and demographically most impacted by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and African chattel slavery. However, as the Gudmundson and Wolfe anthology on Central American blackness establishes, scholarship on the social remembrances of and about Africans and their descendants exists for other regions of Latin America too. Gudmundson and his collaborators make reference to the complex ways that in post-independence Meso-America historical memory emerges and is subsequently shaped by different social agents. According to Gudmundson and Justin Wolfe, historical memory studies in Latin America would assist researchers to not only attain a deeper understanding of both contemporary attitudes and events in the distant past, "but also

⁴⁵ Nathan Wachtel, "Introduction: Between Memory and History." *History and Anthropology* 2 (1986): 207-24. A few general and/or theoretical/methodological studies on collective memory and the African Diaspora warrant consideration from specialists in both areas. In terms of nexus and praxis, theory and method, specialists in the African Diaspora have proffered some preliminary thoughts on the subject of Afro-Latinos and memory. See, Ron Eyerman, *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 1, 5-10. Eyerman is theoretically dependent on both Halbwachs and especially Paul Connerton. As noted above, for Connerton embodied practices, especially rituals are the principle means by which societies manifest their collective remembrances of the past. Moreover, Eyerman makes the case for the importance of bodily practices in forming the African-American collective identity. Also, Michael Hanchard, "Black Memory versus State Memory: Notes toward a Method" *Small Axe* 12, 2 (2008): 45-62; and Pier M. Larson, "Reconsidering Trauma, Identity, and the African Diaspora: Enslavement and Historical Memory in Nineteenth-Century Highland Madagascar." *William and Mary Quarterly* (Third Series) 56, 2 (1999): 335-62.

with clues as to how those very events actually unfolded, often misleadingly presented matter-of-factly in the official record.” Such an approach involves sustained dialogue between historians and anthropologists, as well as between visual and material culture analysts and documents-based scholars.⁴⁶ While this dialogue matures, it is possible to identify various themes that have already received particular attention by those interested in the memory of and about Afro-Latin Americans. The first are the slave trade and slavery itself; transculturation and cultural transferences form a second important topic; finally one could group together a series of studies addressing in particular the representation of blacks and blackness, a key theme in the literature. It shall become apparent that the various thematic sub-sets I just identified overlap considerably and are grouped here separately just for the sake of simplifying the presentation.

Public memory, that subset of collective memory interested in visibly representing itself for mass consumption, has, as Patrick Manning noted above, become both a means of protest against past oppression and injustice and a call for reconciliation. Historical anthropologist Ana Lucía Araujo has recently extended Gilroy’s black Atlantic vision southward, to sub-Saharan western Africa and Brazil, to examine in both regions the “public memory of slavery.” The author studies how Afro-Brazilians in Africa and Brazil construct and renew the public memory of slavery and the slave trade. Araujo is especially interested in the method of slavery’s “memorialization”; according to her, this

⁴⁶ Lowell Gudmundson and Justin Wolfe, “Introduction.” In *Blacks and Blackness in Central America: Between Race and Place*. Lowell Gudmundson and Justin Wolfe, eds., (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2010), 19. Gudmundson has himself done a little work on historical memory. See his “Firewater, Desire, and the Militiamen’s Christmas Eve in San Gerónimo, Baja Verapaz, 1892.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, 2 (May 2004): 239-76.

process consists of bringing the slave past to the present, by preserving, commemorating, and staging this common past in public spaces and places. Note that Araujo here keeps with the understanding of other students of memory by emphasizing that collective memory is anchored in the interests of present social agents. “As a result, the work of memory,” intimates this author, “is not a simple transmission of information. The work of memory allows re-creating, reinventing, and rethinking the past.”⁴⁷

With Paul Ricoeur and others, furthermore, Araujo stresses the selectivity of memory, which implies an equally selective forgetting as well. Both her Afro-Brazilian trans-Atlantic subjects and the offspring of victims of the slave trade publicly memorialize their shared history of slave oppression by building museums, memorials, monuments, as well as through rituals and festivals and fostering new forms of cultural tourism and the cottage heritage industry (defined by Araujo as the public consumption of the collective memories). However, public memory in particular, like collective memory more generally, is plural and contested, and what is recalled and forgotten, and how remembrances and absences are represented, varies from one group to another.⁴⁸ That is, the public remembrances of the descendants of African slaves will clash,

⁴⁷ Ana Lucía Araujo, *Public Memory of Slavery: Victims and Perpetrators in the South Atlantic* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2010), 11. David Glassberg affords readers a helpful introduction to public history and memory in “Public History and the Study of Memory.” *The Public Historian* 18, 2 (1996): 7-23.

⁴⁸ Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, eds., *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* (London: Routledge, 2003). On contested racial memories in the public space, consult Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa M. Knauer, eds., *Contested Histories in the Public Space: Memory, Race, and Nation* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2009), featuring chapters on New Zealand, Canada, Australia, the United States, Great Britain, South Africa, as well as on Latin America and the Caribbean.

compete, and contrast with those of the offspring of their traders or current oppressors. Thus, among Afro-Brazilians, the public memory of slavery and the slave trade is currently expressed through the battle to redress not only historic injustices but also the lingering social inequalities of the present day, of which blacks in Brazil are still victims. In short, what African and Afro-Brazilian descendants of slaves elect to remember and to forget will differ from what Europeans historically represent in their museums and other embodied practices about slavery and the slave trade. Araujo's thick-descriptions of the places and the spaces of Afro-Atlantic public memories, as well as their representations, are rich in both details and methodological suggestions on how to study the shared memories of African descendants in Latin America concerning their bondage and subsequent experiences in the New World.⁴⁹

As the work of Araujo establishes, commemoration of the trans-Atlantic slave trade is an important theme in the literature on Afro-Diasporan memory.⁵⁰ The descendants of the slaves in the Americas and Europe have galvanized public efforts to socially remember the plight of their ancestors. The Afro-Cuban scholar Pedro Pérez-

⁴⁹ Araujo, *Public Memory of Slavery* 5, 9, 415. On Paul Ricoeur and the selectivity of both memory and forgetting, see his *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Ricoeur maintains that forgetting is as selective as remembering; forgetting is both socially necessary and pragmatic. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 412-14, 417. Because of this, however, J. Lorand Matory is highly critical of what he calls the "memory metaphor" for theorizing the African Diaspora. J. Lorand Matory, "The 'New World' Surrounds the Ocean: Theorizing the Live Dialogue between Africa and African American Cultures." In *Afro-Atlantic Dialogues: Anthropology in the Diaspora*. Kevin A. Yelvington, ed. (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2006), 161-64.

⁵⁰ The distinguished historian of sub-Saharan western Africa Joseph C. Miller has also appealed to memory of enslavement as a mechanism for the retention and reinvention of African identities in both sides of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Joseph C. Miller, "Retention, Reinvention, and Remembering: Restoring Identities through Enslavement in Africa and under Slavery in Brazil." In *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery*. José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds. (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004), ch. 4.

Sarduy begins his look at the commemoration of slavery in Cuba with some personal recollections of his own about the island's African past. He recalls hearing stories from his maternal grandmother about Africa, slavery, and famous Afro-Cubans of the past. At this beloved grandmother's wake, Pérez-Sarduy remembers hearing the African drums playing and the performance of Afro-Cuban religious rituals. These individual memories highlight that all social remembrances are grounded and made observable by way of personal recollections of the past. Yet, as Pérez-Sarduy is quick to remind, African cultural heritage has been preserved and passed down communally, "by those African gatekeepers who have been our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents; rituals are the communicating vessels with our origins."⁵¹

Despite the Afro-Cuban heritage and memory-space, official Cuban recognition of the slave trade and African slavery was forgotten for most of the twentieth century. Sculptor Alberto Lescaj's recent "totemic sculpture" commemorating slavery erected in the hills surrounding El Cobre, near Santiago de Cuba, marked an initial step in state recognition of Cuba's slaves. Pérez-Sarduy does acknowledge that monuments to Afro-Cuban war heroes, such as Antonio Maceo, had been erected previously during the republic, prior to the 1959 Cuban Revolution. However, it is only recently that the revolutionary Cuban state has stepped up efforts to commemorate the island's slave past. Thus, in the early 1990s, a sculpture of Maceo was unveiled in Havana's Revolution Square to commemorate his birth city, Santiago. In 1997, the "Monument to the

⁵¹ Pedro Pérez-Sarduy, "In Loving Memory: The Commemoration of Slavery in Cuba." In *Facing up to the Past: Perspectives on the Commemoration of Slavery from Africa, the Americas and Europe*. Gert Oostindie, ed. (Kingston: IRP; Prince Claus Fund Library, 2001), 63-66.

Runaway Slave,” the first official commemoration of Cuban slavery, was also unveiled. As part of UNESCO’s international project on the slave trade, moreover, Cuban officials planned to open a museum dedicated to slavery in the copper mines of El Cobre near Santiago de Cuba, in eastern Oriente Province. Pérez-Sarduy concludes by arguing that erecting “monuments recording the facts [of slavery] would not be designed to inflict greater wounds on human memory but rather cleanse them so that they can heal one day.”⁵²

Transculturation and cultural transfer in general are a second identifiable theme in the available historiography. Throughout the African Diaspora to the Americas, religion and music serve as important sites of memory for Afro-Latin Americans. In addition, both religion and music are sites of transculturation and have consequently often been appropriated and nationalized by Latin American elites and states, thereby becoming, in effect, realms of forgetting (and “whitening”) Afro-Latin American contributions to national cultures throughout the Americas. For example, George Brandon, a religious anthropologist, is an early advocate of Afro-Latin American memory studies focused on transculturation. He critically adopts a collective memory approach to study the cultural transference and transculturation (or lack thereof) of *Santería* (an Afro-Cuban religion) as it moved from West Africa to Cuba with the slaves. For his memory approach, Brandon selectively draws on both Halbwachs and Connerton, arguing that it is difficult to imagine how longstanding and widespread cultural traditions persist across vast spans of

⁵² Pérez-Sarduy, “In Loving Memory,” 66, 67, 69. El Cobre’s slave heritage is historically documented in María E. Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000).

time and space without something like collective memory. In this respect, Afro-Cuban religion is no different. The proper vehicle for collective remembrance, as per Brandon, consists of a social group linked through their shared means of communication. By way of semantic, verbal, and visual codes and the commemorative festivals and rituals that enforced and reinforced these encodings, Brandon maintains that Africans collectively recalled their shared religious experiences and traditions and were able to preserve and reimagine them in Cuba.

While Brandon provides some tentative conclusions about how through collective memory African slaves and their descendants in the colonial and post-independence periods reconstituted their religious experiences in Cuba, he is also nonetheless cognizant of the problems inherent in the social memory paradigm. Along with Sydney Mintz and Richard Price, but contra Melville Herskovits, Brandon is careful not to fetishize African culture, which was neither homogenous in Africa nor static in the New World. For instance, Brandon points out that in Nigeria, the cradle of Cuban *Santería*, many local cults existed among the Yoruba peoples. Nonetheless, Africans and their New-World offspring did in fact reinvent their ancestral religions by way of their individual memories turned collective.⁵³

⁵³ George Brandon, *Santería from Africa to the New World: The Dead Sell Memories* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press, 1993), especially 127-57. For more on collective memory and black religion in the Caribbean, consult Lucie Pradel, "African Sacredness and Caribbean Cultural Forms." *Caribbean Quarterly* 44, 1-2 (1998): 145-68. Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992 [1976]). Melville Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 [1941]). Mintz and Price refuted Herskovits' contention that Africans preserved pure African cultural traits in the Americas.

From the Caribbean to the River Plate, black peoples have expressed their cultures and reinforced group identities by way of music, song, and dance. Afro-Cubans, for example, have long turned to musical expression as simultaneously forms of acculturation and resistance to the dominant national culture.⁵⁴ Robin Moore studies how Afro-Cuban music first became a locus and focus of black cultural heritage and expression before being adopted by national elites in the twentieth century. Both black and white middle-class Cubans by the 1920s and 1930s supported the nationalization of socially acceptable Afro-Cuban rhythms. Slowly, Cuba's ruling class found in the urban *son* and other black Cuban rhythms useful vehicles for the nationalist cultural representation of the ideology of racial inclusiveness and ideal instruments to express an emerging "raceless" *cubanidad* (Cuban national identity). "*Afro-cubanismo* as it initially emerges," writes Moore, "thus contained fundamental contradictions reflecting the divisiveness of race in the early Republic." In short, blacks in early-republican Cuba faced both inclusion and exclusion in nationalist discourses, often at the same time, and this state of affairs was reflected in the adoption and spread of *afrocubanismo*. Hence, Afro-Cubans themselves seemed of two minds (cf., the "double consciousness" of W. E.

⁵⁴ Moreno Fraginals examines both the acculturation and "deculturation" of Afro-Latin Americans during the colonial and national eras. Manuel Moreno Fraginals, "Cultural Contributions and Deculturation." In *Africa in Latin America: Essays on History, Culture, and Socialization*. Manuel Moreno Fraginals, ed. Leonor Blum, trans. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984), ch. 1. The next two chapters in the Moreno Fraginals anthology, by two leading scholars of the African experience and race relations in Latin America, Germán Carrera Damas and Octavio Ianni, are also valuable. Music and dance in Cuba, Brazil, and continental Latin America are treated by Odilio Urfé, Isabel Aretz, and José Jorge de Carvalho, respectively, in *Africa in Latin America*.

B. Du Bois⁵⁵) about their African heritage and its place in the then emerging Cuban nation-state. Consequently, observes Moore, the defining characteristic of *afrocubanismo* was its ambivalence toward all things African-inspired.⁵⁶ This ambivalence can be seen as both an expression of Afro-Cuban “double consciousness” and as a way of forgetting and consigning to oblivion those aspects of African-derived culture incompatible with the cultural tastes of the modern, Europeanized (or, in Cuba’s case, Anglo-American) imagined national community.

Peter Wade, the distinguished student of race relations in the Americas, has studied how Afro-Colombians employ popular music to identify with their “blackness” within a multi-racial society. Ironically, as several scholars of memory among black rural populations in Colombia have shown, Afro-Colombians, especially along the Pacific coast, both in their collective frames of memory and in their oral traditions, do not generally identify with their African origins.⁵⁷ However, the 150th anniversary of the

⁵⁵ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* by W. E. B. Du Bois (New York: Bantam Classic, 1989 [1903]).

⁵⁶ Robin Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness: Afrocubanismo and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 220-21. Alejandra Bronfman studies race relations in the first half of the twentieth century in Cuba, including the reactions of the Afro-Cuban intelligentsia and elite to racialized discourses of citizenship. In ch. 4 of her work *Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1902-1940* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2004), Bronfman looks at public memory on the island and how it fashioned often conflicting collective identities among whites and blacks.

⁵⁷ For this forgetting of “Africa” and African roots among Afro-Colombians, especially on the Pacific Coast, consult the works by Anne-Marie Losonczy, “Memorias e identidad: los negro-colombianos del Chocó.” In *De montes, ríos y ciudades: territorios e identidades de la gente negra en Colombia*. Juana Camacho and Eduardo Restrepo, eds. (Bogota: Fundación Natura; Inst. Colombiano de Antropología e Historia; Ecofondo, 1999), 13-24; Pedro Q. Quílez, “Memorias y relatos de lugares: a propósito de una migrante de la costa Pacífica en Cali.” In *De montes, ríos y ciudades*, 245-263; Oscar Almario G., “Territorio, identidad, memoria colectiva y movimiento étnico de los grupos negros del Pacífico sur colombiano: microhistoria y etnografía sobre el río Tapaje.” *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 7, 2 (2002): 198-229; Odile

abolition of slavery in Colombia in 2001 served as an occasion to publicly recognize the links between Afro-Colombians and their ancestral homeland. Since 2001, “blackness” and “Africa” have gained in importance, according to Wade. Although Wade does not explicitly say so, black music and popular culture have nevertheless served as key sites of memory for Afro-Colombians wishing to collectively recall their ancestry. Since the 1920s, argues Wade, blacks in Colombia have turned to music to challenge “whitening” and racial harmony ideologies; ironically, Afro-Colombian music was also later both nationalized and “exoticized.” Blackness was therefore rendered exotically fashionable and nationally useable by Colombian social elites.⁵⁸

In Mexico, people of color have used rituals and festivals to also simultaneously forget and remember their African ancestry. For example, Laura A. Lewis looks at how Afro-Mexicans in the southern Pacific states of Oaxaca and Guerrero have employed social memory, embodied in religious ceremonies and local lore, to distance themselves from their black heritage, representing themselves in their folklore and social remembrances as “Indian” or *mestizo* (mixed Indian-European ancestry). “Blacks” in Mexico’s southern Pacific rim are collectively remembered as being the “foreign Other,” usually referred to as “Cuban” or “African.” In addition, writes Lewis, very few

Hoffmann, “Collective Memory and Ethnic Identities in the Colombian Pacific.” *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 7, 2 (2002): 118-39; Odile Hoffmann, “La movilización identitaria de la memoria (Nariño, Pacífico colombiano).” In *Memoria hegemónicas, memorias disidentes: el pasado como política de la historia*. Cristóbal Gnecco and Marta Zambrano, eds. (Bogotá: Inst. Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2000), 97-120; Catalina Cortés Severino, “Escenarios de terror entre esperanza y memoria: políticas, éticas y prácticas de la memoria cultural en la costa pacífica colombiana.” *Antropología*, no. 4 (June 2007): 163-85.

⁵⁸ See Pater Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1993), 267-91.

morenos (blacks) in Oaxaca and Guerrero remember that their ancestors were slaves; even the black patron saint of Guerrero, represented as dark-skinned and curly-haired, is collectively recalled as indigenous or *mestizo* by the state's people of color. "Blackness" remains outside the social *imaginario* for the region's *moreno* inhabitants and is therefore socially un-remembered.⁵⁹

On the other hand, in Mexico's Caribbean Coast, in Veracruz, the people of color (and others) collectively celebrate their "blackness" with an annual festival. "El Carnaval de Yanga" ("Yanga carnival") is a ritualized memorial to the descendants of slaves in the region. The carnival is celebrated during the season of Lent, days before Ash Wednesday. In "El Carnaval de Yanga," the racial-religious hybridity of collective memory is manifest. According to Sergio Carretero and his collaborators, the carnival of Yanga in Veracruz "durante el siglo XVII sirvió como una expresión de 'agresiva rebeldía [de los esclavos] hacia las imposiciones de la iglesia católica'."⁶⁰ In the city of San Lorenzo, the carnival has evolved into a full-blown "festival of blackness." The founders of the town and region are remembered by all the residents, regardless of race, as having been maroons or run-away slaves, led by the semi-mythical figure of "Yanga"; non-black denizens of San Lorenzo even go so far as to paint their bodies black (literally embodying the memory of blackness) as a means to honor their African forefathers: "En

⁵⁹ Laura A. Lewis, "Of Ships and Saints: History, Memory, and Place in the Making of *Moreno* Mexican Identity." *Cultural Anthropology* 16, 1 (2001): 62-82.

⁶⁰ Sergio Cruz Carretero et al., *El Carnaval en Yanga. Notas y comentarios sobre una fiesta de la negritud* (Mexico City: Dirección General de Culturas Populares, 1990), 21. The quote basically intimates that throughout the seventeenth century the "Yanga carnival" was a site of resistance for slaves in the Veracruz region of Mexico.

quienes no se sienten descendientes de Yanga, el aspecto racial también se tiene en mente; según decir, pertenecen a otra raza, y Yanga no es, por lo tanto, su ascendiente; no obstante, participan en el Carnaval para rendirle un homenaje porque se sienten orgullosos de él.”⁶¹ Not surprisingly, given the discussion above, music and dance also play an important role in the memorialization of blackness during the festival honoring “Yanga.” In short, the contrast between the peoples of color in the Mexican Pacific and Caribbean coasts could not be more illustrative of the inclusion-exclusion, remembering-forgetting, dichotomies so prevalent in Latin America when it comes to those of African ancestry and their memorializations.⁶²

Blacks throughout the Americas have turned to religion, music, dance, and festivals to culturally remember their African ancestry and to develop communal or collective identities in often hostile settings. In short, Afro-Latin Americans have been the subjects of their own memories of the African Diaspora. They have contested both negative representations and their own forgetting from the collective colonial and

⁶¹ Cruz Carretero et al., *Carnaval en Yanga*, 29. Carretero et al. are here maintaining that peoples of all races identify with “Yanga” and are proud of their collective black heritage. Daniel O. Mosquera studies a comparable event in Colombia, one that challenges other works questioning the viability of memorials of blackness in that country. Daniel O. Mosquera, “Re-constituting Chocó: the Feast of San Pocho and the Afro Question in Colombia.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 13, 2 (2004): 171-94.

⁶² For more on Afro-Mexicans consult the pioneering works of Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán and Colin Palmer. More recent work on Afro-Mexico includes Patrick J. Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. 2nd ed. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2001); Ben Vinson III and Matthew Restall, eds., *Black Mexico: Race and Society from Colonial to Modern Times* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2009); and Herman Lee Bennett, *Colonial Blackness: A History of Afro-Mexico* (Bloomington: Univ. of Indiana Press, 2009). Although not explicitly about collective memory, despite the title, see Solange Alberro, “Olvidar o recorder para ser: españoles, negros y castas en la Nueva España, siglos XVI-XVII.” In *Simposio de Historia de las Mentalidades. La memoria y el olvido* (Mexico City: Inst. Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1983), 135-44.

national memory. However, even in their embodied practices of social remembrance, *afrodescendientes* have also often been excluded by nationalist ideologies of miscegenation, transculturation, and racial harmony; black Latin Americans have witnessed their own cultural memories embodied in sacred and profane traditions appropriated by Creole national elites. Often these cultural appropriations were accomplished by “whitening” Afro-Latin American traditions and cultural expressions. Afro-Latin social dances, like the the Afro-Cuban *son*, for instance, have been transformed and racially “sanitized” by national leaders and thereby rendered useful for commercial exportation and national prestige.⁶³ Sadly, in the final analysis, what should be remembered as realms of black memory often become instead sites of their own exclusion and oblivion from the national, collective memories of Latin American nation-states.

In the light of the above statement, one should not be surprised to learn that Afro-Latin Americans have not only been subjects of collective memory but also its objects. Here the question is not so much if Afro-Latinos have been remembered, but, rather, how have they been represented in the collective memory of others, especially in the imaginings of national elites and their institutions of memory. The academic literature on this theme is every bit as broad ranging as that of the previous section. Academics from various disciplines and perspectives have examined the collective recollections about, and social representations of, Africans and their Latin-American descendants. Joseph K.

⁶³ On this topic, see John Chasteen’s, *National Rhythms, African Roots: The Deep History of Latin American Popular Dance*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2004).

Adjaye, for example, emphasizes that Caribbean history is not the exclusive preserve of colonial transcripts, official letters, court records, and other state documents; instead, evocations of the Caribbean past are present in the popular memory of its peoples, “textualized,” no doubt, through legends, myths, tales, rituals, songs, and other “ground up” mediations. Nevertheless, Adjaye recognizes that popular memory is equally mediated through official realms of memory as well, including institutionalized commemorations. In fact, one of the main problems of the memory approach for this academic is the fact that memory-making throughout the Caribbean has developed into a state-sanctioned “agent of nostalgia.”⁶⁴

The representation of blacks and blackness in various places of Latin America deserve attention. For example, memories about blacks in Mexico have been eradicated according to some researchers as a result of miscegenationist ideologies of “racial democracy.” Therefore, Christina A. Sue and Tanya Golash-Boza maintain that blackness in “*mestizo* America” is problematic. Similar to the case of Pacific-rim Afro-Colombians studied by Peter Wade and other scholars cited above, blacks in the port city of Veracruz, Mexico, according to the Sue and Golash-Boza, either do not retain memories of chattel slavery or “retain this memory but do not ascribe meaning to this memory as it relates to their own ancestries and identities.”⁶⁵ In a different but equally

⁶⁴ Joseph K. Adjaye, “Mediated Lives: Memory and Construction of History in the Caribbean Diaspora.” *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 19, 3 (2005): 207-32. Adjaye invokes “Caribbean memoryspace” to show how blacks in the Anglo-phone Caribbean incorporated their own social memory through practices, rituals, and images. Adjaye makes a connection between black memories and collective, cultural resistance.

⁶⁵ Christina A. Sue and Tonya Golash-Boza, “Blackness in *Mestizo* America: The Case of Mexico and Peru.” *Latino(a) Research Review* 7, 1-2 (2008-9): 49. Such a conclusion goes against the

critical vein, Marco Polo Hernández Cuevas reviews discourses and other representations of Afro-Mexicans by the modern Mexican nation-state. Generally, as elsewhere in the Americas after independence, Afro-Mexicans have been the victims of national discourses endorsing *mestizaje* (race mixing, implying “whitening”). When not rendered invisible by ideologies of state-sponsored miscegenation, blacks in Mexico, as in other Latin American countries, have been socially remembered and represented since colonial times as alternatively submissive or dangerous, meek or powerful, but always as somehow uncivilized. In his book, Hernández Cuevas shows how, for instance, African cultural expressions and popular images were removed or diluted (or effaced, to again borrow from Ricouer) to the point of disappearance from the Mexican national consciousness and memory. In addition, some movies from Mexico’s “Golden Age” of cinema in the 1930s and 1940s presented blacks in racially stereotypical ways aimed at their marginalization and/or forgetting.⁶⁶

The 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in Colombia, which followed on the heels of the passing of one of the most progressive pieces of multicultural legislation in the Americas, the “Ley 70” of 1993, generated a veritable cottage industry in that

findings of the scholars who have studied other Afro-Mexican groups in the Caribbean Coast, such as those communities that celebrate the “Yanga” festival in San Lorenzo, Veracruz.

⁶⁶ Marco Polo Hernández Cuevas, *African Mexicans and the Discourse on Modern Nation* (Dallas: Univ. Press of America, 2004), especially ch. 2, “The Erased Africanness of Mexican Icons,” and ch. 4, “*Angelitos negros*, a Film from the ‘Golden Age’ of Mexican Cinema: Coding Visibly Black Mestizos By and Through a Far-reaching Medium.” Although not interested in either the memories of or about Afro-Mexicans per se, Chege Githora’s *Afro-Mexicans: Discourse of Race and Identity in the African Diaspora* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008) proffers useful data and cultural materials for scholars interested in further examining blackness in Mexico and its representations.

South-American republic concerning memories about blacks and blackness. In 2000, for example, several scholars contributed to publish a collection of essays on official and counter-memories of blackness in Colombia.⁶⁷ In 2002, Odile Hoffmann and her collaborators produced a large tome on the identities and social trajectories of blacks in Latin America and Afro-Colombians to celebrate the 150 anniversary of abolition.⁶⁸ Further, the distinguished Colombian scholar of race, Ernesto Restrepo Tirado, edited a thick anthology of essays on slavery, Afro-Colombians, and race relations after independence entitled *150 años de la abolición de la esclavización en Colombia*.⁶⁹ In this volume, for instance, Beatriz González looks at official artistic representations of Afro-Colombians from colonial times to the twentieth century in state-run museums. González observes that in Colombia's colonial period, blackness is often associated in art and other memorial media with piety and religiosity. As discussed earlier, religion and ritual have been realms of African cultural practice and social memory since the time of slavery. By the eighteenth century, however, with the advent of the Enlightenment across

⁶⁷ See the Gnecco and Zambrano title cited above, *Memorias hegemónicas, memorias disidentes*, especially María E. Vásquez's "Escrito para no morir: memoria desde la exclusión," 319-30.

⁶⁸ Claudia Mosquera, Mauricio Pardo, and Odile Hoffmann, eds., *Afrodescendientes en las Américas: trayectorias sociales e identidades. 150 años de la abolición de la esclavitud en Colombia* (Bogotá: Univ. Nacional de Colombia, 2002).

⁶⁹ Ernesto Restrepo Tirado, comp., *150 años de la abolición de la esclavización en Colombia: desde la marginalidad a la construcción de la nación* (Bogotá: Editora Aguilar, 2003). In addition, other important studies recently published about Afro-Colombians include: Alex A. Rojas Martínez, *Si no fuera por los quince negros. Memoria colectiva de la gente negra de Tierradentro* (Cali: Editorial Univ. del Cauca, 2004); and Claudia Leal and Carl H. Langebaek, comps., *Historia de raza y nación en América Latina* (Bogotá: Univ. de los Andes, 2010), featuring essays on Colombia by Marixa Lasso, James Sanders, Carl H. Langebaek, Eduardo Restrepo, and Claudia Leal. The Restrepo and Leal chapters are especially useful for studying the collective remembrances about Afro-Colombians in the twentieth century.

the Atlantic world, images of Africans slowly lost their religious associations and became more scientific or anthropological. The iconography of blackness was juxtaposed, usually negatively, with those of whites and Indians, veritable depictions of the colonial racial hierarchy in New Granada (Colombia) on canvas or in plaster. Such social representations persisted well into the National Period, not only in art, but also in such writings as those by the European naturalist Alexander von Humboldt.

By the 1850s, with arrival of literary and artistic *costumbrismo* (a genre emphasizing local customs and characters), Afro-Colombians became exotic objects of national folklore. *Costumbrista* artists often depicted blacks in Colombia at work and play, usually exaggerating racial stereotypes. The black disappears from the official memory in art and literature by the start of the twentieth century as *costumbrismo* gave way to first *hispanismo* (“Hispanicism”) and then all things Creole and white, *criollismo*. Subsequently, through the mid-1930s, Colombian elites adopted *indigenismo* (“Indigenism”). Once again the Afro-Colombian was forgotten within the national high culture, this time in favor of commemorations of Colombia’s native peoples. However, on the eve of World War II, Guillermo Widemann, a late-Impressionist German artist, arrived in Colombia, producing paintings that neither romanticized nor “exoticized” the Afro-Colombian. González avers that Widemann’s artistic work “resultó definitivo para el tema de la raza negra en el arte colombiano.” From 1940, Colombian artists once more appropriated black themes, “y lo trabajaron como recurso de belleza por su plasticidad.”⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Beatriz González, “Las imágenes del negro en las colecciones de las instituciones oficiales,” in *150 años de la abolición de la esclavización en Colombia*, 459-72, quote on 470. In the quotes above González suggests that Widemann’s works were foundational for the theme of the

More contemporary depictions of black Colombians in the national imagery, however, are not found in museums or other official sites of memory, according to González, but instead are now more widely accessible on video and in digital formats.⁷¹

Representations of blacks and blackness also constitute important areas of interest for scholars concerned with social memory about Afro-Brazilians. Museums, whether art or historical, are key institutional sites of official memory aimed at inculcating national values and pedagogically disseminating them to all ages, classes, and races. As Daryle Williams shows, Brazilian museums in the first half of the twentieth century both managed the past and shaped national memory; they were major institutions in forming Brazilian national culture and promoting a nationalist (i.e., racially harmonizing) ideology throughout the Getúlio Vargas regime (and, indeed, beyond).⁷² Much of the scholarly writings on the remembrance and representation of Afro-Brazilians in that country's museums build on these insights of Williams.

For example, Livio Sansone examines the collections and artifacts housed in Rio de Janeiro's "Museu do Negro," the only black people's museum in the city, founded in 1946, by members of the lay Catholic brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary and St. Benedict. As was the case with the art works about Afro-Colombians described above, Sansone notes that religious sentiment dominates the collections at the "Museu do

representation of the black race in Colombia and that later Colombian artists beautifully rendered multiple representations of Afro-Colombians in their art.

⁷¹ González, "Las imágenes del negro en las colecciones de las instituciones oficiales," 471.

⁷² Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars in Brazil: The First Vargas Regime, 1930-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2001).

Negro.” Many visitors to the museum look on and pray over relics and other artifacts housed in the museum. The Afro-Brazilian Museum of Salvador, also the only institution of its kind in that center of black national culture, is another site for the organization of collective memory and heritage surrounding slavery in Brazil. Inspired by the research of Melville Herskovits, Roger Bastide, and Pierre Verger in the first half of the last century, the museum is dedicated to representing and preserving Afro-Brazilian religion (generically referred to as *Candomblé*), culture, and conditions under slavery. Sansone goes on to detail the problems facing the institutional remembrances about Afro-Brazilians and their contributions to the national culture. He points out that no monument or other heritage sites to slavery exist, perhaps because of the country’s relatively short period without slavery (abolished in 1888), the selective incorporation (appropriation) of all things Afro into the representation of official and national culture, the national ideology of *mestissage* (again, a miscegenation implying “whitening”), which in effect renders blackness invisible, and lack of a preservationist impulse among the nation’s cultural and political elites. Sansone concludes on a counter-intuitive point, however, asserting that while slavery was generalized throughout the Atlantic, the memory of slavery is often a “surprisingly ‘local,’ relational and contingent construction.”⁷³ Such an insight applies to the social remembrances of blackness in the River Plate as well.

⁷³ Livio Sansone, “Remembering Slavery from Nearby: Heritage Brazilian Style.” In *Facing up to the Past*, 83-89. See also Raul Lody, *O negro no museu brasileiro. Construindo identidades* (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2005); and Anadelia A. Romo, *Brazil’s Living History Museum: Race, Reform, and Tradition in Bahia* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2010). Sepúlveda dos Santos, a sociologist at the State University of Rio de Janeiro, elaborates on 5 different narrative strategies of anti-black discrimination in Brazil’s museums: 1) silence about

Memorializing Blackness in the River Plate

Concluding this historiographical tour about the social frameworks of remembrance about Afro-Latin Americans, the focus shifts to the southern end of Latin America, namely, the Río de la Plata. In both Argentina and Uruguay, there has been a growing interest in the African heritage of those countries. Afro-centric organizations in both nations' capitals, such as María Magdalena "Pocha" Lamadrid's "Africa Vive," have actively sought inclusion for their race in the national imaginaries and have striven for social, economic, and political rights.⁷⁴ Academics in both Buenos Aires and Montevideo, among them, Norberto Pablo Cirio, Liliana Crespi, Alejandro Frigerio, Marta B. Goldberg, Gustavo Goldman, Miriam V. Gomes, Florencia Guzmán, Marta Maffia, Silvia C. Mallo, Dina V. Picotti C., Miguel A. Rosal, and Daniel Schávelzon, have all recently built on and/or moved beyond the older scholarship of the likes of Narciso Binayán Carmona, Marcos de Estrada, José Luis Lanuza, Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, and Elena F. Scheüss de Studer. Only recently, however, have a few Argentine

blackness and race, 2) exaggeration about black national contributions, 3) "the myth of origin," 4) historical absence, and 5) "painful memories as instruments of domination." Myrian Sepúlveda dos Santos, "Representations of black people in Brazilian museums." *Museum and Society* 3, 1 (2005), 51-65. In light of these racist mnemonic discourses, Sepúlveda dos Santos concludes that "as far as the constructions of blackness are concerned, different claims must be considered," especially those of Afro-Brazilians themselves, "as part of the enlargement of democratic rights and, certainly, as responsible for the construction of new narratives about the nation and their people." Sepúlveda dos Santos, "Representations of black people in Brazilian museums," 61.

⁷⁴In addition to the inclusion of race in the Argentine census for the first time since the late nineteenth century, recently the Argentine Congress passed legislation making October 11 as "Día de la cultura afroargentina" ("Day of Afro-Argentine Culture"). Law makers especially signal out black military heroes, including Lorenzo Barcala and Juan Bautista Cabral, and at least one descendant of Cape-Verdean immigrants claims that such an official commemoration will aid in making Afro-Argentines more "visible." "La cultura africano argentina ya tiene su día." *Diario Diagonales*, May 14, 2011.

and Uruguayan, as well as North-American, academics become interested in connecting the Afro-Platine experience with the social memories about them.

In Uruguay, which unlike its neighbor, Argentina, does have a more demographically discernible African-descended population, black and white intellectuals, academics, and artists have of late united to struggle for black rights and inclusion in the *imaginario nacional*. In addition to founding organizations like “Mundo Afro,” Afro-Uruguayans and their Creole supporters have also launched their own publishing houses, such as Rosebud Ediciones, specializing in disseminating works of and about black memory in the *banda oriental*. The Afro-Uruguayan soldier “Ansina,” for example, loyal follower of Uruguay’s independence hero, José Gervasio Artigas, has received special attention from those scholars interested in rescuing his legend from oblivion.⁷⁵ In addition, George Reid Andrews, while foregoing any theoretical discussion of historical memory, has recently studied how Montevideo’s nineteenth-century black carnival societies (*comparsas*) “Africanized” Uruguayan *candombe* (folkloric Afro-Platine music and dance), thereby in some way collectively remembering their ancestral roots.⁷⁶

For the bicentennial of the commencement of the struggle for independence from

⁷⁵ See, e.g., Equipo Interdisciplinario de Rescate de la Memoria de Ansina, *Ansina me llaman y Ansina yo soy...* (Montevideo: Rosebud Ediciones, 1996); and Nelson Caula, *Artigas ñemoñaré II. Vida privada de José G. Artigas: sus hijos y nietos. Los afro “Artigas Kué” de Paraguay y su imagen perdida de San Baltasar. Los tres gauchos negros orientales: Ansina, Ledesma y Montevideo* (Montevideo: Rosebud Ediciones, 2004).

⁷⁶ George Reid Andrews, “Remembering Africa, Inventing Uruguay: Sociedades de Negros in the Montevideo Carnival, 1865-1930.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 87, 4 (Nov. 2007): 693-726. It is important to again emphasize that Andrews does not theorize the social remembering of Montevideo’s black or white *comparsas* at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s. He merely assumes it.

Spain in the River Plate, and as a part of its larger project to commemorate the abolition of Atlantic slavery, UNESCO's Montevideo branch published a report on sites of memory about the slave trade to Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Among the numerous short, medium, and long-term goals of the project are the identification of sites of memory about slavery in the Southern Cone, the preservation of oral traditions relevant to the memorialization of the descendants of slaves in the region, the promotion of sites of memory about slavery and possible uses for heritage tourism in these countries, and the organization of memorial activities associated with or centering on said sites of memory of the slave trade to southernmost South America. Contributors to the project included distinguished experts on slavery in the region, such as Marta Goldberg. Mónica Risnicoff de Gorgas, furthermore, writes a speculative entry on the role of museums as sites of collective memory about the slave trade in the Southern Cone and their social responsibilities to preserve the past in the present. Unfortunately, the thrust of the project is at times undermined by its own notable lapses of memory or historical errors, including misidentifying "Falucho" as Antonio Díaz (as opposed to Antonio Ruíz).⁷⁷

Few of the scholars on blacks in the Río de la Plata explicitly appropriate collective memory, however. Regardless, a few Argentine and Uruguayan academics have recently examined commemorations and representations of blackness in the River

⁷⁷ See UNESCO, *Sitios de memoria de la ruta del esclavo en Argentina, Paraguay y Uruguay* (Montevideo: Contraste Gráfica S. R. L., 2010). The misidentification of "Falucho" occurs on p. 17. A year later, UNESCO produced a much better volume, *Sitios de memoria y culturas vivas de los afrodescendientes en Argentina, Paraguay y Uruguay* (Montevideo: UNESCO, 2011), with contributions from several experts, including Marta Goldberg for Argentina and Alex Borucki for Uruguay.

Plate. For instance, Karla Chagas and Natalia Stalla study oral traditions and iconography to recover the social memory about Afro-Uruguayans over the last century or so.⁷⁸ In the same volume, Lina Gutiérrez Moreno and Viviana Parody examine how racial stereotypes of blacks are created and disseminated by stories, cartoons, and other discourses among school-age children from generation to generation in Argentina to reinforce racialist and hegemonic values.⁷⁹ As in Brazil, museums are increasingly memorializing blackness in the Río de la Plata. Thus, Marina Benzi explores the institutionalization of social memories and representations of blacks and their culture in Santa Fe province, Argentina.⁸⁰

A few Argentine academics have also looked at school textbooks for the mentions (or lack thereof) of Afro-Argentines. Others have examined school plays on patriotic holidays and their depictions of blackness. As Michele Foucault and others have observed, public schools, much like modern prisons, embody the state's power to socially

⁷⁸ Karla Chagas and Natalia Stalla, "Hacia el rescate de las memorias: afrouuguayos a través de la fuentes orales e iconográficas." In *Actas de las Segundas Jornadas de Estudios Afrolatinoamericanos del GEALA*. Florencia Guzmán y Lea Geler, eds. (Buenos Aires: Mnemosyne for Univ. de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras; Inst. de Historia de Argentina y Americana "Dr. Emilio Ravignani," 2011), 125-40.

⁷⁹ Lina Gutiérrez Moreno and Viviana Parody, "Identidades racializadas en productos para la infancia. Estereotipos vigentes y representaciones alternativas." In *Actas de las Segundas Jornadas de Estudios Afrolatinoamericanos del GEALA*. Florencia Guzmán y Lea Geler, eds. (Buenos Aires: Mnemosyne for Univ. de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras; Inst. de Historia de Argentina y Americana "Dr. Emilio Ravignani," 2011), 239-55.

⁸⁰ Marina Benzi, "Un museo y la representación del pasado. La 'presencia' africana en Santa Fe." In *Estudios afrolatinoamericanos. Nuevos enfoques multidisciplinarios*. Actas de las Terceras Jornadas del GEALA. María de Lourdes Ghidoli and Juan Francisco Martínez Peria, comp. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del CCC Floreal Gorini, 2013), 163-74.

control and discipline behavior⁸¹; in school, children are constantly supervised and subject to the entire “micropenality” of time, e.g., tardiness, truancy, assignments, homework. Not surprisingly, therefore, educational elites have sought to discipline the body of students by making them put on patriotic costumes and perform under the gaze of state leaders on national holidays. On patriotic days, such as May 25 and July 9, school children throughout Argentina re-enact national history, and children’s participation in patriotic commemorations has been deemed important by national elites since the latter part of the nineteenth century. Since blacks were a visible and viable part of colonial society, historically remembered as slaves, servants, and street merchants, teachers and administrators feel obliged to have their charges paint their faces black, put on curly wigs, and dress in colorful costumes to dance the *candombe* (traditional black dance) or play the part of black peddlers hawking their wares with traditional *pregones* (street calls). As Argentine historian Pablo Alabarces observes, “... los festejos escolares permiten la única reivindicación visible en el espacio escolar ... del los afrodescendientes riolplatenses, en ese **negrito** ficticio del acto del 25 condenado por los siglos a vocear **empanaditas calientes/para quemarse los dientes**, para felicidad de los padres del actor en cuestión y tranquilidad de la corrección política de generaciones de maestros.”⁸²

⁸¹ See, e.g., Michele Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991).

⁸² Pablo Alabarces, “Sobre las formas populares de narrar la Patria.” In *Debates de mayo. Nación, cultura y política*. José Nun, ed. Alejandro Grimson, coll. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Gedisa, 2005), 236. Bold in the original. In the above quotation, Alabarces is highly critical of both how blackness is politically exploited by national educators and how blacks are derogatorily depicted. Sadly, Alabarces ignores the other remembrances of blacks in Argentine educational settings, including schools named in honor of black heroes, such as “Falucho” and Cabral, and in school history books and historiographies.

Schoolchildren in blackface also re-enact important historical events, such as the freeing of slaves, and sing patriotic hymns, including the national anthem. School textbooks, furthermore, reinforce these images of blacks as folkloric and docile, at least according to those cited below. Hence, the collective memory about Afro-Argentines promoted by educational leaders represents them in often stereotyped ways and a paternalistic manner.⁸³

Lea Geler is one of the more prominent historians working on blacks in Argentina sensitive to historical memory.⁸⁴ She begins her recent book on blacks in Argentina at

⁸³ On school performances and textbooks as important sites of the collective memory about blacks in Argentina, see María M. Tenti, “Escuela y centenario. El caso de Santiago del Estero.” *Trabajo y Sociedad* 9, 9 (2007): 1-14; María Soledad Balsas, “Negritud e identidad en los libros escolares argentinos: del surgimiento del sistema nacional de educación al Bicentenario.” *Estudios Sociológicos* 29, 86 (2011): 649-86; Anny Ocoró Loango, “La emergencia del negro en los actos escolares del 25 de mayo en la Argentina: del negro heroico al decorativo y estereotipado.” *Pedagogía y Saberes*, no. 34 (2011): 33-50. María Cristina Linares and Mariano Ricardes, “El lado oscuro de la negritud: las representaciones de los afroamericanos en los libros de lectura escolares (1895-2000).” In *Actas de las Segundas Jornadas de Estudios Afrolatinoamericanos del GEALA*. Florencia Guzmán y Lea Geler, eds. (Buenos Aires: Mnemosyne for Univ. de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras; Inst. de Historia de Argentina y Americana “Dr. Emilio Ravignani,” 2011), 189-204; Marta Poggi, “La población afrolatinoamericana en los libros escolares argentinos. Memorias y olvidos, 1870-1930.” In *Actas de las Segundas Jornadas de Estudios Afrolatinoamericanos del GEALA*. Florencia Guzmán y Lea Geler, eds. (Buenos Aires: Mnemosyne for Univ. de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras; Inst. de Historia de Argentina y Americana “Dr. Emilio Ravignani,” 2011), 205-18. Most of these works, however, ironically overlook (forget?) more positive representations of Afro-Argentines or trivialize such depictions. Lilia Ana Bertoni traces the origins and early development of patriotic school celebrations in “Construir la nacionalidad: heroes, estatuas y fiestas patrias, 1887-1891.” *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. E. Ravignani”* (Third Series) 5, 1 (1992): 77-111. Astrid Windus examines representations of Afro-Argentines in Argentine history-writing in “El afroporteño en la historiografía argentina: algunas consideraciones críticas.” *Trabajos y Comunicaciones* nos. 28-29 (2002-2003) http://www.fuentesmemoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/art_revistas/pr.1/pr.1.pdf.

⁸⁴ Collective or historical memory studies in Argentina have overwhelmingly been about the so-called “Dirty War” waged between Argentina’s right-wing military dictatorship and communist guerrillas in the 1970s. See, e.g., Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory*. Judy Rein and Marcial Godoy-Anatívia, trans. (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2003).

the end of the nineteenth century with a poem, “*Todo se olvida*” (“Everything is Forgotten”), by the renowned nineteenth-century Peruvian writer Ricardo Palma, published in the Afro-Argentine newspaper *La Igualdad* in 1874.⁸⁵ While Geler largely embraces the regnant historiographical notion that blacks in Argentina have been generally “forgotten,” as her use of Palma’s poetic epigram attests, by a hegemonic Argentine state intent on promoting itself as modern and European, she also nonetheless examines how they were represented in the past and the social and political usages of those representations by national elites.

For example, in a well-documented essay she notes the contradictory representations of Afro-Argentines in the foundational literary texts of the nineteenth century, including the writings of Juan Bautista Alberdi, Domingo Sarmiento, and Bartolomé Mitre. As my own work will also establish, Geler acknowledges that Mitre was especially important in nationalizing blackness in Argentina by way of memorializing several black heroes, especially “Falucho.” However, Geler possibly misattributes Mitre’s commemorations of blackness to sheer political opportunism. While no doubt politically motivated, “Don Bartolo’s” remembrances (perhaps even outright myth-making) was also intended to look to the past for ideals of loyalty and national sentiment to preserve in the (then unstable) present and to carry on to the (then equally uncertain) future. As Lea Geler admits, furthermore, and Patricia Andrea Dosio and María de Lourdes Ghidoli equally attest in their respective articles on the history of the “Falucho”

⁸⁵ Lea Geler, *Andares negros, caminos blancos: afroporteños, estado y nación. Argentina a fines del siglo XIX* (Rosario: Prohistoria Ediciones; Taller de Estudios e Investigaciones Andino-Amazónicas, 2010), 15.

monument, “Lejos de quedar en el olvido... Falucho tuvo gran repercusión en la Argentina de finales del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX.” According to Geler, then, far from forgotten at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries, social remembrances of “Falucho” had a major repercussion on the Argentina of the fin de siècle.⁸⁶

My dissertation will attempt to provide some insight into why “Falucho’s” memory redounded so prominently among Argentine elites at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s. My own study will cover some of the same terrain as these sources, while nevertheless arriving at slightly different conclusions concerning the meaning(s) of the commemoration of blacks in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Argentina. Moreover, remembrances of “Falucho” and other black national heroes were not limited

⁸⁶ Lea Geler, “¡Pobres negros !’: algunos apuntes sobre la desaparición de los negros argentinos.” In *Estado, región y poder local en América Latina, siglos XIX-XX. Algunas miradas sobre el estado, el poder y la participación política*. Pilar García Jordán, ed. (Barcelona: Publicacions i Edicions Univ. de Barcelona, 2006), 117-126, the above quote appears on p. 126. Geler is saying that far from forgotten, “Falucho” received a great deal of attention in Argentina at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries. For the articles on the “Falucho” monument, consult Patricia Andrea Dosio, “Política estatuaría y representividad en Buenos Aires (1880-1910): el monumento a Falucho.” *Estudios e Investigaciones Instituto de Teoría e Historia del Arte Julio E. Payró*, no. 8 (1998): 93-101; and María de Lourdes Ghidoli, “‘Falucho vale poco en comparación a su raza.’ Variaciones en torno a un monumento.” In *Estudios afrolatinoamericanos. Nuevos enfoques multidisciplinares*. Actas de las Terceras Jornadas del GEALA. María de Lourdes Ghidoli and Juan Francisco Martínez Peria, comps. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del CCC Floreal Gorini, 2013), 175-190. Lea Geler and Florencia Guzmán have recently co-edited an anthology that examines the cultural constructions of Afro-Latino(a) blackness featuring the works of a few memory specialists, such as Livio Sansone. My friend, Alejandro Frigerio, contributes a fine chapter on the social representations of Afro-Argentines in the early 1900s in the pages of the leading *porteño* (Buenos Aires) magazine of the day, *Caras y Caretas*. While not employing a social memory approach, Frigerio’s text, especially his clue to articles and iconography of blackness in *Caras y Caretas*, is valuable. Alejandro Frigerio, “‘Sin otro delito que el color de su piel’. Imágenes del ‘negro’ en la revista *Caras y Caretas* (1900-1910).” In *Cartografías afrolatinoamericanas. Perspectivas situadas para un análisis transfronterizo*. Florencia Guzmán and Lea Geler, eds. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, Investigaciones y Ensayos, 2013), 151-72.

to the past century, but have in fact continued to the present day. For example, in a speech commemorating the 202nd anniversary of the start of Argentina's independence struggle from Spain in 1810, Argentine president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner recently reminded her compatriots of "Falucho's" heroism, as well as that of another Afro-Argentine national icon, Juan Bautista Cabral.⁸⁷

The African "Other" throughout Latin America has been subjected to multiple, often contrasting, social representations and remembrances over time. Memories about Afro-Latinos are socially constructed to recall them as picturesque characters at best, hostile savages at worst. When fondly recalled by social or national elites, Afro-descendants in Latin America are represented as faithful servants or heroic defenders of national sovereignty. Such positive social remembrances often articulate and correspond to pressing needs of national leaders and elites in the present moment to forge unity or promote racial harmony. Furthermore, Afro-Latin American culture has also been often expropriated by nation-states and promoted as Creole or simply as national culture. The end result has often been, ironically, either a willful forgetting (and "whitening") or exaggeration of Afro-Latino contributions to national cultures; both discourses, however, too often transform what should be realms of memory of blackness into sites of their oblivion.

Conclusion

⁸⁷ Pres. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, "Commemoración de la Revolución de mayo en Bariloche: palabras de la presidenta de la nación." Casa Rosada. Presidencia de la Nación. <http://www.caserosada.gov.ar/component/content/article/25882>.

This extended excursus through the literature salient for my own dissertation on the social frameworks of memory provides an introduction to some key ideas and players in the field. As stated above, even at its present length, this survey of key works for my own research only scratches the surface of what has been published in the last few decades. Nonetheless, I stand by my earlier statement that no matter how cursory, every scholar has an irreducible intellectual obligation to show a modicum of familiarity with the important works published in their field or sub-field(s).

In summary, from the pioneers in the field of memory studies and their academic heirs I inherit the importance of understanding that memory is not merely individual or even the sum of the parts of some given social group's remembrances of their shared past. Collective memories are more than just a random collection of autobiographical remembrances strung together, end on end, so to speak. Instead, they are the shared re-imaginings and both representations and re-presentations of the past deemed worthy of recalling by a particular society or social group within it, by especially those so-called "memory makers." These socially framed recollections of the past, including what Renato Rosaldo alluded to as "imperialist nostalgia," are always rearticulated and reproduced in the present moment, but also with the future in mind. Moreover, such collective memories inevitably fasten on to symbolic and tangible sites of memory. Thus, one way to approach the historical study of a past society is by apprehending what it elected to remember and reproduce from its past. The social, political, economic, and cultural concerns of a given group at a particular historical juncture will become clearer and come sharply into focus through an examination of what they chose to remember collectively and commemorate in their sites of memory. These ideas are all central to my

own understandings of the historical recollections (and “olvidos”) of Argentines and, to a lesser extent, Uruguayans, about their respective countries’ black heritage.

CHAPTER 3

Vanished but Not Forgotten: The Afro-Platine Experience from the Sixteenth to Twentieth Century

“...toda definición de argentinidad implica también una de negritud.” Narciso Binayán Carmona, “El negro.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 21, 242 (July 1987): 60.

Introduction

This chapter addresses three separate issues. First, it establishes the significant historical contributions Afro-Platines made to the societies of Argentina and Uruguay. Second, as it does so, it surveys and discusses some of the abundant academic literature available on the Afro-Platine experience, thereby negating the notion that this social group has been historiographically forgotten. Finally, in dealing with some cultural expressions characteristic of this racial group, it highlights some of the mechanisms Afro-Platines used to record their own social memory. Thus, this chapter will outline some of the historical experiences of *afrodescendientes* in the Río de la Plata.¹ It will be derived from an abundant and growing secondary literature documented in my previously-cited MA thesis and other studies. There are, in addition to the seminal books by George Reid Andrews on the subject, many more monograph-length studies written in Spanish and English from historians, anthropologists, and other social scientists on Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans.² Overall, this chapter posits that the historical role of Afro-

¹ Because of the documentary and bibliographic bias towards Buenos Aires and Montevideo, this chapter (and dissertation as a whole) will generally restrict itself to the history (and memorializations) of blacks in these capital cities and their environs.

² A sampling of just a few recently published books on the subject include (alphabetically by the author's or editor's last name): George Reid Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation: A History of Afro-Uruguay* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2010); Gustavo Goldman, comp.,

Platines was meaningful, the literature addressing that history is extensive, and Afro-Argentines were active at recording their own historical memories.

Afrodescendientes in the Río de la Plata greatly contributed to the respective economies, politics, societies, and cultures of their countries. First, they were the slaves, peons, urban laborers, and artisans whose toils allowed for the region's economic development between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Second, Africans and their descendants in Argentina and Uruguay were the soldiers whose blood and sacrifices forged independent nation-states and who defended national freedom from foreign invaders in the first half of the nineteenth century. Third, black Argentines and Uruguayans were musicians, writers, and artists whose talents and works enriched, enlightened, and entertained their fellow citizens from colonial times to the present. Moreover, their cultural expressions left a lasting legacy, and even the very symbols and icons of nationhood in the River Plate, such as the tango and the gaucho, were influenced by the genius and contributions of Africans and their New-World descendants.

Cultura y sociedad afro-rioplatense (Montevideo: Perro Andaluz Ediciones, 2008); Leticia Maronese, comp., *Buenos Aires negra. Identidad y cultura*. Temas de Patrimonio Cultural 16 (Buenos Aires: Comisión para la Preservación del Patrimonio Histórico Cultural de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2006); Miguel Angel Rosal, *Africanos y afrodescendientes en el Río de la Plata. Siglos XVIII-XIX* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Dunken, 2009); Alejandro Solomianski, *Identidades secretas: la negritud argentina* (Rosario, Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 2003); and Daniel Schávelzon, *Buenos Aires negra. Arqueología histórica de una ciudad silenciada* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2003). A few observations on some of these titles are warranted. For instance, Andrews, his former student, Solomianski, and Schávelzon all argue that blacks in Argentina and Uruguay have been effaced from history and memory. Solomianski goes so far as to label this forgetting a “discursive genocide.” Solomianski, *Identidades secretas*, 16. See also his “Desmemorias y genocidios discursivos: cultura letrada afroargentina de fines del siglo XIX.” *PALARA* 7 (Fall 2003): 26-42. However, the Buenos Aires Commission for the Preservation of Historical-Cultural Patrimony published a lengthy anthology edited by Maronese, also cited above, on the city's black heritage. Maronese's compilation even features a brief prologue by the city's Minister of Culture, “Escuchar todas las voces” (“Hearing from Every One”), 11-12. A strange decision from a government bent on the “discursive genocide” of black people in Argentina.

Consequently, as Narciso Binayán Carmona reminds his compatriots, quoted in the chapter's epigram, any definition of Argentine national identity must include an appreciation of the country's black heritage.³

Historical themes and periods covered in this chapter include the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery, including abolition, in Argentina and Uruguay during the late sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries; black populations and demographics from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century; and the black community in the Río de la Plata between the eighteenth century and the past century, as well as their many cultural contributions to their nations over several hundred years. However, a more in-depth discussion of the association of the Afro-Argentine community with the regime of Juan Manuel de Rosas, as well as the numerous sacrifices and military contributions of blacks in Argentina and Uruguay, will be discussed in later chapters. The goal of this chapter is simply to provide some historical context for latter discussions of remembrances (or forgettings) of Afro-Argentines (and, to a lesser extent, Afro-Uruguayans) over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Slave Trade and Slavery in the River Plate

A prominent student of Argentina, Lyman Johnson, has observed that in the historical literature devoted to nineteenth-century Buenos Aires, Afro-Argentines have

³ Narciso Binayán Carmona, "El negro." *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 21, 242 (July 1987): 60. For the importance of the Afro-Platine contributions to the cultures of the gaucho and tango, respectively, see, for instance, Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, *Historia social del gaucho* (Buenos Aires: Maru, 1968); and Vicente Rossi's original *Cosas de negros: los orígenes del tango y otros aportes al folklore rioplatense* (Córdoba, Argentina: Imprenta Argentina, 1926).

appeared as either mere footnotes to the major socio-political events or, more pejoratively, as cultural primitives who failed to contribute to national development.⁴ While it is true that in some intellectual circles blacks in Argentina have often been marginalized and/or denigrated in the early historical and sociological literature of the latter part of the 1800s and beginning of the 1900s, contemporary research on this population in the colonial and national periods has grown and matured. It affords much information about the historical experiences of people of African ancestry in the River Plate.

The earliest moments of Africans and *ladinos* (Hispanicized blacks) in the Río de la Plata, as elsewhere in the New World, first came as conquistadors and colonizers and then as slaves, early in the sixteenth century. African-born slaves or *bozales* made their initial appearance in substantial numbers in the River Plate in 1534, arriving with the explorer Pedro de Mendoza. However, as early as the 1520s, Angel Rosenblatt records the intervention of a mulatto slave named Pacheco who fought with Alejo García during the conquest of the Sierra de la Plata and was later killed by local Indians.⁵ In 1570, another African bondsman, Francisco Congo, saved the family of the conquistador Juan Gregorio de Bazán from the attack of hostile natives around the area of Río de Siancas.

⁴ Lyman L. Johnson, review of *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (1980), by George Reid Andrews. *Hispanic American Historical Review* 61, 4 (Nov. 1981): 731-32.

⁵ Angel Rosenblatt, "Las castas en la vida de las gobernaciones del virreinato. Importancia de cada sangre en la fusión étnica hasta 1810." In *Historia argentina*, vol. 3. Roberto Levillier, ed. (Buenos Aires: Plaza y Janes, 1985), 1803-04.

Black retainers, moreover, also served under Governor Hernando Arias and participated in the settling of the Banda Oriental (Uruguay) in 1608.⁶

The slave trade(s), legal and contraband, to the River Plate began in the 1570s and 1580s, as the native populations declined and the demand for labor by Spanish settlers increased. European slavers holding licenses (*licencias*) and then *asientos* (royal permits) from the Spanish crown imported African slaves, commonly referred to as *piezas de indias* or *piezas de ébano*⁷ into Buenos Aires directly from West and Central Africa, as well as re-exports from Brazil. Approximately one thousand slaves made their way into the port city from 1587 to 1600, most en route to Córdoba, Mendoza (Cuyo), and Tucumán in Argentina's central and northwestern interior (where large estates existed), and to Chile and the mines of Upper Peru (Bolivia). By 1604, for instance, forty eight slaves labored in the Santa Rosa area of Catamarca (in Argentina's northwest).⁸ Other

⁶ Oscar D. Monató, *Umkhonto, la lanza negra. Historia del aporte negro-africano en la formación del Uruguay* (Montevideo: Rosebud Ediciones, 1997), 25. Irene Diggs, "The Negro in Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata." *Journal of Negro History* 36, 3 (July 1951): 281. See Evelyn P. Meiners, "The Negro in the Río de la Plata." Ph. D. diss., Northwestern Univ., 1948, for more on the early slave trade to the region.

⁷ A *pieza* entailed a male or female slave between fifteen and thirty years, without vices and with all their teeth. Alberto González Arzac, *La esclavitud en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Polémica, 1974), 77. Wim Klooster in *The Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery* provides a similar working definition. Rather than referring to individual bondsmen, a *pieza* was a theoretical value. A slave constituted a full *pieza* if he or she measured at least seven *palmos* (about five feet) in height and was between fifteen and thirty years old. In addition, children and adults with physical defects, such as poor eye sight, bad teeth, or disease, were only counted as fractions of a *pieza* and were often called *macrones* or *manquerones*. Wim Klooster, "Piezas de Indias." In *The Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery*. Junius P. Rodríguez, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1997), 508.

⁸ María Florencia Guzmán, "Negros en el noroeste." *Todo es Historia* 23, 273 (March 1990): 79-94.

slaves, however, remained in and around Buenos Aires and the littoral (e.g., Santa Fe), as well as across the River Plate in Montevideo.

Slave prices, furthermore, were considerable in the late 1500s and early 1600s in the Río de la Plata; in Tucumán, in northwestern Argentina, for example, between 1600 and 1630, a single healthy slave cost an average of three to five hundred Spanish *pesos*.⁹ (By way of comparison, a few decades later in the 1600s, Indian laborers on agricultural estates were paid 30-40 *pesos* a year, plus food.¹⁰) Despite the frequent trade wars between competing European powers and the resulting vagaries of the Atlantic trade, Africans continued arriving in Buenos Aires throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As many as 13,000 *negros de camiso* (illegally imported slaves) reached the River Plate by means of smuggling between 1606 and 1655 alone. By 1680, some 22,892 African slaves had arrived legally to the port.¹¹ Given the extensive smuggling of slaves into the River Plate, calculations of total imports are tentative. José Torre Revello and

⁹ See Guzmán, “Negros en el noroeste,” 79-94, for more on slave arrivals and prices in the northwestern provinces.

¹⁰ Roberto Pacheco, “Invisible but Not Forgotten: The Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan Experience from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries.” MA thesis, Florida International Univ., 2001, 304. Seth Meisel, email communication, Dec. 16, 2000. Dr. Meisel teaches in the History Department at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Jonathan C. Brown, *A Socioeconomic History of Argentina, 1776-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979) offers additional data for prices and economic activities in Argentina from the establishment of the Viceroyalty to the unification of the Argentine state.

¹¹ For the slave trades, legal and otherwise, to the Río de la Plata during the early colonial era, consult Russell E. Chace, Jr., “The African Impact on Colonial Argentina.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, 1969, ch. 1; and Diego Luis Molinari, *La trata de negros: datos para su estudio en el Río de la Plata*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Fac. de Ciencias Económicas, Univ. de Buenos Aires, 1944). The seminal work on the slave trade to the River Plate is Elena F. Scheüss de Studer, *La trata de negros en el Río de la Plata durante el siglo XVIII*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Libros de Hispanoamérica, 1984). For contraband slavery, see Sergio R. Villalobos, *Comercio y contrabando en el Río de la Plata y Chile*, 4th ed. (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1986).

Elena Scheüss de Studer estimate a total of 35,000 Africans entering Buenos Aires by 1680; adding in the numbers brought in during the Portuguese, French, and English *asientos* produces a figure of some 75,000 African slaves imported into Argentina and Uruguay over the course of the Atlantic slave trade, for an average of 340 per annum.¹² According to Chace, however, factoring in contraband trading, the total volume of the slave trade to the Río de la Plata ranges from 220,000 to 330,000 or 1,000 to even 2,000 arrivals annually.¹³

Portuguese, French, British, and United States slave traders importing human chattel into the Río de la Plata between the mid-1600s and late 1700s required permission to do so from the Spanish Crown. By 1778, however, the Spanish monarchy recognized the futility of its mercantilist policies in the River Plate and throughout the New World, opening limited free trade and allowing Spanish ships and neutral flags to call at Spanish ports without official interference. The crown also designated Montevideo as a port of entry for African slaves and other commerce in 1779, thereby supplementing the trade through the port of Buenos Aires. Furthermore, in 1785, King Charles III of Spain authorized the establishment of the Royal Philippines Company; two years later, the company received royal permission to directly deposit slaves in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. The Royal Philippines Company used British vessels to transport slaves directly from Portuguese “factories” or slave pens in western and central Africa,

¹² Scheüss de Studer, *La trata*, 99, 101, 126, 232-34; José Torre Revello, *La sociedad colonial. Páginas sobre la sociedad de Buenos Aires entre los siglos XVI y XIX* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Pannedile, 1970), 77-90.

¹³ Chace, “African Impact,” 107-08.

especially Angola and Mozambique. The company promised to import from 5,000 to 6,000 slaves annually at a price of 155 Spanish *pesos* per *pieza*. As a result of the Bourbon economic reforms, the slave trade flourished after 1789. Of the 124 slave vessels docking at the port of Buenos Aires between 1740 and 1806, for instance, 109 did so after 1790. In Montevideo, the trade in slaves also expanded in this period, as slavers from Great Britain, Portugal, the United States, and Spain delivered their human cargos after 1788. Ildefonso Pereda Valdés calculates that between 1751 and 1810, 20,000 slaves arrived legally in the port of Montevideo, while Samuel Gorbán estimates that a total for both Buenos Aires and Montevideo of 25,933 for the period 1742-1806.¹⁴

After arriving in Buenos Aires or Montevideo, Africans who survived the often fatal “Middle Passage” underwent a health inspection by colonial authorities (*visita de sanidad*). They were then transported to the slave market, “El Retiro” in Buenos Aires, and along the Arroyo Miguelete and Arroyo Seco in Montevideo, for weight and height measurements, after which a price was affixed for each *pieza*. Slaves of similar worth were then grouped together and the colonial officials of the *Real Hacienda* (Royal

¹⁴ Marta B. Goldberg, “Los negros de Buenos Aires.” In *Presencia Africana en Sudamérica*. Luz M. Martínez Montiel, ed. (Mexico: Consejo Nacional Para la Cultura y las Artes, 1995); 534-35; Marta B. Goldberg, “Nuestros negros: ¿desaparecidos o ignorados?” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 33, 393 (April 2000): 24-37; Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, *El negro en el Uruguay: pasado y presente* (Montevideo: Revista del Inst. Histórico y Geográfico del Uruguay [vol. XXV], 1965), 31-32; Samuel Gorbán, “El tráfico negrero en el Río de la Plata.” *Estudios Históricos*, no. 10 (1971): 120. For a thorough history of the slave trade to Uruguay, consult Ema Isola, *La esclavitud en el Uruguay desde sus comienzos hasta su abolición* (Montevideo: Comisión Nacional de Homenaje del Sesquicentenario de los Hechos Históricos de 1825, 1975).

Customs House) collected the crown's *alcabala* or sales tax for the entire lot. Finally, slaves were branded with hot iron rods indicating legitimate importation.¹⁵

Slave masters in late-colonial Uruguay paid dearly for their human chattel. For instance, the net worth of just one slave cargo of 130 Africans docked in Montevideo in 1779 was 32,389 *pesos*, an average price of 249 *pesos* per individual slave.¹⁶ Robert Turkovic, furthermore, has estimated the average sales price of African slaves in early-nineteenth-century Córdoba, Argentina. In 1800, male slaves between the ages of 20 and 22, who were favored for most of the trans-Atlantic trade by slave owners in the New World, sold for 286 Spanish *pesos* each, while females in the same age cohort brought in some 267 *pesos*. In 1810, just prior to the de jure abolition of the slave trade in the Río de la Plata, male bondsmen in their early twenties, prime age for slaves, sold at only 256 Spanish *pesos*, that is, 30 *pesos* less than their value a decade earlier. However, with the decline of the slave trade in the River Plate, perhaps because of their reproductive and domestic labor value, healthy female slaves sold at higher prices than did males. Slave women in 1810 sold for 336 Spanish *pesos*, considerably more than they were worth in 1800.¹⁷

¹⁵ Scheüss de Studer, *La trata*, 109, 208, 244, 269, 328; Maud de Ridder de Zemborain, "Cuando en Buenos Aires se remataban negros." *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 33, 393 (April 2000): 8-19. Each slaver also had his own brand. For more on the mechanics of the slave trade in the River Plate, see Juan C. Coria, *Pasado y presente de los negros en Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Editorial J. A. Roca, 1997), 22-24, 26-29.

¹⁶ Monatño, *Umkhonto*, 39.

¹⁷ Robert J. Turkovic, "Race Relations in the Province of Córdoba, Argentina, 1800-1853." Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Florida, 1981, 124. Carlos Newland and María Jesús San Segundo, "Human Capital and Other Determinants of the Price Life Cycle of a Slave: Peru and La Plata in the Eighteenth Century." *Journal of Economic History* 56, 3 (Sept. 1996): 694-701. Often sellers

Regardless of the exact numbers and prices, Africans and their descendants contributed to the demographic, economic, social, and cultural development of the River Plate from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Slaves were vital to the economy of the River Plate, especially in and around Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Andrews asserts that "... if every slave worker in the Buenos Aires of 1800 were suddenly to have vanished, economic activity would have come to a standstill in a matter of hours."¹⁸ In the major colonial urban and rural centers of the Río de la Plata, African slaves constituted the main labor force, and were often hired out by their masters. Slaves performed domestic services and farm tasks. They toiled alongside European immigrants as artisans in the cities and with *mestizo* (mixed-race) peons in the *campaña* (countryside). Black and mulatto (*pardo*) slaves engaged in all sorts of work, ranging from bullfighters to teachers, barbers, and, most notably, street vendors.¹⁹ Using the 1827 Buenos Aires census, George Reid Andrews shows that ninety four percent of Afro-Argentines worked as manual laborers in the city.²⁰ Blacks monopolized unskilled and lowly regarded jobs in the River Plate, including water porters, pest exterminators, and load bearers. Black men and women worked in meat-salting plants (*saladeros*), general

and buyers of Africans would dispute the validity of slave sales in colonial courts, owing to the perceived indolence or perfidiousness of a certain slave.

¹⁸ George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 31.

¹⁹ Diggs, "Negro in the Viceroyalty," 290; José Luis Lanuza, *Morenada. Una historia de la raza africana en el Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Schapire, 1967), 10, 26, 157-59.

²⁰ George Reid Andrews, "Race versus Class Association: The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1850-1900." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 11, 1 (May 1979): 22-23.

stores (*pulperías*), workshops (*fábricas*), and slaughterhouses (*mataderos*).²¹ African women were particularly conspicuous in the cities as laundresses, cleaning their masters' laundry along the banks of the major rivers and streams.²² Africans also labored for the colonial and early national state on public works projects, building roads, bridges, and state buildings. The colonial regime even used male slaves as executioners, an occupation abhorred by even poor whites.²³

In both Buenos Aires and Montevideo many slaves also worked as domestics during the colonial era. Domestic slaves lived with their masters, and numerous *casta* paintings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries depict scenes of slave children and women serving their masters at home or in public places such as church. Black slave women often served their masters as duennas and wet nurses.²⁴ Samuel Haigh, a British traveler and diplomat, records in his memoirs of his voyages to southern South America and the River Plate that in Buenos Aires, after Masses in the mornings, fashionable ladies “may then be seen in groups followed by their black or Mulatto girls.”²⁵ Slave artisans

²¹ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 35-38; Lanuza, *Morenada*, 97-98.

²² Judith L. Sweeney, “Las lavanderas de Buenos Aires en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 27, 314 (Sept. 1993): 46-48. See also Marta B. Goldberg, “Mujer en la diáspora africana. Mujer negra rioplatense (1750-1840).” *Arenal* 3, 1 (1996): 126-30.

²³ Chace, “African Impact,” 178-79, 180.

²⁴ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 30-31; Chace, “African Impact,” 164-65, 166-67; Lanuza, *Morenada*, 19, 27. A curious photograph of what purports to be future Argentine president Julio Argentino Roca's nanny in 1843 appeared in *Caras y Caretas* in 1899. However, the photograph is clearly a forgery from a much later date. “El cumpleaños del presidente. Roca á través de la vida.” *Caras y Caretas* 2, 42 (July 22, 1899): n.p.

²⁵ Samuel Haigh, Esq., *Sketches of Buenos Ayres, Chile, and Peru* (London: Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange, 1831), 15-16.

(especially tailors and shoemakers) were especially important to the economies of the region, often earning enough money to not only enrich their masters, but to also purchase their own freedom or that of loved ones. However, European artisans actively discriminated against black craftsmen, prompting failed attempts by Afro-Argentines to form their own guilds.²⁶ A mulatto artisan, the shoemaker Francisco Baquero, even led an incipient labor revolt in the late 1780s and petitioned the Spanish crown directly for the right to establish his own guild for artisans of color.²⁷ Both Lyman Johnson and Eduardo Saguier consider the slave wage labor associated with both African domestics and artisans as characteristic of the slave regimen in the Río de la Plata, differentiating it from slavery on large plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean.²⁸

²⁶ Miguel A. Rosal, "Artesanos de color en Buenos Aires (1750-1810)." *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana* 17, 27 (1982): 331-54.

²⁷ Lyman L. Johnson has published extensively on black artisans in Buenos Aires. E.g., Lyman L. Johnson, "The Competition of Slave and Free Labor in Artisanal Production in Buenos Aires, 1770-1815." *International Review of Social History* 40, 3 (Dec. 1995): 409-24; idem., "The Racial Limits of Guild Solidarity: An Example from Colonial Buenos Aires." *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 99 (Jan.-June 1985): 7-26; idem., "The Role of Apprenticeship in Colonial Buenos Aires." *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 103 (Jan.-June 1987): 7-30; and idem., "The Impact of Racial Discrimination on Black Artisans in Colonial Buenos Aires." *Social History* 6, 3 (Oct. 1981): 301-16. See also his *The Development of Slave and Free Labor Regimes in Late Colonial Buenos Aires, 1770-1815* (Storrs, CT: Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Univ. of Connecticut, 1997). On Francisco Baquero, consult Lyman L. Johnson, "Francisco Baquero: Shoemaker and Organizer." In *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America*. David G. Sweet and Gray B. Nash, eds. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1981), 86-101; and his recent *Workshop of Revolution: Plebian Buenos Aires and the Atlantic World, 1776-1810* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2011), 122-32, 135-36, 138-41.

²⁸ Eduardo Saguier, "La naturaleza estipendiaria de la esclavitud urbana colonial. El caso de Buenos Aires en el siglo XVIII." *Revista Paraguaya de Sociología* 26, 74 (Jan.-April 1989): 45-46. See also Eugenio Petit Muñoz et al., *La condición jurídica, social, económica y política de los negros durante el colonaje en la Banda Oriental*, 2 vols. (Montevideo : Talleres Gráficos "33," 1933-).

Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans, slave and freed, also labored in the countryside of Buenos Aires and Montevideo and in the interior provinces, on agricultural and cattle estates. Until the late 1970s, the traditional historiography on Argentine rural labor assumed that slaves played only a minimal role as workers in the estates of the River Plate. However, as more recent scholarship on slavery and labor in the countryside and interior of Argentina and Uruguay establishes, African bondsmen were in fact a major source of manpower on agricultural estates and cattle ranches during the colonial and early national periods. For example, Jonathan C. Brown documents that the powerful Anchorena family, cousins of the Buenos Aires strongman Juan Manuel de Rosas, regularly purchased Creole and African slaves to supplement the free labor force on their estates in rural Buenos Aires province.²⁹ Samuel Amaral examines the workforce on the colonial cattle estate of Clemente López Osornio in rural Buenos Aires between 1785 and 1795 and finds that slaves represented a wiser investment over free labor. They also supplemented the labor of gauchos and peons, especially during seasonal troughs.³⁰

²⁹ Jonathan C. Brown, *A Socioeconomic History of Argentina*, 187-88. Also, Jorge D. Gelman, "Sobre esclavos, peones, gauchos y campesinos. El trabajo y los trabajadores en una estancia colonial rioplatense." In *Estructuras sociales y mentalidades en América Latina*. Daniel Santamaría, ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1990): 241-79. For an excellent review of the literature emphasizing the importance of slave labor, see Juan Carlos Garavaglia and Jorge D. Gelman, "Rural History of the Río de la Plata, 1600-1850: Results of a Historiographical Renaissance." *Latin American Research Review* 30, 3 (1995): 75-105, especially pages 86-88, 91-93.

³⁰ Samuel Amaral, "Rural Production and Labour in Late Colonial Buenos Aires." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 19, 2 (Nov. 1987): 235-78, as well as his *Producción y mano de obra rural en Buenos Aires colonial. La estancia de Clemente López Osornio, 1785-1795* (Buenos Aires: Inst. Torcuato Di Tella, 1989). The increase in the prices and trade of cattle hides during the middle of the eighteenth century allowed for the López Osornio estate's prosperity by the end of the same century.

Furthermore, as Carlos Mayo establishes, African slaves were equally vital to the economic viability of religious estates in rural Argentina and Uruguay. As elsewhere in the Americas, Jesuits and other Catholic religious orders were in fact among the largest slave owners in the River Plate during the colonial era.³¹ For instance, by the middle of the 1620s, the Jesuits owned as many as one hundred fifty African slaves in and around the major interior city of Córdoba. By the end of the seventeenth century, the Society of Jesus employed thirteen hundred African bondsmen throughout Argentina in their major agricultural interests, wheat in Buenos Aires, wine in La Rioja and Mendoza, and sugar in Tucumán and Salta. Moreover, about the Bethlehemite estates of rural Buenos Aires, Mayo opines that African slaves “... rivalizaban con la tierra por el segundo y tercer lugar en las inversiones necesarias para explotar una estancia.”³² Slaves even worked as gauchos on cattle ranches, and at least one, Patricio de Belén, became the head foreman on the estate of “Las Vacas” in the Banda Oriental (Uruguay).³³ Another African, Tomás

³¹ On Jesuits and slavery in the New World, see David G. Sweet, “Black Robes and ‘Black Destiny’: Jesuit Views of African Slavery in Seventeenth-century Latin America.” *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 86 (July-Dec. 1978): 87-133. Two important works on Jesuit slave labor in Latin America and the River Plate are Magnus Mörner, *The Political and Economic Activities of the Jesuits in the La Plata Region: The Hapsburg Era*. A. Read, trans. (Stockholm: Library and Inst. of Ibero-American Studies, 1953); and Nicholas P. Cushner, *Lords of the Land: Sugar, Wine, and Jesuit Estates in Coastal Peru, 1600-1767* (Albany, NY: State Univ. of New York Press, 1980).

³² Carlos A. Mayo, *Los Betlemitas en Buenos Aires: convento, economía y sociedad (1748-1822)* (Seville: Excma, 1991), 124. Mayo is arguing that slaves were along with land itself second or third in terms of importance for the effective exploitation of any estate.

³³ Consult Mayo, *Los Betlemitas en Buenos Aires*, and Carlos A. Mayo, “Iglesia y esclavitud en el Río de la Plata: el caso de la orden Betlemita, 1748-1822.” *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 101 (Jan.-June 1986): 91-102. On Patricio de Belén, see Carlos A. Mayo, “Patricio de Belén: nada menos que un capataz.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 77, 4 (Nov. 1997): 597-614. For a contrasting study of the “Las Vacas” estate, see Ricardo Salvatore and Jonathan C. Brown,

Silveira, was also a paid overseer on the Oribe estate in Uruguay, and directed the work of four more hired hands, including three other blacks.³⁴

In spite, or perhaps because, of its economic importance for the region, slavery died a slow death in the River Plate. Many slaves had already been given or had purchased their own freedom and that of relatives throughout the colonial era, a practice guaranteed by Spanish law. Lyman Johnson's study of manumission in Buenos Aires establishes that slaves were agents of their own freedom, with over seventy percent of all manumissions involving either Africans purchasing their liberty or that of another bondman or meeting other demands stipulated by their masters from 1776 to 1810.³⁵ Slaves also exploited early republican laws in their defense and actively resisted their masters through various means, including escape, cattle theft, individual acts of violence, and corporate rebellion. Liberal elites enamored with free trade ideas and capitalism also

"Trade and Proletarianization in the Colonial Banda Oriental: Evidence from the Estancia de las Vacas, 1791-1805." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 67, 3 (Aug. 1987): 439-59.

³⁴ John C. Chasteen, *Heroes on Horseback: A Life and Times of the Last Gaucho Caudillos* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1995), 26. Other African workers, however, including Patricio's own brother, elected to use the mobility afforded them by their horses and absconded to Indian territories. The "Orpheus of the Pampas" was immortalized by José Hernández in his classic *Martín Fierro* and by Hilario Ascasubi in *Santos Vega*. To this day, the devil in the plains of the River Plate is called by the African name "Mandinga," and is represented as a black gaucho. G. Gallardo, "Negros y boleadoras." *Historia* 9, 37 (1964): 93-94; Miquel Izard, "Cimarrones, gauchos y cuartereros." *Boletín Americanista* 34, 44 (1994): 148-150. Ricardo Rodríguez Molas pioneered research into the African contributions to the gaucho and his culture. Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, "El gaucho: origen, desarrollo y marginalidad social." *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 6, 1 (Jan. 1964): 68-89; and his *Historia social del gaucho*, cited earlier, especially pages 101-11 and 136-44.

³⁵ Lyman L. Johnson, "La manumisión en el Buenos Aires colonial: un análisis ampliado." *Desarrollo Económico* 17, 68 (Jan.-March 1978): 639-44. Johnson has also published extensively on slave manumissions in Buenos Aires. E.g., Lyman L. Johnson, "Manumission in Colonial Buenos Aires, 1776-1810." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 59, 2 (May 1979): 258-79.

avored abolition. As early as 1801, the leading Buenos Aires newspaper, the *Telégrafo Mercantil*, attacked slavery and the colonial caste system as socially and politically irrational.

Thus, in 1813, the General Constituent Assembly for the United Provinces ratified the Buenos Aires City Council's August 1812 decree abolishing the slave trade. In that same year, "free womb" legislation was approved liberating the children of all slaves, albeit subject to a long-term apprenticeship or *patronato* under their old slave masters until the age of twenty. Nineteenth-century Argentine jurist Dalmacio Vélez records that "La Asamblea Nacional por ley de 4 de Febrero de 1813, declaró á todos los esclavos que de país estrangeros se introdujesen de cualquier modo, desde dicho dia, por solo el hecho de pisar el territorio de la Provincias Unidas," thereby mandating the freedom of all slaves introduced by whatever means into the United Provinces.³⁶ Subsequent legislation progressively increased the age for manumitted blacks (*libertos*) to be under *patronato* until 25, and some cases of owners retaining the services of free-born blacks illegally were not unheard of.³⁷ However, article XV of the 1853 Constitution nevertheless

³⁶ Dalmacio Vélez, "APENDICE sobre el estado de la esclavitud en esta República, y principalmente en Buenos-Aires." In *Instituciones de derecho real de España, por D. José María Alvarez*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Estado, 1834), 47.

³⁷ "El estado de la esclavitud en esta república, y principalmente en Buenos-Aires. Artículo 1. Esclavos. Artículo 2. Libertos." In *Instituciones de derecho real de España*, vol. 1. Don José María Alvarez, with Dalmacio Vélez. (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Estado, 1834), 47-51. David Bushnell, *Reform and Reaction in the Platine Provinces, 1810-1852* (Gainesville: Univ. Presses of Florida, 1983), 9, 10, 13, 63, 70, 81, 110, 123, 134, 136, 148-49, 153-55. Rosas, himself a large slave owner, briefly re-introduced the slave trade to Buenos Aires in 1831. In 1853, after the final abolition of slavery in the River Plate, the last recorded cargo of one hundred Africans landed illegally in Patagonia. George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 57. In fact, despite the threat of prison, slave owners resisted abolition. Nelson Martínez Díaz, "La resistencia a la abolición en el Río de la Plata." In *Esclavitud y derechos humanos: la lucha por*

proclaimed: "... no hay esclavos [en la Argentina]; los pocos que hoy existen quedan libres desde la jura de esta Constitución.... Todo contrato de compra y venta de personas es un crimen."³⁸ By the time the 1853 Constitution definitively abolished slavery, including the *patronato*, and criminalized any dealing in slaves, it merely made de jure what was already de facto.³⁹ Needless to say, even with the legal abolition of slavery in the River Plate, *afrodescendientes* remained second-class citizens in their then newly founded republics.

Basic Afro-Platine Demographics, Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century

About three centuries of slave trading in the River Plate undeniably affected the population's racial makeup. Population figures for the early colonial period are not readily available. Church records for Buenos Aires, for instance, indicate the baptism of 487 Africans in 1604. The travel logs of Acarette du Biscay, who passed through Buenos Aires twice between 1658 and 1664, put the slave population of the city at 1,500 to 2,000. In Mendoza, Africans accounted for about twenty five percent of the total population of that interior city by 1645.⁴⁰ Population data for the Río de la Plata become more

la libertad del negro en el siglo XIX. Francisco de Solano and Agustín Guimera, eds. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1990), 625-34.

³⁸ Quoted in Ricardo Zorraquín Becu, *Historia de derecho argentino*, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Perrot, 1966), 221. The article in the 1853 Argentine Constitution in effect declares all slaves freed from the ratification of the constitution and makes all sales of Africans a federal crime.

³⁹ Bushnell, *Reform and Reaction*, 14, 69-70, 77-78, 101-04.

⁴⁰ Meiners, "The Negro in the Río de la Plata," IV-10, 15; Rosa Mercedes Zuluaga, "La trata de negros en la región cuyana durante el siglo XVII." *Revista de la Junta de Estudios Históricos de Mendoza* 1, 6 (1970): 57.

abundant after 1700. Thus, the 1728 census of Montevideo undertaken by Governor de Zabala gives a total population of 2,538 inhabitants. Africans numbered ninety four and *pardos* (mulattos) eighty three. Interestingly, none are recorded as being slaves, thus it is likely that the slave population was not included in the count. A 1774 Buenos Aires census recorded 1,150 blacks and 330 mulattos in the countryside. In 1770, moreover, the Peruvian traveler Concolorcorvo estimated the *vecinos* or legal residents of Buenos Aires owned 4,163 slaves, out of a total population of 22,007. Concolorcorvo lists free blacks and *pardos* separately.⁴¹

The establishment of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in 1776 prompted incoming viceroy Vértiz to undertake a census of the entire region's population in 1778. For Buenos Aires, the 1778 census documented a total population of 24,363, of which 7,236 were blacks, representing 29.7 percent of the city and neighboring countryside's inhabitants.⁴² For Montevideo and its environs, the 1778 census indicated that blacks

⁴¹ Meiners, "The Negro in the Río de la Plata," IV-16-17. Also, John J. Johnson, "The Racial Composition of Latin American Port Cities at Independence as Seen by Foreign Travelers." *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 23 (1986): 247-66. However, as with all accounts by foreign travelers, observations on the racial makeup of a local population are open to doubt.

⁴² "Padrones de las ciudades y campañas de Buenos Aires y Montevideo (1778-1810)." In *Documentos para la historia argentina*, vol. 12 ("Territorio y población.") Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Introduction by Emilio Ravignani. (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1919), 23-23-29, 47-52, 79, 81-84. Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 66-67. Also, Lyman L. Johnson, "Estimaciones de la población de Buenos Aires, 1744, 1778 y 1810." *Desarrollo Económico* 19, 73 (April-June 1979): 107-19; and Lyman L. Johnson and Susan M. Socolow, "Población y espacio en el Buenos Aires del siglo XVIII." *Desarrollo Económico* 20, 79 (Oct.-Dec. 1980): 329-49.

accounted for nineteen percent of the residents, with mulattos and other mixed races representing another five percent.⁴³

As is true with population figures, demographic data on Africans and their descendants in the River Plate are more extensive and reliable for the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries. For example, slave infant mortality rate seems to have been very high in the River Plate. Also, male slaves outnumbered females on many estates. Both these demographic patterns, plus endemic disease among slaves, affected the development of black families in Argentina and Uruguay, at least according to some researchers.⁴⁴ Another notable demographic trend in the late 1700s and early 1800s was the gradual “whitening” of the black populations of the Río de la Plata. Widespread miscegenation, although proscribed by Spanish colonial law and discouraged by early national mores, was common in the cities and especially the countryside of Argentina and Uruguay. The work of Emiliano Endrek on Córdoba and Tucumán for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for instance, highlights the importance of *mestizaje* (miscegenation) as a demographic phenomenon among blacks in these large inland

⁴³ Pereda Valdés, *El negro en el Uruguay*, 44.

⁴⁴ Tulio Halperín Donghi, “Una estancia en la campaña de Buenos Aires, Fontezuela, 1753-1809.” In *Haciendas, latifundios y plantaciones en América Latina*. Enrique Florescano, ed. (Mexico: Siglo XIX, 1973), 456; Mayo, *Los Betlemitas en Buenos Aires*, 205; Juan Carlos Garavaglia, “Los labradores de San Isidro (siglos XVIII-XIX).” *Desarrollo Económico* 32, 128 (Jan.-March 1993): 535-37; Ernesto Campagna Caballero, “La población esclava en ciudades puertos del Río de la Plata: Montevideo y Buenos Aires.” In *História e população: estudos da América Latina*. Congreso Sobre História da População da América Latina (São Paulo, Brazil: Fundação SEADE, 1990), 222-24. Other scholars observe different demographic trends in the River Plate among black slaves, however. See, e.g., Dora E. Celton and Horacio Vallespinós, *Fecundidad de las esclavas en la Córdoba colonial* (Belo Horizonte, Brazil: Associação Brasileira de Estudos Populacionais, 1989).

provincial centers.⁴⁵ According to Marta Goldberg, moreover, miscegenation resulted from the skewed sex ratio between black men and women in the River Plate by the late 1820s. Whereas in the Buenos Aires of 1744 there were 115 black males for every 100 black females, by 1827 black females outnumbered black males 2 to 1 in and around the River Plate's most important city.⁴⁶

As Mark D. Szuchman also demonstrates, black men in Buenos Aires bore the brunt of military service in the early 1800s. They were conscripted in numbers exceeding their proportion of the city's population. Males of African ancestry in Buenos Aires fell from fifty four percent of the *gente de color* (people of color, i.e., blacks) in 1810 to under forty six percent by 1855. Szuchman documents that the nineteenth-century Afro-Argentine family suffered as a result of this demographic phenomenon, inherited from the colonial period and the institution of slavery. Unlike whites, black *porteños* (denizens of Buenos Aires city) were far less likely to live in family units by the mid-1800s. Slaves and freedmen alike generally resided as solitaries or as lodgers. Moreover, even when marrying, infant mortality rates for Afro-Argentines still outnumbered those of whites, thereby further curtailing their family lives.⁴⁷ Goldberg

⁴⁵ Emiliano Endrek, *El mestizaje en Córdoba, siglo XVII y principios de siglo XIX* (Córdoba: Univ. Nacional de Córdoba, 1966), especially ch. 1. Furthermore, Guzmán cites miscegenation as a leading cause in reducing the African population of Argentina's northwest provinces, especially Catamarca at the end of the colonial period. Guzmán, "Negros en el noreste," 79-94. See also Lowell Gudmundson, "De 'negro' a 'blanco' en la Hispanoamérica del siglo XIX : la asimilación afroamericana en Argentina y Costa Rica." *Mesoamérica* 7, 12 (Dec. 1986) : 34-49.

⁴⁶ Goldberg, "La población negra y mulata de la ciudad de Buenos Aires," 91. See also Goldberg, "Los negros de Buenos Aires," 550-51; and Julián Cáceres Freyre, "Los africanos y su influencia en la población argentina." *Indiana* 9 (1984): 433-56.

⁴⁷ Mark D. Szuchman, *Order, Family, and Community in Buenos Aires, 1810-1862* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1988), 77, 117, 190-92. For comparative data on the slave family

supports Szuchman's findings, adding that disease and epidemics also reduced the total numbers of Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires and negatively impacted their households. A small pox outbreak in 1829 and a yellow fever epidemic in 1871 further contributed to the demographic decline of the African social group in Buenos Aires at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸

Several general and local censuses were undertaken in the nineteenth century, allowing for an estimation of the black populations of the River Plate before 1850. For example, according to the research of César García Belsunce and his team, the black population of Buenos Aires city in 1810 numbered 8,943 or 27.7 percent of the total. By 1822, however, Afro-Argentines represented less than twenty five percent, even as their total numbers increased to 13,685. By 1877, the combined effects of the early suppression of the slave trade, death and disease, and massive European immigration led to the almost total disappearance (or at least invisibilization) of Afro-Argentines, who by that date represented only 1.8 percent of Buenos Aires city's total inhabitants.⁴⁹

According to other estimates, however, between 1838, the last time race was officially

elsewhere in late-colonial Latin America, see David Lee Chandler, "Family Bonds and the Bondman: The Slave Family in Colonial Colombia." *Latin American Research Review* 16, 2 (1981): 107-31; and Kátia de Queirós Mattoso, "Slave, Free, and Freed Family Structures in Nineteenth-century Salvador, Bahia." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 25, 1 (Summer 1988): 69-84.

⁴⁸ Goldberg, "Los negros de Buenos Aires," 552-53. For more on the vanishing or "disappearance" of Afro-Argentines, see Francisco C. Morrone, "La disolución del grupo afro-argentino." *Desmemoria: Re-vista de Historia* 2, 10 (Feb.-May 1996): 8-22.

⁴⁹ César García Belsunce, ed., *Buenos Aires: su genete, 1800-1830* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1976), 76. Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 66-67; Marta B. Goldberg, "La población negra y mulata de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1810-1840." *Desarrollo Económico* 16, 61 (April-June 1976): 75-99. Susan M. Socolow, "Buenos Aires at the Time of Independence." In *Buenos Aires: 400 Years*. Stanley R. Ross and Thomas F. McGann, eds. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1982), 18-39.

accounted for in a census until 2010, and 1887, the representation of Afro-Argentines in Buenos Aires declined from twenty five percent to just ten percent. This decline was largely the result of net immigration from Europe, especially after 1850. While in the 1850s the annual balance of arriving immigrants from western and central Europe and the provinces over departures was under 5,000, by the 1880s the annual average was 50,000. At its nineteenth-century peak in 1889, the net immigration exceeded 200,000, predominantly Italians, Spaniards, and central Europeans (mostly Jews).⁵⁰

The demographic historian John Hoyt Williams also employs nineteenth-century census data to establish the black population of Montevideo and its surrounding areas between 1800 and 1836. One of his main findings is that unlike Buenos Aires, the black population of Montevideo did not vanish demographically; Montevideo's black population held its own versus other racial groups. Unlike Buenos Aires, fewer European immigrants were not enough to "whiten" the city's population in the 1800s. On the eve of the outbreak of the independence struggle in 1810, blacks in Montevideo actually accounted for 36.7 percent of the population. Even in Montevideo's hinterlands, blacks were a large segment of the population. In Montevideo's rural areas of Las Piedras and Pantanoso, blacks accounted for 23.4 and 35.9 percent, respectively, of the populations in 1826. According to Williams, the legal and contraband slave trades persisted in Uruguay,

⁵⁰ David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonization to Alfonsín*, rev. and expanded ed. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987), 132. Carl Solberg provides a good overview of European immigration to Argentina. Carl Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism: Argentina and Chile, 1890-1914* (Austin: Inst. of Latin American Studies; Univ. of Texas Press, 1970). On Italian immigration to Buenos Aires, see Samuel L. Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1999). On Spaniards in Buenos Aires, consult José C. Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1998).

especially as a result of its proximity with Brazil, Colônia do Sacramento in particular. The Portuguese presence in Montevideo thus accounts for the significant demographic presence of black Uruguayans in the early 1800s. However, by 1836, the slave and free African populations of Montevideo dropped to about twenty two percent of the city's total residents. Thus, by the middle of the 1800s, the Afro-Uruguayan population experienced a decline similar to that of Afro-Argentines.⁵¹ As if demographic decline was not sufficient, the living conditions for Afro-Argentines were most challenging. To be sure, they did not remain passive but organized themselves throughout the nineteenth century to improve their situation as best as they could.

The Black Community in the River Plate, Eighteenth to Twentieth Century

Throughout the late-colonial period, Afro-Platines continued to face discrimination. Despite the efforts of some colonial officials and other social elites to point out the positive qualities and virtues of black men and women in the Viceroyalty of the River Plate and highlight their potential as loyal subjects, soldiers, and productive and skilled laborers, *castas* (people of color) remained marginal. Racial prejudice was rarely challenged.⁵² In spite, or, more likely, because, of this discrimination, the African

⁵¹ John Hoyt Williams, "Observations on Blacks and Bondage in Uruguay, 1800-1836." *The Americas* 43, 4 (April 1987): 411-27.

⁵² An example of progressive attitudes towards blacks and other *castas* in the Río de la Plata at the end of the colonial period is a document entitled "Contra los prejuicios raciales. Alegato en favor de los negros, zambos, mulatos, mestizos, cuarterones, etc. Contiene interesantes referencias a Reales Ordenes y Cédulas destinadas a honrar y enaltecer la condición social de los obreros y artesanos," possibly authored by one Dr. Don S[a]turnino Segurola, for King Charles III of Spain, toward the end of his reign. I found this very detailed and fascinating document reproduced in its entirety in *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional* 4, 13 (First Trimester 1940): 120-131.

community of the Río de la Plata organized from the late 1700s onwards. African community organizations were a means of both resisting and accommodating to the caste system of the late-colonial and the emerging class society of the early-national periods. While segregation in the cities was limited—and practically non-existent in the countryside—blacks nevertheless united to defend their communal rights and interests (as well as to preserve and pass on their ancestral memories and traditions).

Between the end of the eighteenth and start of the twentieth centuries, blacks in Argentina and Uruguay formed three kinds of community organizations. The first was the lay religious brotherhood or *cofradía*, which had its apogee during the colonial period. The second was the ethnic association or nation, which began at the end of the eighteenth century and catered to slaves and free blacks alike. The last was the mutual aid society, which appeared only in the middle of the nineteenth century, as the colonial caste system and the slave-based economy definitively gave way to the capitalist class society and wage labor of the national period.⁵³

⁵³ On the community organizations of Afro-Argentines, see, in addition to the Andrews monographs on blacks in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, Oscar Chamosa, “‘To Honor the Ashes of Their Forebears’: The Rise and Crisis of the African Nations in Post-Independence Buenos Aires, 1820-1860.” *The Americas* 59, 3 (Jan. 2003): 347-78; Carmen Bernard, “Entre pueblo y plebe: patriotas, pardos, africanos en Argentina (1790-1852).” In *Blacks, Coloureds and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. Nancy Priscilla Naro, ed. (London: Inst. of Latin American Studies 2003), 64-70; Lea Geler, “La sociedad ‘de color’ se pone de pie. Resistencia, visibilidad y esfera pública en la comunidad afrodescendiente de Buenos Aires, 1880.” In *Homogeneidad, diferencia y exclusión en América Latina*. Gabriela Dalla Corte and Pilar García Jordán, eds. (Barcelona, Publicacions de la Univ. de Barcelona, 2006), 141-53. Karl Graeber argues that there was indeed segregation in Buenos Aires during the nineteenth century. Karl F. Graeber, “Buenos Aires: A Social and Economic History of a Traditional Spanish American City on the Verge of Change, 1810-1855.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of California, Los Angeles, 1977, 164-68. However, Miguel A. Rosal contends that there was no significant segregation between white and blacks in the city during the late-colonial or early-national periods. Miguel A. Rosal, “Algunas consideraciones sobre las creencias religiosas de los africanos porteños (1750-1820).” *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, no. 31 (July-Dec. 1981): 374-76. For a discussion of the transition from caste to class society in the River Plate, see Carlos M. Rama, “The Passing of Afro-

The *cofradías* centered on churches and convents and, though they also were a means of social control by colonial authorities, they served the evangelization of slaves by the clergy, thus primarily benefitting the church. These lay brotherhoods contributed to the welfare of their own parish church, collected alms, paid for Masses, maintained buildings and altars, while also performing sundry duties for local priests. While women could participate, they were subordinate to men in the lay brotherhoods. The first African *cofradía* in the city of Buenos Aires appeared in 1772 in the church of La Piedad and had as its patron saint the black magi Balthazar. Three other black brotherhoods formed by the 1780s. In addition, by 1787, the archbishop of Montevideo authorized the creation of a *cofradía* for Balthazar in the church of Matriz. The convents of San Francisco and San Domingo each had its own brotherhoods in the late 1700s. Membership was open to slave and freed alike. Appropriate to a caste society, however, black and white brotherhoods were separate throughout the colonial period.

Cofradías required regular dues from members for Masses and evangelization. Members were also required to attend all major church events, especially during holidays, and were commanded to live lives of piety and devotion. Benefits for members included catechesis, funerals, and sense of communal belonging. *Cofradías* in Argentina and Uruguay were administered by priests.⁵⁴ While they survived well into the nineteenth

Uruguayans from Caste to Class Society.” In *Race and Class in Latin America*. Magnus Mörner, ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1970), 28-50.

⁵⁴ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 139-42; Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, “Esclavitud africana, religión y origen étnico.” *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv* 7, 4 (1981): 141-44. The *cofradía* of San Benito de Palermo (sixteenth-century Ethiopian martyr) in Montevideo endured until 1892. Gustavo Goldman, *¡Salve Baltasar! La fiesta de reyes en el Barrio Sur de Montevideo* (Montevideo: Impresora Federal Nuevosur, 1997), 25-26. On these lay religious brotherhoods elsewhere in Latin America, consult Frederick Bowser, “The African Slave in

century, these brotherhoods gave way to more independent black social organizations, namely, African ethnic associations or nations.

African ethnic nations (*cabildos de nación* in Cuba) consisted of associations of slaves according to their putative provenance in Africa.⁵⁵ These organizations were autonomous but highly controlled and supervised by both the late colonial- and early-national states, which often banned their dances (*tambos* or *candombes*) and required police inspections of their headquarters and activities.⁵⁶ Often, these nations and the lay brotherhoods were in conflict, however, evidencing tensions within the African community as a whole. For example, in 1785 the brotherhood of San Balthazar petitioned the viceroy to ban alms collecting by the African nations at their dances.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, by the end of the colonial period, African nations were the dominant feature of black community organization in the Río de la Plata. The most prominent nations included the Congo, Angola, Lubolo, Cambunda, and Benguela. By the end of 1827,

Colonial Latin America: Reflections on Research Achievements and Priorities.” *Latin American Research Review* 17, 1 (spring 1972): 77-94, especially page 82; A. J. R. Russell-Wood, “Black and Mulatto Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 54, 4 (Nov. 1974): 567-602; and Meiko Nishida, “From Ethnicity to Race and Gender: Transformations of Black Lay Sodalities in Salvador, Brazil.” *Journal of Social History* 32, 2 (Winter 1998): 329-48.

⁵⁵ Jorge E. Gallardo, *Etnias africanas en el Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos, 1989).

⁵⁶ “Reglamento que debe observarse en La Sociedad de Morenos de Nación Conga establecida en el Cuartel Número 15 para la administración de las limosnas que colectan en los bailes de tambo que hacen los domingos y días festivos.” This document is dated November 30, 1821, and is signed Joaquín de Achaval. Reproduced in the appendix of Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, “Presencia de Africa negra en la Argentina (etnias, religión y esclavitud).” *Desmemoria: Re-vista de Historia* 6, 21-22 (Jan.-June 1999), 61-62.

⁵⁷ Chamosa attributes these conflicts to state interventions in African communal affairs. Chamosa, ““To Honor the Ashes of Their Forebears,” 348. This, however, overlooks the fact that Africans acted on their own volition in many cases and for their own financial and cultic interests.

thirteen ethnic associations existed in Buenos Aires, a number that, despite the lowering proportion of blacks in the city's overall population, grew to about fifty by the 1840s and boasted memberships ranging from fifty to two hundred each.⁵⁸ Black leaders possessed full authority over their association's finances, which were primarily intended for freeing the family members remaining in bondage. Other activities and services included founding schools and lending monies to members. The main social activity of these nations was cultural, especially preserving their traditions through music and dancing. However, these musical celebrations and dances, held on Sundays and most major holidays, often were a source of tension among the different ethnic sodalities and generated rivalries between them. There is also evidence of gender tensions within the associations. Women often asserted their right to leadership in the African nations, even going as far as to demand their rights in municipal courts. These ethnic organizations declined over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, resulting from their association with the fallen dictator Rosas, aging membership, and lack of interest on the part of younger Afro-Argentines.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 138-39; Goldberg, "Los negros de Buenos Aires," 580-81; Chamosa, "'To Honor the Ashes of Their Forebears,'" 353. For Montevideo's African nations consult Goldman, *¡Salve Baltasar!*, 19-21, 23-26.

⁵⁹ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 143-51; Rama, *Los afro-argentinos*, 76-77; Mónica Cejas Minuet and Mirta Pieroni, "Mujeres en las naciones afroargentinas de Buenos Aires." *América Negra*, no. 8 (Dec. 1994): 139-44. Chamosa, contra Andrews, holds that these ethnic nations were nevertheless effective agents of resistance against the state and preserved African traditions and culture. See Chamosa, "'To Honor the Ashes of Their Forebears,'" cited above. On the close ties between Afro-Argentine nations and Rosas, see Ricardo D. Salvatore, "Integral Outsiders: Afro-Argentines in the Era of Juan Manuel de Rosas and Beyond." In *Beyond Slavery: The Multilayered Legacy of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Darién J. Davis, ed. (Lanham, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), ch. 3. As will be shown in the next chapter, however, for most of Argentina's intellectual nation builders of the first half of the nineteenth century, Afro-Argentines were viewed as integral insiders of the Rosas regime.

With the gradual dissolution of the ethnic nations by the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries, a new form of black community organization emerged. These societies assumed many of the same functions as the nations, including lending money, buying the freedom of members and their kin, caring for the sick and elderly, and paying for funerals. The first such group incorporated in Buenos Aires was the “Sociedad de la Unión y de Socorros Mutuos,” founded in 1855. The mutual aid societies exploited the liberalism of the 1853 Constitution providing for individual and collective freedoms and rights to their advantage. Other societies formed in the mid- to late-1800s included “La Fraternal,” founded by military officer cum poet Casildo Thompson, and “La Protectora,” established by black port workers. These societies, like their predecessors, were often riven by internal conflicts and ideological, social, and political feuds between them. Members enjoyed all the benefits and privileges associated with previous community organizations and paid fees. In 1881, “La Protectora” opened a library and two years later purchased a mausoleum in La Recoleta cemetery (where most of Argentina’s famous and infamous are laid to rest, including Rosas and Evita Perón) for its members. However, by the twentieth century, these black mutual aid societies were assimilated and lost their ethnic identification. The mutual aid societies “de-Africanized” themselves and discarded the African dances and cultural traditions. They were assimilationist and identified with the growing Creole nationalism of the last decade of the 1800s and first few of the 1900s.⁶⁰ Thus, Carmen Bernand maintains that these black

⁶⁰ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 152-55. On Casildo Thompson, Marcos de Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano. 34 biografías* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1979), 133-34.

mutual aid societies were unsuccessful as agents of blackness in Argentina given their total integration into the dominant society.⁶¹

At the core of both white and black communities in the Río de la Plata were the household and neighborhood, both of which were deeply impacted by endogamy. While exclusively colored households in the early 1800s accounted for only about five percent of Buenos Aires's total, endogamy was almost universal in this and other cities of Argentina and Uruguay in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Marriage records show that mulattos married other mulattos and blacks married blacks. To be sure, slaves tended not to marry, produced few offspring, and lived in their masters' households.⁶² In any case, illegitimate births among slaves in Buenos Aires and Montevideo remained high throughout the colonial period. Ema Isola records the number of illegitimate births among blacks in Montevideo growing between 1810 and 1839, from 112 to 126 per annum. Using wills of black Argentines in Buenos Aires, Miguel A. Rosal reveals that Afro-Argentine couples had on average only 1.4 children from 1750 to 1810. Mark Szuchman, however, documents an increase in birth rates among Afro-Argentines between 1810 and 1855, although he suggests that illegitimacy and child abandonment

⁶¹ Carmen Bernand, "Esclaves et affranchise d'origine africaine." *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 105 (1998): 334-36. Francisco Merino, a close friend of the Afro-Uruguayan community of Montevideo renders a similar observation about the assimilation of the black community in that city. Francisco Merino, *El negro en la sociedad montevideana* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1982), 13.

⁶² Campagan Caballero, "Población esclava en ciudades puertos," 222-23; Graeber, "Buenos Aires," 185.

rates for Afro-Argentines in Buenos Aires remained high well into the nineteenth century.⁶³

Blacks lived throughout Buenos Aires city but clustered in traditional neighborhoods known as *barrios del tambor* (drum) or *barrios del mondongo* (tripe), and these included the parishes of Monserrat, Concepción, and San Telmo.⁶⁴ Vicente G. Quesada in his memoirs remembers that the “neighborhood where the African population predominated was known as the *Barrio del Tambor*, because that was their preferred instrument for their monotonous and totally African *candombe* dances.”⁶⁵ In Buenos Aires province, blacks resided in Liniers, Morón, and Chascomús. In Montevideo, the traditional black tenements or *conventillos* include those of Palermo, Reus, and Sur. Here, blacks (and whites) still perform on weekends and holidays

⁶³ Miguel A. Rosal, “Diversos aspectos relacionados con la esclavitud en el Río de la Plata a través del estudio de testamentos de afroporteños, 1750-1810.” *Revista de Indias*, no. 56 (Jan.-April 1996): 230-35. Rosal has updated his extensive research into nineteenth-century blacks in Buenos Aires in *Africanos y afrodescendientes en el Río de la Plata. Siglos XVIII y XIX* cited above. Szuchman, *Order, Family, and Community*, 81, 84-85, 117, 204-05. See also Mark D. Szuchman, “Household Structure and Political Crisis: Buenos Aires, 1810-1860.” *Latin American Research Review* 21, 3 (1986):55-93. Szuchman persuasively argues that black support for Rosas reflected the improved chances for survival of black men and the corresponding benefits for their families resulting from the dictator’s law and order regime, which afforded lower-class and black males a reprieve from war and attendant battlefield deaths.

⁶⁴ San Telmo has become something of a black heritage site in Buenos Aires. Especially on weekends, the neighborhood’s plaza often puts on performances of tango and *candombe* with dancers painted black. An interesting example of historical memory is in the name of the local soccer team, founded in 1904, that plays in Argentina’s lower divisions, known popularly as *El candombero*, a clear memorial of the neighborhood’s African heritage.

⁶⁵ Vicente G. Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*. Isidoro J. Ruiz Moreno, prelim. study by and ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciudad Argentina, 1998), 87. In the original: “El barrio donde dominaba la población africana se llamaba el *Barrio del Tambor*, porque era el instrumento favorito de sus *candombes*, música monótona y bailes enteramente africanos.”

ancestral drumming known as *llamadas*.⁶⁶ Black homes in these and other boroughs were generally built of mud bricks with thatched roofs on individual lots. The exterior and interior walls were whitewashed and the floors made with bricks. Many Afro-Argentines inherited their homes from their parents or even their masters. According to Miguel A. Rosal, moreover, blacks and whites bought and sold homes from each other during the late-colonial and early-national periods. In Montevideo, however, blacks were more likely to live in tenement housing or *conventillos* than in individual homes. This accommodation corresponds to the demand for cheap and collective housing in a city experiencing much expansion as a result of immigration, especially after 1850.⁶⁷

While a majority of blacks were poor, property-owning *afrodescendientes* in the River Plate formed the basis of a small but prosperous “black bourgeoisie” (to use E.

⁶⁶ The classic social history of Buenos Aires and its neighborhoods is James R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb, 1870-1910* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974). Scobie opines, however, that by the late 1800s visitors to the city would not see very many blacks. Scobie, *Buenos Aires*, 35. Juan J. Maroni, *El alto de San Pedro: parroquias de la Concepción y San Telmo* (Buenos Aires: Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1971). Carlos Altezor, “Esclavitud urbana y tipologías habitacionales en Montevideo.” *Estudios Ibero-Americanos* 16, nos. 1-2 (July-Dec. 1990): 17. Roberto Pacheco, “Uruguay: Afro-Uruguayans.” In *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora*, vol. 3. Carole Boyce-Davies, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2008), 935.

⁶⁷ As early as 1771, Montañó documents the presence of free black property owners in Montevideo. Montañó, *Umkhonto*, 139. Lyman Johnson records two free black master shoemakers owning their own homes in 1780. Lyman L. Johnson, “The Artisans of Buenos Aires during the Viceroyalty, 1776-1810.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Connecticut, 1974, 41. León Benarós, “Negros en Buenos Aires.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 4, 40 (July 1987): 24-25. Rosal, *Africanos y afrodescendientes*, 71-92. Also Miguel A. Rosal, “Afroporteños propietarios de terrenos y casas.” In *IV Jornadas de Historia de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires*. (Buenos Aires: Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1988), 370-371. Altezor, “Esclavitud urbana,” 23-27. In the 1970s, Uruguay’s military dictatorship closed some of the city’s *conventillos*, a move resisted by the city’s black residents. Lauren A. Benton, “Reshaping the Urban Core: The Politics of Housing in Authoritarian Uruguay.” *Latin American Research Review* 21, 2 (1986): 33-52.

Franklin Frazier's expression), with more than a few also owning their own human chattel. Marta Goldberg and Laura Jany, for instance, record the existence of at least one black owner of a rural general store or *pulpería* in Buenos Aires province. Women like Carmen Gómez, who owned a dance hall or *academia de bailes* (often doubling as brothels), where the tango was born, also figure among a small but significant cohort of black socio-economic elites in Argentina and Uruguay during the late 1700s and first half of the 1800s.⁶⁸ This Afro-Platine middle class included professionals, artisans, and laborers. As early as 1830, the black lawyer Jacinto Ventura de Molina represented the African nations of Montevideo in court and authored thought-provoking works. Furthermore, in 1882 Tomás B. Platero became the first black notary public in Argentina.⁶⁹ Creole writer Juan José Soiza Reilly, himself familiar with the black *porteño* elite of the day, in 1905 wrote a self-congratulatory piece for the popular Buenos Aires weekly *Caras y Caretas* praising and nostalgically remembering the professional and entrepreneurial achievements of the black race.⁷⁰ The black middle class on both

⁶⁸ Marta B. Goldberg and Laura B. Jany, "Algunos problemas referentes a la situación del esclavo en el Río de la Plata." *IV Congreso Internacional de Historia de América*, vol. 6. (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1966), 64. Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, "El negro en la sociedad porteña después de Caseros." *Comentario* 6, 22 (1959): 50. On the "black bourgeoisie" in the United States, see E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*, 2nd ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1962).

⁶⁹ This event was even recorded in the leading Buenos Aires daily *La Nación*. *La Nación*, October 27, 1882, 1. Tomás Platero may very well be pictured in a small article in *Caras y Caretas* on the first women notaries employed by the Civil Registry. "Burocracia femenil." *Caras y Caretas* 3, 99 (Aug. 25, 1900) : n.p.

⁷⁰ Juan José Soiza Reilly, "Gente de color." *Caras y Caretas* 8, 373 (Nov. 25, 1905): n.p.

sides of the River Plate founded black-owned and operated newspapers and were active politically in the late 1800s and early 1900s.⁷¹

The black community's political involvements in Argentina and Uruguay date back to the time of independence and their public demonstrations of patriotism. The zenith of black Argentine political power and participation happened during the regime of Juan Manuel de Rosas, in office as governor of Buenos Aires province from 1829 to 1832 and again from 1835 to 1852. According to Rosas's political enemies, as will be shown in the next chapter, Afro-Argentines served as henchmen and spies for the dictator.⁷²

However, the fall of Rosas in 1852 and the rise to power of his liberal foes marked the nadir of black Argentine involvement in politics. Blacks could serve as orderlies in congress but could not generally aspire to office of their own.⁷³ Afro-Argentines did exercise their voting rights as citizens and supported both liberal Bartolomé Mitre and conservative Nicolás Avellaneda of the *Partido Autonomista Nacional* (PAN). The Afro-Argentine newspapers *La Igualdad* and *El Artesano* were

⁷¹ Andrews, *the Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 191. Lanuza, *Morenada*, 100-01. On Jacinto Ventura de Molina, consult William G. Acree, Jr. and Alex Borucki, eds., *Jacinto Ventura de Molina y los caminos de la escritura negra en el Rio de la Plata*. George Reid Andrews, intro. (Montevideo: Linardi y Risso, 2008). On Tomás B. Platero, read Tomás Platero, *Un escribano de color: Tomás B. Platero (1857-1925)* (La Plata, Argentina: Inst. de Historia del Notario, 1980).

⁷² On Rosas, consult John Lynch, *Argentine Dictator: Juan Manuel de Rosas, 1829-1852* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), revised and updated as *Argentine Caudillo: Juan Manuel de Rosas* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Books, 2001).

⁷³ A notable exception was Colonel José María Morales, who, after a long and distinguished military career, served as a provincial legislator for Buenos Aires in the late 1870s. De Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 144. Lea Geler, "'Aquí... se habla de política.' La participación de los afroporteños en las elecciones presidenciales de 1874." *Revista de Indias* 67, 240 (2007): 459-84, for more on Afro-Argentine political involvement in the late nineteenth century.

both heavily subsidized by and therefore supported the political interests of the PAN. Afro-Argentine participation in local, provincial, and national politics garnered the community the right of political patronage, a must for constituencies throughout Latin American in the post-colonial period. For example, the distinguished black public servant Tomás B. Platero used his training and wealth to become an important player in Argentina's oldest surviving political party, the *Unión Cívica* (founded after the Revolution of 1890), rubbing shoulders with the likes of Héctor Florencia Varela and future president of Argentina Hipólito Yrigoyen.⁷⁴ In the early twentieth century, the black minority of the country supported first the breakaway *Unión Cívica Radical* and subsequently the regime of Juan Domingo Perón (1946-52). (Most Afro-Argentines regard themselves "Peronists" to this day.) However, with their numbers greatly diminished during the course of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, the political clout of Afro-Argentines also waned.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ The Afro-Argentine press was very politically conscious and engaged throughout the late nineteenth century. They not only promoted certain politicians and their parties, but also championed the rights and interests of the black community as a whole. Thus, on March 21, 1880, an anonymous editorial appeared in the pages of "La Broma" lambasting the political opportunism of white candidates in their dealings with the Afro-Argentine community. The author begins the piece by pointing out the discrepancy between the Argentine Constitution, which holds that there are no legal differences between the races, and the reality of black Argentines who are routinely discriminated against. The editorialist goes on to point out the forgetting of black contributions to national sovereignty, writing: "Siempre hemos sido y somos despreciados por aquellos que hemos ayudado a subir al poder." The anonymous editorialist is lamenting that Afro-Argentines are regularly overlooked by those they help attain political power. "Los candidatos y los negros." "La Broma," March 21, 1880, 1-2. In *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer. Los afroporteños a través de sus periódicos entre 1873 y 1882*. Norberto Pablo Cirio, comp. (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Nacional; Editorial Teseo, 2009), 191-92.

⁷⁵ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 185; Tomás Platero, "Un escribano de color: Tomás B. Platero (1857-1925)." *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 13, 162 (Nov. 1980): 63-64; Margarita Sánchez and Michael Franklin, *Communities of African Ancestry: In Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela* (Washington: Inter-American Development Bank, 1996), 119-20. In 1961, however, a black

In neighboring Uruguay, blacks have been even more politically active in the last century than in Argentina, owing in large part to their greater numbers and therefore political presence and social visibility.⁷⁶ As in the case of Argentina, black political participation dates back to the early 1800s and the drive for independence from Spain and then Brazil. However, it was not until the early 1900s that black Uruguayans exerted their greatest political power. Afro-Uruguayan intellectuals and professionals desired to highlight black culture in the River Plate and the important role of blacks in Uruguay's economic, social, and political development from colony to republic. African Uruguayan thinkers and writers began their mobilization by first founding in 1917 the journal *Nuestra Raza* to promote black letters and social causes. The journal momentarily stopped circulating, but was later re-founded in 1933, enduring until the middle of the last century. The success of *Nuestra Raza* convinced black intellectuals that political organization was feasible. In 1937, leading black Uruguayans Ventura Barrios, Elemo

man, one Mr. Pereira, was elected to a Buenos Aires municipal post representing the Mataderos district. Moreover, a few Afro-Argentines, such as Carlos Boot in the 1970s, managed to become mid-level government bureaucrats, while blacks continued in their traditional roles as orderlies and assistants in the federal congress. Era Bell Thompson, "Argentina: Land of Vanishing Blacks." *Ebony* 28, 12 (Oct. 1973): 80. Both the federal legislature and municipal government of Buenos Aires passed progressive legislation in the 1980s attempting to ensure the rights of the Afro-Argentine minority. Coria, *Pasado y presente*, 117, 120. Afro-centric organizations have nevertheless appeared in the 1970s until the present to address the continued social, political, and economic injustices experienced by the black community in Buenos Aires and across the country, notably María Magdalena "Pocha" Lamadrid's "Africa Vive" and the "Comité Argentino contra el Apartheid." "Buenos Aires de ébano." *Revista Clarín*, Dec. 5, 1971, 36; Osvaldo Baigorria, "El apartheid porteño." *El Nuevo Periodista*, July 15, 1988, 43-46; Sandra Commisso, "Raíces. Historias de afroargentinos." *Revista Clarín*, Sept. 5, 1999, 62-69.

⁷⁶ According to Margarita Sánchez and Michael Franklin, Uruguay's black population as of the late 1990s was about 190,000. Sánchez and Franklin, *Communities of African Ancestry*, 189. George Reid Andrews estimates that in 1996 black Uruguayans accounted for only 0.9 percent of the country's population of 2,790,600 people. Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation*, Table 1.1.

Cabral, and Salvador Betervide established the first (and last) black political party in Uruguay, the *Partido Autóctono Negro* (PAN). Unfortunately, PAN never developed a coherent political program; rather, their platform revolved around three generic issues: 1) social and labor discrimination; 2) racial and class solidarity, and 3) electoral awareness and representation. Sadly for PAN's leadership, it misjudged black Uruguayan political involvement. Blacks simply did not vote for the party. In the 1938 elections, for instance, PAN received only .06 percent of the vote in Montevideo and .02 percent nationwide. Afro-Uruguayans instead voted for the two traditional political parties, the liberal "Partido Colorado" and the conservative "Partido Nacional (Blanco)."⁷⁷

By 1944, PAN had disbanded. However, black Uruguayans remained politically conscious. In the 1970s, blacks and poor whites united to protest the military junta's destruction of several tenements in downtown Montevideo and the forced relocation of their tenants. As both Lauren Benton and Abril Trigo demonstrate, Afro-Uruguayans and their white allies have rallied around the ancestral *candombe* music as a means of resistance and to mobilize the community.⁷⁸ In 1993, the *New York Times* even ran an article with the headline "Uruguay is on Notice: Blacks Ask for Recognition."⁷⁹ Black Uruguayan women, furthermore, are also pressing for recognition of their social, legal,

⁷⁷ Pacheco, "Uruguay: Afro-Uruguay," 935. On the PAN, consult Alvaro Gascue, *Partido Autóctono Negro: un intento de organización política de la raza negra en el Uruguay* (Montevideo: A. Gascue, 1980). Also, Pereda Valdés, *El negro en el Uruguay*, 195-96.

⁷⁸ Benton, "Reshaping the Urban Core," 38-39; Abril Trigo, "Candombe and the Reterritorialization of Culture." *Callaloo* 16, 3 (Summer 1993): 716-28.

⁷⁹ Nathaniel Nash, "Uruguay is on Notice: Blacks Ask for Recognition," *New York Times*, May 7, 1993, 4.

and political rights as feminism assumes a greater influence generally in Uruguay. Social groups including the “Centro Cultural por la Paz e Integración,” “Centro Uruguayo de Melo,” and, especially, “Mundo Afro,” all champion the interest of the Afro-Uruguayan community. In December 1994, for instance, members from “Mundo Afro” hosted delegations from across the Americas at the First Seminar on Racism and Xenophobia held in Montevideo. Afro-Uruguayans, who by the late 1990s were about 190,000, are increasingly establishing NGOs as vehicles to promote their causes locally and globally.⁸⁰ Apart from political action and organization, black communities have tended to express themselves culturally and artistically.

Black Cultural Contributions in the River Plate, Eighteenth to Twentieth Century

No history, however abbreviated, of blacks in the Río de la Plata can overlook their numerous contributions to the culture and art of the region. African Argentines and Uruguayans have lent their creative genius to the music and dance of the River Plate, from the traditional *candombe* to the *milonga* and even the tango. Black Argentine and Uruguayan writers captured the experiences and sentiments of their communities in prose and poetry. Even the speech ways of *rioplatenses* are infused with African vocabulary. While not as pronounced as their roles in music and literature, blacks in the River Plate figured as subjects for visual artists and were themselves painters of some renown.

⁸⁰ Sánchez and Franklin, *Communities of African Ancestry*, 189, 196-96. For a compilation of Afro-Uruguayan voices commenting on their community’s past (including historical remembrances as oral traditions) and present socioeconomic and socio-political plights, see Teresa Porzekanski and Beatriz Santos, comps., *Historias de vidas: negros en el Uruguay* (Montevideo: EPPAL, 1994).

Moreover, Africans and their descendants in the Río de la Plata also contributed to popular religion and folklore. All of these cultural expressions have considerable significance as bearers of African remembrance and historical memory.

The scholarly debate over African religious and other cultural survivals in the New World has generated considerable sound and fury since the first encounters between Melville Herskovits and E. Franklin Frazier on the subject in the 1940s. Subsequently, academic luminaries such as Roger Bastide, Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Sidney Mintz, Richard Price, Robert Farris Thompson, John Thornton, and Paul Lovejoy, among others, have all sided with either Herskovits or Frazier in one way or another. If there is any kind of scholarly consensus on the issue of African cultural retentions in the Americas, it is that Africans and their descendants largely “invented” or “reinvented” their cultures, borrowing from both African and New-World sources.⁸¹

Regardless, Africans and their descendants greatly impacted the cultures of the Americas and the River Plate. For example, music and dance constitute cultural domains where blacks excel throughout the Americas. Numerous scholars attest to the importance of African rhythms in Latin-American music and dance.⁸² In Argentina and Uruguay,

⁸¹ Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990 [1941]). Joseph E. Holloway summarizes the Herskovits-Frazier debate. Joseph E. Holloway, “Introduction.” In *Africanisms in American Culture*. Joseph E. Holloway, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1990), ix-x. A notable critique of Herskovits is Sydney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976). A current proponent of New-World Africanisms is John K. Thornton. See his *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998).

⁸² In addition to the work of Robin Moore on Afro-Cuban music already discussed in ch. 2, John C. Chasteen has also documented the importance of Africa in the musical heritage of Latin America, including the Río de la Plata. John C. Chasteen, *National Rhythms, African Roots: The*

too, African slaves and their free descendants bestowed a rich musical legacy to those countries. Marta Goldberg, writing of the richness of African dance and music in the River Plate, intimates: “Podemos considerar pues, que el ámbito de la música y la danza constituye la manifestación artística afroargentina más propia y genuina.”⁸³ From the earliest arrivals, Africans used music and dance, as well as religion, to preserve and pass on ancestral cultures and memories and to resist the hegemonic traditions of their Spanish (and other) masters.

The most African of rhythms in the Río de la Plata throughout the colonial era until well into the twentieth century (and beyond) was the *candombe*. Estanislao Villanueva concludes that the *candombe* was born in Africa but matured in Argentina and Uruguay.⁸⁴ These dances took place inside homes (*salas*) and in public on most Sundays and major religious feast days, especially Corpus Christi and the Feast of the Epiphany or festival of San Balthazar on January 6.⁸⁵ The dances were sponsored by different, often rival, African organizations in Buenos Aires and Montevideo in their traditional neighborhoods or tenement housing. Social elites on both sides of the Río de la Plata were suspicious of the dances, owing to their fears of slave insurrections or immorality,

Deep History of Latin American Popular Dance, 1st ed. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2004).

⁸³ Goldberg, “Los negros de Buenos Aires,” 583. Goldberg suggests that music and dance are the most genuinely African artistic expressions among Afro-Argentines.

⁸⁴ Estanislao Villanueva, “El candombe nació en Africa y se hizo rioplatense.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 13, 62 (Nov. 1980): 44.

⁸⁵ By far the best study of the subject is Goldman’s *¡Salve Baltasar!*

and forced the African nations to seek permission from local authorities to hold their festivals.

Both Paulo de Carvalho Neto and Rubén Carámbula describe the *candombe*, at least as performed in contemporary Montevideo, as a dramatic or pantomimic dance, featuring various folkloric characters, such as the African “king” and “queen,” and a “witchdoctor” known as the *gramillero*. Pedro Figari’s impressionistic paintings nostalgically capture scenes of black dancers in the Montevideo of the late 1800s. In addition to the dancers, there were drummers or *comparsas*. As shown in Figari’s drawings and paintings, couples danced side by side, supervised by the king and queen of the dance, and the other characters performed their trademark moves. In the end, the king would raise his scepter and call an end to the drumming and dancing.⁸⁶ Traditional instruments used in the *candombe* and other black dances were, among others, *palillos* (sticks) and the *marimba* or African xylophone. Afro-Platine drums (*tamboriles*), so essential to communal dances until this day, include the *chico*, that guides the beat, the slightly larger *repique*, responsible for improvisation, and the large *bajo* or bass. These

⁸⁶ Paulo de Carvalho Neto, “The Candombe, a Dramatic Dance of Afro-Uruguayan Folklore.” *Ethnomusicology* 6, 3 (Sept. 1962): 164-74; Rubén Carámbula has written extensively on this Afro-Platine musical expression. Rubén Carámbula, *El candombe: danza ritual pantomímica del folklore afro-rioplatense* (Bueno Aires: Ricordi Americana, 1966); and his *El candombe* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol, 1995). See also, Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, *La música y la danza de los negros en el Buenos Aires de los siglos XVIII y XIX* (Buenos Aires: Clio, 1957). The classic early-twentieth-century study of black contributions to the music and culture of the River Plate is Vicente Rossi, *Cosas de negros*. Horacio Jorge Becco, preliminary study. (Buenos Aires: Aguilar, Altea, Taurus, Alfaguara, S. A., 2001 [1926]). Pedro Figari was a white Uruguayan illustrator and painter of the late 1800s and early 1900s who favored black themes and personages in his works. For a collection of his Afro-themed paintings, consult Pedro Figari, *Recuerdos íntimos del Río de la Plata; Intimate Recollections of the Río de la Plata* (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1986). Chapter eight will further explore Figari’s artistic memories of and memorials to Afro-Uruguayans.

drums according to some ethnomusicologists were inherited by Afro-Uruguayans from their Congo-Angolan forefathers.⁸⁷ One prominent Uruguayan ethnomusicologist regards these drums as the bearers of not only African-inspired beats but also collective memories of the mother continent.⁸⁸

Common knowledge holds that the *candombe* gradually disappeared in the Río de la Plata.⁸⁹ In reality, however, the *candombe* never disappeared; instead, it evolved into the *comparsas* of Carnival, the *llamadas* of the *conventillos* (tenements), and the tango. Ironically, this transculturation guaranteed the survival of black music in the River Plate. Carnival in both colonial and nineteenth-century Buenos Aires and Montevideo, for instance, was so associated with black drum troops and musicians that their declining numbers prompted the creation of “comparsas de negros Lubolos” or whites in black face. This mimicry at once represented fear and attraction of the African “Other” among white elites, and was challenged by surviving black Carnival associations in the latter 1800s.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Luis Ferreira, *Los tambores del candombe* (Montevideo: Colihue-Sepé, 1997).

⁸⁸ Tomás Olivera Chirmini, *Memorias del tamboril* (Montevideo: Editorial Latina, 1996).

⁸⁹ However, as Frigerio reminds, the dance survived and its death was greatly exaggerated, a “chronicle of a death foretold,” borrowing from the title of a Gabriel García Márquez story. El *candombe* argentino: crónica de una muerte anunciada.” *Revista de Investigaciones Folklóricas*, no. 8 (Dec. 1993): 51-52. My friend Alejandro is also adamant that the traditional Afro-Argentine dance is different than its present incarnation in Uruguay.

⁹⁰ John C. Chasteen, “Black Kings, Blackface Carnival, and Nineteenth-Century Origins of the Tango.” In *Latin American Popular Culture: An Introduction*. William H. Beezely and Linda A. Curcio-Nagy, eds. (Willington: DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000), 50-53. See also Paulo de Carvalho Neto, “La comparsa Lubola del carnaval montevidiano.” *Archivos Venezolanos de Folklore* 10-11, 7 (1961-62): 153-85. Enrique Puccia, *Breve historia del carnaval porteño* (Buenos Aires: Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1974) provides a historical introduction to the subject. Homi K. Bhabha has written that “mimicry is at once resemblance and menace,” raising the possibility of the substitution or even destitution of the subjects of the

By the end of the nineteenth century, moreover, in the outskirts and ghettos of Buenos Aires and Montevideo, the tango was born. The tango first evolved from the *milonga* (*baile de corte y quebrada* or cut-and-break dance), a dance imitating and taunting the steps of the *candombe*. For instance, an 1883 description of the *milonga* noted the relationship of the *milonga* to the Afro-Platine *candombe*, “the milonga is only danced by the *compadritos* [white thugs who frequented the brothels cum dance halls of Buenos Aires] of the city, who created it to make fun of [black dances].” In 1902, moreover, an old Afro-Argentine woman acerbically recalled how the *compadritos* invented the *milonga* based “on our music.” Rossi therefore opines: “All the creative and evolutionary process of the *milonga* was the works of blacks.”⁹¹ Eventually, the *milonga* itself transformed into that quintessentially Platine dance, the tango. Therefore, Andrews properly observes that whenever, wherever, couples lock their bodies tightly together to dance the tango, its descent from the *milonga* by way of the *candombe* is manifest, and the “steps of the tango form a kinetic memory of the *candombe*.”⁹²

As late as the mid-1970s, Alejandro Frigerio records that blacks in Buenos Aires met to dance and socialize (as well as no doubt collectively recall the past) at the “Shimmy Club,” housed in the “Casa Suiza,” a large meeting hall in a working-class area

parody by the very objects of the mimicry who were imagined/represented as the ultimate “Other.” Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 86.

⁹¹ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 166; Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 125-28, 136, 146; Lanuza, *Morenada*, 225.

⁹² Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 165. Simon Collier reaches a similar conclusion about the tango’s origins. Simon Collier, “The Tango is Born: 1880s-1920s.” In *Tango! The Dance, the Song, the Story*. Simon Collier et al. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 42-47.

of the city, near the Congress. As many as three or four hundred blacks, mulattos, and whites (some the descendants of Afro-Argentines) met to remember their ancestral culture, including dancing the *candombe*. However, over time, younger, better educated black Argentines lost interest in attending these social gatherings or maintaining communal memories and traditions. As a result, many young black residents of Buenos Aires forgot or abandoned their heritage.⁹³ As many native Afro-Argentines assimilated and opted to mainstream, African immigrants have arrived by the tens of thousands to Argentina, especially throughout the course of the last century. Beginning with Cape Verdeans, who began to arrive by the thousands after 1920 to Buenos Aires and surrounding areas, other sub-Saharan Africans have become increasingly noticeable in major urban centers.⁹⁴ These Africans have further contributed to Argentina's often forgotten African musical heritage.

Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan musicians displayed their talents from colonial times. *Casta* musicians in the eighteenth century were skilled artisans, making their own instruments, and some were even classically trained. For example, the mulatto violin master Antonio Vélez conducted an orchestra of fourteen colored musicians.

⁹³ Frigerio, "El candombe argentino," 51-52. Andrews and others attribute this loss of cultural memory and tradition to a racist society that forces assimilation and acculturation at the expense of blackness. Again, such an explanation seems mechanistic, if not outright deterministic, and assumes the "consciousness" of assimilation/acculturation and precludes any black agency in any of their own cultural choices.

⁹⁴ Matt Prichard, "Buenos Aires Looks at its 4,000 Blacks with Mixture of Curiosity and Prejudice," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Sept. 4, 1988, 51A. My friend Marta Maffia is the leading authority on Cape Verdean immigration to Argentina. See, among her many publications on the subject, *Desde Cabo Verde a la Argentina : migración, parentesco y familia* (Buenos Aires : Editorial Biblos, 2010); and "La migración caboverdeana hacia la Argentina. Análisis de una alternativa." *Trabalhos de Antropologia e Etnologia*, nos. 1-4 (1986): 191-207.

These black musicians performed for social elites in private gatherings and at public events, including government-sponsored galas in the town hall (*cabildo*). The most renowned Afro-Argentine master composer was Zenón Rolón, who trained in Italy. For the inauguration of the “Falucho” monument in Buenos Aires in 1897, Rolón composed a military march in honor of the black independence hero for the event. Black musicians in the River Plate also composed tangos and other popular rhythms. The most celebrated early tango composer and pianist of his day was a black man, Anselmo Rosendo Mendizábal, famous for the first true tango music “El Entrerriano” (1897?). Moreover, Oscar Alemán, a black man born in 1909 in Chaco province, close to the Paraguayan border, was Argentina’s leading Jazz exponent. Alemán even earned the praises of African-American Jazz great Duke Ellington, who said of him: “This Cat has roots,” undoubtedly a reference to Alemán’s African ancestry.⁹⁵

Afro-Platines have also contributed to the language and discourse of their respective countries.⁹⁶ They have lent African-derived words to the popular speech of the River Plate, such as *quilombo* (originally meaning a brothel, now an expression for a mess of some kind), *mucama* (a maid or servant woman, very often of African ancestry), and *mandinga* (something wicked, a devil). Blacks in Argentina and Uruguay were

⁹⁵ Andrews, *the Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 169; Coria, *Pasado y presente*, 91-94; Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 146-55 on Rolón. On black tango musicians see Oscar Natale, *Buenos Aires, negros y tango* (Buenos Aires: Peña Lillo Editor, 1984). On Argentine Jazz, consult Sergio A. Pujol, *Jazz al sur: la música negra en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1992). For Duke Ellington’s remark about Alemán, Laura Haimovichi, “Oscar Alemán, veinte años después. El guitarrista nomade.” *Revista Clarín*, Oct. 14, 2000, 10.

⁹⁶ Alberto Britos Serrat, comp., *Glosario de afronegrismos uruguayos* (Montevideo: Ediciones Mundo Afro, 1999).

renowned story-tellers, much like their *griot* ancestors.⁹⁷ Blacks were the greatest of folk singers or *payadores* throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the greatest of these troubadours, including Gabino Ezeiza, were black men. The *payada* was a “chant and response” verbal duel between guitarists similar to North-American “answer-back songs” or the Brazilian *canto de sotaque*. According to Ortiz Oderigo, the *payada*’s contrapuntal and satiric style is similar to the African *makawas* or *ibiririmbo*.⁹⁸ The famous black laundresses of nineteenth-century Buenos Aires were not to be outdone by their men, however, and were equally renowned for their wit and popular wisdom (as well as gossip, according to contemporaries). Black street vendors on both sides of the River Plate hawked their wares with catchy sayings called *pregones*. For example, black women selling pastries (*mazamorras*) would cry out: “*Mazzamorra cocida para la mesa tendida*,” meaning something like hot pastries ready for eating or serving.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Among different ethnic groups in western Africa, a *griot* is a story teller and keeper of oral traditions and community memories.

⁹⁸ Néstor Ortiz Oderigo, *Aspectos de la cultura Africana en el Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Plus Ultra, 1974), 108-09. These “cutting contests” took place throughout the River Plate, in both cities and rural towns in Argentina and Uruguay, often in local theaters, traveling circuses, and general stores.

⁹⁹ On black vocabulary in the River Plate, consult Néstor Ortiz Oderigo, *Diccionario de africanismos en el castellano del Río de la Plata* (Montevideo: EDUNTREF, 2007); and Rolando A. Laguarda Trías, “Afronegrismos rioplatenses.” *Boletín de la Real Academia Española* 49, 186 (Jan.-April 1969): 21-116. On West-African *griots*, Barbara G. Hoffman, “The Power of Speech: Language and Social Status among the Mande Griots and Nobles.” Ph. D. diss., Indiana Univ., 1990; and Charles S. Bird, “Oral Art of the Mande.” *Papers of the Manding* 3 (1971): 15-25. On the black *payador*, especially Gabino Ezeiza, Donald S. Castro, “The Afro-Argentine Payador Tradition: The Art of Gabino Ezeiza.” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 13, 2 (Fall 1994): 9-17; and Abel Zabala, “El negro Gavino: payador de payadores.” *Revista de Historia Bonaerense* 4, 16 (March 1998): 25-26. For more on black street peddlers and their sayings, see Ana Cara-Walker, “The Art of Creole Expression in Argentina.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1983, especially pages 106-08, 108-09.

As Marvin Lewis establishes, blacks in Argentina and Uruguay also lent their genius to high-culture discourses and literature in the 1800s and early 1900s. The legendary Afro-Argentine *payador* Gabino Ezeiza also wrote learned verse and prose, including a poem “Yo soy” (“I Am”), which begins nostalgically and patriotically: “Soy de la raza de Falucho...”¹⁰⁰ The most Afro-centric poem by an Afro-Argentine writer, however, was Casildo G. Thompson’s “Song to Africa” (1877), a moving ode to the mother continent and the pains endured by her native children “ripped” from her “virgin” breast. Black poetry in neighboring Uruguay reached its peak in the first half of the twentieth century, coinciding with the black consciousness movement that gave rise to *Nuestra Raza* and PAN. Besides *Nuestra Raza*, Afro-Uruguayans published literary journals such as *Revista Bahía Hulán Jack* and newspapers for the black community of Montevideo. Perhaps the two most distinguished Afro-Uruguayan literati of the last century were Pilar Barrios and Virginia Brindis de Salas, the latter a descendant of renowned Afro-Cuban violinist Claudio Brindis de Salas Garrido, “el Paganini negro,” who died destitute in Buenos Aires in 1911.¹⁰¹ While Pilar Barrios focuses on the sufferings of his people in his collection of poems *Piel negra (Black Skin)* (1947), Virginia Brindis de Salas emphasizes black pride and women’s liberation in her poetry in *Pregón de Marimorena (Marimorena’s Street Cry)* published in 1974. In addition, playwright Andrés Castillo’s “Teatro Negro Independiente” (“Independent Black Theater

¹⁰⁰ Gabino Ezeiza, “Yo soy.” In *Nuevas canciones inéditas del payador argentino Gabino Ezeiza* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Gauchesca, 1987), 42. In effect, the great black *payador* proudly recalls that he is of the same race as the Afro-Argentine independence martyr, “Falucho.”

¹⁰¹ Agapito Candileja, “La muerte de Brindis de Salas. Aventuras de un artista bohemio.” *Caras y Caretas*. 14, 662 (June 10, 1911): n.p.

Company”) rendered an important service to the black community of Montevideo by highlighting on stage their historical and cultural contributions to the nation.¹⁰²

Blacks also figured prominently in the visual arts of the Río de la Plata from colonial times onwards. For example, the mulatto Fermín Gayoso was a slave owned by revolutionary leader Juan Martín de Pueyrredón. He travelled with his master to Spain in 1808, where he sought to employ his skills as a painter to earn enough income to purchase his freedom. However, he was unable to earn his manumission and he vanished from the historical record after Pueyrredón’s political defeat and exile in 1819. Furthermore, the Afro-Uruguayan artist Juan Blanco de Aguirre cultivated his art in neighboring Buenos Aires, his adopted city during the second half of the 1800s. At first, he was taken into the household of Colonel Manuel Fernández Cutiellos, where he learned leather working as a trade.

In 1872, Blanco de Aguirre obtained an art scholarship to study in Florence, Italy, thanks in large measure to the support of then Justice and Public Education Minister

¹⁰² On Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan literature, see Marvin A. Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse: Another Dimension of the Black Diaspora* (Columbia, MO: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1996); idem., *Afro-Uruguayan Literature: Post-Colonial Perspectives* (London: Associated Univ. Presses, 2003); and Carroll Mills Young, “The Literary Tradition of Afro-Uruguay.” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 10, 13 (Sept. 1991): 72-77. Juanamaría Cordones-Cook, *¿Texto negro uruguayo? Texto y contexto del teatro afro-uruguayo de Andrés Castillo* (Montevideo: Editorial Graffiti, 1996). Afro-Argentines were also often depicted in popular street plays called *sainetes* in the first few decades of the twentieth century. On these popular performances, see Donald S. Castro, “‘El negro del acordeón’: The Image of the Black in Argentina.” *Afro-Hispanic Review*, 7, 1 (Sept. 1988): 11-18. Rodolfo González Pacheco in 1966 wrote a stage play historically remembering traditional *candombes* in Buenos Aires in *Juan y Juana, cuando aquí había reyes* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1966). Playwright Héctor Pedro Blomberg also composed a play bringing to memory popular scenes and types from the Rosas era in “La mulata del Restaurador. Escenas populares de la época de Rosas.” In *Homenaje popular a Carlos Max Viale* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Porter, 1938).

Nicolás Avellaneda and President Domingo F. Sarmiento.¹⁰³ Both the Argentine Senate and Chamber of Deputies provided funds in the amount of 1,000 *pesos fuertes* per annum to complete his studies in Europe.¹⁰⁴ He returned to Buenos Aires in 1878, and once more thanks to Avellaneda opened his own art school in the city.¹⁰⁵ In July 1884, Juan Blanco de Aguirre delivered a public lecture at the “Teatro Goldoni” on “La raza negra en América,” emphasizing his race’s many artistic contributions to the New World. He is frequently mentioned by name, along with other black elites, as a champion of their community in the pages of the Afro-Argentine newspaper “La Broma.” For instance, Blanco de Aguirre makes a speech at the reception for the new board of directors of the black mutual aid society “La Protectora” on July 28, 1882.¹⁰⁶ Having achieved a

¹⁰³ Nicolás Avellaneda, *Memoria presentada al Congreso Nacional de 1873 por el Ministerio de Justicia, Culto e Instrucción Pública, pensión anual para estudios de dibujo natural y pintura para Juan Blanco de Aguirre. Buenos Aires, 22 de junio de 1872* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Unión, 1873).

¹⁰⁴ “Ley núm. 510 del 21 de Junio. Acordando pensión á D. Juan Blanco de Aguirre para costear sus estudios de pintura y dibujo en Europa.” *Recopilación de leyes nacionales sancionadas por el honorable Congreso Argentino durante los años 1854 á 1887 por Máximo P. González, oficial de de la Secretaría Honorable del Senado, tomo II 1871 á 1881* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta Europea, 1888), 48.

¹⁰⁵ Blanco de Aguirre continued to receive financial support from the federal government to finish his studies in Europe and also received a pension from the federal government. “Sesiones de 1875,” *Congreso Nacional, Cámara de Senadores* (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1898), 58-59. *Registro Nacional de la República Argentina que comprende los documentos espedidos desde 1810 á 1873, tomo sexto 1870 á 1873* (Buenos Aires : Imprenta Especial de Obras “La República,” 1884), 261.

¹⁰⁶ “La Broma,” July 28, 1882. In Tomás A. Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros. La Broma y otros periódicos de la comunidad afroargentina (1873-1882)* (Buenos Aires : Instituto Histórico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2004), 116. “La Broma” also kept its readers aware of Blanco de Aguirre’s artistic production, informing them on February 22, 1878, for instance, that the Afro-Uruguayan artist was preparing “a magnificent sketch” of José de San Martín being crowned by the representation of a grateful nation. “La Broma”, February 22, 1878,

modicum of notoriety, he died at the end of the century in his beloved Buenos Aires, a respected member of the local black elite.

On the twentieth anniversary of Avellaneda's death, Blanco de Aguirre proved his standing within both the Buenos Aires art scene and the city's black community by being asked to submit a small piece honoring and thanking his deceased benefactor for a collection of homilies. This anthology of tributes to the memory of Dr. Avellaneda reads like a farrago of nineteenth-century Argentine intellectual and political luminaries, and features contributions on the legacy of the deceased statesman and writer from, among others, philosopher Paul Groussac, writers Miguel Cané and Lucio V. Mansilla, jurist Bernardo de Irigoyen, political and economic theorist Juan B. Alberdi, and former presidents Julio A. Roca, and Domingo F. Sarmiento. He begins by recognizing Avellaneda as one of the most prominent "men of letters" of the day, and one who employed his vast erudition for the benefit of his nation. According to Blanco de Aguirre, Avellaneda was a champion of progress for national aggrandizement. The black artist then goes on to honor the memory of Dr. Avellaneda by signaling his great generosity. He briefly details Avellaneda's efforts on his behalf, while then minister of Public Education, before the Congress and then president Domingo Faustino Sarmiento to find monies so Blanco de Aguirre could continue his art studies in Europe. Blanco de Aguirre recalls of Dr. Avellaneda: "... no sintió repugnancia alguna, en traer de la mano á un pobre negro, rico de esperanzas, pero pobre de espectabilidad y de fortuna." The

in *Piedra librea para nuestros negros*, 131. Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 62-63, 190-96. Juan Blanco de Aguirre was a major promoter of the dedication of the "Falucho" monument.

Afro-Platine painter concludes his homily by reminding his readers of Avellaneda's lack of racial prejudice and support for the humble, writing: "Son pocos, muy pocos los que dan desde tan encumbradas posiciones, ejemplos, como el Dr. Avellaneda, de que no pagan tributo á prejuicios de color, preocupaciones de raza, que rechazan la razón y el sentimiento humano."¹⁰⁷

As noted above, Pedro Figari's impressionist paintings of Afro-Uruguayans at work and play (but especially dancing) represent a national artistic patrimony. Particularly notable are his *candombe* and tango paintings, which capture the languid body language of black dancers. For example, his 1922 sketch "Pareja danzando candombe" ("Couple dancing candombe") features two black couples and other figures, including a seated drummer, exercising the characteristic steps of the quintessential black Platine dance. Figari's "black" paintings and sketches are generally featured in books and articles about *afrodescendientes* in Uruguay or about the tango. His art works have been displayed in museums and galleries throughout Latin America, as well as in Washington, DC and Paris, France.¹⁰⁸ Other prominent white and black artists of the

¹⁰⁷ Juan Blanco de Aguirre, "Humilde homenaje." In *Avellaneda, XX aniversario de su muerte. Homenaje a su memoria del Círculo Nicolás Avellaneda*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Círculo Nicolás Avellaneda, 1906), 111. In the above quotes, Blanco de Aguirre asserts that his white benefactor felt no revulsion whatsoever aiding a poor black man move forward and that there are very few people of Avellaneda's important status who afford such an enlightened example of freedom from racism and prejudice.

¹⁰⁸ See the Appendix I. Pedro Figari's "black" works of art are easily available now via the internet and art databases. A slide collection of his works, *Candombe* is available from the Museum of Modern Art of Latin America in Washington, DC. For published works, see Pedro Figari and Fernando Gaibert, *Tango y candombe en el Río de la Plata, 1861-1979* (Buenos Aires: Librería Colonial, 1979); and Pedro Figari, *Pedro Figari: mito y memoria rioplatense* (Caracas: Fundación Museo de Bellas Artes, 2000). For a study of Figari's artistic style and contributions, consult Ivonne Pini, "Pedro Figari: The Search for Roots." *Art Nexus*, no. 18 (Oct.-Dec. 1995): 64-68. A highly critical take on Figari's work as racist is Andrea M. Ferreiro, "The Black Image in Latin American Art: A Study on Race Representation in the Vanguard Art of Don Pedro Figari

Afro-Uruguayan experience in the twentieth century include Carlos Páez Vilaró, Fernando Guibert, and Rubén Galloza. Afro-Uruguayans have also recently done impressive work in the fields of sculpture and design.¹⁰⁹

Finally, Argentine folklore and religion are infused with African elements, and have been so since colonial times. Don Daniel Granada, one of the first to compile a list and study the superstitions and legends of the River Plate, asserts the importance of Africans in contributing to the folklore of Argentina from the earliest colonial times. In fact, Granada's study constitutes an early example of works documenting the collective memories of all Argentines by way of their folk tales and traditions.¹¹⁰ Afro-Platine folklore, for instance, includes tales of evil spirits and demons. Often, the characters in these legends are explicitly depicted as black or African. The most common of these legends are the "lobisón" (a wolf beast), the "negros del agua" or the "negros del río" (black water spirits), the "negrito pastorero" (black shepherd boy), and, perhaps the most popular of all black legendary beings, the "Mandinga" or black devil. The legend of the "lobisón," a kind of werewolf, while also common in Europe, according to Dina V.

and José Sabogal." MA thesis, Univ. of Texas, 2000. A far fairer and more scholarly assessment of Figari's Afro-Uruguayan art is found in Lyneise Williams, "'Sacudiendo los espíritus adormecidos': The Art of Pedro Figari (1861-1938)." Ph. D. diss., Yale Univ., 2004. Williams emphasizes Figari's appreciation for and of the black community of Montevideo and his desire to commemorate their culture through his drawings and paintings. The distinguished specialist on African and Afro-American culture Robert Farris Thompson chaired Williams' dissertation committee.

¹⁰⁹ Carlos Páez Vilaró, *Mediomundo: un mundo de recuerdos*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Artes Gráficas Integradas, SA, 2000). Alberto Britos Serrat, "La plástica afro-uruguaya." In *La herencia cultural Africana en la Américas*, vol 1. Beatriz Santos, ed. (Montevideo: EPPAL, 1998), 45-47.

¹¹⁰ D. Daniel Granada, *Reseña histórico-descriptiva de antiguas y modernas supersticiones del Río de la Plata* (A. Barreiro y Ramos, 1896).

Picotti C. acquires properly African overtones in Argentina and Uruguay. This scholar regards the wolf beast legend as coming from Angolan slaves and the tales there of the “Kimbungu” or “Kibungu,” whereby the seventh son of an incestuous relationship transforms into a large dog with the full moon. Picotti C. also relates the water spirits to similar African tales about “Yemanjá,” “Kianda,” and “Kiximbi” in Nigeria, Angola (Luanda), and Congo (Mbaka), respectively. In the River Plate and southern Brazil, the legend of the spirit of the slave child (the “negrito pastorero”) killed by his cruel master haunting lonesome pastures continues to this day. Also, Dina Picotti C. maintains that the inhabitants of these regions even wore African-style amulets to ward off evil spirits until very recently.¹¹¹

The most popular black legend in the Río de la Plata is that of the “Mandinga,” according to Ildefonso Pereda Valdés “un duende africano acriollado.”¹¹² Traditionally depicted as a black gaucho or cowboy, this devil or demon wanders the vast, open spaces of the Pampas hinterlands searching for souls to steal. The “Mandinga” legend stretches from the northern provinces of Tucumán and La Rioja south to Córdoba all the way to the

¹¹¹ Dina V. Picotti C., *La presencia africana en nuestra identidad*, Serie Antropológica (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol, 1998), 127-30. In the River Plate, the “lobisón” is the cursed seventh son of a seventh son, said to transform with the full moon into a large wolf. For more on these and other legends, see Daniel Granada, *Reseñas histórica-descriptivas de antiguas y modernas supersticiones del Río de la Plata*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: G. Kraft, 1959). Argentine folklore was often featured in *Caras y Caretas* in the early 1900s. E.g., Javier Freyre, “El negrito del pastoreo.” *Caras y Caretas* 24, 1167 (Feb. 12, 1921): n.p.

¹¹² Pereda Valdés, *El negro en el Uruguay*, 143. This author is claiming that the “Mandinga” is a Creole African evil spirit. An old black war veteran is called “Mandinga” by a *Caras y Caretas* correspondent in 1900. Fabio Carrizo, “De la calle a la vereda. Mandinga.” *Caras y Caretas* 3, 91 (June 30, 1900): n.p. Also, Víctor Arreguine described “Mandinga” as “Negro, chiquito de ingenio diabólico....” *Caras y Caretas* 9, 400 (1906): n.p.

countryside of southern Buenos Aires province. The folk tale is also known in the Banda Oriental (Uruguay). The superstition of the “Mandinga” is no doubt predicated in part on the exploits and fierceness of the black gaucho as both fighter and *payador*. Both José Hernández in *El gaucho Martín Fierro* (1872) and Hilario Ascasubi in *Santos Vega ó los mellizos de la flor* (1872) capture the skills of the black gaucho with his large knife (*facón*) and guitar. Thus, Ascasubi recounts the *payada* (verbal duel) between his protagonist, the gaucho Santos Vega, and the “Mandinga,” disguised as the black minstrel “naked or clothless John” (“Juan sin ropa”). Whether or not this legend gets its name from the Manding peoples of Senegambia in West Africa is open to debate, however. There is little proof that many (or any) Manding slaves made it to the River Plate.¹¹³

Regardless, some interesting connections are possible between the superstition and its putative origins among Africans from western Africa. For instance, the Manding were renowned for their equestrian skills, making them the finest light cavalry in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1700s and 1800s.¹¹⁴ Moreover, as alluded to above, peoples from western Africa also developed linguistic skills ideal for *payadores*, and also came from cultures where certain types of “answer-back” songs were common. These two cultural elements common to and among the Manding and other West-African peoples perhaps

¹¹³ Andrews does not list a “Mandinga” or “Mandingo” ethnic group in Buenos Aires. Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 233-34. However, Vicente Rossi insists on the existence of a “Mandinga” nation in Buenos Aires. Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 222-24.

¹¹⁴ Robin Law, *The Horse in West African History: The Role of the Horse in Societies of pre-Colonial West Africa* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980).

explain the provenance of the legend of the “Mandinga” as a black horseman and minstrel in the folklore of the River Plate.¹¹⁵

As mentioned earlier, blacks in the River Plate, slave and free, men and women, joined religious sodalities throughout the colonial period. Black saints such as San Benito, San Baltasar, and San Nicolás de Bari were venerated by Africans and their descendants. Furthermore, religious festivals honoring the black Virgin of Luján and San Nicolás de Bari in La Rioja also attest to the importance of blacks in the development of popular Catholicism in Argentina during the colonial era. The most popular Afro religious festival in the River Plate, however, was the “Fiesta de los Reyes” or “Three Kings Festival” on January 6 (Epiphany) in honor of Saint Balthazar. This popular religious holiday was accompanied throughout Buenos Aires and Montevideo by *candombes*. A small chapel in rural, southern Buenos Aires province, in Chascomús, once home to a significant Afro-Argentine population, retains until today a shrine and relics associated with its African heritage, serving as a pilgrimage site (and therefore realm of memory) for the remnant black populations of the area.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ F. Couccio and G. Schiaffino, *Folklore y nativismo* (Buenos Aires: S. A. Editorial Bell, 1948), 137-38; Fermín A. Anzalaz, *Cuentos y tradiciones de la Rioja* (La Rioja, Argentina: Ediciones Tribuna, 1946), 69-72.

¹¹⁶ Anzalaz, *Cuentos y tradiciones de La Rioja*, 59-61; Cayetano Bruno, “La Virgen de Luján en la historiografía.” *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, no. 32 (1982): 93-102; Julián Cáceres Freyre, “El Encuentro o Tincunaco: las fiestas religiosas tradicionales de San Nicolás de Bari y el niño alcalde de la ciudad de La Rioja.” *Cuadernos del Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Pensamiento Latinoamericano*, no. 6 (1966-67): 253-338; Alicia C. Quereilhac de Kussrow, *La fiesta de San Baltasar: presencia de la cultura africana en el Plata* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Culturales Argentinas, 1980); Goldman, *¡Salve Baltasar!*; Alejandro de Isusi, *La capilla de los negros: una estampa de Chascomús* (Chascomús, Argentina: Editorial del Lago, 1953); Alicia N. Lahourcade, *La comunidad negra de Chascomús y su reliquia*, 2nd ed. (Chascomús, Argentina: Museo Pampeano, 1987). In northeastern Corrientes province, the celebration of Saint Balthazar dates to the early 1800s and is still celebrated by dancing the *candombe* (known locally as *ramba*

However, Marcellino Bottaro, an Afro-Uruguayan scholar and social critic, contends that Africans in the River Plate only pretended to adopt Christianity. Bottaro adds that in the *salas* or living rooms of African Uruguayan nations, paintings of African patron deities adorned the walls, bringing to memory ancestral beliefs and encouraging ancient rituals. Moreover, Bottaro maintains that the *candombe* itself was religious, and various groups and sects used the dance to preserve ancestral memories and spread African beliefs, what this author calls “reminiscences of Africa.” Alberto Soriano arrives at a similar conclusion. Soriano ascribes parallels between the dance steps of the traditional *candombe* (although how these steps were exactly determined is not addressed) and those found in the current dances of *Oxalá* and in the *candomblé* (Yoruba) of Bahia, Brazil. Hugo Ratier believes that Catholic African lay brotherhoods and ethnic nations both in fact served to perpetuate remembrances of African rituals and spirituality in the Río de la Plata. Miguel Angel Rosal contributes that the black religious sodalities and African nations in colonial Buenos Aires served as social frameworks for the preservation of African languages and religions.¹¹⁷ Oscar Chamosa argues that African associations worked to sustain ancestral links through their rituals, especially for the memory of the dead; in their funerary rites, Afro-Argentines sung, danced, and drank

or *charanda*), making this a dynamic site of collective remembrance of the community’s African heritage. See Félix Coluccio, *Fiestas y celebraciones de la República Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Plus Ultra, 1978).

¹¹⁷ Ortiz Oderigo, *Aspectos de la cultura africana*, 31-31; Marcelino Bottaro, “Rituals and Candombes.” In *Negro: An Anthology*. Nancy Cunard and Hugh Ford, eds. (New York: Continuum, 1996), 317-20; Alberto Soriano, *Tres razos augúricos y otros cantares de liturgia negra* (Montevideo: Univ. de la República, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias, 1968), 51, 53; Rosal, “Algunas consideraciones sobre las creencias religiosas,” 370. Also, Hugo Ratier, “Candombes porteños.” *Vicus* 1 (1977): 100, 134-35.

libations to honor the memory of the departed. “The mention of dance, singing, and libations,” asserts Chamosa, “demonstrates that the *candombe* preserved the memory of African rituals.”¹¹⁸ In addition, Jorge E. Gallardo contends that in Montevideo, the Mozambique nation worshiped its ancestral war god, while Juan Carlos Coria reports on the archeological recovery of an African-type voodoo doll in the slave quarters on *caudillo* Juan Manuel de Rosas’ Palermo estate in Buenos Aires province, further evidencing African religious vestiges in the River Plate.¹¹⁹ As late as 1893, an African *baile de santo* (spirit dance) in Buenos Aires, described by Argentine sociologist José Ingenieros, seems to cultural anthropologist Alejandro Frigerio “very similar to those practiced all over the continent and, having occurred at such a late date, makes a strong case of the survival of [African religion] in Argentina ... perhaps into the beginning of the [twentieth century].”¹²⁰ Ingenieros also claimed that each African nation had its own *brujo* (witch-doctor) or priest, and they were often in conflict with the local Catholic Church’s authorities.¹²¹

Frigerio has also documented another Afro religious phenomenon in twentieth-century Buenos Aires and Montevideo, namely, the spread of Afro-Brazilian cults among

¹¹⁸ Chamosa, ““To Honor the Ashes of Their Forebears,” 373-74.

¹¹⁹ Jorge Emilio Gallardo, *Presencia africana en la cultura de América Latina: vigencias de los cultos afroamericanos* (Buenos Aires: F. García Cambeiro, 1986), 68; Coria, *Pasado y presente*, 116.

¹²⁰ José Ingenieros, “III. Locos y brujos en la raza negra.” *Obras completas*, vol. 12 (*La locura en la Argentina*) (Buenos Aires: Elmer Editor, 1957), 24-25. Alejandro Frigerio, “With the Banner of Oxalá: Social Construction and Maintenance of Reality in Afro-Brazilian Religions in Argentina.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of California at Los Angeles, 1989, 48-50.

¹²¹ Ingenieros, “III. Locos y brujos,” 24, 25.

both white and black denizens of those capital cities. Frigerio notes that by 1970, two Afro-Brazilian temples in downtown Buenos Aires had registered with Argentina's National Office for Cults and were legally practicing their religion. Despite persecution under the military dictatorship of the 1970s and early 1980s, Afro-Brazilian religions, such as *Batuque*, *Macumba*, and *Candomblé*, prospered. In 1979, the "Spiritist Confederation of *Umbanda*" attempted to unite different sects in the city, with minimal success, however. Frigerio documents the registration of sixty temples in the National Register of Cults in 1984 and another fifty two in 1985. The years between 1986 and 1991, with the return of democracy to the region, marked a period of gradual acceptance and normalization of Afro-Brazilian religions in the River Plate. Several public events were staged in this period, some very well attended. After 1991, however, the numbers of registered temples dropped, perhaps reflecting more restrictive state policies against non-Catholic groups in Argentina. Regardless, Frigerio observes that *Umbandistas* attempted to "re-Africanize" after 1990, possibly as resistance to state opposition.¹²²

Conclusion

From the mid-1600s to the early 1900s Blacks in the River Plate, slave and freed, were a visible social group presence throughout the cities and countryside of the region, not only as urban day laborers or as gauchos and peons, but also as writers, artists, and musicians. From the late nineteenth century, however, various factors, but primarily

¹²² Frigerio, "With the Banner of Oxalá," 52-53; Alejandro Frigerio and María J. Carozzi, "Las religiones afrobrasileñas en Argentina." *Cadernos de Antropología*, no. 10 (1993): 39-41. See also, Alejandro Frigerio, "Nuevos movimientos religiosos y medios de comunicación: la imagen de la Umbanda en Argentina." *Sociedad y Religión*, no. 8 (Dec. 1991): 69-84.

death, disease, and miscegenation, led to the virtual “disappearance” or vanishing of *afrodescendientes* in the Río de la Plata, especially in Argentina. Aline Helg, in agreement with Lowell Gudmundson, points out that the “whitening” of Argentina in the nineteenth century was in reality a fast process. Helg shows that the black population of Buenos Aires had in 1838 composed twenty five percent of the capital’s population, but had dropped to two percent by 1887. In effect, by the late 1930s or early 1940s, Afro-Argentines had “vanished” or were essentially invisible, subsumed beneath waves of European immigration to that nation from the mid-1800s to the first decade of the 1900s. Between 1880 and 1930, total net immigration added nearly 3.23 million inhabitants to Argentina. Among the immigrants, forty three percent were Italian and thirty four percent Spanish, with Central- and Eastern-European Jews representing another two to six percent of total net immigration.¹²³

As of 2010, the first time in over a century race was recorded in a national census in Argentina, the total numbers of people of African ancestry numbered 149,493, of which 137,503 considered themselves native-born Argentines.¹²⁴ To put this in perspective, Argentina’s total population is over forty two million. Blacks, therefore, now

¹²³ Aline Helg, “Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction.” In *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, 2nd pub. Richard Graham, ed. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1992), 43. See also Lowell Gudmundson, “Black into White in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America: Afro-American Assimilation in Argentina and Costa Rica.” *Slavery and Abolition* 5, 1 (May 1984): 34-49.

¹²⁴ Florencia Emilia Castillo, “Afro-Argentines and the 2010 Census: A Path Toward Visibility?” MA Thesis, Univ. of Florida, 2013, 66.

account for less than a 0.5 % of the country's entire population!¹²⁵ In neighboring Uruguay, blacks are slightly more visible demographically. According to George Reid Andrews, blacks account for 2 percent of the population of Uruguay as of 2006.¹²⁶ Regardless of their current numbers, though, it is clear that historically blacks in the River Plate were an important social group for most of the region's history. They were integral to the economic and social development of Argentina and Uruguay beginning in colonial times.

The scholarship available to researchers interested in any socio-historical aspect of the black populations of Argentina and Uruguay is demonstrably extensive. For a social group allegedly made the victims of a "discursive genocide," at least according to some scholars,¹²⁷ the quantity and quality of the academic literature on their experiences in the River Plate from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century (and, indeed, beyond) is quite impressive. I am not quite sure what constitutes a "discursive genocide."

¹²⁵ "Argentina Demographic Profile, 2013."
http://www.indexmundi.com/argentina/demographics_profile.html.

¹²⁶ Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation*, 7. However, other sources I consulted for my entry in the *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora* on "Afro-Uruguayans," give a higher percentage of people of African descent, around six percent of the population of that country. Most Afro-Uruguayans live in Montevideo, but also in the departments of Artigas, Rivera, Cerro Largo, Treinta y Tres, and Rocha. Pacheco, "Uruguay: Afro-Uruguayans," 937.

¹²⁷ In addition to Solomianski's work, already cited, M. Cristina de Liboreiro makes a similar charge of "historiographical genocide" in *Los negros en Argentino* (Buenos Aires: CEHILA, 1995); and, subsequently, in *¿No hay negros argentinos?* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Dunken, 1999). Her claim of "historiographical genocide" when it comes to Afro-Argentines is explicitly rendered in *Un olvido histórico: los negros en Argentina. Ensayo sobre un ejemplo de racismo historiográfico* (Buenos Aires: CEHILA, 1994). Of course, if the universe of academic sources were only those acknowledged by de Liboreiro, then perhaps her charge might actually be compelling. However, her bibliographies are so poor that one can only imagine that her argument constitutes nothing more than a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Certainly, as will be shown, not all remembrances and/or representations of blacks in Argentina and Uruguay have been positive. Perhaps this is what some scholars mean when they invoke (rather casually in my estimation) the term “genocide” when referring to the historiography on blacks in the River Plate. However, the sizable and growing corpus of academic writings on *afrodescendientes* in Argentina and Uruguay belies the notion of a historiographical forgetting, so to speak, of blacks there.¹²⁸

Lastly, this chapter has attempted to document, albeit briefly, different realms of memory or remembrance by Afro-Platines themselves. In the River Plate, blacks often turned to religion and music, for instance, as not only means of resistance against hegemonic forces of empire and slavery, but also as a means of preserving and passing along cultural memories of their homelands to their children and grandchildren. Recall that Cambridge social anthropologist Paul Connerton affirms as his central thesis in *How Societies Remember*, cited in chapter two of this dissertation, that in embodied rituals, the collective remembrances of a social group are most effectively disseminated.

In this regard, then, one can appreciate how blacks in the River Plate emphasized communal ceremonies and dances, whether religious or secular, for the purpose of collectively remembering their African heritage. In light of slave rebellions throughout the Americas in the late 1700s and early 1800s, most notably the African uprising on Saint Domingue (Haiti) in 1791-1804, white elites in colonial and early-national Argentina and Uruguay feared these gatherings of slaves and free blacks or *libertos* as

¹²⁸ Pierre Nora insists that memory in fact drives historiography. Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire.” *Representations*, no. 26 (spring 1989): 21. One can as easily posit, however, that history writing is itself a realm of memory or remembrance.

possibly revolutionary. As shown above, the elites attempted to socially control the political and social messages of *candombes* and other African rituals and public celebrations. However, in doing so, Creole elites in the Río de la Plata overlooked the real importance for Africans and their descendants in the New World of their dances and other embodied performances. In the rites taking place in their *salas* (urban homes) and *rancherías* (rural dwellings), blacks in Argentina and Uruguay transmitted from generation to generation those memories that shaped their identities as individual persons and as peoples. This is the deeper meaning of African history and culture in the River Plate.

It is precisely this deeper understanding of African heritage in the Río de la Plata that threatened, and was despised by, early-national *pensadores* (thinkers) and cultural nation builders, whose own memories and representations of blacks, especially in Argentina, proved foundational in the first half of the nineteenth century for the then evolving Creole national identity. Thus, the following two chapters examine a selection of the writings of these early intellectual nation builders and how black Argentines were negatively represented as the barbaric allies of conservative strongman Juan Manuel de Rosas of Buenos Aires and thus regarded un-nostalgically by early nineteenth-century liberals.

CHAPTER 4

“Con sangre de negros”: Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans in the Military, Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries

“Los negros supieron ser argentinos con el precio de su sangre.... El mito mil veces recordado de Falucho se justifica en el sacrificio de Antonio Videla, hombre real éste, muy de carne y hueso.” Daniel Sorín, *Palabras escandalosas. La Argentina del centenario* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2003), 17.

Introduction

The military, in which Afro-Platines actively participated, was a key source and site of historical remembrances. Over the course of the nineteenth century in Argentina and Uruguay, it was also a space linked to a related phenomenon—namely, the construction of national identity. Throughout the “long nineteenth century,”¹ the military in the River Plate fought for, first, independence from Spain and, then, consolidation of the national state after decades of civil wars. Eventually, the military was instrumental in the forging of citizens by way of conscription and patriotic education of its soldiers in both barracks and schools. Argentine founding father Domingo F. Sarmiento correctly regarded these two privileged spaces as interrelated sites of national identity.

Recently, scholars of Latin America, building on insights from Charles Tilly and Samuel Huntington, among others, have examined the importance of the military and

¹ The “long nineteenth century,” at least in Argentina, began with the establishment of the viceroyalty in the region in 1776, with Buenos Aires as its capital, and culminated with the rise to power of the Radical Party after 1916, thereby bringing to an end the liberal-conservative *ancien regime*. Of course, I borrow the term “long nineteenth century” from Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm as developed in his trilogy *The Age of Revolution: Europe, 1789-1848* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996 [1962]); *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996 [1962]); and *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989 [1987]).

wars in the development of nation-states in the nineteenth century and in the making of national citizens in the region. Charles Tilly famously stated, for instance, that “states make wars and wars make states.”² In Latin America, nineteenth-century wars of independence and civil conflicts allowed for the centralization of power in national governments employing armies composed of citizen-soldiers.³ Fernando López-Alves also highlights the role of the army in the establishment of Uruguay’s modern political party system in the first half of the nineteenth century. He also addressed its contribution to the formation of Latin American states in general.⁴ Miguel Angel Centeno has recently discussed the importance of the military monuments, other patriotic icons and symbols, and national military myths in the building of nations and the forging of national identities in Latin America. According to Centeno, “war created icons with

² Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975), 73. Quoted in Miguel Angel Centeno, “The Centre Did Not Hold: War in Latin America and Monopolisation of Violence.” In *Studies in the Formation of the Nation-State in Latin America*. James Dunkerley, ed. (London: Inst. of Latin American Studies, 2003), 54. Also, Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1968); and Richard Bean, “War and the Birth of the Modern Nation-State.” *Journal of Economic History* 33, 1 (March 1973): 203-21.

³ See, e.g., Fernando López-Alves, *State Formation and Democracy in Latin America, 1810-1900* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2000). Miguel Angel Centeno, however, is critical of the role of the military and war as agents of national consolidation in Latin America. Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2002). On the importance of civil wars in modern Latin-American political history, consult Rebecca Earle, ed., *Rumours of War: Civil Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (London: Inst. of Latin American Studies, 2000). On conscription in early Latin-American national armies, see Malcolm Deas, “The Man on Foot: Conscription and the Nation-State in Nineteenth-Century Latin America,” in *Studies in the Formation of the Nation-State in Latin America*, ch. 3.

⁴ Fernando López-Alves, “Wars and the Formation of Political Parties in Uruguay, 1810-1851.” In *Wars, Parties and Nationalism: Essays on the Politics and Society of Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. Eduardo Posada-Carbó, ed. (London: Inst. of Latin American Studies, 1995), ch. 1.

which to teach nationalism.”⁵ The army is thus central to the understanding of the cultural nuances and participation of different social groups in the building of nation-states.

The role of blacks in the armies of Latin America after independence and their functioning as social agents of identity construction have garnered increasing consideration from historians of national development in the region. After independence in the early 1800s throughout most of the Americas, race, wars, and liberalism were intertwined in at times contradictory ways. According to Nicola Foote and René D. Harder Horst, liberals needed to both engage with and control popular classes. The military proved to be the ultimate institution of that control, which was, however, paradoxically dependent on subaltern participation.⁶

This chapter, therefore, will examine the history of black participation in the armies of Argentina and, to a far lesser extent, Uruguay from colonial times to the latter part of the nineteenth century. A central argument here is that Afro-Platines were present in the military of the region from the onset and played key roles as citizen-soldiers in the

⁵ Centeno, *Blood and Debt*, 178-94, 182. Of course, memory scholars in Europe and the United States have also discussed war memorialization in the process of national identity formation. Jay Winter, in particular, has examined the importance of war commemoration and its relation to the nation. E.g., Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995); and idem., *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2006). Also see T. G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper, eds., *The Politics of War and Commemoration* (London: Routledge, 2000), as well as John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984).

⁶ Nicola Foote and René D. Harder Horst, “Introduction: Decentering War. Military Struggle, Nationalism, and Black and Indigenous Populations in Latin America, 1850-1950.” In *Military Struggle and Identity Formation in Latin America: Race, Nation, and Community During the Liberal Period*. Nicola Foote and René D. Harder Horst, eds. (Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2010), 5.

wars of independence and the subsequent civil wars. They were thus agents of nation building throughout the nineteenth century in the River Plate.

Consequently, this chapter also serves as historical background in order to understand subsequent commemorations of Afro-Platine soldiers and heroes by Creole national elites toward the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century. Creole historians and writers in the late 1800s remembered Afro-Platines as national heroes and commemorated them in various ways, in fact, too many to totally document fully in the following chapters.⁷

“Con sangre de negros” (“With the Blood of Blacks”)⁸: Afro-Platines in the Military, Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries

Colonial Period, 1500s to early 1800s

Africans were part of the informal and formal Spanish colonial military apparatus from the beginning of the colonization of the New World in the late 1400s and early 1500s. For example, blacks fought alongside Hernán Cortés in Mexico and with the Pizarro brothers in Peru as soldiers of fortune. Armed blacks, such as Juan Garrido, supported Spanish conquistadors in subduing Indian populations and in the settlement of their lands throughout the Americas. These mercenaries turned conquistadors also demanded tribute from the natives in the forms of land, labor, capital, and military

⁷ An excellent study on the memorialization of African-American soldiers in the nineteenth century, from which I have drawn comparative insights, is Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monuments in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997).

⁸ I take this title from José Oscar Frigerio, “Con sangre de negros se edificó nuestra independencia.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 21, 250 (April 1988): 48-69.

service. Over time, as far south as Chile and southern Argentina, African auxiliaries served their colonial masters as infantrymen and mounted soldiers fighting off Indian raids and settling the vast frontiers of the empire.⁹

In what would later become Argentina and Uruguay, blacks and mulattoes served in the Spanish militias from at least the mid-1600s. For instance, according to a letter addressed to royal officials dated July 1, 1664, the garrison (*guarnición*) of Buenos Aires then included three *casta* (non-white) cavalry companies. One company of Indian cavalry had forty two mounted soldiers, while two companies of blacks and mulattoes numbered seventy seven horsemen.¹⁰ This revises Russell Chace's previous observations on Africans in early colonial Argentina that black and native troops first appeared in the River Plate in 1674, and even then only as foot soldiers.¹¹ In the Cisplatine (including the Banda Oriental, later Uruguay), Spanish colonial *casta* troops fought against the Portuguese at *Côlonia do Sacramento* in 1680 and once more in 1705. According to Russell Chace, by 1705 Buenos Aires's militia numbered six hundred soldiers, three hundred of which were Indians as well as free blacks and mulattoes. In 1722,

⁹ Peter M. Voelz, *Slave and Soldier: The Military Impact of Blacks in the Colonial Americas* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993); Jane Landers, "Transforming Bondsmen into Vassals: Arming Slaves in Colonial Spanish America." In *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age*. Christopher L. Brown and Philip D. Morgan, eds. (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2006), 120-45. On Juan Garrido and other black conquistadors, see Matthew Restall, "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America." *The Americas* 57, 2 (Oct. 2000): 171-205. On the makeup and organization of the Spanish military in the colonial period, see Juan Marchena Fernández, *Ejército y milicias en el mundo colonial americano* (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992).

¹⁰ Francisco C. Morrone, *Los negros en el ejército: declinación demográfica y disolución* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1996), 20-21.

¹¹ Russell E. Chace, "The African Impact on Colonial Buenos Aires." Ph. D. diss., Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, 1969, 182, 184.

furthermore, *castas* joined forces with Spanish militiamen in an expedition against the Tapes Indians of the Banda Oriental (Uruguay).¹²

Afro-Argentine cavalrymen also distinguished themselves fighting Indian campaigns on the Pampas from the early eighteenth century onwards. For example, as early as 1711, ten natives and ten free mulattoes were commissioned by the Buenos Aires *cabildo* (municipal government) to round up, pacify, and escort back to the city a number of rebellious Malbalaes Indians from the northwestern province of Tucumán. Four years later, in 1715, the city's *procurador general* (solicitor general) commanded all the men of the various militia companies, including *casta* cavalry units, to meet on February 3 with their horses and weapons for an expedition against quarrelsome Aucas Indians, who had been marauding the Pampas countryside. In 1720, forty mulattoes and Indians once more accompanied eighty five Spanish horsemen against the fearsome Araucanians. Black infantry and cavalry would continue to fight hostile natives in the Río de la Plata (Argentina and Uruguay) well into the nineteenth century.¹³

The almost constant skirmishes with Indians in the countryside in the eighteenth century led to the formation in 1752 of a company of light cavalry or *blandengues* in Buenos Aires to patrol desolate frontier outposts; Montevideo also had its own colored company of *blandengues* to defend against hostile natives. In 1765, the *Cuerpo de Negros Libres* or "Company of Free Blacks" of Buenos Aires was commissioned by the

¹² Chace, "The African Impact on Colonial Buenos Aires," 182.

¹³ Chace, "The African Impact on Colonial Buenos Aires," 183-84; Morrone, *Negros en el ejército*, 72-72, 75.

local colonial government and included three units totaling 168 infantrymen.¹⁴ Each company unit also had a captain, first lieutenant, second lieutenant, two sergeants, four corporals, and fifty troopers. The *Cuerpo de Pardos* or “Company of Mulattoes” was organized along the same lines as the “Company of Free Blacks” and totaled four hundred soldiers. In 1771, José de Vértiz y Salcedo, governor of Buenos Aires, then under the jurisdiction of the viceroy of Peru, noted with disdain, however, that these troops served as merely peons, not as soldiers.¹⁵ Regardless, continued Indian raids once more forced the colonial government of the River Plate to issue a decree requiring that all inhabitants of the countryside able to bear arms do so to fight “las invasiones de los indios” (“Indian invasions”), threatening with six years imprisonment all those who failed to comply.¹⁶ In colonial Córdoba, in western Argentina, the province’s own *Compañía de Milicias de Mulatos Libres* or “Militia Company of Free Mulattoes” was also employed to fight hostile Indians; however, echoing Governor Vértiz y Salcedo’s complaint, the Córdoba militia company’s captain lamented that his men served mostly as prison guards and policemen and not as soldiers. Sadly, this apparent contempt for

¹⁴ According to Morrone, by 1765 Afro-Argentines accounted for eleven percent of the military of Buenos Aires city, based on a report from Governor Pedro de Cevallos to Juan de Arriaga. Morrone, *Negros en el ejército*, 22-23.

¹⁵ Chace, “The African Impact on Colonial Buenos Aires,” 186, 188; Morrone, *Negros en el ejército*, 23.

¹⁶ “Bando del Teniente de Rey ordenando a que todos los habitantes de la campaña, capaces de tomar armas acudan á hacerlo para rechazar las invasiones de los indios, bajo pena de seis años de presidio quien no lo hiciese (Setiembre 4 de 1777).” In *Documentos para la historia del Virreinato del Río de la Plata*, vol. 1. Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Sección de Historia, ed. (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1912), 218.

colored forces was common among white officers, many of whom refused to serve as their commanders.¹⁷

This disdain, however, was temporarily quieted after the gallant performance of free blacks and slaves in the defense of Buenos Aires and Montevideo during the British invasions of the River Plate in 1806 and again in 1807 as part of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe. By 1801, blacks, freed and slave, and mulattoes accounted for ten percent of Buenos Aires's sixteen-hundred strong militia. Viceroy of the River Plate Santiago Liniers unsuccessfully marshalled an ad hoc military to ward off the British in 1806. However, on the decisive day of July 5, 1807, the populace of Buenos Aires, including its free and slave Afro-Argentines, fought bravely, often armed with only knives and pitchforks, and took back the city from the British. A black man, José María, organized an African Argentine slave company and proposed to round up some 4,000 men, so long as they were provided with weapons. His proposal was accepted by the local authorities.¹⁸ Another free black man, Francisco Otregadío enlisted in the militia and

¹⁷ Emiliano Endrek, *El mestizaje en Córdoba, siglo XVIII y principios de siglo XIX* (Córdoba, Argentina: Univ. Nacional de Córdoba, 1966), 82. Jackie Booker found a similar disdain for colored militiamen in late-colonial Veracruz. Jackie Booker, "Needed But Unwanted: Black Militiamen in Veracruz, Mexico, 1760-1810." *The Historian* 55, 2 (Winter 1993): 259-76.

¹⁸ Morrone, *Negros en el ejército*, 29. See José Luis Molinari, "Los indios y los negros durante las invasiones al Río de la Plata." *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* 34, 2 (1963): 639-72 for a detailed account of subaltern participation in the reconquest of the River Plate from the British. A document submitted to Viceroy Liniers from October 1806 puts the total number of Afro-Argentine militia in Buenos Aires at 898. "El Comandante de Armas acompaña un Estado general de la fuerza total de aquella Plaza faltando el cuerpo de Indios, Pardos, y Morenos, y algos de los Patricios que estan sin armas teniendo comisionados en la Campaña para recojerlas siendo motivo para que no las enviado al Señor Gobernador de esta Plaza." In *Documentos para la historia argentina*, vol. 12 ("Territorio y Población"). Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, ed. (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1919), 306. The uniforms of the different Afro-Argentine soldiers in 1806 are depicted in *Comando en Jefe del*

donated 1,000 *pesos* of his own money for the cause of retaking Buenos Aires from the invaders.¹⁹ Morrone notes that of the 350 injured in the fighting on July 5, 47 were black or mulatto or 13.7 percent of the total wounded.²⁰ Furthermore, Manuel Macedonio Barbarín, a slave born in Angola in 1771, obtained the rank of lieutenant colonel as a result of his bravery during the invasions.²¹ Thus, the expulsion of the British from the River Plate was in great part due to the loyalty and heroism of free blacks and mulattoes as well as African slaves.

In response, the Buenos Aires *cabildo* repaid the sacrifices of slaves by paying the widows of those killed in action a stipend and also by purchasing the freedom of thirty two slaves who had fought in defense of the city, while, according to Marcos de Estrada, simultaneously expressing its regrets for being unable to buy the liberty of every slave defender of the city.²² According to Carmen Bernand, this public celebration, held in what is today the “Plaza de Mayo,” complete with speeches, music, dances, and fireworks, was one of the first, if not the first, patriotic festival in what would later

Ejército, *Reseña histórica y orgánica del ejército argentino: uniformes de la patria* (Buenos Aires: Imp. de los Buenos Ayres, 1972).

¹⁹ Marcos de Estrada, “El negro en las invasiones inglesas.” *Revista Nacional de Cultura* 9 (1981): 43.

²⁰ Morrone, *Negros en el ejército*, 29.

²¹ Marcos de Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano: 34 biografías* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1979), 81-84.

²² Chace, “The African Impact on Colonial Buenos Aires,” 193-94. Vicente G. Quesada remembers hearing about this ceremony and recounts it in his memoirs. Vicente G. Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*. Isidro J. Ruiz Moreno, ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1998), 82-84.

become Argentina.²³ On a more symbolic but equally important level, local officials praised the blacks and renamed a major square in Buenos Aires the “Plaza de la Fidelidad” (“Loyalty Plaza”) for them.²⁴ Viceroy Liniers in addition renamed the traditional black neighborhood of Monserrat in Buenos Aires the “Barrio de la Fidelidad” (“Faithful Neighborhood” or “Neighborhood of the “Faithful”) to further commemorate the fidelity of the city’s black denizens during the British invasions of the River Plate at the start of the nineteenth century.²⁵

Consequently, according to José Luis Molinari, the patriotic feats of Indians, blacks, and mulattoes after the British invasions have been “ampliamente recordadas” (“extensively remembered”) by a grateful nation.²⁶ Heroic poems of an explicitly nationalistic vein recorded and immortalized the exploits of Afro-Argentines during the British invasions. José Luis Lanuza, for instance, quotes from a poem written by Vicente López y Planes, also the author of the Argentine national anthem, in which the poet sings of the patriotic virtues of blacks: “With his valor, with his enthusiasm,/from natural, from

²³ Carmen Bernand, “La población negra de Buenos Aires (1777-1862).” In Mónica Quijada, Carmen Bernand, and Arnd Schneider, *Homogenidad y nación con un estudio de caso: Argentina, siglos XIX y XX* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas; Centro de Humanidades. Inst. de Historia, Departamento de Historia de América, 2000), 122.

²⁴ Voelz, *Slave and Soldier*, 379.

²⁵ de Estrada, “El negro en las invasiones inglesas,” 61. For more on the recognition of blacks after the British invasions, see Roberto L. Elissalde, *Historias ignoradas de las invasiones inglesas*, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires: Aguilar, Altea, Taurus, Alfaguara, 2006), esp. 180-87.

²⁶ Molinari, “Los indios y los negros durante las invasiones al Río de la Plata,” 663. Medals and other military memorabilia of the British invasions of the Río de la Plata are catalogued by Carlos Roberts (Lt. Col., Argentine Army Reserves), *Las invasiones inglesas del Río de la Plata (1806-1807) y la influencia inglesa en la independencia y organización de las provincias del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos, S. A. Jacóbo Peuser, 1938). These relics were intended to preserve the memory of the reconquest of the River Plate from the British.

the *quarterón* [quadroon], and from the offspring/of the browned inhabitant of Ethiopia....”²⁷ In another poem intended to commemorate the heroes of the reconquest of the River Plate, López y Planes praised all the citizens of Buenos Aires for their heroism, who selflessly rushed to their city’s defense: “There is the common laborer, there is the educated man,/the merchant, the artisan, even the child,/as well as the mulatto and the black man....”²⁸ Another nationalist poet of the period, the priest Pantaleón Rivarola, also eulogized the sacrifices of Afro-Argentine patriots. “It is impossible here to ignore,/for the honor of our land and sovereign,/” writes Rivarola, “the glories done, by faith and by honor,/by Indians, mulattoes, and the African....”²⁹ In particular, the poet sings the praises of the mixed-race slave, Pablo Ximenes (Jiménez): “Pablo Jiménez, mulatto slave,.../He killed, by himself, two Englishmen,/battling hand-to-hand/and saved

²⁷ Quoted in José Luis Lanuza, *Morenada* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1946), 56. The translation is mine. The complete stanzas in the original read: “Oh ínclito señor ésta no es tropa,/Buenos Aires os muestra allí sus hijos:.../... el moreno y el pardo..../Por todas las calles número infinito de ilustre juventud a los cuarteles correr se ve.../al natural, al cuarterón, y al hijo del tostado habitante de Etiopía.” In *Antología de literatura virreinal* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1967), 102-3.

²⁸ Quoted in José Luis Lanuza, *Morenada: una historia de la raza africana en el Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Schapire, 1967), 61. The translation is mine. In the original, the stanzas read: “Allí está el labrador, allí está el letrado,/el comerciante, el artesano, el niño,/el moreno y el pardo....”

²⁹ “No es posible aquí omitir,/para honor de nuestro suelo y de nuestro soberano,/las maravillas que hicieron,/de religón y valor, los indios, pardos, y negros....” Pantaleón Rivarola, “Episodio heroico de un negro.” (Fragmento de un *Romance de la Gloriosa defensa de la ciudad de Buenos Aires* [1807].) In *Lira negra (Selecciones afroamericanas y españolas)*. José Sanz y Díaz, comp. and ed. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1962), 30-31. Seth Meisel argues that the explicit intention of the poem was to imprint in the memory of the people those glorious days of heroism. Seth J. Meisel, “Manumisión militar en las provincias unidas del Río de la Plata.” In *Fuerzas militares en Iberoamérica, siglos XVIII y XIX*. Juan Ortiz Escamilla, ed. (Mexico: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 2005), 168.

his poor brother....”³⁰ These heroic deeds by the slave Jiménez merited his immediate freedom, which, according to Rivarola’s paean, he willingly received from his grateful owner, thereby displaying from both slave and master alike “the honor of virtue and accord.”³¹

The heroism of blacks during the defense of the River Plate has long remained in the national memory. Therefore, Vicente G. Quesada recalls in his *Memorias de un viejo* that Afro-Argentines rejected the opportunity to join the British invaders and rebel against their masters; on the contrary, “the blacks were heroic defenders of the city.”³² In addition, on the one hundred and seventieth anniversary of the first invasion, José Luis Lanuza wrote an article for the prestigious *porteño* (Buenos Aires) daily *La Prensa* reminding his compatriots of the role played by slaves in the original defense and eventual recapture of Buenos Aires from the British. Lanuza records that following the final defeat of the European invaders, the city was enveloped by a sense of martial pride, one in which blacks were also easily absorbed. The “air of freedom” that followed victory “inflated everyone’s chest” and African “slavery perturbed the city’s collective

³⁰ “Pablo Jiménez, esclavo, pardo,.../Mató él solo dos ingleses/batallando cuerpo a cuerpo,/y libró a su pobre hermano....” Rivarola, “Episodio heroico,” 33. The Afro-Uruguayan soldier-poet “Ansina” also memorialized in verse the African defense of the Banda Oriental against the British. See his poems on the reconquest of the River Plate in Daniel Hammerly Dupuy and Víctor Hammerly Peverini, comps. and eds., *Artigas en la poesía de América*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Noel, 1951), 76-77.

³¹ Pantaleón Rivarola, “Fiel vasallo de S[u] M[ajestad] y amante de la Patria,” in *Antología de literatura virreinal*, 74-77.

³² Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*, 79-80. Vicente Rossi also remembers Africans as excellent soldiers and defenders of the state. Vicente Rossi, *Cosas de negros*. Horacio Jorge Becco, ed. and prelim. study. (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2001 [1926]), 60.

conscience,” writes Lanuza. Afro-Argentines were treated then with sympathy and later fondly (if patronizingly) remembered as “el negrito” (“the little black”) and “mi negro” (“my black”).³³

According to several scholars of Argentine history, the British invasions accelerated the process of the militarization of the River Plate, a process that only strengthened with the subsequent war for independence from Spain and continued unabated as a result of the nineteenth-century civil wars between liberals and conservatives in both Argentina and Uruguay.³⁴ For instance, the renowned Argentine historian Tulio Halperín Donghi has documented the increased size and prominence of the military in Buenos Aires after 1806.³⁵ The rapid and pronounced militarization of

³³ José Luis Lanuza, “Los esclavos en las invasiones.” *La Prensa*, July 9, 1936, 2. A few years earlier, the distinguished intellectual and literary critic José Torre Revello wrote a story about the young slave “Picavea” and his heroism during the reconquest of Buenos Aires. Torre Revello concludes his tale by asserting of the slave’s virtue: “The profound lesson on humanity offered by the mulatto slave Picavea reveals that love and kindness for the neighbor has never been the patrimony of caste, nor of race.” José Torre Revello, “La nobleza de un mulato esclavo.” *Nativa* 11, 128 (Aug. 31, 1934), 13-14. The original reads: “Esta profunda lección de sentimiento humano dada por el mulato Picavea, nos revela que el amor y el bien hacia el prójimo, no ha sido nunca patrimonio de casta, ni de raza.” Again, these commemorations coincide with the rise to power of the military in the 1930s in Argentina.

³⁴ A classic exposition of this thesis is Tulio Halperín Donghi, “Militarización revolucionaria en Buenos Aires, 1806-1815.” In *El ocaso del orden colonial en Hispanoamérica*. Tulio Halperín Donghi, ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1978), 121-58.

³⁵ Tulio Halperín Donghi, “Revolutionary Militarization in Buenos Aires, 1806-1815.” *Past and Present*, no. 40 (July 1968): 84-107. As a result, Lyman L. Johnson, working from the data culled by John J. TePaske and Herbert S. Klein from the archives of the Royal Treasury of Spain, documents the totals and percentages of Spanish colonial government expenditures on the military in late-colonial Argentina. According to Johnson, for example, during the final five years of the colonial era in Buenos Aires, salaries paid to military personnel alone reached a per annum average of thirty five percent of total government expenditures. Lyman L. Johnson, “The Military as Catalyst of Change in Late Colonial Buenos Aires.” In *Revolution and Restoration: The Rearrangement of Power in Argentina, 1776-1860*. Mark D. Szuchman and Jonathan C. Brown, eds. (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994), 32, 34.

late-colonial society in the River Plate in fact had multiple social consequences. Thus, for instance, the militarization of society in the River Plate witnessed and reinforced emerging bonds of patriotism, beginning with the wars of independence, among Creoles.³⁶ Brian Loveman avers that “the habits of war became the habits of society, shaping attitudes and expectations” in post-colonial Latin America.³⁷

Afro-Platines were not excluded from the dramatic social effects of the militarization of Buenos Aires and Montevideo as well as their surrounding environs. Therefore, Carmen Bernard points out that the participation of slave and free Afro-Argentines during the British invasions of Buenos Aires had as a major social consequence the immediate identification of people of color with the larger *pueblo* (populace) and vice versa. Seth J. Meisel, who has written and published extensively on Afro-Argentine military participation, concurs with Bernard. Afro-Argentines, sustains Meisel, were in fact citizen-soldiers and thus full participants in the nascent “Creole patriotism” of the early 1800s. According to Meisel, endemic war in the region and military service afforded both slave and free Afro-Argentines the possibility of freedom and social ascension. For Meisel, therefore, the early-national military in Argentina served as “a locus for a kind of social engineering” that Afro-Argentines experienced

³⁶ Pilar González Bernaldo, “Producción de una nueva legitimidad: ejército y sociedades patrióticas en Buenos Aires, 1810-1813.” *Cahiers des Amériques*, no. 10 (1990): 177-95.

³⁷ Brian Loveman, *For la Patria: Politics and Armed Forces* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1999), 27.

first-hand and fully availed themselves of, thereby producing new political identities and social solidarities.³⁸

Thus, on the eve of independence from Spain in the early 1800s, Afro-Platines had already spilled their blood in defense of the *patria* (fatherland) against the Portuguese in the Cisplatine and the British in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Given the valor and loyalty demonstrated by free blacks and slaves in the River Plate, but also sorely needing manpower, Creole revolutionary leaders wasted no time in incorporating blacks into the armies of independence in the early nineteenth century. The scarcity of able-bodied fighting men of European ancestry in the Río de la Plata at the onset of the independence struggle was noted by British official Samuel Haigh, who chronicled Argentina's independence. Writing in 1817, Haigh reported that there were few "pure whites" in the province and city of Buenos Aires and that the bulk of the population was of mixed ancestry or black.³⁹ Don José de San Martín and other Creole revolutionary leaders, therefore, had little choice but to enlist Afro-Platines in the armies of independence.

National Period, early to late 1800s

Slaves proved willing to risk their lives for the possibility of pay and freedom. In

³⁸ Meisel, "Manumisión militar," 165, 167; idem., "'The Fruit of Freedom': Slaves and Citizens in Early Republican Argentina." In *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America*. Jane G. Landers and Barry M. Robinson, eds. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2006), 281-85, 291-92, 296; idem., "From Slave to Citizen-Soldier in Early-Independence Argentina." *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 29, 1 (2003): 67, 68, 73-78. An overview on the military experiences of common soldiers in late-colonial and independence-era Argentina and Uruguay is found in Alejandro M. Rabinovich, *Ser soldado en las Guerras de Independencia. La experiencia cotidiana de la tropa en el Río de la Plata, 1810-1824* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2013), especially pages 40-47 on black troops.

³⁹ Samuel Haigh, *Bosquejos de Buenos Aires, Chile y Perú* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Argentina de Historia y Política, 1988 [1831]), 70.

fact, along with manumission and birth after the promulgation of the 1813 “Free Womb Law,” for male African slaves and their descendants, military service represented an important avenue of freedom, albeit at the risk of their well-being.⁴⁰ Seth Meisel opines that military manumissions represented a point of inflexion in the transition from a colonial to a republican society since the social position of slaves positively changed as a result of their military services rendered to the revolutionary cause. In turn, Meisel and Peter Blanchard both note the emancipation of slave soldiers as a major objective of the emerging nation-state. Slave soldiers consequently associated national freedom with personal emancipation. Blanchard, citing the words of Afro-Uruguayan slave Francisco Estrada, shows that slave soldiers in the River Plate in fact willingly fought “under the flags of freedom,” that is, for the inter-related causes of national liberation from Spain and slave freedom from bondage.⁴¹ Slaves even ran away from their masters in order to enlist.⁴² The African-American historian Irene Diggs, a forgotten pioneer in the field of Afro-Platine studies, claims that “Negroes literally begged to be permitted to join the

⁴⁰ On manumissions of Africans in late-colonial Buenos Aires, consult the important scholarship of Lyman L. Johnson. Lyman L. Johnson, “La manumisión de esclavos en Buenos Aires durante el virreinato.” Alejandro Titiunik, trans. *Desarrollo Económico* 16, 63 (Oct.-Dec. 1976): 333-48; idem., “La manumisión en el Buenos Aires colonial: un análisis ampliado.” *Desarrollo Económico* 17, 68 (Jan.-March 1978): 637-46; idem., “Manumission in Colonial Buenos Aires, 1776-1810.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 59, 2 (May 1979): 258-79.

⁴¹ Meisel, “Manumisión militar,” 166, 167. Peter Blanchard, *Under the Flags of Freedom: Slave Soldiers and the Wars of Independence in Spanish America* (Pittsburgh, PA: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), 1, 41. See also Peter Blanchard, “The Languages of Liberation: Slave Voices in the Wars of Independence.” *Hispanic Historical Review* 82, 3 (Aug. 2002): 499-523; and Silvia C. Mallo, “La libertad en el discurso del estado, de amos y de esclavos, 1780-1830.” *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 112 (July-Dec. 1991): 121-46.

⁴² Blanchard, *Under the Flags of Freedom*, 42, 43.

[revolutionary] armed forces.”⁴³ While, as Robert Turkovic intimates in his dissertation on race relations in nineteenth-century Córdoba, death rates were in fact high for both white and black troops, many slave recruits nonetheless gained their freedom from their military service, thus accounting for their willingness to gamble with their lives.⁴⁴

In spite, or perhaps because, of the efforts of Spanish and some Creole slave owners to resist the *rescates* or *levas* (impressment) of slaves for the independence efforts, Africans and their offspring in the River Plate proved more than willing to risk their lives for the cause of freedom and thus swelled the ranks of the revolutionary military. In 1811, José Rondeau and his commanders forcibly conscripted slaves belonging to Spaniards in the Banda Oriental. Future Uruguayan national hero José Gervasio Artigas led a force of slaves and *libertos*, who fought and defeated the Spanish forces at the Battle of Cerrito in 1812. Meanwhile, in Córdoba, José de San Martín recruited blacks and mulattoes to his Army of the Andes. San Martín also recruited slaves for his army in the province of Cuyo (Mendoza). While he wanted to impress or draft some 10,000 slaves from Argentina’s western provinces to supplement his forces from Buenos Aires, San Juan, and other littoral provinces, perhaps due to resistance from their masters, San Martín and his officers only managed to recruit 784 bondsmen. Regardless, about two thousand total slaves enlisted under various decrees and impressments from Buenos Aires and its environs. The majority of the slave recruits

⁴³ Irene Diggs, “The Negro in the Viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata.” *Journal of Negro History* 36, 3 (July 1951): 300.

⁴⁴ Robert J. Turkovic, “Race Relations in the Province of Córdoba, 1800-1853.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Florida, 1981, 266-68.

ranged in age between eighteen and thirty, although there were some slaves as young as eight and as old as sixty.⁴⁵ Slave recruits were mostly single, and came from both the cities and countryside.⁴⁶ George Reid Andrews therefore asserts that “military service was an experience that virtually every black man who reached adulthood in nineteenth-century Buenos Aires could count on having. Few indeed are the memoirs of life in the city that do not include a vision of the province’s black troopers....”⁴⁷

Many of the slaves and other blacks recruited between 1813 and 1816 fought with San Martín in his Army of the Andes in the colored Seventh and Eighth Infantry Regiments from Buenos Aires and in the integrated Tenth Regiment. These legendary black and Creole troops took part in some of the bloodiest battles of the independence

⁴⁵ An 1816 decree creating a regiment of freed African men stated in its first article that all single, male slaves of Spaniards aged twelve to fifty would be forthwith conscripted into the revolutionary military. Ercilio Domínguez, comp., *Leyes y decretos militares concernientes al Ejército y Armada de la República Argentina, 1810 á 1896 (con anotaciones de derogaciones, modificaciones, etc.)*, vol. 1 (“1810 á 1853”) (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1898), 203.

⁴⁶ Frigerio, “Con sangre de negros,” 57-60. Blanchard, *Under the Flags of Freedom*, 40-41, 45, 99-101, 104, 168. George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 115-20. Marta Beatriz Goldberg, “Milicias y tropas de Buenos Aires. Afro-argentinos armados para defender a sus amos.” *Memoria & Sociedad*, no. 15 (Nov. 2003): 37-51. Irene S. Ricoy, “San Martín y la formación de los batallones de negros en el Ejército de los Andes.” *Boletín Informativo* 5, 7-8 (1973): 115-29. Félix Torres, “La movilización de los esclavos en Córdoba 1815.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 18, 224 (Dec. 1985): 34-47. Víctor Barrionuevo Imposti, *Los esclavos de San Luis en el Ejército de los Andes y otros documentos sanmartianos* (Villa Dolores, Argentina: Talleres Gráficos “Democracia,” 1947).

⁴⁷ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 115. Andrews does not fail to mention, however, the stress caused on black women and black society as a whole by war. In addition, Seth J. Meisel ably documents how Córdoba’s women pressed their own vision of citizenship in their petitions to the revolutionary government by making a public issue of war recruitment’s debilitating effects on the family and its finances. Seth J. Meisel, *Petitions, Petitioners and the Construction of Citizenship in Early Republican Argentina* (College Park, MD: Latin American Studies Center, Univ. of Maryland, 2004), 11-16.

struggle, including Sipe-Sipe in 1815 and Chacabuco and Maipú in 1817. These battalions crossed the Andes with San Martín, a latter-day Hannibal, and liberated first Chile and subsequently Peru from the *Godos* (“Goths,” i.e., Spaniards). The Uruguayan artist Juan Manuel Blanes commemorates San Martín’s black troopers in his oil on canvas painting of 1872 “La revista de Rancagua,” which depicts the general reviewing his soldiers on the eve of the Battle of Rancagua (October 1-2, 1814) in Chile.⁴⁸ Black troops recruited in the River Plate fought as far north as Quito in what would become Ecuador, in northern South America. However, by the time these black soldiers returned to Argentina, less than one hundred and fifty men remained from the about two thousand black soldiers who crossed the Andes with General San Martín.⁴⁹ Well, then, does José Oscar Frigerio remind his compatriots concerning the liberation of Argentina from Spain: “Con sangre de negros se edificó nuestra independencia” (“With the blood of blacks was our independence forged”).⁵⁰

However, exactly how much African blood was spilled during the Wars of Independence in the River Plate? Put another way, were Afro-Argentines and Afro-

⁴⁸ See Appendix I. This painting is now housed in Argentina’s National Historical Museum in Buenos Aires. In 1878, the Uruguayan government donated the Blanes painting to Argentina in commemoration of the centennial of General José de San Martín’s birth. “Revista de Rancagua.” <http://actaderancagua.blogspot.com/2009/10/revista-de-rancagua.html>.

⁴⁹ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 117-18; Blanchard, *Under the Flags of Freedom*, 58, 59, 89-90, 91, 124, 126, 129, 131-33, 107, 109-10, 141, 148, 166, 180. See Nuria Sales de Bohigas, *Sobre esclavos, reclutas y mercaderes de quintos* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1974), first published as “Esclavos y reclutas en Sudamérica, 1816-1826.” *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 7 (July-Dec. 1970): 279-337, for an overview of slave recruits in the independence struggles in South America in the first two decades of the 1800s.

⁵⁰ Frigerio, “Con sangre de negros,” 48-69.

Uruguayans used by the revolutionary armies as “carne de cañón” (“cannon fodder”)?

There is no scholarly consensus on this matter. Still, the facts just cited above would tend to confirm the discriminatory nature of African battlefield mortalities in South America.

In fact, Ricardo Rodríguez Molas and Miguel Angel Rosal both consider Afro-Argentine military deaths as a form of racial genocide.⁵¹ Mark D. Szuchman, moreover, considers the generalized demographic collapse suffered by the *gente de pueblo* (country folk, including blacks and mulattoes) due to military service as having profoundly detrimental consequences for the Afro-Argentine family in particular.⁵²

Contemporary observers often remarked on the sacrifices of blacks fighting and perishing on the battlefields in defense of the fatherland. For example, British consul Samuel Haigh alluded to the “human bones,” once belonging to black soldiers, “lying whitening in the wind and sun” of so many South American battlefields.⁵³ As quoted in a previous chapter, Juan Bautista Alberdi also lamented the deaths of so many Afro-Argentines in war; in his posthumous memoirs, Alberdi recalled: “Because of them, the men of color, who have left their bones and blood on the battlefields of Ituzaingo and Chacabuco, for this country to have... its dignity that we all enjoy save for them. Poor

⁵¹ Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, “El negro en el Río de la Plata.” *Historia Integral Argentina* 1 (1974): 54-56; Miguel Angel Rosal, “Negros y pardos en Buenos Aires, 1811-1860.” *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 51, 1 (1994): 167. Morrone also intimates that Afro-Argentines were signaled out for the most hazardous assignments. Morrone, *Negros en el ejército*, 108.

⁵² Mark D. Szuchman, *Order, Family, and Community in Buenos Aires, 1810-1860* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1988), 193.

⁵³ Samuel Haigh, *Sketches of Buenos Ayres, Chile, and Peru* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1831), 127. Describing the aftermath of the Battle of Mapiú, Haigh observed that the carnage was “immense.” Haigh, *Sketches of Buenos Ayres*, 238.

black men!” (“Porque son ellos, los hombres de color, que han dejado sus huesos y su sangre en los campos de Ituzaingo y Chacabuco, a fin de tener esta patria... esta dignidad que tenemos todos menos ellos. ¡Pobres hombres de color!”).⁵⁴ Ironically, in an 1899 interview with *Caras y Caretas*, an old surviving veteran of the independence wars recalled: “After all, the black left nothing on this earth besides his bones—who would ever remember him?”⁵⁵ The memory of this imagery of bleaching bones of dead black soldiers in fact survived well into the twentieth century. Both Argentine poet Alvaro Yunque and historian José Luis Lanuza invoke this gruesome imagery in their public lectures and writings.⁵⁶

Given the over-representation of blacks, as a percentage of the total population, in the liberating armies of the River Plate, there is undeniably an element of truth to some of these representations. Black troops indeed suffered heavy casualties in clashes with Spanish forces at Sipe-Sipe, Maipú, and Ituzaingo. And as Szuchman asseverates, the deaths of Afro-Argentine males undoubtedly impacted the black family in numerous ways, including financially and demographically, as gleaned by the marked sexual imbalance of the black inhabitants of the city of Buenos Aires in the 1827 census.⁵⁷ However, scholars should not accept uncritically representations and remembrances of

⁵⁴ Juan Bautista Alberdi, *Escritos póstumos de J. B. Alberdi. Miscelánea*, vol. 13 (*Propaganda revolucionaria*). Oscar Terán, ed. (Buenos Aires: Univ. Nacional de Quilmes, 2002), 92.

⁵⁵ “Un sargento de la independencia.” *Caras y Caretas* 2, 21 (Feb. 25, 1899): n.p.

⁵⁶ Yunque is quoted in Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 122; Lanuza, *Morenada*, 164.

⁵⁷ See Mark D. Szuchman, “Household Structure and Political Crisis: Buenos Aires, 1810-1860.” *Latin American Research Review* 21, 3 (1986): 55-93.

Afro-Platine battlefield deaths. Andrews maintains that there is no evidence that blacks were used as cannon fodder in the armies of independence of Argentina. Afro-Argentines were not selected for more dangerous missions or front-line duties above and beyond their Creole counterparts. In fact, battlefield mortality equally reduced white troop strength. Integrated regiments, for instance, suffered heavy losses throughout the wars of liberation. A comparison of military roll calls for 1810 through 1815 of several battalions on active duty against the Spaniards in Bolivia and the northwestern part of Argentina reveals that white forces actually lost more men than the black troops. For example, during the years from 1810 to 1813, the Battalion of Blacks and Mulattoes suffered an annual death rate of 91.2 men for every 1,000; however, the roll calls of the white or Creole Second Battalion for 1813 indicated an elevated rate of 253.2 casualties per 1,000 soldiers, almost three times as much as the African Argentine battalion. George Reid Andrews also hypothesizes that disease and desertion, rather than just battlefield mortality, accounted for the decimation of Afro-Argentine troops during the War of Independence. Thus, Andrews is explicit that blacks were not used as cannon fodder: "Let it stand to Argentina's credit that there is no evidence of such thought or practice in the country's military history."⁵⁸

In spite of the poor remuneration received by black soldiers (who were paid less than their white counterparts), the drudgery, and the dangers of military services, Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan forces generally performed admirably, often displaying

⁵⁸ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 120-23. Fernando López-Alves is thus blatantly wrong when he avers that racial tensions in Argentina's army diminished only after blacks, Indians, and mulattoes were used for the most precarious and dangerous missions or as front liners. López-Alves, *State Formation and Democracy in Latin America*, 251n.152.

extreme heroism. With the notable exception of General Manuel Belgrano, who wrote to San Martín ironically complaining about the simultaneous cowardice and blood-thirstiness of black soldiers in Paraguay, northern Argentina, and Bolivia, other revolutionary-era officers lauded the sacrifices of Afro-Argentine troops.⁵⁹ The great liberator himself, San Martín, for example, wrote to his friend and fellow revolutionary Tomás Godoy Cruz that “the black and mulatto is the best infantryman we have.”⁶⁰ General José María Paz often remarked that one black soldier was worth at least three Europeans.⁶¹ Paz and San Martín both preferred *liberto* (free black) troops. Paz, for example, praised the all-black Seventh Infantry for their discipline and tactics, “so that they served as a model to the rest of the infantry and cavalry.”⁶² Generals Rondeau, Vianna, Miller, and Guido also lavished praise on Afro-Uruguayan and Afro-Argentine soldiers. For instance, Uruguayan revolutionary general Rondeau recorded of his black

⁵⁹ On the alleged battlefield “savagery” (“salvajismo”) and “blood-lust” (“sed de sangre”) of black troops, as well as its critique, consult Peter Blanchard, “La agresividad de los esclavos en Venezuela y Argentina durante las guerras de independencia.” In *Violencia social y conflicto civil: América Latina, siglos XVIII-XIX*. Cuadernos de Historia Latinoamericana, no. 6. Anthony McFarlane and Marianne Wiesebron, eds. (Leiden, Netherlands: Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas Europeos, 1998), 93-117.

⁶⁰ “Carta de San Martín a Tomás Godoy Cruz.” *Documentos del Archivo de San Martín*, v. 5. Museo Mitre; Comisión Nacional del Centenario, dirs. (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de Coni Hermanos, 1910), 538. Eduardo B. Astesano, *La movilización económica en los ejércitos sanmartianos* (Buenos Aires: Librería y Editorial “El Ataneo,” 1951), 87.

⁶¹ M. F. Mantilla remembers General Paz often saying this. M. F. Mantilla, *Páginas históricas* (Buenos Aires: Imp. de P. E. Coni, 1890), 367. José Luis Masini Calderón, “La esclavitud negra en la República Argentina. Epoca independiente.” *Revista de la Junta de Estudios Históricos de Mendoza* 1, 1 (1961): 142-43.

⁶² Voelz, *Slave and Soldier*, 303-04. Writing in 1883, a by-then nostalgic Domingo F. Sarmiento also lauded the heroism of black troopers, contrasting their gallantry to the cowardice of Indians. Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América* (Buenos Aires: La Cultura Argentina 1915 [1883]), 120.

soldiers after one battle: “the intrepidity and valor of the mulattoes and blacks and their heroic commander makes them worthy of the highest eulogy” (“la intrepidez y valor de los pardos y morenos y de su denodado jefe los hace dignos de los mayores elogios”).⁶³ These views reflected then prevalent republican ideals held by liberal nation-builders after the revolutionary wars about patriotic citizens sacrificing for the common good of the *patria* (fatherland or nation). Furthermore, even early nineteenth-century foreign travelers and dignitaries, such as Woodbine Parrish and Samuel Haigh, expressed and recorded similar observations on the gallantry of Afro-Platine troops.⁶⁴

What motivated black soldiers in Argentina and the Banda Oriental (Uruguay) to fight so hard and for so long and risk so much in the process? Certainly, the chances to escape the inhumanity of slavery and eventually gain their freedom were prime motivations. Military manumission guaranteed slave soldiers legal release from their bondage after their service. For example, an early-republican-era court determined that to return the former slave soldier Antonio Lima to slavery after his service to the cause of independence was unjust: “había pasado a la digna clase de libre... [y] sería tirano y monstruoso reducirlo a la penosa esclavitud de que había salido” (“he has passed over to the dignified class of the free... [and] it would be tyrannical and monstrous to once more reduce him to the class of a slave whence he escaped”). Before the victory of

⁶³ Voelz, *Slave and Soldier*, 304; Blanchard, “La agresividad de los esclavos,” 110. Also, Marcos de Estrada, *El Cabo Segundo Antonio Ruiz (a) “Falucho”* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Julio Kaufman, 1964).

⁶⁴ Woodbine Parrish, *Buenos Aires y las provincias del Río de la Plata desde su descubrimiento y conquista por los españoles* (Buenos Aires: Hachette, 1958), 180; Haigh, *Bosquejos de Buenos Aires*, 153, 160.

Chacabuco (1817), General San Martín regaled his black soldiers proclaiming: “*Soldados, hace seis días érais esclavos... y ahora sois ciudadanos*” (“*Soldiers, six days ago you were all slaves... and today you are all citizens*”).⁶⁵ Prominent Creole military officers often testified on behalf of their black soldiers in their petitions for freedom from slavery, citing the valor of their charges and demanding the emancipation of slave warriors as consistent with the cause of national freedom.⁶⁶

While African Argentine soldiers fought on both sides of the liberal and conservative civil wars of the first half of the 1800s, they were especially associated in the memory of the nation with the federalist regime of Buenos Aires leader Juan Manuel de Rosas. Ricardo Salvatore has documented the loyalty of Afro-Argentines to Rosas and their importance to the strongman’s powerbase.⁶⁷ In addition, in his seminal *Wandering Paysanos*, Salvatore recaptures the memories of blacks about their leader and how the recollections shaped their political consciousness.⁶⁸ Vitriolic anti-Rosas memorialist José María Ramos Mejía remembered that black men swelled the ranks of Rosas’s brigades and regiments, notably the Third Brigade (“*Tercera Brigada*”) and the

⁶⁵ Quoted in Bohigas, “*Esclavos y reclutas en Sudamérica*,” 292. Italics in the original.

⁶⁶ Blanchard, “*La agresividad*,” 110.

⁶⁷ Ricardo D. Salvatore, “Integral Outsiders: Afro-Argentines in the Era of Juan Manuel de Rosas and Beyond.” In *Beyond Slavery: The Multilayered Legacy of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Darién J. Davis, ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), ch. 3.

⁶⁸ Ricardo D. Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos: State Order and Subaltern Experience in Buenos Aires during the Rosas Era* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2003). For instance, Salvatore records the historically accurate memories of federalist black soldier Bonifacio Martínez from Santa Fe province, north of Buenos Aires, evidencing “a dose of political awareness.” Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos*, 334-35.

dictator's elite Restorers' Regiment ("Regimiento de Restauradores"), as well as the Defenders of Buenos Aires ("Defensores de Buenos Aires"). According to Ramos Mejía, black soldiers for these elite forces were selected based on their physical prowess.⁶⁹ Like generals San Martín and Paz before him, Rosas also preferred black soldiers. In a note in the *Gaceta Mercantil* of Buenos Aires dated 1843, Governor Rosas indicated that he considered blacks and mulattoes the most valiant defenders of liberty against enemies from within, Unitarists, and from without. Federalist poet Francisco Acuña de Figueroa reproduces in *bozal* (Afro-Castillian dialect) black military support for Rosas: "Battalions of African blood,/Already the faithless enemy we see,/From afar the drum beats:/Ask no quarter, and give none we."⁷⁰ Afro-Argentine troops remained loyal to their *caudillo* (leader) until the bitter end, laying down their lives for him at Caseros in 1852.⁷¹

Regardless of Rosas's appeal to the Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, blacks also fought for other strongmen in the interior provinces as light cavalry or *montoneras* and infantry. African Argentines fought against Rosas and with Urquiza at Caseros, against Urquiza and with Bartolomé Mitre at Pavón in 1861, as shock troops in the Paraguayan

⁶⁹ José María Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2001 [1907]), 202, 550-52, 554-55, 556. Ramos Mejía nonetheless also pays a moving tribute to the black forces of the nation. Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 558.

⁷⁰ "BATAYONE de sangle flicana,/Ya len fielo mimigo si ve,/Que a legueyo se toca e tambole:/Nem pedimo, nem damo cualté." Francisco Acuña de Figueroa, "Canción guerrera de los batallones de negros." In *Cancionero del tiempo de Rosas*, 2nd ed. José Luis Lanuza, comp. (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1941), 85-87, the quoted stanza appears on page 85. The "African troops" claim that Unitarist "scum" "cannot rightly call themselves Argentine or Oriental (Uruguayan)": "No melece se yama gentino/Ni orientale, ese chuma...." Figueroa, "Canción guerrera de los batallones de negros," 86.

⁷¹ John Lynch, *Argentine Dictator: Juan Manuel de Rosas, 1829-1852* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 123-24, 134, 188, 191.

War of 1864-1870, and with Roca against Indians in the final “Conquest of the Desert” in 1879.⁷² In the Banda Oriental or Uruguay, gauchos and colored *montoneras* fought until the end of the nineteenth century and start of the twentieth century for the last of the cowboy *caudillos*, Gumercindo and Aparicio Saravia. Furthermore, even Afro-Platine women participated directly in the many nineteenth-century wars. For example, as John Chasteen documents, black women were often found among the *montonera* army’s supply carts. A rare 1897 description emphasized the “mannishness” of these colored women, including riding bareback.⁷³ Peter Blanchard also points out that black women, slave and free, often accompanied their men on military campaigns. Like their male counterparts, black women fought for their own emancipation, taking advantage of military payments to purchase their liberty from bondage. Amazingly, history remembers that a few of these women even achieved a modicum of notoriety as warriors in their own right, as was the case with Josefa Tenorio and Carmen Ledesma.⁷⁴ The latter eventually rose to become a sergeant first class.⁷⁵

George Reid Andrews intimates that Afro-Argentine troops enlisted to exact

⁷² Morrone, *Negros en el ejército*, 72-76.

⁷³ John Charles Chasteen, *Heroes on Horseback: A Life and Times of the Last Gaucho Caudillos*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1995), 64-66.

⁷⁴ Despite the title, historian Rafael Gutiérrez documents “Las Damas de la Guerra.” Rafael Gutiérrez, “Los olvidados de la guerra.” <http://museonor.gov.ar/olvidados.htm>.

⁷⁵ Blanchard, “La agresividad de los esclavos,” 113-15. See also Miguel Angel de Marco’s *La patria, los hombres y el coraje: historias de la Argentina heroica* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1998), 177-80, which, despite the book’s explicitly patriarchal title, remembers the military exploits of both “Mama Carmen” and Rosa “La Tigra,” two black women fighters. The author, however, immediately “masculinizes” these women of color by describing them as “dos mujeres con agallas,” literally, “two women with balls.” For more on “Mama Carmen,” see Eduardo Gutiérrez, *Croquis y siluetas militares. Escenas contemporáneas de nuestros campamentos*

revenge on their white or Spanish masters; Andrews cites first-hand accounts of the “bloodthirstiness” and “savagery” of black troops as possible proof of their hidden motivations.⁷⁶ Samuel Haigh, for example, recalled in terms similar to San Martín’s the “gloomy ferocity of the soldiers, particularly the blacks.”⁷⁷ However, as Peter Blanchard has so ably established, slave recruits in the wars of independence just as often seemed to avoid extreme violence, evidencing more concern about merely surviving. Desertions were common. General Paz, for instance, recorded in his memoirs that during the 1815 march from Buenos Aires to Bolivia, three thousand soldiers deserted.⁷⁸ Rather than masking a resentment of their masters, Blanchard considers whatever “sed de sangre” (“bloodthirstiness”) evidenced on the battlefields by black soldiers more an angry reaction to the heavy losses endured by revolutionary forces, black and white, at the hands of the Spaniards.⁷⁹ Contemporary British observer Samuel Haigh supports Blanchard’s reading of events. Haigh recorded that the fury of black soldiers resulted

(Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2001 [1886]), 13-15, 20-21, 29-32, 143-46, a contemporary source which remembers “forgotten heroes,” including Afro-Argentines and women.

⁷⁶ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 127.

⁷⁷ Haigh, *Sketches of Buenos Ayres*, 214. Haigh also recalled: “Nothing could exceed the savage fury of the Black soldiers in the patriot army....” Haigh, *Sketches of Buenos Ayres*, 235.

⁷⁸ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 124-25; Blanchard, “La agresividad,” 112.

⁷⁹ Blanchard, “La agresividad,” 106, 110. According to some reports, Afro-Platine troops responded to threats of returning to slavery on Spanish sugar plantations by shouting “No quere azuca, pues tomá azuca,” meaning something akin to “I don’t want sugar, take your sugar.” Juan M. Espora, *Episodios nacionales* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Hurapes, 1945), 95-96. On the cover page of this tome, an epigram appears making clear its national mnemonic function: “Honrar con justicia la memoria de los muertos, es estimular las virtudes de los vivos” (“Honoring the memory of the dead, is to stimulate the [patriotic] virtues of the living”).

from having “borne the brunt of the action against the finest Spanish regiment.”⁸⁰

Ultimately, it seems, Afro-Platine soldiers were as diverse in their battlefield prowess (or lack thereof) as other troopers, white or non-white.⁸¹

In addition, as Andrews and others suggest, the possibility of social mobility may also explain the active role played by Afro-Platines in the military before, during, and after the independence struggles from Spain. Black males could ascend the social ladder by becoming officers, for example. Andrews calculates that of the 104 officers whose race was identifiable in historical records from 1800 to 1860 in selected battalions from Buenos Aires, over a third (39) were Afro-Argentine. Between 1800 and 1860, Andrews documents two colonels, five lieutenant colonels, five majors, thirteen captains, nine lieutenants, and five sub-liuetenants in selected Buenos Aires battalions. Black officers, moreover, like their white counterparts, enjoyed privileges of the military *fuero* or perquisites during and immediately after the colonial period in the River Plate and throughout the Americas. Especially significant for black officers was the right to

⁸⁰ Haigh, *Sketches of Buenos Ayres*, 235. Throughout the Atlantic world during modernity, the black male body has been represented as both violent (and the white masculine body as non-violent) and exploitable. Ronald L. Jackson III, *Scripting the Black Masculine Body: Identity, Discourse, and Racial Politics in Popular Media* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 80-87, 87-101.

⁸¹ Desertion, for example, was common among troops regardless of color in the nineteenth century. Szuchman, Andrews, and Blanchard all document high rates of desertion among Afro-Argentine soldiers. Szuchman, *Order, Family, and Community*, 82-83; Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 124-27; Blanchard, *Under the Flags of Freedom*, 57, 60, 136-37, 139. See also, Rabinovich, *Ser soldado*, 136-48. Lucio V. Mansilla records an old black deserter from San Martín’s army living among the Ranquele Indians of the Pampas. Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 125. However, Marta Goldberg and Laura Jany argue based on their own archival research that desertions of black troops were in fact infrequent. Marta B. Goldberg and Laura B. Jany, “Algunos problemas referentes a la situación del esclavo en el Río de la Plata.” *VI Congreso Internacional de Historia de América*, vol. 6 (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1966), 73.

employ the honorific title of “Don.” Andrews, Morrone, and Meisel confirm the use of this title by Afro-Argentine officers.⁸² The spouses of black officers were consequently to be addressed as “Doña” by peers and social inferiors. The social mobility afforded Afro-Platine officers, however limited, nonetheless played an important role in military race relations, as did the integration of the troops during and after the wars of independence. Perhaps Angel Rosenblat overstates his case when he intimates that “the armies of independence were the embryo of a new democracy” in Argentina.⁸³ Still, the social importance of the military for Afro-Platines should not be trivialized or overlooked.

Several notable black officers were remembered for their valor and patriotism by their compatriots well into the twentieth century. Some of the more memorable Afro-Argentine officers were the already mentioned Manuel Barbarín, hero of the British invasions, who achieved a rank of lieutenant colonel, Juan Bautista Cabral, the savior of San Martín at the Battle of San Lorenzo (1813), and Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz, the

⁸² George Reid Andrews, “The Afro-Argentine Officers of Buenos Aires Province, 1800-1860.” *The Journal of Negro History* 64, 2 (Spring 1979): 85-100; Morrone, *Negros en el ejército*, 37; Seth J. Meisel, “War Economy and Society in Post-Independence Córdoba, Argentina.” Ph. D. diss., Stanford Univ., 1998, 91. The classic study of the *fuero militar* in Spanish America is Lyle N. McAlister, *The “Fuero Militar” in New Spain, 1764-1800* (Gainesville: Univ. of Florida Press, 1957). Almost inexplicably, Fernando López-Alves claims that Afro-Argentines could not achieve the officer ranks. López-Alves, *State Formation and Democracy in Latin America*, 191. He cites David Bushnell, *Reform and Reaction in the Platine Provinces, 1810-1852* (Gainesville: Univ. Presses of Florida, 1983), 13, but Bushnell makes no such assertion on the page referenced by López-Alves. López-Alves released his book well after the publications of Andrews and Blanchard, among others, that clearly prove that blacks were officers in Argentina in the nineteenth century.

⁸³ Angel Rosenblat, “Las castas en la vida de las gobernaciones del virreinato. Importancia de cada sangre en la fusión étnica hasta 1810.” In *Historia argentina*. Roberto Levellier, ed. (Buenos Aires: Plaza y Janés, 1985), 78.

legendary “Falucho.” This list also included the previously referenced colonels José María Morales, the soldier-statesman, and Casildo Thompson, the warrior turned poet. Two other prominent Afro-Argentine colonels were the Sosas, Domingo and Agustín. However, perhaps the most notable of the Afro-Argentine officers was Colonel Lorenzo I. Barcala. While Barcala fought in the independence armies and on both sides of the Argentine civil war, eventually his Unitarist sentiments earned him the enmity of La Rioja strongman and Rosas loyalist Facundo Quiroga. Following Quiroga’s assassination in 1835, Governor Molina of Córdoba accused Barcala of plotting to overthrow the federalist provincial regime then in power. In that year, Barcala was tried for sedition and executed by firing squad.⁸⁴ Domingo F. Sarmiento, as already alluded to, highly esteemed Barcala a paragon of virtue, patriotism, and civilization, referring to him as “El caballero negro” or “illustrious black gentleman.”⁸⁵

Regardless of the social mobility afforded a few black men, George Reid Andrews is puzzled by the apparent military devotion of Afro-Argentines, given the persistent discrimination and hardship faced by black veterans and their race as a whole after independence. In spite of their bravery and services rendered to the nascent national states of the River Plate, Afro-Argentines faced continued racism and were often left

⁸⁴ Biographies for these black soldier-patriots can be had in de Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*. Barcala was especially commemorated leading up to and during the military coup of 1930. See José Canale, *El Coronel Don Lorenzo Barcala (contribución al estudio de la vida militar argentina)* (Buenos Aires: Sociedad de Publicaciones “El Inca,” 1927); and Lucio Funes, “El Coronel Barcala.” *Junta de Estudios Históricos de Mendoza* 7, 17-18 (1937): 131-46.

⁸⁵ Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism*. Kathleen Ross, trans. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2003), 222.

destitute upon their return from war.⁸⁶ Vicente G. Quesada recalls in his memoirs seeing as a youth disabled black veterans begging for food and money on the streets of Buenos Aires. “Muchos que pertenecieron al Ejército de los Andes se arrastraban por las calles con las piernas cortadas, o perdidas por las nieves al atravesar las altas cordilleras,” (“Many who belonged to the Army of the Andes dragged themselves along the streets with their legs amputated, or lost to the glaciers while traversing the mighty ranges [of the Andes]),” recalls Quesada. These black veterans of San Martín’s Army “mendigaban el pan” (“they go about begging for their food”), yet, no doubt inspired by nostalgia, also “tenían un fuego en su mirada cuando hablaban del Ejército de la Patria” (“they have a fire in their stare when talking about the Army of the Fatherland”). Despite their plight after the wars, and evidencing a deep love of country, black veterans “[n]unca tenían una mala palabra de queja contra sus jefes” (“they never had a bad thing to say about their military superiors”), according to Quesada. Nevertheless, Quesada complains about the then present suffering of the veterans: “que tan mal les pagaba abandonándolos a la caridad pública” (“gave them a terrible payback abandoning them to the mercy of public charity”). Echoing Alberdi, who was himself supposedly quoting San Martín,⁸⁷

⁸⁶ It should be mentioned, however, that the Argentine government established a *Campo de Inválidos* or “Invalid Residence” in 1852 for all those veterans “consecrating the Fatherland tributes of blood to defend its sovereignty and laws.” Comando en Jefe del Ejército, *Reseña histórica y orgánica del ejército argentino*, vol. 1, 478-79.

⁸⁷ Allegedly, after the battle of Chacabuco (1817), General San Martín surveyed the battlefield, and upon seeing the bodies of so many dead Afro-Argentine soldiers, movingly cried out: “¡mis pobres negros!” (“my poor blacks!”). “El sargento Cabral era negro y no era sargento.” <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1479080-el-sargento-cabral-era-negro>.

Quesada sympathetically bemoans the impecunious condition of black war veterans in the Buenos Aires of his day by crying out: “¡Pobres negros!”⁸⁸

The iconic Buenos Aires weekly *Caras y Caretas* also often remembered black war veterans and noted their social and economic problems. In June 1900, for instance, the magazine featured a story about the poverty of an Afro-Argentine veteran of the Paraguayan War or War of the Triple Alliance (1864-1870), Juan Martínez Moreira, known as “Mandinga.” Martínez Moreira had long been unemployed when the *Caras y Caretas* story about him appeared. After recalling his military career to the writer, Fabio Carrizo, “Mandinga” relates how he lives off the charity of others, especially his beloved “dark-skinned female cooks” (“las morenas cocineras”), who would surreptitiously provide him with food smuggled from their employers. The article also features a sad black and white photograph of Martínez Moreira in front of his hovel-like “residence,”

⁸⁸ Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*, 89. Bartolomé Mitre commemorates the crippled war veterans in his nationalistic poem “El inválido.” No doubt writing about a black soldier, Mitre pens: “I was a soldier of the Andes Army,/At Maipo I was made a corporal,/And bullets took my arm at Ituzaingó:/Then was my agony heard amidst the heavy fire,/And today with disparege I am dismissed/An alms for God’s sake!” (“Fui soldado de los Andes,/En Maipo cabo me hicieron,/Y las balas deshacieron/Mi brazo en Ituzaingó:/Entonces mi voz se oía/En medio del fuego recio,/Y hoy me arrojan con desprecio/¡Una limosna por Dios!”) Bartolomé Mitre, “El inválido.” *Obras completas de Bartolomé Mitre*, vol. 18 (III.—*Obras literarias y traducciones*) Ed. ordenada por el Honorable Congreso de la Nación Argentina, Ley no. 12.328, (1938-) (Buenos Aires: Marcos Víctor Durruty Impresor, 1972), 129-31, quoted stanza appears on page 130. Nicolás Avellaneda also paid homage to wounded war veterans. “¡Gloria á las heridas hechas y á las recibidas en campo abierto, á la luz del sol y por noble espada del soldado!” (“Glory to the wounds given and received in open battle, at mid-day and by the noble sword of the soldier”). Nicolás Avellaneda, “El inválido.” In *Antología patriótica, prosa y verso. Contribución á la enseñanza patriótica de la escuela argentina*. Bernardo L. Peyret, comp. (Buenos Aires: J. LaJouane y Cía., 1911), 321-22. See also Mitre’s poem dedicated to the memory of the martyrs of independence, “A los mártires de la independencia,” *Obras completas de Bartolomé Mitre*, vol. 18, 127.

totally destitute, surrounded by memory objects of his youth and his favorite reading materials.⁸⁹

However, the hard-to-overlook patriotism of Afro-Platines was not forgotten by contemporaries. Quesada reminds his compatriots that “the black race joined in the War of Independence and spilled its blood with the same spirit and heroism than during the British invasions.”⁹⁰ Writing under the pseudonym Víctor Gálvez, Quesada remembers, bringing to memory the legendary “Falucho,” that black soldiers “spilled their blood under the flag of the country... dying longing for liberty. These black troops distinguished themselves as “valiant,” sober,” and “excellent soldiers... loyal to the national flag.”⁹¹ *Caras y Caretas* published a series of commemorative articles on Argentine military history in the early twentieth century in anticipation of the centennial

⁸⁹ Fabio Carrizo, “De la calle y la vereda. Mandinga.” *Caras y Caretas* 3, 91 (June 30, 1900): n.p. *Caras y Caretas* often ran stories about Afro-Argentine war veterans as nostalgia pieces. E.g., “Tipos populares. El mazamorrero Juan José de Urquiza.” *Caras y Caretas* 3, 102 (Sept. 15, 1900): n.p. This black veteran served under the Entre Ríos *caudillo* (strongman) Justo José de Urquiza until 1852. See also Rufino Marín, “El ‘Negro Muleta.’ Un viejo soldado que tiene 121 años de edad.” *Caras y Caretas* 19, 928 (Dec. 2, 1916): n.p. This black veteran achieved the rank of sergeant and won two medals of valor during the Paraguayan War. And “Necrología. Fallecimiento del Sr. Juan Drysdale y del Teniente Coronel Urquiola.” *Caras y Caretas* 4, 133 (April 20, 1901): n.p. Lieutenant Colonel Urquiola fought in both the civil and Indian wars. However, no amount of commemoration then (or now) should ignore the real discrimination and economic displacement faced by Afro-Argentine war veterans and other people of color in the nineteenth century (and beyond) in Argentina and Uruguay.

⁹⁰ In the original: “La raza negra se mezcló en la guerra de independencia y derramó su sangre con el mismo brío y heroicidad con que lo hizo en las invasiones inglesas.” Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*, 85. Also, for their military service, the Argentine republic paternalistically reserved jobs of congressional orderlies and pages for black men. Mamerto Fidel Quinteros, *Memorias de un negro del Congreso* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Argentinos de L. J. Rosso, y Cía., 1924), records his memories as serving as a black congressional worker for many decades.

⁹¹ Víctor Gálvez, “La raza africana en Buenos Aires. Recuerdos de otros tiempos.” *Nueva Revista de Buenos Aires* 3, 8 (1881): 256, 257. Note the explicitly notslgi subtitle of the article.

celebrations, some of which featured Afro-Argentines.⁹² As for the patriotism of Afro-Argentines, George Reid Andrews concedes that many black Argentines “believed in love of country and the principles of heroism, loyalty, and valor.”⁹³ Furthermore, Carmen Bernand of the University of Paris at Nanterre documents the testimonies of slave soldiers who clearly express their desires to “serve with love for the fatherland” (“servir con amor a la patria”). Bernand cites slave recruit testimonies asserting their attachment to the homeland and their refusal of seeing it fall to “strangers” or foreigners.⁹⁴ Moreover, as already mentioned, both Blanchard and Meisel document the revolutionary state’s support of slave recruit freedom in the early nineteenth century, thereby perhaps inspiring a reciprocal loyalty among black soldiers and officers.⁹⁵

For example, in the words of the previously mentioned Afro-Uruguayan slave recruit Francisco Estrada: “[We] seek the most opportune moment to place ourselves under the flags of freedom.... We then embrace the generosity of the fatherland, singing hymns of liberty, and uniting our desires, our hearts with the holy sentiments of the just system of Liberty....” (“[B]uscamos el tiempo oportuno de ponernos bajo las banderas de la libertad.... Nos acogimos entonces al sistema generoso de la patria, cantamos los

⁹² E.g., “La Conquista de Desierto.” *Caras y Caretas* 6, 237 (April 18, 1903): n.p., features and old Afro-Argentine veteran of Julio A. Roca’s triumph over the natives of the Argentine plains.

⁹³ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 137.

⁹⁴ Carmen Bernand, “Entre pueblo y plebe: patriotas, pardos, africanos en Argentina (1790-1852).” In *Blacks, Coloureds and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*. Nancy Priscilla Naro, ed. (London: Inst. of Latin American Studies, 2003), 60-80.

⁹⁵ Blanchard, “La agresividad de los esclavos,” 109-10; Meisel, “War Economy and Society,” 88-89.

himnos de la libertad, y uniendo nuestros deseos, nuestros corazones con los santos sentimientos del sistema justo de la Libertad...”).⁹⁶ In December 1825, Afro-Uruguayans sent General Juan Antonio Lavalleja a letter promising their unconditional support in defending the fatherland: “We all swear under oath to commit ourselves to spill our last drop of blood... to defend of the Fatherland and die dismembered.”⁹⁷ Following the Brazilian empire’s capture of the Banda Oriental in 1821, a small band of insurgents, the “Immortal Thirty Three,” fought for and reasserted the independence of Uruguay in 1825. Among the “Immortal Thirty Three” who fought to liberate Uruguay from Brazil were (at least) two slaves bearing the important last names of Artigas and Oribe, thereby indicating their owners.⁹⁸ A “foundational icon” depicting and remembering the thirty-three national heroes is Juan Manuel Blanes’s “The Oath of the Thirty-three Orientals” (“El juramento de los Treinta y Tres Orientales”), finished in 1877.⁹⁹ In addition, the

⁹⁶ Quoted in Blanchard, “La agresividad de los esclavos,” 101.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, *El negro en el Uruguay: pasado y presente* (Montevideo: Revista del Inst. Histórico y Geográfico del Uruguay, 1965), 253-54. In the original: “Todos comprometidos bajo el juramento que han de derramar su última gota de sangre... para libertar la Patria y morir descuartizados.”

⁹⁸ Jacinto Carranza compiles nineteenth-century lists of combatants among the “Immortal Thirty Three” from various contemporary publications. All include the names of Dioniso Oribe and Joaquín Artigas, listed as “criados,” “sirvientes,” “negros esclavos,” or “esclavos libertos,” all basically meaning slaves or ex-slaves. One list from 1825 even gives us the names of their masters, Don Manuel Oribe and Don Pantaleón Artigas, respectively. Jacinto Carranza, *¿Cuántos eran los Treinta y Tres?* (Montevideo: Talleres Gráficos “33,” 1946), 16-19, 26-29, 34-41, 44-47. Also, Oscar D. Montaña, *Yeninyanya (Umkhonto II)* (Montevideo: Rosebud, 2001), 70-71.

⁹⁹ Hugo Achugar, “Foundational Images of Latin America.” In *Building Nineteenth-Century Latin America: Re-Rooted Cultures, Identities, and Nations*. William G. Acree, Jr. and Juan Carlos González Espitia, eds. (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 2009), 14-18. Achugar, however, avers that Afro-Uruguayans are not represented in this foundational painting, often reproduced throughout the last century in textbooks, stamps, and paper money in Uruguay.

already cited patriotic poems of nineteenth-century Afro-Argentine poets Horacio Mendizábal and Gabino Ezeiza respectively invoked the historical memory of black heroes José María Morales and “Falucho” as national icons. “Not to be overlooked in this nationalistic moment is the role Afro-Argentines played in the battles determining the nation’s destiny,” intimates Marvin Lewis.¹⁰⁰ In the historical remembrances of Argentines and Uruguayans respectively, the ultimate patriotism of Afro-Platines was embodied in the legendary soldiers “Falucho” and “Ansina.”

Afro-Platine militray participation was thus a viable site of both historical memory and national identity during the nineteenth century in the River Plate. In Argentina and Uruguay, nineteenth-century wars of independence and civil conflicts allowed for the centralization of power in national governments employing armies composed of citizen-soldiers of all races and classes. Foote and Harder Horst asseverate that wars represent moments in which national identity is contested and reimagined.¹⁰¹ Along these lines, then, the central argument of this chapter is that Afro-Platines were present in the military of the region from the onset and played key roles as citizen-soldiers in the wars of independence and the subsequent civil wars. They thus were agents of nation building throughout the nineteenth century in the River Plate. Seth Meisel and others have commented on the “politicized solidarity” created by military

According to Achugar, the painting proffers a “homogenous portrayal in which ethnic elements are blended into a general ‘Uruguayan’ character...” Achugar, “Foundational Images,” 17.

¹⁰⁰ Marvin A. Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse: Another Dimension of the Black Diaspora* (Columbia, MO: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1996): 39.

¹⁰¹ Foote and Harder Horst, “Introduction: Decentering War,” 7.

service among soldiers in nineteenth-century Argentina.¹⁰² Also, Sara E. Mata comments that the armies of independence created a military identity that erased ethnic distinctions.¹⁰³ In this way, a social space for black heroes was therefore created in the national memory and imagination or imaginary.

To commemorate the May Revolution in 1815 four statues were erected in the “Plaza de la Victoria” (today “Plaza de Mayo”), representing Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. On the statue for “Redeemed Africa,” the inscription on the dedicatory plaque recalled the redemption of her “sons” in the Americas.¹⁰⁴ In reality, however, it was Africa’s “unfortunate” sons (and daughters) who redeemed the Americas from bondage and “bestowed this precious gift” of “proud liberty” upon her.

Retired Argentine colonel Juan Lucio Torres has recently written an explicitly commemorative monograph about black Argentine soldiers and officers. Peter Burke, among others, notes that narrative histories like Colonel Torres’s are as much a means of social memory transmission as visual objects such as monuments. Therefore, history

¹⁰² Meisel, “‘The Fruit of Freedom’,” 287.

¹⁰³ Sara E. Mata, “Negros y esclavos en la guerra por la independencia. Salta 1810-1821.” In “*Negros de la Patria.*” *Los afrodescendientes en las luchas por la independencia en el antiguo Virreinato del Río de la Plata.* Silvia C. Mallo and Ignacio Telesca, eds. (Buenos Aires: Editorial SB, 2010), 144. Morrone also maintains that after independence in the military racial distinctions were eliminated. Morrone, *Negros en el ejército*, 103.

¹⁰⁴ Lanuza, *Morenada*, 70. Seth Meisel translates a few verses of the the plaque’s poem, attributed to the poet Don Saturnino de la Rosa by nationalist historian Vicente Fidel López: “Ever since the American/with his proud liberty/compassionate and generous/bestowed this precious gift upon the unfortunate African.” Meisel, “‘The Fruit of Freedom’,” 275; Lanuza, *Morenada*, 70.

writing can itself constitute a site of memory.¹⁰⁵ Significantly, Torres's book was published by the Institute for Argentine Military History, which is under the official auspices of the national Army's Central Command, and thus represents an official locus of historical memory about the Argentine armed forces. Colonel Torres dedicates his book to all Afro-Argentine soldiers, whom "together with their white fathers were conscripted to defend the fatherland." The work strives "to do justice" by the sacrifices of black soldiers in Argentina by "remembering" their many contributions to the national state. "There are events that characterize our nation and the participation of the black man in our military is one of those, reason enough not to forget and to pay permanent homage to their members, a remembrance that will endure throughout time," extols Torres.¹⁰⁶ He therefore urges his comrades: "Soldados argentinos, camaradas: mantengan y difundan la Historia y las tradiciones del Ejército, porque si ellas se olvidan, ocultan, desvirtúan o se pierden, se pone en peligro la continuidad histórica de la Institución" ("Argentine soldiers, comrades: maintain and diffuse the History and traditions of the Army, because if they are ignored, obscured or lost, then the historic continuity of the Institution itself is put at risk").¹⁰⁷ As will be documented, the legends and traditions of

¹⁰⁵ Peter Buke, "History as Social Memory." In *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*. Thomas Butler, ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 100-02.

¹⁰⁶ Juan Lucio Torres, *El soldado negro en la epopeya libertadora argentina. Integrando el Ejército Argentino y de otros países*. (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Historia Militar Argentina, 2003), 5. To prevent the "forgetting" of Afro-Argentine military sacrifices, Torres quotes from a nineteenth-century document dedicated "a los héroes soldados negros: ("black military heroes"): "¡Ah! No olvides que su sangre es el bálsamo con que se cierra las heridas de la patria." Torres, *El soldado negro en la epopeya y libertadora argentina*, 26.

¹⁰⁷ Torres concludes with a moving poem written by a current Argentine officer, Colonel Orlando Mario Punzi, dedicated to the memory of black loyalty and heroism, simply entitled "Negro." Col. Punzi's ode begins by recalling the trans-Atlantic slave trade from Angola, Congo, and

black military service have been in fact variously commemorated and remembered over the last century.

Conclusion

A dominant ideal for nationalism, especially in times of war, was that of the soldier, especially the volunteer, one who was ready to sacrifice all for the fatherland. The central aspect of this nationalistic military ideal (and other patriotic myths) was heroism, which found its ultimate expression in masculine valor and death in defense of the *patria*. Wartime service itself developed a powerful mythic status, and the rhetoric of sacrifice for the nation served to heighten heroism. Among others, Karen Hagemann shows how the call to patriotism and readiness to sacrifice oneself for the nation combined the interests of both the state and its citizens and was expressed in terms of family, home, and fatherland.¹⁰⁸ The cult and myth of the heroic soldier was used by Argentine state builders in the last third of the nineteenth century to construct a unified

Mozambique, that brought thousands of Africans to Argentina between the sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The poem then goes on to relate Afro-Argentine folklore and history, before moving on to describe the many battles fought by black legions in the nineteenth century. The poem then reminds its readers about black soldiers sacrificing life and limb at Sipe-Sipe, Montevideo, and “Maypo” (Maipú). San Martín’s crossing of the Andes is also recalled: “Los Andes a mis pies.../al tope de la cuarta cordillera.../Y yo con los trescientos./**Solo quedó mi lápida de nieve con cinco letras ilegibles: NEGRO**” (“The Andes at my feet.../at the top of the fourth range.../And I with the three hundred./**All that remains in the snows is my tombstone with five barely legible letters: NEGRO**”). Bold in the original. Torres, *El soldado negro en la epopeya y libertadora argentina*, 297.

¹⁰⁸ Karen Hagemann, “German heroes: The cult of the death for the fatherland in nineteenth-century Germany.” In *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh, eds. (Manchester, UK: Manchester Univ. Press, 2004), 116-34. George Mosse, moreover, also alludes to the gendered dimensions of defense of the fatherland, intimating “... nationalism as a manly faith steeled in war.” George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), 28.

and centralized nation-state after the downfall of federalism and included the glorification of Afro-Platine volunteers and regular troops.

This chapter documents the importance of Afro-Platines to the military history and heritage of the Río de la Plata. From earliest colonial times in the sixteenth-century River Plate, blacks, free and slave alike, volunteered or were conscripted by the state to serve in the military and shed their blood in defense of the *patria* (fatherland). Afro-Platines played key roles as citizen-soldiers in the wars of independence and the subsequent civil wars and thus were agents of nation building throughout the nineteenth century in both Argentina and Uruguay. Moreover, the militarization of the Río de la Plata in the 1800s allowed for the social mobility of some blacks into the officer class; a few of these Afro-Platine officers, whether real historical persons, legends, or a bit of both, attained the status of national icons or myths.

However, Afro-Platines themselves remembered their own sacrifices for their nations. For example, recall the story in the the black Argentine newspaper *La Broma* from February 22, 1878 reminding its Afro-Argentine readers that “la sangre de sus hijos riega los campos de la Patria,” alluding to the many foreign and civil wars of the nineteenth century in which black soldiers fought and died. In the same newspaper in a June 4, 1880 editorial addresses from Montevideo the “hermanos de raza y patria” (“racial and national brethren”) in Argentina’s capital city and recalls the memory of General San Martín and his black soldiers. San Martín was extolled as a great patriot who fought alongside numerous black heroes to secure “the freedom of our beloved fatherland.” “La sociedad de color” (“colored society”) then gathered in Montevideo, moreover, convened to render homage to the liberator, “the consummate figure of the

highest summit of our nation” (“la figura mas culminante de la epopeya mas grandiosa de nuestra patria”), thereby putting on display their intense patriotic sentiments.¹⁰⁹ Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans were thus not only agents of their own freedom won by their military service for their nations, they were also the objects of their own historical remembrances.

The dead Afro-Platine soldier, so lamented by San Martín, Alberdi, and other Creole nationalists, made for an ideal “vanishing other,” however. With the graphic imagery of their spilled blood and whitening bones on battlefields previously referenced, Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan soldiers were ultimately victims of their own sacrifices for the nation.¹¹⁰ The very corporeality of black male martyrization for the nation was an acceptable social-racial script.¹¹¹ Even if they were not used as cannon fodder, as Szuchman has documented the battlefield deaths of black men in the River Plate adversely affected that black family. It also led to the demographic collapse of the African-descended populations of Argentina, as claimed by Andrews and Morrone,

¹⁰⁹ “Redacción.” *La Broma*, Feb. 22, 1878. In *Piedra libre para nuestros negros. La Broma y otros periódicos de la comunidad afroargentina (1873-1882)*. Tomás A. Platero, comp. (Buenos Aires: Inst. Histórico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2004), 41; “Corona de fierro.” *La Broma*, June 4, 1880, in *Piedra libre*, 35-36.

¹¹⁰ However, as an 1880 editorial in the white Buenos Aires daily *El Porteño* makes clear, Afro-Argentines were not extinguished as of the late nineteenth century, although they faced much economic and social discrimination, despite the “good and loyal services owed by the nation to the people of color, who constantly shed their blood for public liberties and national honor.” Cited in Luis Soler Cañas, “Pardos y morenos en el Año 80...” *Revista del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas* “Juan Manuel de Rosas,” no. 23 (1963): 281.

¹¹¹ As noted by many theorists, the body is the primary site of racial representation, and it facilitates both descriptive and ascriptive means for assigning signification to in-groups and out-groups alike. As such, the body (even of the dead) can be said to be political. Jackson III, *Scripting the Black Masculine Body*, 1-2, 12, 14.

among others. The putative (physical) disappearance of Afro-Argentines (and to a lesser degree Afro-Uruguayans) played perfectly into the hands of Creole nostalgists, who thus reimagined and fondly remembered on their own terms and for their own social and/or political agendas a select few black national heroes in the collective memory of the River Plate republics starting as early as the middle of the nineteenth century and continuing to the present day in fact. For generations in the River Plate, the names “Ansina,” “Falucho,” “sargento” Juan Bautista Cabral, and Lorenzo Barcala, among others, were remembered in song, verse, and iconography as national heroes who fought and, just as often, died for the nation. Therefore, as subsequent chapters document, a few Afro-Platine heroes of the nineteenth century were commemorated in numerous ways in the late 1800s and early 1900s (and well beyond) in both Argentina and Uruguay.

CHAPTER 5

“Rey de todo los tambores”—Juan Manuel de Rosas, the Generation of 1837, and Blackness in Nineteenth-Century Argentina

“Rosas era Presidente y Rey de todos los *Tambores* de la ciudad.” José M. Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2001 [1907]), 447.

Introduction

This chapter lays out the relationship of conservative *caudillo* (strongman) Juan Manuel de Rosas with the black community of Buenos Aires in the first half of the nineteenth century. This serves as background information for the reader to better understand the representations and remembrances of Afro-Argentines by a foundational group of Argentine literati and cultural nation builders during the middle of the nineteenth century. This group and its views on Afro-Argentines are examined in detail in the next chapter. These liberal intellectuals, the Generation of 1837, experienced the collective repression of the conservative Rosas regime and its subaltern, especially Afro-Argentine, allies in the early- to mid-1800s. Their writings would eventually constitute the first Argentine national canon and therefore shaped the country’s emerging ideology and national self-image, one which was explicitly white, liberal, European, and cosmopolitan.¹

¹ Nicolás Shumway studies this cultural production of Argentine national identity in the first part of the nineteenth century among the Generation of 1837 in *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991). On the social and political ideologies of the Generation of 1837, see the important work by Natalio R. Botana, *La tradición republicana. Alberdi, Sarmiento y las ideas políticas de su tiempo*, rev. and exp. ed. (Buenos Aires: Debolsillo, 2005).

The political, social, and literary commentaries (and collective memories) of the Generation of 1837 were largely shaped by their coming of age under the repressive dictatorship of the conservative leader of Buenos Aires's federalist faction, Juan Manuel de Rosas. Recall that rhetoric and communications scholar G. Thomas Goodnight intimates that generations in effect are predicated on their foundational experiences, which are transformed into social memory.² In addition, sociologist Karl Mannheim renders a similar point, asserting that youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems constitute "the same actual generation." The memories of such concrete historical problems are part of the "mental data" that Mannheim insists have a "socializing effect" on a given generation.³ These observations are particularly relevant to the representations/remembrances of the Rosas era among the Generation of 1837.

Therefore, to understand the representations/remembrances of blacks in Argentina during the first half of the nineteenth century in the writings of the Generation of 1837, one must study this Generation's concrete historical experience under the Rosas regime, especially their perception of the strongman's and his family's relationship with the black community of Buenos Aires at the time.⁴ To the founding intellectuals of Argentina's

² G. Thomas Goodnight, "Generational Argument." In *Argumentation: Across the Lines of Discipline*. Frans van Eemeren, Rob Grootendorst, J. Anthony Blair, and Charles A. Willard, eds. (Dordrecht, Holland: Foris, 1987), 135.

³ Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, vol. 1. Paul Kecskemeti, ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, LTD, 1972 [1952]), 304.

⁴ On Rosas and his rule, see John Lynch, *Argentine Caudillo: Juan Manuel de Rosas* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2001). However, Lynch's work has been critiqued by some revisionists for its overly negative assessment of the Buenos Aires strongman and his allies. In this regard, see Noemí Goldman and Ricardo Salvatore, eds., *Caudillismos rioplatenses: nuevas miradas a un viejo problema* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1998); and Ricardo D. Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos: State Order and Subaltern Experience in Buenos Aires during the Rosas Era* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003). By the 1930s, Rosas apologists attacked the

imaginario nacional or national image, Afro-Argentines both represented and embodied the barbarism of the Rosas regime in all its sanguinary fury and backwardness.

“Rey de todos los tambores”: Juan Manuel de Rosas (1829-1852), the Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, and the Representations of the Generation of 1837

To make sense of the rise of Juan Manuel de Rosas to power by 1829 it is indispensable to consider the social and political unrest in what was then known as the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata. War was being waged on two fronts in the 1820s: against marauding Pampean Indians besieging the western and southern frontiers of the country; and against the Brazilian empire over control of the territory that would later become Uruguay. Both campaigns continued the militarization of an incipient state that had just concluded a prolonged battle for independence from Spain, further depleting national wealth. Payments on high-interest war debts accrued during the struggle for independence further sacked the treasury and stunted national development. In addition to Indian raids, lawlessness in the countryside hampered inland trade and made travel dangerous for natives and foreigners alike. The failures to successfully deal with these and other social, economic, and political problems led to the downfall of the short-lived,

“official,” liberal historiography on the strongman. In 1938, they even founded the “Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos Juan Manuel de Rosas,” complete with its own in-house organ, to promote their revisionist views of Rosas. Right-wing nationalists, and even Juan Perón, admired Rosas and remembered him as a champion of national freedom and traditional values. Not surprisingly, given what scholars know about how social memory works in the present, the long-dead *caudillo* has been dragged into many a contemporary political debate in twentieth-century Argentina. See Jeffrey M. Shumway, “Juan Manuel de Rosas: Authoritarian Caudillo and Primitive Populist.” *History Compass* 2, 113 (2004): 3-4; idem., “‘Sometimes Knowing How to Forget Is Also Having Memory’: The Repatriation of Juan Manuel de Rosas and the Healing of Argentina.” In *Death, Dismemberment, and Memory: Body Politics in Latin America*. Lyman L. Johnson, ed. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2004), ch. 4.

liberal administration of Bernardino Rivadavia (1826-1827), and further intensified the internecine political conflicts between conservatives and liberals, federalists and centralists (*unitarios*, Unitarians) which had been simmering since the end of the wars of independence.⁵

Whereas the conservatives or federalists preferred respecting traditional values, including Catholicism, and a confederation or federal form of government with provincial autonomy, the liberals or *unitarios* militated for a strong central government and unified national state, complete with a national constitution, predicated on liberal, secular (anti-Catholic), and free-trade ideals and institutions.⁶ The two sides would compete with each other in both the field of battle and in the battlefield of public opinion throughout the 1820s, but especially after the downfall of liberal Rivadavia. It is into this chaotic political scene that Juan Manuel de Rosas, leader of Buenos Aires's federalist faction, appeared on the national stage in 1828-1829 and promised to restore law and order and a respect for traditional values (hence his title, the *Restaurador de las leyes* or "Restorer of

⁵ David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonization to Alfonsín* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987) remains the best primer on Argentine history available. More focused on the first half of the nineteenth century and the era of Rosas in particular is David Bushnell, *Reform and Reaction in the Platine Provinces, 1810-1852* (Gainesville: Univ. Presses of Florida, 1983). The best survey of Latin American history in this period is David Bushnell and Neill Macaulay, *The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994).

⁶ For a classic study of Argentine liberalism in this period, see José Manuel Estrada, *La política liberal bajo la tiranía de Rosas* (Buenos Aires: "La Cultura Argentina, 1917). A fine recent social history of the Unitarians and their political struggles with Rosas and other federalists in the first half of the 1800s in Argentina is Ignacio Zubizarreta, *Los Unitarios: faccionalismo, prácticas, construcción identitaria y vínculos de una agrupación política decimónica, 1820-1852* (Stuttgart, Germany: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz Akademischer, 2012).

the law”). From 1829 until 1852, he along with other provincial strongmen would rule with an iron fist what would eventually become Argentina.⁷

Juan Manuel de Rosas was a member of Buenos Aires province’s landed elite. He was a successful commercial rancher, and, along with his kinsmen the Anchorenas, one of the wealthiest men in the Buenos Aires and all of Argentina. While not overtly or overly political at first, siding with neither federalists nor Unitarians, his strong religious and conservative social values aligned him more closely with the former. Rosas formally entered politics in 1828 when he raised an army and overthrew the *unitarios*, taking back control of the capital city and reinstating a federalist provincial legislature in Buenos Aires. Although reluctant at first, he eventually assumed gubernatorial authority by legislative appointment in 1829, was given “extraordinary powers” to deal with civil unrest in Buenos Aires province, and ruled until 1832. As the province’s (and nation’s) politics once more turned anarchic, in 1835 the Buenos Aires legislature begged Rosas to resume his role as governor. He conceded, but only after demanding and receiving from the local legislature “the fullness of public power” (“la suma del poder público”).⁸ The

⁷ Needless to say, this is but a cursory outline of a long chronology of events in Argentina’s foundational period. On particular historical issues alluded to in the above paragraphs, see, e.g., on the militarization of nineteenth-century Argentina and its impact on national formation, Tulio Halperín Donghi, *Revolución y guerra: formación de una élite dirigente en la Argentina criolla*, 1st Spanish ed. (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Argentina, 1972); Lyman L. Johnson, ed., *The Problem of Order in Changing Societies: Essays on Crime and Policing in Argentina and Uruguay*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1990), on crime in rural Argentina in the nineteenth century; and Carlos Marichal, *A Century of Debt Crises in Latin America: From Independence to the Great Depression, 1820-1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989), on war debts and their macro-economic impacts on Latin American development, including in nineteenth-century Argentina.

⁸ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, for one, claimed that “la suma del poder público” was a federalist neologism or canard, “palabra nueva cuyo alcance sólo [Rosas] comprende,” (“a new word only Rosas understands”) and believed that the provincial plebiscite to grant Rosas plenary power was a travesty. Sarmiento wondered how it was possible that in a province of 400,000 residents only

strongman immediately set about to instill and install order, stability, and respect for his authority and that of his federalist allies in the other provinces.⁹

A great deal of Rosas's rise to power can be attributed to his charisma and skill in rallying (or manipulating) the masses of Buenos Aires to his cause.¹⁰ Rosas's brand of nineteenth-century "populism" included serving as patron for gauchos in the countryside and urban laborers, especially poor black men and women in and around the city of Buenos Aires.¹¹ While Rosas despised men of letters and intellectuals, he felt at ease among working-class people.

three voted against Rosas. "¿Concíbese como ha podido suceder que en una provincia de cuatrocientos mil habitantes, según asegura la 'Gaceta', sólo hubiese tres votos contrarios al gobierno?" Domingo F. Sarmiento, "El plebiscito." In *Así fue Rosas. Compilación de opiniones, juicios y semblanzas*. Nicanor E. Colombres, comp. (Tucuman, Argentina: Editorial URU, 1966), 90.

⁹ Shumway, "Juan Manuel de Rosas," 5-6. Lynch, *Argentine Caudillo*, ch. 2, documents Rosas as prosperous landlord. Ch. 5 records his rise to power in Buenos Aires. In a letter written to fellow federalist *caudillo*, Juan Facundo Quiroga, on December 20, 1834, a few months before the assassination of Quiroga, Rosas stresses the need for "peace and order" in the country, "both disgracefully missing now," and blames the Unitarians and their foreign agents (including Freemasons) for this "most frightening catastrophe" and "all this disorderly chaos." Juan Manuel de Rosas, "The Caudillo's Order," trans. by Patricia Owen Steiner. In *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2002), 75, 77, 78. Rosas believed that foreign spies had infiltrated his government in an attempt to undermine it and provide European invaders intelligence. Rosas's relations with Quiroga are well-documented in Ariel de la Fuente, *Children of Facundo: Caudillo and Gaucho Insurgency during the Argentine State-Formation Process (La Rioja, 1853-1870)* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2000).

¹⁰ "[Rosas's] regime," claims Kevin Kelly, "was multiclass, expansive, popular, driven by charisma." Kevin Kelly, "Rosas and the Restoration of Order through Populism." In *Revolution and Restoration: The Rearrangement of Power in Argentina, 1776-1860*. Mark D. Szuchman and Jonathan C. Brown, eds. (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994), 209.

¹¹ On Rosas as populist, consult Shumway, "Juan Manuel de Rosas," 1-14; Kelly, "Rosas and the Restoration of Order," 208-39; Ricardo D. Salvatore, "Fiestas federales: representaciones de la república en el Buenos Aires rosista." *Entrepasados: Revista de Historia* 6, 11 (1997): 45-68; idem., *Wandering Paysanos*; and Gabriel Di Meglio, *¡Mueran los salvajes unitarios! La mazorca y la política en tiempos de Rosas* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2007).

Luis Pérez, a pamphleteer sympathetic to federalism and contemporary of Rosas, in 1830 published a biography in verse of the strongman, writing of his leader's dislike for and distrust of intellectuals (like the men of the Generation of 1837): "De los *sabios* de la Tierra/Guena [buena] opinión no tenía;/*Estos no tienen acierto*,/Siempre a solas [Rosas] nos decía."¹² In these verses, the federalist poet is saying that Rosas used to tell his friends behind closed doors that of learned men he had a poor opinion, as they knew nothing or always got things wrong. Among gauchos, however, he always felt right at home. For example, in late 1828, American diplomat John Murray Forbes even reported to the then United States Secretary of State Henry Clay that Rosas was called by local peasants "King of the Gauchos."¹³ Furthermore, even his enemies recognized his sense of solidarity with common people, although they often could not conceal their disgust over it. His horsemanship, though, also elicited admiration. For instance, in another biography of the dictator composed in verse, John Mansfield, English poet laureate from 1930 to 1967, and student of South America, claims that "There on the ranges with a

¹² Luis Pérez, *Luis Pérez y la biografía de Rosas escrita en verso en 1830*. Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, comp. (Buenos Aires: Clio, 1957), 23. Italics in the original. Rosas himself praised López and his pro-federalist paper *El Negrito*. In a letter dated August 26, 1833 to an ally, the strongman observed that "peasants and similar folk like verse," and "They gather in throngs to read the issues of *El Negrito*, fighting for a space...." Quoted in William Garrett Acree, Jr., *Everyday Reading: Print Culture and Collective Identity in the Río de la Plata, 1780-1910* (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 2011), 57.

¹³ John Murray Forbes, "Despatches to the Secretary of State Henry Clay," Dec. 3, 1828 [no number], *Despatches from United States Ministries to Argentina* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Record Service, 1952), available from National Archives microfilm publications.

half-wild crew/Of gauchos, cut-throats, thieves, and broken rakes/He [Rosas] caught and broke wild horses.”¹⁴

In his memoirs, Unitarian general and Rosas contemporary Gregorio Aráoz de Lamadrid recalls a curious episode in the life of Juan Manuel before he came to power that captures the future dictator’s charisma, appeal to the masses, and demand for total obedience and respect. The old general and political foe of federalism records that Rosas wanted to be respected by the gauchos who worked on his family’s estates. Apparently, one day, in the year 1820, Rosas forgot his lasso, a grave error for a cowboy, and, on another day, a holiday no less, he was caught carrying his large gaucho knife (*facón*), which violated one of his own mandates. Rather than use his rank as an excuse to escape punishment for his oversights, however, Rosas demanded that the head gaucho, a black slave, whip him fifty times for his offense. Needless to say, the black majordomo resisted his master’s request, but Rosas threatened the slave lashes of his own if he did not comply with the command.¹⁵ Episodes like this strange tale remembered by an

¹⁴ “En aquellas regiones, con un tropel feroz/de gauchos asesinos, perdidos y ladrones/empezó [Rosas] a perseguir, cazar y domar potros.” John Mansfield, *El poema Rosas de John Mansfield. La leyenda del Restaurador cantada por el poeta nacional de Inglaterra*. José Luis Muñoz Azpiri, comp. (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1970), 67. Mansfield, clearly no friend of the dictator who at one time stood up to the British empire, goes on to rail against Rosas’s bloody regime: “And with this Gaucho power he ruled his slaves [i.e., citizens]/By death alone....” Mansfield, *El poema de Rosas*, 79. The poet laureate dedicated this work to the memory of one of Rosas’s most famous and tragic victims, Camila O’Gorman. Mansfield’s verses are one example of the negative historical memory of Rosas among liberal literati outside of Argentina.

¹⁵ According to General de Lamadrid: “Todas sus órdenes eran bárbaras y crueles y para que sus domésticos o dependientes supieran hasta qué punto quería que fuesen obligatorias, [Rosas] empezó por hacercelas ejecutar en sí mismo de un modo singular.” José Luis Busaniche, comp., *Rosas visto por sus contemporáneos* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica, 1986 [1955]), 16. All Rosas orders and instructions were barbarous, according to the old general. But to show his underlings that his commands were to always be obeyed, Rosas had himself punished as an example. The slave foreman nonetheless received one hundred lashes for his disobedience. General de Lamadrid records that sometime later another gaucho foreman did administer fifty lashes to

erstwhile political rival of the *caudillo* established Juan Manuel de Rosas as very much a man of the people, but also one who needed to be respected and obeyed by all and at all times. He had an ulterior motive, of course, to consolidate his rule. Rosas himself acknowledges as much: “Previous governments have acted very well towards educated people, but they despised the lower classes.... So ... I thought it very important to gain a decisive influence over this class in order to control and direct it.”¹⁶ As Ricardo D. Salvatore documents in his *Wandering Paysanos*, employing an array of documentary, oral, and ethnographic evidence, gauchos, peasants, and other subalterns both feared and respected the federalist leader and were essential political and military elements of his regime.¹⁷

Rosas’s relations with the Afro-Argentine community of Buenos Aires were especially close, much to the disgust of the men of ’37 and his other liberal opponents. This tie between leader and subjects was later immortalized in the foundational writings of the liberal Generation of 1837, which made manifest its racial undertones. In his study of the men of ’37, William H. Kattrak correctly observes that “... the struggle against Rosas had a clearly racial dimension.”¹⁸ Moreover, in his study of early nineteenth-century

Rosas’s bare back and was rewarded for it by the future dictator. Busaniche, comp., *Rosas*, 16-17.

¹⁶ Quoted in John Lynch, *Argentine Dictator: Juan Manuel de Rosas, 1829-1852* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 109.

¹⁷ Especially see Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos* on the political and military roles of subalterns during the federalist era.

¹⁸ William H. Kattrak, *The Argentine Generation of 1837: Echeverría, Alberdi, Sarmiento, Mitre* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1996), 31.

political conflicts among warring liberal and conservative factions in La Rioja province, Ariel de la Fuente also documents the racial tensions inherent in the battles, especially Rosas's ally and local warlord Facundo Quiroga's use and promotion of blacks in his forces. Along the lines of Katra, Ariel de la Fuente opines that in La Rioja of the first half of the 1800s, the clash between federalists and Unitarians was tantamount to a racial or caste war. Ariel de la Fuente, for example, cites from the memoirs of one contemporary who as a child remembered Facundo allegedly inciting African slaves to rebel against their masters.¹⁹ It is this social proximity to and political ties of solidarity within the African community of Argentina to federalist *caudillos*, especially Rosas, which is recorded and memorialized for generations to come in the foundational socio-political writings and fictions of Generation of 1837's Esteban Echeverría, José Mármol, José Hernández, and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento.

That Rosas actively courted the support of the black community of Buenos Aires is beyond dispute. A painting housed in the collection of National History Museum in Buenos Aires depicts the Afro-Argentine community of the capital city turning out to thank Rosas for their freedom from bondage. The colorful 1841 oil on canvas painting by D. de Plot, a contemporary of Rosas, captures the black women of the capital city receiving a document from the hands of the "Restorer" himself granting them their liberty. The Africans carry with them banners with the typical federalist slogans of the era, rendered in the black (*bozal*) dialect: "Mueran los Salvages Unitarios" ("Death to the Savage Unitarians"), "Restaurador" ("Restorer"), and "Viva la Libertad" ("Long Live

¹⁹ De la Fuente, *Children of Facundo*, 146.

Liberty”). The florid caption on the painting’s bottom frame reads: “*Las Esclavas de Bues. Ays. [Buenos Ayres or Aires] Demuestran ser Libres y Gratas á su Noble Libertador*” (“The Slave Women of Buenos Aires Display Their Freedom and Support for Their Noble Liberator”). The legend at the top of the painting reads: “Not a single slave continued to cry in the Plata in chains anymore; their bitter cry ceased since the humane Rosas, proud of his freedom, compassionate and generous, granted this precious gift to the unhappy African.”²⁰ Thus, Rosas clearly intended to turn blacks into his loyal followers.

In a letter to his wife, Doña Encarnación Ezcurra de Rosas, Juan Manuel de Rosas reminds her not to forget their black allies; he urges her to “write to them [i.e., Afro-Argentines] frequently” and to “send them gifts,” sparing no expense, “also assist them as far as you can when they are in trouble.”²¹ In return for his and his family’s patronage, the Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires lent their support to the federalist cause and especially to Rosas himself.²² Oscar Chamosa, however, asserts that African nations and

²⁰ See Appendix I for a reproduction of this painting and its source information. This painting is frequently displayed in books and other studies about Rosas and/or Afro-Argentines, as well as on numerous internet sites, thereby serving as a realm of memory about blackness in Argentina for not only Argentines but other viewers also. Ironically forgotten by this artist is that under Rosas, an October 15, 1831 decree allowed foreigners to sell African slaves legally as personal servants in the local market. Bushnell, *Reform and Reaction*, 55. In effect, during Rosas’s first regime, a limited slave trade to Buenos Aires was reintroduced. Kevin Kelly correctly points out: “To Rosas, skillful manipulation of the lower sectors of society did not presuppose egalitarian ideals.” Kelly, “Rosas and the Restoration of Order,” 213.

²¹ Quoted in Lynch, *Argentine Dictator*, 109. The Rosas’s clan’s familiarity with blacks included, at least according to one of the strongman’s most hated enemies, the marriage of his sister Mercedes to the African-descended physician Rivera, “a black man, short and fat.” José Mármol, *Amalia, novela histórica americana* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sopena Argentina, 1958), 129. This is one of several versions of the text consulted.

²² Oscar Chamosa, however, argues that the black community of Buenos Aires and its social organizations did not blindly follow Rosas and in fact received tangible benefits from the regime.

their leaders were highly pragmatic in their relationship with Rosas and in their dealings with his officials, including the Buenos Aires police force, during the regime of the “Restorer.”²³ Regardless, the Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires became, at least in the writings and collective reminiscences of the Generation of 1837 and that of many of their subsequent readers, Rosas’s henchmen, shock troops, and spies.

As part of his patronage of the Afro-Argentine community, the dictator and his family often attended the dances (*tangos* or *candombes*) of the African ethnic nations; these dances, which had been outlawed by Spanish colonial officials fearing social unrest and heavily controlled by the previous liberal regime,²⁴ were reintroduced and popularized by Rosas, who was a champion of all things traditional, folkloric, and *criollo* (Creole).²⁵ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento recalled that the “... African dances were the

Oscar Chamosa, “To Honor the Ashes of Their Forebears: The Rise and Crisis of African Nations in the Post-Independence State of Buenos Aires, 1820-1860.” *The Americas* 59, 3 (Jan. 2003): 357. For more details about Rosas and the Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, see George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 96-98, 100-101. Carmen Bernand considers the perquisites afforded blacks supporting Rosas an “illusion.” Nonetheless, the fidelity of Afro-Argentines to the federalist cause facilitated their integration into the nation. Carmen Bernand, “La población negra de Buenos Aires (1777-1862).” In Mónica Quijada, Carmen Bernand, and Arnd Schneider, *Homogenidad y nación con un estudio de caso: Argentina, siglos XIX y XX* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Centro de Humanidades; Inst. de Historia, 2000), 133.

²³ Chamosa, “To Honor the Ashes of Their Forebears,” 361-64.

²⁴ For example, in 1779, the pastor of the parish church of “La Piedad” asked city officials to ban the “obscene dances” of the African nations on the feast day of Saint Balthazar and on Easter, owing to their disrespect for the Church. “Acuerdo del 9 de octubre de 1788.” *Acuerdos del extinguido Cabildo de Buenos Aires*, vol. 8, Third series. José Juan Biedma et al., comps. (Buenos Aires: Archivo General de la Nación [Argentina], 1930), 623-27.

²⁵ John Charles Chasteen, “Patriotic Footwork: Social Dance, Popular Culture and the Watershed of Independence in Buenos Aires.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 5, 1 (1986): 13-17, 19. Given his brand of nativist populism, it is not surprising that Rosas strongly encouraged and defended folk traditions such as the *candombe*. Kelly, “Rosas and the Restoration of Order,” 215. As late as 1935, *Caras y Caretas* documents re-enactments of Rosas-era *candombes*,

terror of Buenos Aires during the Rosas dictatorship” (“... *candombes* fueron el terror de Buenos Aires durante la tiranía de Rosas”).²⁶ Pilar González Bernaldo de Quirós suggests that Rosas in fact inherited the tradition from his liberal predecessors; however, it is clear that it was particularly during Rosas’s rule when “ethnic associations appear as one of the types of organization that adhered the most to the values of the Holy Federation.”²⁷ An eye witness to the events, General Tomás de Iriarte writes in his memoirs that the blacks of Buenos Aires found in Rosas a true protector, one who allowed them their “farces” and “extravagant customs,” especially their “native” dances.²⁸ Another contemporary, José Antonio Wilde, addressing in his memoirs (1861) the Rosas regime, remembers that while head of state, Rosas customarily attended “black tribal celebrations” by special invitation of their leaders, “with whom Rosas always wanted good relations” (“con quien Rosas quería estar siempre bien”).²⁹ In an allusion to the African instrument par excellence, José Ramos Mejía also relates that “Rosas was the

including one that year to benefit the Red Cross of Argentina. “A beneficio de la Cruz Roja Argentina.” *Caras y Caretas* 38, 1898 (Feb. 16, 1935): n.p.

²⁶ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, “Raza negra.” In *El civilizador: síntesis del pensamiento vivo de Sarmiento*, 1st ed. Julio R. Barcos, comp. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Antonio Zamora, 1961), 331.

²⁷ Pilar González Bernaldo de Quirós, *Ciudad y política en los orígenes de la Nación Argentina. Las sociabilidades en Buenos Aires, 1829-1862*, 2nd ed. (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), 116-17. The above quote in the original reads: “las asociaciones étnicas aparecen como uno de los tipos de organización que mayor adhiere a los valores de la ‘Santa Federación’.”

²⁸ Tomás de Iriarte, *Memorias* (Buenos Aires, 1844-1869), in Maxine Hanon, “En la Buenos Aires de Rosas.... Las lavanderas, morenas y federales.” *Todos es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional*, no. 452 (2005): 7-8. Cf., “Figarillo,” “El carnaval antiguo. Los candomberos.” *Caras y Caretas* 5, 176 (Feb. 15, 1902): n.p., an explicitly nostalgic look at the black dances and popular festivals of the Afro-Argentine past.

²⁹ José Antonio Wilde, *Buenos Aires desde setenta años atrás (1810-1880)* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1960), 126.

Presider and King of all the African drums of the city [of Buenos Aires].”³⁰ According to this late nineteenth-century positivist, Rosas was thus the principal guest of honor or honorary “king” at all the black dances of the African ethnic nations in Buenos Aires in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Rosas-era painter Martín L. Boneo immortalized on canvas the dictator and his family attending a dance festival organized by the “Angunga” nation.³¹ The oleo depicts a black pair performing the *candombe* to the percussion of African drums while Rosas, his wife and daughter, a well-dressed black man, possibly the nation’s “king,” and other spectators look on attentively.³² As the sources above indicate, this event was not an isolated instance. To commemorate the May 25 patriotic festival in 1845, for example, Rosas invited all the African nations of the city of Buenos Aires to publicly dance in the

³⁰ José M. Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2001 [1907]), 447. “Rosas era Presidente y Rey de todos los *Tambores* de la ciudad.”

³¹ Like the D. de Plot painting referenced above, the Boneo canvas is also displayed in Buenos Aires’s National Historical Museum. For the country’s 2010 bicentennial, the United States Embassy in the capital organized a conference on the representations of Argentine blackness in the National Historical Museum and other museums, with seminars by several United-States memory specialists. http://argentina.usembassy.gov/afro_event.html.

³² Referenced in Bernard, “La población negra de Buenos Aires,” 134. The exact date of the painting is unknown. Also see María de Lourdes Ghidoli, “Journeys of the Candombe Federal by Martín Boneo. Their Contribution to the Social Imaginary on Afro-Argentines.” *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 7, 2 (2014): 152-64. In some ways, this nineteenth-century *costumbrista* painting anticipates and resembles the Afro-themed art work of early twentieth-century Uruguayan impressionist artist Pedro Figari, discussed in the chapter on Creole nostalgists. However, Figari does not include (or forgets) to associate blacks with Rosas or any other strongman in the River Plate from the previous century, concentrating instead on the blacks themselves and their insouciant dances. See Appendix I for a reproduction of this painting.

“Plaza Victoria,” an event that much scandalized the regime’s liberal foes.³³

Ricardo D. Salvatore maintains that Afro-Argentines, male and female, black and mulatto, turned to dancing to shorten social distances during the federalist rule of Rosas. During federalist festivals and dances, it was not uncommon to see whites and blacks dancing with each other. Salvatore quotes from Ramos Mejía about the shocking lack of respectable social distinctions evidenced by black and mulatto men and women dancing the *media caña* (a lower-class dance) in the streets of Buenos Aires alongside or even with whites during the Rosas era.³⁴ In his foundational novel *Amalia* (1844), for instance, José Mármol’s narrator complains that at the dances Rosas sponsored, “good federalists” “... even danced with blacks” (“hasta bailaban con morenos”).³⁵ The news of Rosas, his wife, and daughter engaging with blacks scandalized Unitarian exiles in Montevideo and became a prime site of their representations and memories of the black

³³ Bernand, “La población negra de Buenos Aires,” 134. Vicente Rossi, born two decades after Rosas’s downfall, but very much influenced by earlier liberals, claims that Rosas attempted to further increase his hold over the African nations by ordering that the usual civic processions on May 25 and July 9 be replaced by black carnivals and parades. Vicente Rossi, *Cosas de negros, los orígenes del tango y otros aportes al folklore rioplatense* (Cordoba, Argentina: Imp. Argentina, 1926), 75-76. “‘El Carnaval de Rosas,’ como se le llamaba después, era la institución popular por excelencia,” (“‘Rosas’s Carnival,’ as it was later called, was the populist institution par excellence of the era”) recalls José M. Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 209.

³⁴ Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos*, 388. It is important to note that Salvatore acknowledges that there are no reports of inappropriate cross-racial encounters appearing in the criminal records of the era, although these could have been expunged from the reports of Rosas’s justices. Salvatore perhaps suggests that these tales of black-white social familiarity were part of the anti-Rosas propaganda inherited and transmitted in the collective memory by liberal elites, such as Ramos Mejía.

³⁵ José Mármol, *Amalia*. Juan Carlos Ghiano, ed. (Mexico: Ediciones Porrúa, 1974), 246.

community of Buenos Aires.

Juan Manuel de Rosas's daughter, Manuela or Manuelita, remembered by contemporaries and near contemporaries as her father's only true love and confidant,³⁶ was especially venerated by the Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires. José Mármol, one of Rosas's most acerbic social critics and political enemies, recalls that "among the feeble, weak-minded, and fanatical rabble and masses" Manuelita was "the altar upon which they prostrated themselves in servile adoration."³⁷ Domingo Sarmiento concurs with Mármol's memory, writing that "Rosas formed a favorable public opinion, an addicted following among the black population of Buenos Aires, and entrusted his daughter [Manuela] that aspect of the government."³⁸ José M. Ramos Mejía, born a few years before Rosas's downfall, and clearly influenced by the writings of the Generation of 1837, equally recorded that Manuela could in fact represent her father in both personal

³⁶ Miguel Cané, comp., *Cancionero de Manuelita Rosas* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1942), 15. Cané was born in January 1851, a full year before the dictator's downfall and remembers stories about him from his childhood. Also, José Mármol, *Manuela Rosas y otros escritos políticos del exilio*. Félix Weinberg, ed. (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2001), 238, 240. Both Mármol and Cané, like some other writers, actually pitied Manuela Rosas, and saw her at times as yet another victim of her father's tyranny. From Montevideo in 1851, Mármol went as far as to write Rosas an open letter that begins by championing Manuelita and denounces the dictator's exploitation of his child. Mármol, *Manuela Rosas*, 265. At other times, however, she was viewed by Rosas's literate foes as just another member of a despotic clan, a monster like her progenitor. Gabo Ferro, *Barbarie y civilización. Sangre, monstruos y vampiros durante el segundo gobierno de Rosas* (Buenos Aires: Marea Editorial, 2008), "Manuela: la diosa monstruosa," 86-91.

³⁷ Mármol, *Manuela Rosas*, 238. In the original, Mármol writes: "para el pueblo enfermo, débil y fanatizado, el altar donde corre a deponer de rodillas el homenaje servil de su prostración."

³⁸ "Rosas se formó una opinión pública, un pueblo adicto en la población negra de Buenos Aires, y confió a su hija [Manuela] esa parte del gobierno." Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Facundo, civilización y barbarie* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1961), 223. I have consulted and taken notes from various editions of this foundational work.

and official matters.³⁹ Several of these involved *afrorioplatenses*. For example, in a letter from Aureliana Sacristi de Cazón to Dolores Lavalle de Lavalle, Manuelita is represented as the honorary “queen” of the African dances, whose grand entrance at their *candombes* was saluted with drum playing. Then, the African “king” and “queen” of the nation would greet her and personally escort Manuelita to her “throne.”⁴⁰ Moreover, contemporaries also said that Manuelita ruled over Rosas’s court in Palermo de San Benito, named after an African Catholic saint,⁴¹ presiding over fetes and dinners as “queen,” complete with her own black jesters. Apropos, William MacCann, a British traveler to Buenos Aires in 1847, recorded his experiences dining with Rosas and his family in their Palermo villa. MacCann recalled that “Rosas’s daughter presided over the banquet and three jesters entertained the dinner guests with their jokes and foolishness.”⁴²

³⁹ Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 177.

⁴⁰ Letter from Doña Aureliana Sacristi de Cazón to Doña Dolores Lavalle de Lavalle, reproduced in Arturo Capdevila, *La vísperas de Caseros*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Cabut y Cía., Colegio Alsina y Bolívar, 1928), 50-51. Like Ramos Mejía and Rossi, Capdevila is another later liberal commentator influenced by the memories and fictions of the Generation of 1837.

⁴¹ Sarmiento remembered San Benito de Palermo from his childhood, including the beginning of a carnival song: “San Benito está en el cielo/No se sabe cuando vendrá” (“St. Benito is in heaven/His return [to earth] is unknown.”) Sarmiento suggests that Rosas possibly selected this name for his estate deliberately thinking about Afro-Argentines. Domingo F. Sarmiento, “20 de setiembre: conmemoración nefasta.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 46 (*Páginas literarias*) (Buenos Aires: Imp. y Litografía ‘Mariano Moreno,’ 1897), 389. The prestigious Buenos Aires weekly *Caras y Caretas* ran a story on Rosas and his estate to expressly bring to memory what by then had been long forgotten. “Rosas.” *Caras y Caretas* 2, 18 (Feb. 4, 1899): n.p.

⁴² Mármol, *Manuela Rosas*, 250. William MacCann, “Un viajero afortunado (1847),” in *Rosas visto por sus contemporáneos*, 91. The British traveler records that “La hija de Rosas presidia la mesa y dos o tres bufones ... divertían huéspedes con sus chistes y agudezes.” Lina Beck-Bernard, from Alsace-Lorraine, spent five years in Argentina from 1857 to 1862. She records the deplorable state of Rosas’s Italianate villa in Palermo within a few years of his downfall and considered it a systematic, calculated act of destruction for the purposes of vengeance by his liberal enemies. Beck-Bernard remembers Manuelita as sweet and kind, one who convinced her father to spare many lives and tried to upkeep the grounds and residence. Lina Beck-Bernard,

Rosas's favorite jesters, Biguá and Don Eusebio de la Santa Federación, were both of African descent.⁴³

In 1848, "the black women of Buenos Aires" composed a hymn to honor Manuelita on the occasion of her birthday.⁴⁴ In this ode to Manuela Rosas, the "black women" of the Congo nation claim her as their own beautiful and gracious queen and mother, without peer on earth (a clear parallel to the Virgin Mary in Catholic theology).⁴⁵ "Felices morenas" ("happy black women"), the poem continues, are they to have her as a protector. In their joy, the women of the Congo nation promise to pray to heaven for her long life: "En tanto felices/las congas seremos,/si al cielo su vida/prolongue roguemos." The women of the Congo nation conclude their hymn of praise and thanks "to the beat of

"Palermo de San Benito." In *Así fue Rosas*, 72-73. However, according to Mármol, the Palermo estate was full of only bloodshed and vice during Rosas's reign, and Manuelita, a joyless witness to the bloody spectacles, only perceived the Unitarian threat to her father and family. Mármol, *Manuela Rosas*, 248.

⁴³ José Luis Lanuza, *Morenada: una historia de la raza Africana en el Río de la Plata*, 2nd rpt. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Schapire, 1967), 142-143, 155. José Mármol satirizes the relationship between Rosas, Manuelita, and the jester Biguá in his novel *Amalia*. In a scene replete with irony and social inversion, Mármol has Rosas order the jester "Father Biguá" to kiss with his "greasy lips" his daughter during a family meal, an act that revolted Manuelita. When the buffoon, who is depicted as more concerned with his meal, fails to do so properly, Rosas lambasts him for his poor effort and Manuelita for her prudishness. José Mármol, *Amalia*. Helen Lane, trans. Doris Sommer, ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press), 55-56.

⁴⁴ Cané, comp., *Cancionero de Manuelita Rosa*, 35-38. The poem, attributed to "black women," was most likely composed by an educated white man in Rosas's party. Nonetheless, the hymn does capture the perceived strong bond between the black community of Buenos Aires and Rosas and his family. Sylvia G. Carullo, "Una aproximación a la poesía federal afro-argentina de la época de Juan Manuel de Rosas" *Afro-Hispanic Review* 4, 1 (Jan. 1985): 15-22, examines the linguistic and literary issues surrounding these literary sources.

⁴⁵ Cf., "Eres Virgen, tan Hermosa..." in *Cancionero de Manuelita Rosas*, 50-53. "Eres Virgen, tan hermosa/como la luz de la aurora/cuando apenas la colora/de mi patria el limpio sol:/Como las flores del cielo,/que en la tierra no hay tan bellas,/como lo son las estrellas,/como un regalo de Dios." The pro-federalist poet is declaring Manuelita to be a beautiful virgin whose beauty compares to the morning sun, flowers from heaven, and the stars, all gifts from God.

the *candombe*” by proclaiming her glories and her memory will be extolled and transmitted across time: “Tus glorias celebre/la patria en su historia,/y al tiempo transmita tu grata memoria.” As will be shown, African women were especially viewed by the Generation of 1837 as blindly loyal to the strongman Rosas, his family, and his regime.⁴⁶

It was Juan Manuel de Rosas himself, however, who was most idolized by the federalist masses, including Afro-Argentines. If Manuela Rosas was the virtual “queen” of the African nations, then her father was their undisputed “king.” “The support of blacks gave Rosas’s authority an indestructible base,” lamented leading liberal intellectual Domingo Faustino Sarmiento in *Facundo*.⁴⁷ Recalling Sarmiento’s words, later liberal intellectual Vicente Rossi recorded that Rosas was raised by and among blacks, and educated alongside them, thus “it was only natural that he understood them so well and exploited them for his personal safety and tranquility.”⁴⁸ In her 1846 novel, the female liberal writer Juana Manso concurs with her male cohorts, intimating that Afro-Argentines adored Rosas, who dispensed his favors on the black community. Manso also suggests that loyalty is a characteristic of Africans: “Afro-Argentines adored Rosas, who

⁴⁶ Ramos Mejías recalls: “Las mujeres de la plebe amaban a Rosas en una forma más animal y calurosa...”; that is, plebeian women passionately adored the “Restorer” in a primordial or animalistic manner. According to Ramos Mejía, black women in particular, given their mental and racial inferiority, felt this animal attraction to their benefactor Rosas: “La negra, por su temperamento y su inferioridad mental, se acercaba más al insecto en sus amores colectivos... vivía sólo para el calor en sus diversas formas de admiración física, de lealtad personal, de adhesión casi carnal.” Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 445.

⁴⁷ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1942), 246.

⁴⁸ Rossi, *Cosas de negros, los orígenes del tango y otros aportes al folklore rioplatense*, 75-76. As per Rossi on Rosas and blacks: “y es natural que los conociera tanto como a sí mismo, por eso los utilizó para garantizar su defensa personal y tranquilidad.”

in all truth dispensed them all kinds of favors and granted them his entire trust, rightly so, for it is known that fidelity is a characteristic of the African race.”⁴⁹ Ramos Mejía even suggested that the mobs’ admiration of the “Restorer” reached idolatrous proportions in the Buenos Aires of the mid-1800s. “Esta adoración por la persona de Rosas,” writes Ramos Mejía, “en toda su enormidad no era ... sino una expresión derivada del fanatismo religioso que nunca afectó en Buenos Aires formas y amplitud más desagradable.”⁵⁰ According to Ramos Mejía, then, Rosas in effect turned federalism into a sacred cause, and he was its principal or even sole object of adoration.⁵¹

The oral culture and festivals of federalism, so brilliantly studied by Ariel de la Fuente and Ricardo Salvatore, equally attest to Rosas’s undisputed standing among the lower-classes and Afro-Argentines. As Ariel de la Fuente observes, the oral culture and

⁴⁹ Juana Manso, *Los misterios del Plata* (Buenos Aires: Jesús Menéndez, 1924 [1846]), 204. In the original, the text reads: “Estos pueblos de negros adoran a Rosas que, a la verdad, les dispensa toda clase de favores y les acuerda su más ilimitada confianza, en lo que no se engaña, pues se sabe que es la fidelidad una de las características de la raza Africana.” Juana Manso was a pioneering feminist and abolitionist. According to John F. Garganigo, some of her fictions bear a strong resemblance to contemporary Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852). John F. Garganigo, “El perfil del negro en la narrativa rioplatense.” *Historiografía y Bibliografía Americanista* 21 (1977): 90.

⁵⁰ Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 240. According to this heir of the Generation of 1837, the adoration of Rosas was in its form and amplitude derived from a crude religious fanaticism previously unseen in Buenos Aires. He goes on to comment: “El alma del populacho experimentaba una crisis moral propicia para cualquier tiranía, yo diría que se hallaba en *inminencia de idolatría* [emphasis in the original], estado mental que desemboca en el misticismo epidémico de las épocas de guerras religiosas y en las tiranías...” Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 241. Ramos Mejía asserts that the imminent idolatry of the mob for Rosas was a product of a moral crisis proper to tyrannies and reflected a mysticism endemic to religious wars or political despotisms.

⁵¹ Di Meglio, *¡Mueran los salvajes unitarios!*, 190-91; Kelly, “Rosas and the Restoration of Order,” 215, 217. Sarmiento writes that Rosas was literally worshipped by the people in their churches and sanctuaries. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1961), 178.

traditions of federalism were highly politicized and transmitted the “collective memory” about Rosas and other caudillos. He adroitly employs folk traditions and popular songs (*cancioneros*) from different provinces in the nineteenth century to document the representation of *caudillismo*.⁵² Popular songs about Rosas depict him as a god-like, father figure to his people. In the federalist poem “Remitido del Moreno Juan,” the “black” singer begins in his broken Spanish: “Que VIVA D. JUA MANUE/El señó gobenadó,/Padre de todos los pobres/El gobenadó mijó” (“Long live Don Juan Manuel [de Rosas]/the lord governor,/Father of all the poor/My leader”). Black “Juan” then claims that “[Rosas] cares for the blacks/Because he is a man of reason” (“Eti [Rosas] quiere á lo morenos/Opqui es hombre de razon”).⁵³

Rosas was the undisputed hero of the black masses, always adored and cheered on by the plebeians.⁵⁴ For instance, in an anonymous poem from the 1830s, “The Black

⁵² Ariel de la Fuente, “Facundo and Chaco in Songs and Stories: Oral Culture and the Representations of Caudillos in the Nineteenth-Century Argentine Interior.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80, 3 (Aug. 2000): 503-35. Ariel de la Fuente in effect challenges Benedict Anderson’s assertion that only cultivated literature is vital to the construction of national identity by documenting the role of popular stories and folk songs in the struggle for national formation in nineteenth-century Argentina. Along similar lines, see Brendan Lanctot, “Graffiti and the Poetics of Politics in Rosas’s Argentina (1829-1852).” *Hispanic Review* 78, 1 (Winter 2010): 49-70. Lanctot argues against the entrenched idea that men of letters during the Rosas regime wrote in a cultural vacuum and demonstrates how a range of other social actors, including subalterns, established and defined shared political terms and discourses.

⁵³ “Remitido del Moreno Juan.” In *Negros, gauchos y compadres en el cancionero de la federación (1830-1848)*. Luis Soler Cañas, comp. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Theoría, 1958), 16. This poem was probably authored by the afore-mentioned Luis Pérez and first published in his pro-Rosas newspaper, *El gaucho*. In the poem, “black Juan” praises Rosas as a good leader and father of black people and the poor. This reference to Rosas as “father of the poor” is identical to popular sentiments about later Latin-American strongmen, namely, Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina and Getúlio Vargas in Brazil.

⁵⁴ Kelly, “Rosas and the Restoration of Order,” 215, 217; Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 240-241.

Girl,” most likely penned by another educated, federalist writer also imitating popular Afro-Argentine speech, “Juana Peña” declares her absolute loyalty to the federalist cause and Rosas. She begins by asserting: “I’m a true federalist girl.” She goes on to say that her black federalist compatriots, true “Defenders of the laws and of their Restorer,” “Only for Don Juan Manuel will they kill and will they die.” So, too, will Juana Peña one day tell her leader “‘Yessum, General’... ‘At your service, General,’ this sister-girl from Buenos Aires” “will tell him [Rosas].”⁵⁵ These and other popular songs and verses, as well as public support for the regime apparent during civic holidays and federalist festivals, establish the loyalty of blacks in Buenos Aires to Rosas, who, as Ricardo Salvatore correctly points out, were seen as integral to the federalist cause by its

⁵⁵ This poem was originally published sometime in the early 1830s in the pro-Rosas newspaper *La Negrita*. “The Black Girl,” translated by Ruth Hill, in *The Argentina Reader*, 93-94. “Yo me llamo Juana Peña/Y no tengo vanidad/Que sepan todos que soy/Negrita muy federal/... Sólo por don Juan Manuel/Han de morir y matar./... Mandame, mi general,/Se lo dice Juana Peña,/Mandame, mi general,/Esta Negrita Porteña.” “La negrita (1830).” In *Cancionero del tiempo de Rosas*, 2nd ed. José Luis Lanuza, comp. (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1945), 21, 22. Other sources give a date of 1833 for the poem. See, e.g., Luis Soler Cañas, comp., *Negros, gauchos y compadres en el cancionero de la federación (1830-1848)* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Theoría, 1958), 25. In another popular song, “La negra Catalina” tells “Pancho Lugares” that she dreams of Rosas at night and in the morning wakes up talking about only him. She concludes by shouting in her “African” voice: “Viva nuestlo Padle Losas,/El Goblenadol más Güeno.” The black woman shouts in her own dialect: “Long Live our Father Rosas/The Best Governor [ruler].” “Carta de la Negra Catalina a Pancho Lugares.” In *Negros y morenos en el cancionero rioplatense*. Horacio Jorge Becco, comp. (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Argentina de Americanistas, 1953), 18-19. Perhaps these popular verses attributed to black women in admiration of their “Liberator” in part explains the impression in the writings of nineteenth-century liberals, and those who inherited their ideas and memories of federalism, that Rosas was the especial object of affection among subaltern, especially African, women.

opponents.⁵⁶

Another realm of subaltern and Afro-Argentine support for Rosas and federalism was through military service.⁵⁷ As established in the previous chapter, Afro-Argentines had been an important social component in the military since the English invasions of the River Plate in 1806 and 1807 and during the wars of independence in the 1810s. As one recent Argentine historian has astutely observed, “con sangre de negros se edificó nuestra independencia”; in other words, with the blood of Africans was Argentine independence forged.⁵⁸ Afro-Argentines were also vital to the Rosas regime’s military. The civil wars between federalists and Unitarians further militarized Argentine society in the 1820s and beyond, thereby necessitating the further enlistment of black men. Rosas, in fact, continued and reinforced the practice of forced conscription, with Afro-Argentines

⁵⁶ Ricardo D. Salvatore, “Integral Outsiders: Afro-Argentines in the Era of Juan Manuel de Rosas and Beyond.” In *Beyond Slavery: The Multilayered Legacy of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Darién J. Davis, ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), ch. 3. Salvatore maintains that the collective representations of blacks by nineteenth-century Argentine literati simultaneously placed the Afro-Argentines within and outside the politics of the era. Salvatore, “Integral Outsiders,” 59. Salvatore has also studied the ways Rosas-era national festivals afforded subalterns a public forum and social space to voice their reasoned and pragmatic support of Rosas and federalism. See both Salvatore’s “Fiestas federales,” which is accompanied by numerous drawings of black carnival dancers, as well as *Wandering Paysanos*, especially his discussion of “rituals of federalism.” Both studies are cited above.

⁵⁷ Eva Gracia Abós, “Composición social del ejército argentino durante la etapa de Rosas, 1829-1852.” *Ulúa* 4, 7 (Jan.-June 2006): 125-72, especially pages 127-143; Andrés Alejandro Castro, “¿Libre o libertos? Los libertos de la Revolución de Mayo en la Buenos Aires de Rosas.” In *Estudios Afrolatinoamericanos.: nuevos enfoques multidisciplinares. Actas de las Terceras Jornadas del GEALA*. María de Lourdes Ghidoli and Juan Francisco Martínez Perla, eds. (Buenos Aires: GEALA, 2013), 727-42.

⁵⁸ José Oscar Frigerio, “Con sangre de negros se edificó nuestra independencia.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 21, 250 (April 1988): 48-69. Also, George Reid Andrews, “The Black Legions of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900.” In *Slavery and Beyond: The African Impact on Latin America and the Caribbean*. Darién J. Davis, ed. (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1995), 55-80.

becoming a logical target.⁵⁹ Rather than merely a social institution to discipline subalterns, gauchos, and blacks, however, the Rosas-era federalist military served to integrate different social groups and opened new avenues of advancement for and solidarity and identification between and among themselves and with federalism.⁶⁰ José Antonio Wilde, for example, recalls in his memoirs that the so-called “Restorer’s Battalion” even had black commanders and officers, a tangible social benefit further cementing the ties of affection between Afro-Argentines and Rosas.⁶¹ In addition, the racial segregation of the army, which had existed since colonial times and survived well into the early republican period, was officially abolished by Rosas’s government in 1851.⁶²

The presence of black troops loyal to Rosas, needless to say, did not go unnoticed by liberals and Unitarians. Sarmiento, for one, had mixed feelings about the warrior

⁵⁹ “Decreto del 26 de enero de 1830.” In *Colección de leyes y decretos militares concernientes al Ejército y la Armada de la República Argentina*, vol. 1 (1810-1853). Ercilio Domínguez, comp. (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1898), 508.

⁶⁰ Ricardo D. Salvatore, “Reclutamiento militar, disciplinamiento y proletarización en la era de Rosas.” *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. E. Ravignani”* (Tercera Serie), no. 5 (First Semester 1992): 25-47. See also Salvatore’s monograph *Wandering Paysanos* for additional details.

⁶¹ José Antonio Wilde, *Buenos Aires desde setenta años atrás*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Imp. y Librería de Mayo, 1881), 313. On Afro-Argentine officers, see George Reid Andrews, “The Afro-Argentine Officers of Buenos Aires Province, 1800-1860.” *Journal of Negro History* 64, 2 (Spring 1979): 85-100.

⁶² *Colección de leyes y decretos militares*, vol. 1, 509. Bushnell documents the continued segregation by race of the Buenos Aires militia during Rosas’s first regime. Bushnell, *Reform and Reaction*, 55. Salvatore points out that in 1830, free blacks were enlisted in the “Batallón de Defensores de Buenos Aires,” while Creoles and Indians were sent to serve in the “Regimiento de Patricios.” Salvatore, “Reclutamiento militar, disciplinamiento y proletarización,” 43.

nature of blacks. In his aforementioned classic 1845 work *Facundo*, part novel, part history, part sociological commentary,⁶³ Sarmiento writes that foreign travelers know all too well of the war-like tendencies of the Africans. Africans are full of passion and imagination, and can be ferocious when excited, writes Sarmiento. However, by nature they are also docile and faithful to their masters, which accounts for their easy manipulation by strongmen like Rosas.⁶⁴ After one particularly bloody campaign, a Unitarian eyewitness recalled the appalling site of a “thick wall” composed of blacks, wild Indians, and other federalist soldiers, whom this contemporary refers to as “chusma” or “scum,” awaiting them.⁶⁵ In his memoirs of nineteenth-century events, Ramos Mejía reminds his readers that blacks were the backbone of Rosas’s “brutish” forces. Rather than handicaps, the “ignorance” and “rustic morality” of Afro-Argentine men made them ideal soldiers for their barbaric ruler.⁶⁶ Francisco Acuña de Figueroa, a contemporary and antagonist of Rosas, sardonically captures in verse, once more rendered in *bozal* (African) dialect, the admiration and loyalty of Afro-Argentine troops for the Buenos

⁶³ Diana Sorensen Goodrich, *Facundo and the Construction of Argentine Culture* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1996) on the narrative style and genre(s) of *Facundo* and its significance in the Argentine canon.

⁶⁴ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo: civilización y barbarie*. María T. Bella and Jordi Estrada, eds. (Barcelona: Planeta, 1986), 216.

⁶⁵ Jacinto Mariano de la Natividad Villegas, *Rasgos de la política de Rosas o escenas de barbarie seguidas a la Batalla del Quebracho por un testigo presencial y paciente* (Buenos Aires: Imp. Constitución, 1854), 30.

⁶⁶ Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 553. Ramos Mejía, however, then apparently contradicts himself and states, in a similar vein to Sarmiento, that the predilection of blacks for Rosas was due more to their fidelity, valor, and resistance, made evident by their long tradition of defending the republic. These he sees as clearly positive character traits among Afro-Argentines. Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 554. See Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos*, 278, 334-35, on the social memory of black soldiers in Rosas’s army.

Aires leader in his poem “*Canción de Guerra de los Batallones de Negros*,” “The Battle Song of the Black Battalions.”⁶⁷ Acuña de Figueroa chides: “They don’t deserve to be called Argentines/. . .nor soldiers these lowly folk; they are no more/than rabble from Rosas’ hand/Curses and bullets on them/bandits of an infernal race/who enslave defenseless people/and call them Federalists.”⁶⁸ For *unitarios* and other Rosas-era liberals, therefore, federalist black soldiers were exemplars of barbarism and backwardness and shock troops of the bloody dictatorship.⁶⁹

However, perhaps the subaltern image most associated with the fear and repression of the Rosas regime in the literary imagination of the Generation of 1837 and in the memories of other liberals was *La sociedad popular* or “la Mazorca.” “La Mazorca” was Rosas’s secret police (more like death squad to the Unitarians). The name of the organization was itself a play on words, meaning both ear of corn, a federalist symbol (cf., Echeverría’s *El matadero*), and also a double entendre for “más horca” (“stranglers of many” or, alternatively, “more hangings”). Gabriel di Meglio characterizes “La Mazorca” as a para-police organization with boundless authority during

⁶⁷ Francisco Acuña de Figueroa, “Canción de Guerra de los Batallones de Negros,” in *Cancionero del tiempo de Rosas*, 85-87. Also, “Canción marcial de negros,” in *Negros y morenos en el cancionero rioplatense*, 28-29.

⁶⁸ Translation by Constance García-Barrios, “The Black in the Literature About the Rosas Era.” *Revista/Review Interamericana* 10, 4 (Winter 1980): 484.

⁶⁹ This is not to imply that all black soldiers were federalists or Rosas supporters. Acuña de Figueroa, for example, is complimentary of blacks who opposed Rosas.

the Rosas era.⁷⁰ Among both its rank and file as well as its leadership were members of the plebeian class of Buenos Aires, including many blacks. Thus, two black men, Zabalia and Domiciano, were important leaders of “la Mazorca.”⁷¹ According to Sarmiento, Afro-Argentine association with “la Mazorca” and federalism created a spirit of unity among the black population of Buenos Aires that no doubt served the dictator’s plans.⁷² Members of “la Mazorca” were empowered and easily identifiable to all by the red badges they wore in support of the federalist cause. Rosas, moreover, provided his spies and henchmen in “la Mazorca,” Afro-Argentines included, vast sums of money and other resources, attests a contemporary source.⁷³ Vicente G. Quesada, prestigious former director of the National Library and congressman, and a federalist in his youth, nonetheless recalled the horrors “la Mazorca” perpetrated on the liberal class of the Buenos Aires of his childhood. “De modo que los niños,” writes Quesada in his memoirs, “hemos asistido a estas escenas, no podemos sino odiar la dictadura.”⁷⁴ The children who witnessed the brutalities of the dictatorship could not help but detest it, remembers Quesada, a leading Creole successor of the men of ’37. Curiously enough, in

⁷⁰ Di Meglio, *¡Mueran los salvajes unitarios!*, 81, 93. Juan María Gutiérrez, a leading liberal of his day, describes the origins of and popular support for “la Mazorca.” Juan María Gutiérrez, “El juramento (1835),” in *Rosas visto por sus contemporáneos*, 56-57.

⁷¹ Kelly, “Rosas and the Restoration of Order,” 224. Domingo Sarmiento recalls black participation in “la mashorca.” Sarmiento, “Política—Estdo de Buenos Aires, 1855-1860.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 25, 15.

⁷² Sarmiento, *Facundo*, 246.

⁷³ “F. B.,” *Episodios sangrientos del año 1840* (Buenos Aires: Imp. Bonaerense, 1856), 31.

⁷⁴ Ernesto G. Quesada, “La Mazorca en 1840.” *Memorias de un viejo*. Isidro J. Ruiz Moreno, ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciudad Argentina, 1998), 108.

1881, the liberal Afro-Argentine press equally remembered and denounced the “ignominious yoke of Rosas’s tyranny.”⁷⁵

Kevin Kelly cites that the estimated numbers of political executions during Rosas’s twenty-year administration, many the result of “la Mazorca” espionage and oppression, was about two thousand victims.⁷⁶ Most victims of “la Mazorca” met their demise at Rosas’s gulag, ironically named “Santos Lugares” or “Holy Places.”⁷⁷ Ramos Mejía records that hangings and firing squads were the preferred means of execution in the “Santos Lugares” of Rosas.⁷⁸ Fear of assassination or execution drove many members of the Generation of 1837, including Alberdi, Echeverría, and Sarmiento, into political exile in the 1830s and 1840s. The trauma of forced exile and its memories not only defined the Generation of 1837 as per Hungarian sociologist of knowledge Karl Mannheim, referenced at the beginning of this chapter, but also shaped the representations and/or remembrances of Afro-Argentines in the writings of Argentina’s foundational *pensadores* (intellectuals), which endure in the collective memory of the Argentine nation.

⁷⁵ *La Broma*, December 23, 1881. Tomás A. Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros. La Broma y otros periódicos de la comunidad afroargentina (1873-1882)* (Buenos Aires: Inst. Histórico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2004), 59-60.

⁷⁶ Kelly, “Rosas and the Restoration of Order,” 227.

⁷⁷ “Santos Lugares” is where Camila O’Gorman was executed in 1848. The cruelty and desolation of this death camp is remembered by Xavier Marmier in his memoirs *Buenos Aires y Montevideo en 1850*. José Luis Busaniche, trans. (Buenos Aires: Distribidor El Ataneo, 1948), 61. For more on the Rosas regime’s death camp, consult Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos*, 245-46, 248, 291.

⁷⁸ Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 286-87.

Conclusion

As the next chapter will document, the Argentine Generation of 1837 proved foundational in the development of their country's *imaginario nacional* or national imaginary. The memories of their individual and collective trauma under Rosas were transmitted through their voluminous literary production, which became the first canon of the Argentine nation. Subsequent generations of Argentines learned their history of the Rosas era in school from the literature and recollections of Alberdi, Echeverría, Mármol, Sarmiento, and company. The men of '37 and their socio-political ideas, however, were shaped by coming of age during the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas and his federalist (conservative) cohorts, who threatened, killed, and exiled numerous Unitarians (liberals) in the 1830s and 1840s, with active participation from several Afro-Argentines.⁷⁹ After all, Afro-Argentines were actively courted by the dictator, received his and his family's favors, enjoyed his deference, and, not surprisingly, became his loyal followers.

⁷⁹ Most men of '37 remained staunchly anti-Rosas their whole lives. A notable exception was Juan Bautista Alberdi. After the dictator's downfall at Caseros in 1852 and eventual exile to England, Alberdi and Rosas developed something like a mutual respect. They exchanged many letters, often of a friendly tone, and Alberdi even visited Rosas in Southampton. Alberdi stated that no compatriot ever received him as warmly as did Rosas. Alberdi also wrote to Manuelita and often sympathized with her plight. E.g., Juan Bautista Alberdi, *Las cartas rosistas de Alberdi*. Adolfo Saldías, comp. and comm. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Politeia, 1970), 60-61, 62-63, 102-103; idem., *Recuerdos de viaje y otras páginas* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1962), 91-94; Juan Manuel de Rosas, *Cartas del exilio, 1853/1875. Por primera vez en la historia se le da la palabra: Rosas habla*. José Raed, comp. (Buenos Aires: Rodolfo Alonso Editor, 1974), 38-39; and "Alberdi y Rosas," in *Así fue Rosas*, 147-54.

Afro-Argentines, therefore, played key roles in the “foundational fictions” of the Generation of 1837.⁸⁰ Notwithstanding their acknowledgement of the evils of slavery and recognition of Afrodescendants and their contributions to the Río de la Plata’s independence and heritage, as shall be discussed next, the Generation of 1837 generally represented or remembered Africans and their offspring in a negative way.⁸¹ Central to the literary imagination and memories of the men of ’37 was the association of Afro-Argentines with Rosas’s regime. They were the dictator’s henchmen and spies, as well as his shock troops.⁸² The very representations and/or remembrances of the Generation of 1837 about blacks during the Rosas era were shaped by their experiences (historical memory is always about the context of those doing the remembering) of persecution and expatriation in the 1830s and 1840s at the hands of Rosas and all of his subaltern followers, Afro-Argentines in particular.⁸³

⁸⁰ See Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), esp. chapters 2 and 3.

⁸¹ Nineteenth-century Argentine liberals had a Manichean worldview composed of opposing binaries such as civilization-barbarism, city-countryside, liberal-conservative, white-not-white, etc., that clearly comes across in their fictional and historical writings and shaped their remembrances and representations of subalterns.

⁸² British writer L. E. Elliott (errantly) recalls that blacks in Argentina no longer exist because Rosas effectively used Afro-Argentine men as cannon fodder for his forces. L. E. Elliott, *The Argentina of To-day* (London: Hurst and Blackett, Patterson House, E. C., 1926), 30-31.

⁸³ On the political usages of historical memory among Unitarians and other liberals in this period, see Zubizarreta, *Los Unitarios*, 46 ff.; William H. Kattr, “Sarmiento frente a la Generación de 1837.” *Revista Iberoamericana* 54, 143 (April-June 1988): 547.

CHAPTER 6

“Gobernar es blanquear”—The Generation of 1837 and the un-Nostalgia of Blackness in Nineteenth-Century Argentina

“Porque poblar, repito, es instruir, educar, moralizar, mejorar la raza; es enriquecer, civilizar, fortalecer y afirmar la libertad del país, dándole la inteligencia y la costumbre de su propio gobierno y los medios de ejercerlo.” Juan Bautista Alberdi, *Argentina 1852. Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina* (Barcelona: Red ediciones, SL, 2011 [1852]), 10.

Introduction

This chapter examines the representations and remembrances of Afro-Argentines by the Generation of 1837, Argentine political and cultural nation builders in the first half of the nineteenth century. These writers and intellectuals, members of the Argentine elite, wrote extensively about their country’s social and political problems in the aftermath of independence from Spain in the early 1800s. Made up of some of the most important essayists and fiction writers of their day in Latin America, the Generation of 1837 prominently included Juan Bautista Alberdi, Esteban Echeverría, José Mármol, José Hernández, and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, among other ideologically liberal intellectual notables of the era. Their writings are universally esteemed a part of the literary canon of Argentina and fashioned the national myths or what Nicolás Shumway refers to as that country’s “guiding fictions.”¹

¹ Nicolás Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), xi. According to Shumway, perhaps the most enduring of these guiding fictions is the Generation of 1837’s “mythology of exclusion,” which is very relevant to the representations of blackness discussed below.

The Generation of 1837 lived through Argentina's independence struggle from Spain, early attempts at liberal national consolidation, civil war, and the repressive dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas, all this happening during the first half of the nineteenth century.² In many of their works of fiction and non-fiction alike, these liberal intellectual elites denounced Argentina's socio-racial backwardness and promoted the "whitening" of their nation's population. Generally, the liberal elite of the era represented blacks in particular as racially inferior and morally suspect. Not only were they prone to immorality but also to support of conservative political strongmen or *caudillos*, especially Buenos Aires federalist ruler Rosas. As will be highlighted below, as in the previous chapters as well, the collective representations of Afro-Argentines by the Generation of 1837 were canonical sources for subsequent Argentine intellectuals' depictions of blacks and blackness, regardless of whether *afrorioplatenses* were fondly remembered or not.

In addition to the discussion of the association between Juan Manuel de Rosas and the black community of Buenos Aires of Chapter five, this part of the dissertation will examine some of those representations and later remembrances by looking at a

² William H. Ktra, *The Argentine Generation of 1837: Echeverría, Alberdi, Sarmiento, Mitre* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1996) provides an accessible introduction to the biographies, writings, and ideas of these nineteenth-century intellectual luminaries. Tulio Halperín Donghi observes that in some of the early writings of the men of '37 there is a reactionary sense of loss or nostalgia for the traditional position occupied by *letrados* (literati) during the colonial era. Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Prólogo: una nación para el desierto argentino." *De la revolución de independencia a la confederación rosista: historia argentina*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2000), 10-11. William G. Acree, Jr., *Everyday Reading: Print Culture and Collective Identity in the Río de la Plata, 1780-1910* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 2011) examines the importance of writing and reading in the formation of Argentina from the late-colonial to the early-national period.

selective anthology of writings by key members of the Generation of 1837 and other liberal literati. For these writers, blacks in Argentina in the first half of the nineteenth century, albeit in the process of disappearing, were both too visible and too well-entrenched within the despotism of Rosas and his henchmen. In fact, Rosas and his black allies had forced many of the generation's finest into political exile to Europe and other countries in South and Latin America. Even if they were putatively vanishing, there was nevertheless little literary space in the imagination of the Generation of 1837 for nostalgia for the then not only still very visible (but also vicious) black population of Argentina in the 1830s and 1840s.

Far from nostalgia for or fond memories of a colonial past, then, blacks were for the thinkers of '37 vestiges of a degraded history and very real social threats to them and their ideas. According to Sarmiento and company, if Argentina was to progress as a civilized society and modern nation-state on par with the United States and Europe's metropolises, Afro-Argentines had to be marginalized or even eliminated. The writings of the Generation of 1837 were foundational in marginalizing Afro-Argentines and other subalterns and promoting a national image that was (and remains) largely liberal, educated, urban, urbane, cosmopolitan, white, and European. Collectively, they shaped in one way or another, whether positively or negatively, subsequent memorializations and representations of blacks in Argentina from the mid-nineteenth century on.³

To cavalierly dismiss the Generation of 1837 and their foundational fictions as

³ As previously stated, the fiction and non-fiction prose of Alberdi and company have generated the founding myths of Argentine nationalism. On this theme, consult the already cited work of Shumway, *Invention of Argentina*. Also, Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991). These foundational fictions have served as the national canon for generations of students in Argentina (and

merely racist by contemporary sensitivities is anachronistic, facile, and un-nuanced. Moreover, such an appreciation does nothing to move the scholarship forward or afford a better understanding of the actual, always infinitely complex “lived lives” and thoughts of real people, with all their pride, prejudices, paradoxes, and contradictions. After all, if reality is indeed socially constructed, a by now commonplace idea among scholars in the social sciences and humanities, then one must appreciate on their own terms and in their proper contexts the various social elements that go into making up that reality.⁴

As has already been documented, it is certainly true that some of the racial thoughts of nineteenth-century Argentine liberals sound foreign and even offensive to contemporary readers or hearers. It is equally true that their racial ideologies have now been largely discredited by modern science and sociology. This, however, should not be taken as license to either dismiss or turn into a caricature what were in their day serious epistemological positions, buttressed by then regnant biological and social scientific

throughout Latin America) since the late 1800s, shaping the *imaginario nacional* of Argentina for natives and foreigners alike. My father and other Argentine relatives of different ages all recall memorizing as children in school key passages and scenes from the works of Alberdi, Echeverría, Hernández, Mármol, Mitre, and Sarmiento. Moreover, the numerous editions, re-editions, and translations of these classics over the years suffice to prove their canonical status and importance as sites of national memory. I cite from various editions as proof positive of this assertion. On the importance of print culture and national literatures in the formation of modern nations, see Benedict Anderson’s seminal *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991). In the Verso edition, Anderson added a concluding chapter on the relevance of “memory and forgetting” in the making of the “imagined community” of nations.

⁴ On the social construction of reality see the now classic work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966).

principles, espoused by very intelligent men (and women).⁵ What follows is perforce a limited excursus on the representations/remembrances of Afro-Argentines in the canonical writings of some of the leaders among the liberal Generation of 1837. These erudite men each wrote voluminous amounts on what they understood to be the main social, economic, political, and cultural problems facing Argentina in the nineteenth century, race included. It would demand a much better and more systematic study than this to do justice to the range and complexity of their thoughts on these and other subjects⁶; however, the synopsis proffered below shall suffice for our immediate purposes.

Blackness in Argentina and The Generation of 1837: “Gobernar es blanquear” (“To Govern is to Whiten”), Mid- to Late-Nineteenth Century

As mentioned above, one of the early leaders of Argentina’s Generation of 1837 was Juan Bautista Alberdi. A fine polemicist and legal scholar, Alberdi was a typical nineteenth-century liberal, espousing constitutional republicanism (not to be confused with democratic idealism or populism), free trade capitalism, and anti-religious (specifically anti-Catholic) prejudices. In one of his most celebrated works, *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina*, first published in 1852, the same year of the downfall of Juan Manuel de Rosas, Alberdi pronounces perhaps the most memorable rallying cry of his generation of thinkers:

⁵ For an excellent overview of nineteenth-century racial ideologies and their impacts on national formation in Latin America, consult Nancy Leys Stepan, *“The Hour of Eugenics”: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991).

⁶ For a brilliant example of the kind of scholarship on race and national identity I have in mind, see Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974).

“gobernar es poblar,” “to govern is to populate.” This trenchant summary, encapsulating so much of the social, political, and racial ideologies of the Generation of 1837, is repeated several times by Alberdi in *Bases y puntos*. Thus, for example, Alberdi opines that “to govern is to populate”; and to populate is really the dictum derived from the science of political economy, which considers population a means of wealth and prosperity for the nation.⁷ Alberdi, unlike Sarmiento, questions the notion that to populate is merely a matter of adding numbers to the population; on the contrary: the main aspect of the art of populating a nation is the art of properly distributing the populace. Simply adding population can in fact be ruinous to the state, avers Alberdi.⁸

Moreover, now in keeping with his contemporary and erstwhile ally Sarmiento, and others of his generation, Juan Bautista Alberdi argues that correctly populating a country also means civilizing the populace and bettering its racial composition: to populate is to guide, to educate, to moralize, and to improve one’s national race; it is to enrich, civilize, strengthen, and affirm the country’s freedom, providing an understanding and custom of self-government, as well as the means to carry it out.⁹ William H. Katra

⁷ Juan Bautista Alberdi, *Argentina 1852. Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina* (Barcelona: Red ediciones, SL, 2011 [1852]), 22. Alberdi insists: “‘Gobernar es poblar’ muy bien; pero poblar es una ciencia, y esta ciencia no es otra cosa que la economía política, que considera la población como instrumento de riqueza y elemento de prosperidad.”

⁸ Alberdi, *Bases y puntos*, 22. Alberdi now shifts the metaphor of populating the nation from science to art, maintaining: “La parte principal del arte de poblar es el arte de distribuir la población. A veces, aumentarla demasiado es lo contrario de poblar; es disminuir y arruinar la población del país.”

⁹ “Porque poblar, repito, es instruir, educar, moralizar, mejorar la raza; es enriquecer, civilizar, fortalecer y afirmar la libertad del país, dándole la inteligencia y la costumbre de su propio gobierno y los medios de ejercerlo.” Alberdi, *Bases y puntos*, 10.

correctly observes that to properly understand Alberdi's meaning of "to govern is to populate," one must readily acknowledge his "very strong and ethnographic racial inclinations."¹⁰ In fact, insists Alberdi, populating with inferior racial stock, such as Asians and Africans, is not to civilize a population but rather to "bestialize" ("embrutecer") the populace of a country.¹¹ Consequently, Alberdi's and his generation's solution to Argentina's social and racial backwardness was unfettered (northern) European immigration, politically promoted by a strong centralized state and constitutionally defined and defended.¹² In other words, for Alberdi and others of his generation of liberal thinkers, *gobernar es blanquear*, i.e., to govern is to whiten, and not

¹⁰ Katra, *Generation of 1837*, 163. Later generations of Argentine social theorists agreed with Alberdi and saw his vision of a European nation largely fulfilled. For instance, José Ingenieros opined in his influential treatise *Sociología argentina* that "Europeanization is not, in our opinion, a hope... it is inevitability." José Ingenieros, *Sociología argentina*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Daniel Jorro, 1913), 228-29. Creole nationalists, however, espoused race-mixing to better the national population. On later Creole nationalist Ricardo Rojas, race, and national identity, see also Graciela Liliana Ferrás, "Ricardo Rojas: mestizaje y alteridad en la construcción de la nacionalidad argentina." *Sociedad y Economía*, no. 18 (2010): 9-36.

¹¹ Alberdi, *Bases y puntos*, 10. Alberdi argues that: "... poblar no es civilizar, sino embrutecer, cuando se puebla con chinos y con indios de Asia y con negros de Africa." Animal imagery and associations with the Rosas regime and its Afro-Argentine supporters was a common literary device in the writings of the Generation of 1837, especially in Esteban Echeverría's classic *El matadero*. José Mármol, for example, writes of Rosas's daughter and sole confidant, Manuela, who was beloved by the common people, "En medio de esos reptiles Manuela es un Dios." José Mármol, *Manuela Rosas y otros escritos políticos del exilio*. Félix Weinberg, ed. (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2001), 243. In effect, Mármol claims that among the "reptilian" mobs of Rosas's followers, Manuela was a god to them.

¹² Alberdi, *Bases y puntos*, 10-11. "Poblar es civilizar cuando se puebla con gente inteligente en la industria y habituada al trabajo que produce y enriquece," maintains the author of *Bases y puntos*. That is, to civilize is to populate means bringing in industrious and productive laborers. Who were these "intelligent" workers according to Alberdi? Namely, "civilized" (read white, non-Mediterranean or northern) Europeans: "Poblar es civilizar cuando se puebla con gente civilizada, es decir, con pobladores de la Europa civilizada." Alberdi, *Bases y puntos*, 10.

merely populate.

Alberdi's idea became, to once more invoke Nicolás Shumway's memorable turn of phrase, a true guiding fiction about race and nation in nineteenth-century Argentina. It was a dominant view of and among Argentina's foundational writers and national architects. Such a central ideology serves as the background for coming to terms with their collective representations and remembrances of Afro-Argentines in the first half of the nineteenth century. It would therefore be difficult to overestimate the significance of the liberal Generation of 1837 and their foundational writings on the social, political, economic, and cultural formation and the national consolidation of modern Argentina in the post-Caseros period.¹³

Alberdi, Mitre, Sarmiento, and company would become iconic national heroes. Several of them, including both Mitre and Sarmiento, would even become presidents of the republic. Their lives, careers, and ideas were commemorated in countless sites and ways throughout Argentina from the late 1800s onwards, especially in the nation's public schools. Their fiction and non-fiction writings have served as required reading for generations of young Argentine students over the last century and a half. For instance, in

¹³ Rosas was defeated by fellow federalist strongman Justo José de Urquiza at the Battle of Caseros, province of Buenos Aires, on February 3, 1852. Rosas would shortly thereafter leave for exile in England, where he died in 1877 at the age of 83. Urquiza would himself be defeated in 1861 at the Battle of Pavón in Santa Fe province by the centralist forces of Bartolomé Mitre. With Mitre's victory, the long road to final national consolidation, begun with the struggle for independence from Spain, civil war, and the promulgation of the Constitution of 1853, was undertaken, culminating in the election by provincial delegates of Mitre as the first president of the Argentine Republic in 1862. Consult David Bushnell and Neill Macaulay, *The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), ch. 10, "The Heyday of Liberal Reform in Spanish America (1850-1880) II: Argentina, Chile, and Some Other Cases," for political developments in Argentina after the fall of Rosas and Urquiza.

the immediate aftermath the centennial celebration of Argentina's drive for independence in 1910, an anthology of patriotic heroes and writings was published for schoolchildren. The expressed purpose of the anthology explains its compiler Bernardo L. Peyret, professor at the "Escuela Normal y Colegio Nacional de Paraná," was so schoolchildren would be infused with patriotism and remember their founders and the key sites or sources of national identity. The anthology was designed to be employed by teachers in the classroom as a tool for instruction in civic pride, exhorts Peyret.¹⁴ The Generation of 1837, needless to say, figures prominently in the tributes to the founders and nation builders in the Peyret compendium. Odes to the memory of Alberdi, Mitre, and Sarmiento are grouped together in a section on national heroes, and features "Canto á Alberdi" and "Homenaje á Sarmiento," by then renowned poets A. C. Bugnone and Enrique E. Rivarola, respectively.¹⁵ Therefore, the men and writings of the Generation of

¹⁴ Bernardo L. Peyret, comp. and org., *Antología patriótica, prosa y verso. Contribución á la enseñanza patriótica de la escuela* (Buenos Aires: Librería Nacional, J. LaJouane y Cía., Libreros Editores, 1911), 7. "ESTA ANTOLOGIA PATRIOTICA, destinada a la escuela pública, como contribución á la enseñanza nacional que en ella se dá..." Peyret states that the anthology is for the public schools for the purpose of a national education. The Peyret anthology in effect responds to the call of Ricardo Rojas in his *La restauración nacionalista. Informe sobre educación* (Buenos Aires: Min. de Justicia y Educación Pública, 1909), a federally sponsored work on public schools in Argentina, by a leading early-twentieth-century cultural nationalist, that stressed the need for patriotic pedagogy.

¹⁵ Peyret, comp. and org., *Antología patriótica, prosa y verso*. The poems to Alberdi and Sarmiento referenced above appear, respectively, on pages 269-62 and 279-82. "Cantar á la patria, recordar sus fechas magnas, ... tributar un recuerdo á los que de entre el conjunto anónimo de los huestes salvaron del olvido siquiera su nombre..., todo esto... constituye para la escuela un ejemplo vivo del patriotismo en su faz más elocuente é impresionante ." To sing to the nation, remember its important dates, save from oblivion the anonymous heroes, these are the living patriotic examples for the public schools in all their most eloquent and impressive semblance extols Peyret. Peyret, comp. and org., *Antología patriótica, prosa y verso*, 7-8. Interestingly, while there are tributes to the memory of Urquiza, Rosas goes unacknowledged in the Peyret anthology. Also interesting in a compilation of tributes to mostly by then dead white men is the inclusion of two commemorations of "Falucho."

1837 are key sites of memory for Argentines past and present. What follows below proffers readers an overview of the complex views on blacks in mid-nineteenth-century Argentina among a few key members of the Generation of 1837.

To the men of '37, Afro-Argentines were a very real and (then) present danger for them personally and for their ideas about the development of Argentina into a modern nation-state. In addition to their perceived racial and moral inferiority, blacks for the Generation of 1837 were largely represented, and later remembered by some subsequent writers, as henchmen of federalism, especially of Buenos-Aires strongman Juan Manuel de Rosas. Consequently, there was for the Generation of 1837 little nostalgia for Afro-Argentines, who were at that time still very visible and seen as integral to Rosas from the 1830s through the early 1850s. However, even if they were essentially un-nostalgic about blacks, the writings of the Generation of 1837 also evidence some contradictions and mixed feelings on race. Moreover, with the alleged vanishing of the black population of Argentina over the latter part of the nineteenth century, a sort of imperialist nostalgia would gradually emerge, even among the older, surviving men of '37. That, however, is a story for a later chapter.

Let us take up again some of the views espoused by Juan Bautista Alberdi, whose overall writings reflect the nuanced ideas concerning race among liberal intellectuals of 1837. Unlike some of the other members of the Generation of 1837, Juan Bautista Alberdi did not comment much on race in general or blacks in particular. Furthermore, like others of his generation, his racial views when articulated evidenced characteristic complexities or paradoxes. Note that despite his “whitening” ideology, for patriotic reasons Alberdi even railed against the racial prejudice of his day that openly

discriminated against black citizens and denied them a public voice or access to certain places. He also explicitly appealed to the historical memory of his compatriots to recognize the rights of Afro-Argentine citizens. According to Alberdi, Afro-Argentines deserve full political equality with whites because “... los hombres de color, los que han dejado sus huesos y su sangre en los campos de Ituzaingo y Chacabuco, a fin de tener esta patria esta bandera, esta libertad, esta dignidad que tenemos todos menos ellos.”¹⁶ As opposed to some of his observations in *Bases y puntos* quoted above, Alberdi seemed to disavow any idea that biological race automatically disqualifies anyone from the opportunity to advance socially or enjoy legal rights: “Black, rich, or poor, if he is capable, then so be it; and thus being worthy he is equal to other capable men be he black, mulatto, or Indian: because neither skin color, hair texture, nor blood are [limiting] capacities” (“Negro, rico, pobre, si él puede ser capaz de todo, déjesele ser; y en siendo capaz él será igual al hombre capaz aunque sea negro, mulato o indio: porque ni el color ni el cabello ni la sangre son capacidades”).¹⁷ Alberdi thus lamented the discrimination suffered by Afro-Argentines, the very men who fought and died for national freedom and the rights enjoyed by all citizens save for themselves. He also credits Afro-Argentines for their patriotic services to the cause of Independence, and concluded his lament over the discrimination experienced by compatriots of color by once more appealing to their

¹⁶ Juan Bautista Alberdi, *Escritos póstumos. Miscelánea: propaganda revolucionaria*, vol. 13 (Buenos Aires: Imp. Juan B. Alberdi, 1900), 182. Here, Alberdi recalls the heroic sacrifices on independence battlefields of black soldiers and claims that said sacrifices entitles Afro-Argentines to full legal equality.

¹⁷ Alberdi, *Escritos póstumos. Miscelánea*, 184. Note, however, that in the above passage women seem to be excluded from Alberdi's otherwise egalitarian espousals.

historical memory, invoking the famous words of General José de San Martín: “¡Pobres negros!” (“Poor blacks!”).¹⁸

While Alberdi recalls that Afro-Argentines were the backbone of Rosas’s despotism, he nonetheless ultimately blames the dictator for their barbarism and backwardness, a byproduct of a lack of education afforded black people by a regime intent on keeping them ignorant so as to be easily manipulated, a sentiment shared by the another great liberal of the era, Domingo F. Sarmiento, a champion of the merits of universal education. In many respects, then, Alberdi’s thoughts on Afro-Argentines evidence a complexity that belies facile characterization or generalization. This is equally true of the remembrances or representations of blacks in the canonical writings of others in the Generation of 1837.¹⁹

Esteban Echeverría is another important writer of this generation. Raquel Chang-Rodríguez and Malva E. Filer observe that Esteban Echeverría was the pioneer of literary romanticism in the River Plate. Born into a well-to-do Buenos Aires family, Echeverría studied at the University of Buenos Aires before moving to Paris between 1826 and 1830. While in Paris, he took in the works of leading exponents of French romanticism, including François-René de Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, Alphonse de Lamartine, Alfred

¹⁸ Supposedly San Martín cried out “¡Pobres negros!” (“poor blacks!”) after the Battle of Chacabuco in 1817, when he saw the battlefield strewn with their dead bodies. Lea Geler, “‘¡Pobres negros!’: Algunos apuntes sobre la desaparición de los negros argentinos.” In *Estado, región y poder en América Latina, siglos XIX-XX. Algunas miradas sobre el estado, el poder y la participación política*. Pilar García Jordán, ed. (Barcelona: Publicacions i Edicions de la Univ. de Barcelona, 2007), 117.

¹⁹ On the racial views and sensibilities of the Generation of 1837, consult Katra, *Generation of 1837*, 30-31, 123-4, 163-64, 188; Shumway, *Invention of Argentina*, 134-36, 139-44, 166-67, 253-67, 272-73, 287-88.

de Musset, and Alfred de Vigny.²⁰ Upon his return to Argentina, Echeverría immediately ran afoul of the Rosas dictatorship as a result of his involvement with Marcos Sastre's liberal literary circle and membership in the radical *Joven generación argentina*. Before his permanent political exile to Montevideo, where he died very young in 1851, Echeverría penned some of the most important foundational works of the national literary canon, including the epic poem "La cautiva" (1837) and his ideological manifesto *Dogma socialista de la Asociación de Mayo* (1846), which is, along with Alberdi's *Bases y puntos*, one of the most important political writings in nineteenth-century Argentina. Noé Jitrik considers Echeverría not only a literary pioneer, but also "the teacher" of a "brilliant generation" that, after the fall of Rosas, becomes the basis of the dominant social group in Argentina, "que controla el desarrollo nacional hasta nuestros días" (that is, that shapes national development until this day).²¹

As a typical nineteenth-century liberal, Echeverría, his other racial views notwithstanding, condemned African chattel slavery as morally inhumane and economically irrational. Before traveling to Europe, Echeverría spent a brief time in Brazil. There, he witnessed firsthand the barbarity and cruelty of Negro slavery on the sugar and coffee plantations and mines of the Brazilian empire. He was emotionally

²⁰ Raquel Chang-Rodríguez and Malva E. Filer, comps., *Voces de Hispanoamérica: antología literaria* (Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers, 1988), 138.

²¹ On Echeverría, his thought, and seminal writings, consult the dated but still valuable works of Noé Jitrik, *Esteban Echeverría* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1967); Tulio Halperín Donghi, *El pensamiento de Echeverría* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1951); and Oreste Popescu, *El pensamiento social y económico de Esteban Echeverría* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Americana, 1954). Note that Echeverría's use of term socialism has little to do with the nineteenth-century, European political ideology by that name.

moved by the plight of the African slaves and their misery. Echeverría laments the poor fortune of “los miserables descendientes del Africa..., víctimas desgraciadas del egoísmo y de la ambición del oro..., a que nuestros semejantes tratan como a bestias de carga.” Here, the young Echeverría complains about the miserable condition of the African slaves and their descendants in Brazil, victims of white pride and greed for gold, which turn black brothers into nothing more than beasts of burden.²² Elsewhere, when talking about the social composition of colonial Latin America, he observes that Indians and African slaves “tenían una existencia extrasocial” (“had an extra-social existence”), and were the victims of an odious caste system promoted by the Catholic Church and other powerful elites, “los enriquecidos por el monopolio y el capricho de la fortuna” (i.e., “those made wealthy by monopoly and the caprices of fortune”).²³ Echeverría’s strong anti-slavery sentiment was also shared by others of his generation of liberal intellectuals and cultural nation builders in early nineteenth-century Argentina.

Regardless of his principled anti-African slavery stance, however, Echeverría nonetheless affirmed his generation’s views on blacks as largely uncivilized and barbaric,

²² Esteban Echeverría, “Personaje del Gualpo.” *Obras Completas de don Esteban Echeverría*, vol. 5. Juan María Gutiérrez, ed. (Buenos Aires: Carlos Casavalle Editor, Imp. y Librería de Mayo, 1870-74), 18 ff.

²³ Esteban Echeverría, “Antecedentes y primeros pasos de la revolución.” *Obras Completas de don Esteban Echeverría*, vol. 5, 247. In his *Dogma*, Echeverría intimates that the newly independent republics of Latin America still bore with them the scars of slavery inherited from their colonial masters and therefore militated for a needed reform of customs and morals in the nascent nations. Esteban Echeverría, *Dogma socialista*, crit. ed. with documents. Biblioteca de Autores Nacionales y Extranjeros Referente a la República Argentina, vol. 2. Univ. Nacional de La Plata, ed. (La Plata: Univ. Nacional de La Plata, 1940), 187. Several writers of the independence era and the Generation of 1837 compared the imperial yoke of Spain with slavery and Spanish subjects to slaves in need of liberation from their European masters.

beasts in Rosas's slaughterhouse. Echeverría's *El matadero* (1838/1840), "acknowledged as the foundational work of national literature" ("obra reconocida como fundadora de las letras nacionales") according to the University of Buenos Aires's Berenice Corti, embodies perhaps the cruelest and crudest depiction of the Rosas regime and its supporters.²⁴ His *El matadero* is an allegorical critique of Rosas's dictatorship, which has, according to the author, transformed his native land into a place of brutality and carnage. Echeverría's use of the slaughterhouse as a symbol and setting for his political allegory is not coincidental, however. Beyond the obvious association between the slaughterhouse's death and gore and the federalist dictatorship, Echeverría was also well aware of the economic importance of the cattle industry in the River Plate of the 1800s and the wealth it generated for commercial ranchers like Rosas.

Nineteenth-century British sailor and painter Emeric Essex Vidal visited Buenos Aires in the early 1800s and captured on canvas some of the earliest depictions of social customs and daily life in the River Plate. Emeric Essex Vidal described the slaughterhouses of the city of Buenos Aires then. He wrote that there were four slaughterhouses, two on the edges of Buenos Aires, and two more within the city itself; each *matadero* had its own corrals and belonged to an individual butcher. Essex Vidal goes on to describe in gory detail how the cattle were slaughtered by the butchers, establishing the verisimilitude between Echeverría's tale and the actual practices of

²⁴ Juan Carlos Ghiano, "*El matadero*" de Echeverría y el costumbrismo (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1968). Berenice Corti, "La construcción ideológica en torno a los Afroargentinos en la literatura: Echeverría, Hernández y Borges y la relectura popular de Adolfo Bellocq." In *Actas de las Segundas Jornadas de Estudios Afrolatinoamericanos del GEALA* (Buenos Aires: GEALA, 2012), 82. *El matadero* was not published until 1871, however, twenty years after Echeverría's death.

butchers and offal collectors in the slaughterhouses of nineteenth-century Buenos Aires.²⁵ Echeverría's naturalistic imagery of death and dismemberment in the slaughterhouse, as well as the brutishness of its mixed-race denizens, was thus seemingly seared into the collective imaginary of Argentines, and even that of foreign visitors, from the time of his story's first publication until well into the twentieth century (and beyond in learned circles).

Esteban Echeverría's *El matadero* is a rather simple tale. Nicolás Shumway proffers a concise summary. Owing to a severe draught, there is in Buenos Aires a beef shortage. Rosas's followers are hungry and beginning to doubt their leader's ability to provide for them (i.e., the nation). In light of the potential social unrest, Rosas reacts and there is a public announcement that several cows will be slaughtered on a given day at one of the city's main slaughterhouses. The lower-class and mixed-race mobs turn out en masse to the slaughterhouse. On the day of the slaughter, the story takes readers inside the slaughterhouse itself and describes "in stomach-turning detail" how steers are butchered and dismembered by the filthy, blood-soaked butchers; how the mobs fight over animal parts, especially the tripe or entrails (*mondongo*, a favorite food among Afro-Argentines); how the accidental death of a mixed-race child produces no sense of compassion from the starved rabble; and how a wandering Englishman is bullied and beaten (typifying the xenophobia of Rosas and his federalist supporters). The story's climax, however, involves a cultured, Unitarian youth who unfortunately for him happens

²⁵ Emeric Essex Vidal, "South Matadero." *Picturesque Illustrations of Buenos Aires and Montevideo*. In *Colección de viajeros y memorias geográficas*. Carlos Muzio Sáenz Peña, trans. (Buenos Aires: Fac. de Filosofía y Letras, 1923), 151-54.

by the slaughterhouse. He is not wearing the mandatory pro-Rosas red insignia and is therefore set upon by the head butcher of the slaughterhouse, “Matasiete” (i.e., “Killer of Seven,” a stand in for Rosas). The Unitarian youth is dragged down from his horse, beaten, and stripped by the mob. The young Unitarian dies of noble rage, blood spouting from his nose and mouth, much like a dying bull. Clearly, the Unitarian youth represents the civilized Argentina Rosas’s barbarism suppressed.²⁶ The slaughterhouse is therefore “[a]ll a representation in miniature of the savage ways in which individual and social conflicts are thrashed out in our country,” laments Echeverría.²⁷

Among the most beastly of the denizens of the slaughterhouse in Echeverría’s fiction are black women, recalled and represented repeatedly by authors of this generation as Rosas’s most loyal followers. Echeverría’s goal in his representations was to vilify the lower-class, mixed-race, black supporters of the Argentine strongman. He

²⁶ Shumway, *Invention of Argentina*, 142. Doris Sommer provides an alternative reading of the Unitarian hero’s death suggesting that he was raped by an ear of corn (*mazorca*) and this caused his hemorrhaging. Sommer, *Foundational Fictions*, 105-6. Thus, in light of the male-on-male sexual violence implied in the scene, one can argue that Echeverría is depicting Rosas and his followers as sodomizers of the nation. This scene of gratuitous rape has resonated in the literary memory of Argentine writers and reappeared time and again, ranging from Jorge Luis Borges’s philosophical tales to pop-comics. In the introduction to “The Slaughterhouse,” trans. by Angel Flores. In *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2002), 107. According to Shumway, during Perón’s first presidency (1946-1955), Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares (under the pen name of “Bustos Domeq”) wrote a story titled “Fiesta del monstruo” or “Monsterfest,” inspired by “El matadero’s” critique of Rosas’s regime. Shumway, *Invention of Argentina*, 143. This clearly shows the importance of the writings of the Generation of 1837 in the national memory among at least certain progressive writers and their representative social groups.

²⁷ Esteban Echeverría, “The Slaughterhouse,” trans. by Angel Flores, in *Argentina Reader*, 110. “Simulacro en pequeño era éste del modo bárbaro con que se ventilan en nuestro país las cuestiones y los derechos individuales y sociales.” Esteban Echeverría, “El matadero,” in *Voces de Hispanoamérica*, 147. María Rosa Lojo, “El matadero de Esteban Echeverría: la sangre derramada y la estética de la ‘mezcla’.” *Alba de América* 1, 16-17 (1991): 41-63.

does so by essentially bestializing them, narrating their terrible and savage deeds in the slaughterhouse. Echeverría repeatedly points out the race of his characters to make sure the association between blacks and beasts is not lost on his readers. For instance, “From a distance the view of the slaughterhouse was now grotesque....” At the butcher’s back were “Negro and mulatto women, offal collectors whose ugliness matched that of the harpies, and huge mastiffs that sniffled, snarled, and snapped at one another as they darted after booty.”²⁸ Here, Echeverría is comparing the ugliness of black women offal collectors to that of mythological beasts, while at the same time juxtaposing them with mastiffs. The black women and large dogs appear to be in competition for the meat scraps.

Elsewhere in his story, Echeverría has one of the butchers threaten to cut open a “black witch” for stealing prized cattle fat. Black women were repeatedly depicted in the story dragging along bloody animal entrails. “A mulatto woman carrying a heap of entrails slipped in a pool of blood and fell lengthwise under her coveted booty,” writes Echeverría, in what can perhaps be taken as a moment of comic relief at the expense of a colored woman. “Farther on,” continues the writer, “huddled together in a long line, four

²⁸ Echeverría, “The Slaughterhouse,” trans. by Angel Flores, in *Argentina Reader*, 108. “A sus espaldas se rebullían, caracoleando y siguiendo los movimientos, una comparsa... de negras y mulatas achuradoras cuya fealdad transuntaba las arpías de la fábula....” Echeverría, “El matadero,” in *Voces de Hispanoamérica*, 145. José Mármol is also fond of juxtaposing black women with animals. Cf., *Amalia* (Barcelona: Linkgua, 2011), 112-13. Stories and lithographs appearing in Unitarian publications in exile, such as *El Grito Argentino*, published from Montevideo in 1839, often represent Rosas and his followers as animals, demons, or both. In “Sigue la danza,” a group of animals and demons dance around Rosas. *Rosas en las láminas de “El Grito”: El Grito Argentino. ¡Muera Rosas!* Roberto Moro, comp. (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1974), n.p. The “bestializing” of blacks was a common motif in this era throughout the Atlantic world. See, e.g., Paul Outka, *Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

hundred Negro women unwound heaps of intestines in their laps, picking off one by one those bits of fat that the butcher's avaricious knife had overlooked."²⁹ Moreover, these same black women fight each other over a bull's testicles, employ foul language, and, worst of all, agitate the men to humiliate the young Unitarian hero at story's end.

"Few documents in Argentine history," asseverates Nicolás Shumway, "better reflect the odd mixture of fear and hostility upper-class Argentines felt toward their own lower classes than Echeverría's 'The Slaughterhouse'."³⁰ The images of beast-like lower-classes in *El matadero* remained in the national imaginary and memory. For example, later nineteenth-century intellectual, positivist writer, and politician José María Ramos Mejía takes his description of the slaughterhouses of Buenos Aires in the Rosas era directly from Echeverría. "El matadero fue otro de los conservatorios de la fe, el local más frecuentado de las reuniones plebeyas," writes Ramos Mejía, intimating that the slaughterhouse was another frequented place of plebeian worship of Rosas. His depictions of scenes and people inside the slaughterhouse seem lifted straight from Echeverría's story, a fact Ramos Mejía openly acknowledges. Again, black women are mentioned as major animators of the wild agitations in the slaughterhouses, with howls of "Long Live the Federation!," "Long Live the Restorer [i.e., Rosas] and the Heroine [i.e., Manuelita]!," "Death to the Savage Unitarians!" "Nadie que concurriera allí, y siempre que fuera del pobrero federal, dejaba de compartir el reparto, que más parecía botín de asalto o de conquista, tan abundante era," asserts Ramos Mejía. That is, no one who went

²⁹ Echeverría, "The Slaughterhouse," in *Argentina Reader*, 109.

³⁰ Shumway, *Invention of Argentina*, 143.

to the slaughterhouse, so long as they belonged to the federalist rabble, went away empty-handed, which seemed to Ramos Mejía, more the result of booty from an assault or conquest, so abundant were the spoils.³¹

A generation later, Jorge Luis Borges, moreover, recalls an oral tradition in his own family that vividly brings to mind Echeverría's tale. Borges recounts the story of another young Unitarian set upon by "la Mazorca" and beaten up in a manner reminiscent of the way Echeverría's hero was treated by the butchers of the slaughterhouse (literary stand ins for "la Mazorca's" ruthless killers).³² The association of especially black women with the Rosas regime, evidenced in both federalist-era *cancioneros* and Unitarian fiction, would still be a part of the collective memory a century later, as evidenced in Carlos Max Viale and Pedro Blomberg's stage play *La mulata del Restaurador*, first performed in Buenos Aires's National Theater on June 3, 1932 (practically one hundred years to the day of the end of Rosas's first government).³³ The association of Afro-Argentine women with the federalist cause, especially spying on Unitarian families in their domestic roles, has also been part of the collective memory of *porteño* (Buenos Aires) elites since the mid-1800s, and was memorably depicted in José Mármol's canonical novel *Amalia*.

³¹ José María Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2001 [1907]), 198-99. In another reference to *El matadero*, Ramos Mejía stresses that murdering Unitarians was legal and encouraged under Rosas. Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 429.

³² See Jorge Luis Borges, "Pedro Salvadores." *Elogio de la sombra* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2005).

³³ Carlos Max Viale Paz et al., "La mulata del Restaurador. Escenas populares de la época de Rosas." *Homenaje popular a Carlos Max Viale* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Porter, 1938).

José Mármol's *Amalia* is arguably the most important novel authored by a member of the Generation of 1837. It is certainly the most referenced and studied novel of the period. Like other members of the Generation of 1837, Mármol's lineage emanates from among the Buenos Aires elite. He commenced but did not complete a course in legal studies at the University of Buenos Aires. His truncated law studies did not prevent Mármol from achieving a political career. However, Mármol's nascent career as a politician was cut short by the advent of the Rosas regime, which first jailed him over his political views and subsequently forced him into exile along with many other men of '37. It was from his political expatriation in Montevideo that Mármol wrote his magnum opus, *Amalia*. In addition to its canonical status as the Generation of 1837's most significant novel, *Amalia* is also regarded as yet another example of anti-Rosas historical fiction, along with Echeverría's *El matadero*. Mármol used actual personages of the Rosas era as central characters in his novel, including Manuelita and Rosas's sister-in-law María Josefa Ezcurra, to lend the work greater historical verisimilitude.³⁴ Mármol himself points out in his "Explanation" in *Amalia* that most of the historical personages in the novel were still alive at the time of its publication, and they occupy the same social and political roles they had during the Rosas regime.³⁵ The author clearly intended for his novel to shape the historical imagination and understanding of his

³⁴ On the historicity of *Amalia*, see Sonia Karsen, "Una interpretación del fondo histórico de *Amalia*." In *Actas del X Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, 1st ed. Antonio Vilanova, comp. (Barcelona: PPU, 1992): 745-54.

³⁵ José Mármol, *Amalia*, 5th ed. (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1975), 9. Mármol writes: "... la mayor parte de los personajes históricos de esta novela existen aún, y ocupan la misma posición política y social en la época en que ocurrieron los sucesos...."

readers. Therefore, Mármol's *Amalia* affords historical (albeit far from neutral) representations of different social classes in Rosas's Buenos Aires, including blacks.

In effect, *Amalia* involves a complicated love triangle among cultivated Creole (read white) elites, Eduardo Belgrano, Daniel Bello, and Amalia Sáenz de Olabarrieta. By their last names alone, educated readers would understand that the main characters are related to important liberal figures in nineteenth-century Argentina. In the love story, Amalia and Belgrano conspire against Rosas but are eventually uncovered by "la Mazorca," allegedly aided by black spies working for Amalia's family. The conspirators are then run through by the swords of Rosas's henchmen, dying romantically enough in each other's arms.³⁶ Given Mármol's stated aim at historicity in his novel, it is not surprising that Afro-Argentines are represented throughout the work. The case of the court jester Biguá has already been alluded to in the previous chapter.³⁷ The main black characters in Mármol's *Amalia*, however, are, as was the case in *El matadero*, women, especially domestic servants. Black women as Rosas's staunchest allies appear as a recurrent theme in the literature of the era.

If the white Amalia is for Mármol the epitome of feminine beauty, elegance, and fidelity, then the black women are her opposites in their ugliness, lack of grace, and

³⁶ Doris Sommer provides a useful summary and interpretation of *Amalia*. Sommer, *Foundational Fictions*, ch. 3, "Amalia: Valor at Heart and Home." For plot and character summaries of this long novel, consult Alberto Blasi Brambilla, *José Mármol y la sombra de Rosas* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Pleamar, 1970), ch. 17, "Amalia."

³⁷ A younger member of the Generation of 1837, the distinguished Creole poet Hilario Ascasubi makes an ironic mention of Biguá in his poem *Paulina Lucero* (1846): "¿Si será verdá?/que el ejército Rosin/lo debe mandar Biguá." In Vicente Rossi, *Cosas de negros*. Horacio Jorge Becco, prelim. study (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2001 [1926]), 85n.22. The verse reads (in affected Creole speech): "Is it true?/that in Rosas's army/Biguá should rule."

treachery. In this respect, then, Amalia's skin is described as "translucent," beautifully "rose-colored," whereas black federalists, men and women, are "beasts," with "hard" and "sinister" "physiognomies."³⁸ For Mármol, Amalia (and Bello) literally embodies his ideal Argentina: white, educated, urbane (and urban), and liberal, essentially the mirror image of himself and his generational cohort.³⁹ In their tragic deaths, moreover, Amalia and Belgrano bodily represent the murder of civilization under Rosas, in much the way Echeverría symbolized the rape of Argentina in the physical violence that kills the Unitarian gallant at the end of *El matadero*. In Mármol's *Amalia*, therefore, physical traits like race take on an added moral and intellectual dimensions as well. For instance, while the hero Daniel Bello is repeatedly described as handsome (a youth "perfectamente bien formado" or "handsomely built," for instance), the black buffoon Biguá is depicted as grotesque; therefore, these physical traits for Mármol highlight the intelligence and moral superiority of Bello against that of Rosas's jester (in whose factions "were painted all the degeneracy of the human intellect and the seal of imbecility") and consequently

³⁸ Mármol, *Amalia* (1975), 36, 361.

³⁹ In addition to Sommer's "erotics of politics" reading of nineteenth-century foundational fictions, this interpretation of *Amalia* was suggestively proposed by Nancy Hanway in *Embodying Argentina: Body, Space and Nation in 19th Century Narrative* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2003), ch. 1, "The Body in the Museum: *Amalia* and Puyredón." On the racial discourses in the novel, see Rosalía V. Cornejo-Parriego, "El discurso racial en *Amalia* de José Mármol." *Afro-Hispanic Review* 13, 2 (Fall 1994): 18-24.

the overall supremacy of the liberal Unitarians over the uncivilized federalists as a whole.⁴⁰

It is apparent from very early on that black women in particular are a threat to the Unitarian heroes. As has already been mentioned, it was a commonly held belief among liberals of the era that Afro-Argentines, but especially female domestics, were agents of the Rosas regime. In fact, Bello's first request for Amalia, when he pleads for her to hide Belgrano in her family's residence, to escape Rosas's henchmen, is that she remove all the black servants. Given the reach of Rosas, Belgrano maintains none can be trusted.⁴¹ The home was invaded, "El hogar doméstico era invadido," writes Mármol of the insecurity of the Unitarian home as a result of Rosas's spying network.⁴² Black women in particular were the regime's main informants, attests Mármol: "Los negros, pero en especialidad las mujeres de ese color, fueron los principales órganos de delación que tuvo Rosas." Mármol also highlights the lack of gratitude of black women for their generous liberal masters: "El sentimiento de la gratitud apareció seco, sin raíces en su corazón. Allí donde se daba el pan a sus hijos, donde ellas mismas habían recibido su salario y sus prodigalidades de una sociedad cuyas familias pecan por su generosidad," laments the

⁴⁰ On the black jester, Mármol writes: "...estaban pintadas la degeneración de la inteligencia humana y el sello de la imbecilidad." José Mármol, *Amalia* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1978), 37, 51. Mármol contrasts Bello's beauty and intellectual superiority against that of the degenerate imbecile Biguá.

⁴¹ José Mármol, *Amalia*. Helen Lane, trans. Doris Sommer, ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 25

⁴² Mármol, *Amalia* (1978), 487. In many ways, Mármol depicts Rosas's Argentina as a type of "panopticon," where the state's gaze was omnipresent as a consequence of its subaltern informants. Michel Foucault wrote about the "panopticon" in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

author, "... allí llevaban la calumnia, la desgracia y la muerte."⁴³ The loyalty to Rosas and the ingratitude of black female domestics toward their liberal employers were made manifest, according to Mármol, when these women marched to Rosas's encampment on the eve of battle between federalist forces and General Juan Lavalle's Unitarian army, thereby abandoning their jobs and obliging their employers to fend for themselves.⁴⁴ For Mármol and for many of his liberal contemporaries, blacks were clearly a danger to them personally and to their ideas of the right constitution of the nation. There was simply no room in Mármol's literary imagination for the inclusion of Afro-Argentines in the liberal national imaginary.

Other liberals shared Mármol's suspicions about the role of blacks, especially their women, as Rosas agents. Anti-Rosas agitator and medical doctor, José Antonio Wilde also excoriated blacks for the indispensable role they played as informants for the dictatorship. He wrote that black servants spied on their employers for the regime and denounced the alleged disloyalty of these families to Rosas to his agents within "la Mazroca," which often resulted in the arrest and execution of members of liberal families.⁴⁵ Black female servants "became so haughty and insolent," writes Wilde, "that

⁴³ Mármol, *Amalia* (1978), 452. The author of *Amalia* condemns the lack of gratitude among black domestic workers towards their generous white masters, who provide for blacks and their families. Instead of thanksgiving, black domestics bring into the abodes of their enlightened employers "lies, tragedy, and death."

⁴⁴ Mármol, *Amalia* (2001), 551. However, it is ultimately a black man who betrays the white protagonists of the novel.

⁴⁵ José Antonio Wilde, *Buenos Aires desde setenta años atrás*, in Andrews, *Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 100.

the ladies of the house came to fear them as much as they did the Mazorca.”⁴⁶ A fellow member of the Generation of 1837 observed that: “La adhesión de las negras dio al poder de Rosas una base indestructible,” meaning that the support of black women gave Rosas’s regime an indestructible base.⁴⁷ “The blacks, won over to the government ... put into Rosas’s hands zealous espionage within the bosom of every family, through servants and slaves,” assures Sarmiento.⁴⁸

Later in the century, Ramos Mejía inherits and perpetuates the treacherous representations and memories of the men of ’37 about Afro-Argentines. Thus, writing a half century after Mármol, Ramos Mejía commented on “El espionaje epidémico” (“epidemic of espionage”) among black women, who would routinely denounce elite

⁴⁶ José Antonio Wilde, *Buenos Aires desde setenta años atrás* (Buenos Aires: W. M. Jackson, 1944), 176. Note that this is a different edition than the one used by Andrews cited just above. On this topic, consult Irene S. Coromina, “La mujer en los escritos antirrosistas de Echeverría, Sarmiento y Mármol.” *Hispania* 89, 1 (Mar. 2006): 13-19.

⁴⁷ Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Facundo, civilización y barbarie* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1961), 223. Also, “Los criados delataban a sus amos diciendo que eran unitarios....” “F. B.,” *Episodios sangrientos del año 1840* (Buenos Aires: Imp. Bonaerense, 1856), 31. On this topic, consult Ricardo D. Salvatore, “Integral Outsiders: Afro-Argentines in the Era of Juan Manuel de Rosas and Beyond.” In *Beyond Slavery: The Multilayered Legacy of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Darién J. Davis, ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 65-68. Black women serving as spies for the dictator continued in the memory of social elites into the second part of the nineteenth century. For example, in his *Recuerdos de provincia* (1850), Sarmiento describes Rosa, a family slave, as “sly and curious like a monkey.” This is also yet another example of the “bestialization” of black Argentines in the imaginary of the Generation of 1837. Moreover, Sarmiento recalls that another black maid denounced a relative to the federalists. Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Recuerdos de provinica* (Barcelona: Linkgua, 2007), 28. Lower-class women also were part of Juan D. Perón’s government, at least according to certain contemporary sources. This is perhaps an example of the historical memory of the Rosas era preserved by a later generation of intellectual elites. See Ines Dunstan, “The Maid as Political Spy in Argentine Literature and Historiography: The Rosas-Perón Nexus.” *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production in the Luso-Hispanic World* 3, 1 (2013): 1-22.

⁴⁸ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo*. Kathleen Ross, trans. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2003), 223.

ladies suspected of Unitarian tendencies.⁴⁹ Along these lines, Vicente Fidel López in his 1896 *Manual de la historia argentina*, a school manual for history teachers, denounced the treachery of black women to thus serve Rosas; López complains that black and other lower-class women can go with gossip and slanders to Rosas himself by way of his wife: “The women... blacks, *chinas* or mulattas, even had access to [Doña Encarnación] for intercession, or to transmit gossip and news, everything that happened in the neighborhood thus made its way to Rosas” (“Las mujeres... negras, *chinas* o mulatas, tenían acceso hasta [Doña Encarnación] para solicitar, o para transmitir chismes y declaciones; todo cuanto pasaba en el seno del vecindario iba hasta por esos medios; y de ella hasta Rosas”).⁵⁰

While Vicente Rossi concurs that the Afro-Argentine served as Rosas’s spies, this fact, however, “no implica que lo haya sido en la forma propagada.” In effect, Rossi, a later Crole nostalgist, was questioning the depictions of blacks as unquestioning henchmen for Rosas passed on to his generation by previous liberals. On the contrary, such a charge was for Rossi an unfair accusation against a loyal and faithful people, whose very faithfulness and loyalty was only adduced to blacks by those interested in

⁴⁹ Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 318-19. Ramos Mejía asserts that black women served Rosas in every way possible, as maids, dancers, purveyors of goods to soldiers, and even as soldiers themselves. Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su tiempo*, 452.

⁵⁰ Vicente Fidel López, *Manual de la historia argentina, dedicado á los profesores y maestros que le enseñan* (Buenos Aires: Imp. Librería de Mayo, 1896), 378. Vicente Fidel López, son of the composer of the words to Argentina’s national anthem, was along with Mitre one of the patriarchs of liberal historiography. His history manual was an important site of memory, therefore, about Rosas and his era well into the twentieth century. Equally important as a realm of historical memory was Vicente Fidel López, *Historia de la República Argentina: su origen, su revolución y su desarrollo político hasta 1852*, 4th illustrated ed., 10 vols. (Buenos Aires: Librería La Facultad, 1926 [1883-1893]), a founding source of official liberal historiography.

depicting them solely as spies: “injusto agravio a seres cuyas cualidades innates, de leales y fieles, se han tenido presentes tan solo en favor de la parte interesada en su espionaje.”⁵¹

On a different note, and adding a different kind of nuance, Mármol ironically expressed the belief that while blacks were physically, morally, and intellectually inferior to whites, mulattoes were inexorably improving themselves and their racial stock. For Mármol, mulattoes (literally) embodied the hopes of a vanishing race that is destined to evolve or perish as a result of its racial and spiritual inferiority. Thus, he intimated: “... los negros están ensorbecidos, los blancos prostituidos, pero los mulatos, por esa propensión que hay en cada raza mezclada a elevarse y dignificarse, son casi todos enemigos de Rosas, porque saben que los unitarios son la gente ilustrada y culta, a que siempre toman ellos de modelo.”⁵² Herein, Mármol opined that while in Rosas’s Argentina blacks have become haughty, and white federalists were whores of the regime,

⁵¹ Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 87. Nevertheless, Rossi affirmed that while neither Rosas’s victims nor his henchmen, blacks were indeed sadly spies for the regime: “No habiendo sido víctimas ni verdugos de Rosas, su rol de espías ha debido ser negativo, sin duda alguna.” This is another example of the complexity and paradoxes in Argentine liberal thought on blacks in the era.

⁵² José Mármol, *Amalia* (Barcelona: Linkgua, 2011), 35. Sarmiento agreed with Mármol on the superior racial qualities of the mulatto. Sarmiento perceived the mulatto as a kind of “missing link,” “the link that binds civilized man to the uncouth one; a race inclined towards civilization, endowed with talent and with the finest aspirations of progress.” Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Facundo* (Mexico: UNAM, 1972), 43. Cited and translation by Lourdes Martínez-Echazábal, “Mestizaje and the Discourses of National/Cultural Identity in Latin America, 1845-1959.” *Latin American Perspectives* 25, 3 (May 1998), 25. Martínez-Echazábal maintains that Sarmiento’s favorable view of mulattoes (and even blacks) vis-à-vis Indians was due to the fact that people of African ancestry “did not constitute a substantial racial element” in Argentina; “hence, they did not pose a problem for the country.” Martínez-Echazábal, “Mestizaje and the Discourses of National/Cultural Identity,” 25. As has been shown, this is a profoundly wrong misreading both of both Argentina’s demographic history and nineteenth-century race relations as presented by the men of ‘37.

mulattoes, because of the propensity of mixed-races to elevate and dignify themselves, were almost in their entirety enemies of Rosas. That is because, maintained Mármol, in a typically liberal fashion, mulattoes appreciated that Unitarians were the enlightened party and cultivated people of Argentina, whom the mixed-races logically take as their role models. Although not overtly stated, perhaps the author of *Amalia* has in mind light-skinned Afro-Argentine soldiers and officers, such as Colonel Lorenzo I. Barcala, who fought with the Unitarians and against Rosas. Colonel Barcala in particular would be made part of the national memory by none other than Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, one of the greatest of the men of '37. Barcala originally supported the federalist cause but switched sides, joining in with General José M. Paz in Córdoba. After switching sides, Paz instructed Barcala to promote the Unitarian cause, “y su acción fué fecunda,” recalls Sarmiento, “hacienda desde entonces que los *cívicos* de Córdoba perteneciesen al orden civil, á la civilización.” Sarmiento remembers and records that Colonel Barcala’s actions in Córdoba among the soldiers were very successful, and that from his arrival the centralist troops in the province remained loyal to the Unitarian cause and to “civilization.”⁵³

Along with Bartolomé Mitre, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento was arguably the most accomplished member of the men of '37. In addition to his very successful literary career, Sarmiento was also a skilled politician and statesman. He succeeded Mitre as president of Argentina, serving in office from October 1868 to October 1874, and

⁵³ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, “Ad Memorandum. Antecedentes históricos.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 14 (*Campaña del Ejército Grande*) (Paris : Belin, 1895-1909), 364-65.

subsequently presided as the general director of public schools in Buenos Aires during Nicolás Avellaneda's administration. Public education had long been for Sarmiento a passion, as evidenced by his enduring friendships with Horace Mann, Massachusetts educational reformer, and later with Mann's widow as well. If for Alberdi "gobernar es poblar," then for Sarmiento "gobernar es educar," that is, to "govern is to educate" the citizens of a nation.

Sarmiento's prodigious career as a writer led him to take up his pen to weigh in on all manner of topics. His collected works, now published in several editions, span fifty three thick volumes.⁵⁴ Although not perhaps the dominant theme of Sarmiento's works, race relations was nevertheless an important aspect of his ideas about civilization and barbarism and national character.⁵⁵ His thoughts on Afro-Argentines evidence some of the nuances or contradictions already seen in the musings of his contemporaries as well.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, 53 vols. (Paris : Belin, 1895-1909). On the cover page, however, the Buenos Aires publisher Imprenta y Litografía "Mariano Moreno" appears.

⁵⁵ Some scholars might disagree with me, arguing that race was a central component in Sarmiento's thought. Cf., Vanesa Miserés, "Lengua y raza como pilares de la identidad en Sarmiento." *Céfitro Journal* 5, 1-2 (Spring and Fall 2005): 35-43; and Janet Burke and Ted Humphrey, "Sarmiento on Barbarism, Race, and Nation Building." In *Forging People: Race, Ethnicity and Nationality in Hispanic American and Latino/a Thought*. Jorge E. Gracia, ed. (Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2011), ch. 6.

⁵⁶ In addition to Katra's book on the Generation of 1837, consult Allison Williams Bunkley, *The Life of Sarmiento* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969 [1952]); and Frances G. Crowley, *Domingo Faustino Sarmiento* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972), for two dated but still useful biographies of Sarmiento in English. Two important works on Sarmiento and his thought about the development of Argentina include: José Salvador Campobassi, *Sarmiento y su época*, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1975); and Natalio R. Botana, *La tradición republicana: Alberdi, Sarmiento y las ideas políticas de su tiempo* (Buenos Aires : Editorial Sudamericana, 1984). Tulio Halperín Donghi et al., eds., *Sarmiento: Author of a Nation* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1994); and Joseph T. Criscenti, ed., *Sarmiento and His Argentina* (Boulder, CO:

George Reid Andrews bluntly states that Sarmiento's thinking on blacks was "profoundly racist."⁵⁷ Of course it was, especially in light of our modern-day understandings about race as largely a social construction contra the Darwinian point of view regnant in Sarmiento's day. However racist Sarmiento's ideas seem to contemporary readers, they are nevertheless important to an understanding of the development of the Argentine nation, and its image of itself, over the course of the last century or more. To his credit, Andrews concurs and actually makes an understanding of the racial ideologies of Sarmiento, Alberdi, and their cohorts the key to his argument about the historical amnesia that explains the belief that blacks in Argentina vanished over the course of the 1800s.⁵⁸ Along the lines of Andrews, then, the works of Sarmiento are indeed key sites of historical memory about blackness in nineteenth-century Argentina.

In accordance with this nineteenth-century liberalism, and like Alberdi and others of his ideological ilk, Domingo Sarmiento detested African chattel slavery. For instance, he characterized Negro slavery in his beloved United States as a "cancer" or "incurable fistula" in the national body politic. Sarmiento wrote extensively about slavery in the United States south before and after the Civil War. Prior to the war between the southern and northern states, Sarmiento opined that "slavery in the United States is today a

Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993) feature specialized chapter articles on a broad range of topics important for understanding Sarmiento and his ideas in historical context.

⁵⁷ Andrews, *Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 103.

⁵⁸ Andrews, *Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, ch. 6, "Why the Afro-Argentines Disappeared."

question without a solution.”⁵⁹ In fact, Sarmiento believed that African chattel slavery placed the United States on the border of an abyss.⁶⁰ Moreover, the eminent Argentine intellectual feared that this social and political problem without a viable solution short of armed conflict would devolve into a full-blown race war within a century, the result of a “black, backward, and vile nation” sharing borders with “a white one, the most powerful and cultivated one on the earth.” Sarmiento was particularly disgusted by the sight of slave shacks on sugar and cotton plantations as he approached the city of New Orleans. “You can make out plantations,” writes Sarmiento, “and in them, lines of wooden shacks, all of the same form and size, showing that freedom played no part in the building of them.”⁶¹ From New Orleans, Sarmiento traveled to the still then Spanish colony of Cuba,

⁵⁹ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Travels in the United States in 1847*. Michael Aaron Rockland, trans. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), 304-5. Sarmiento nonetheless feared the unilateral emancipation of slaves in the southern states: “Everyone today is afraid that this colossus of a civilization [i.e., the United States], so complete and so vast, may die in the convulsions which will attend the emancipation of the Negro race....” Sarmiento, *Travels*, 273. William H. Katra, however, believes that despite his liberalism, Sarmiento’s views about slavery and blacks in his *Viajes por Europa, Africa y América* (1849) are vague. William H. Katra, “Rereading *Viajes*: Race, Identity, and National Destiny.” In *Sarmiento: Author*, 75.

⁶⁰ Sarmiento, “Orden y anarquía.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 25 (*Política. Estado de Buenos Aires, 1855-1860*), 90. After the American Civil War, Sarmiento lamented the loss of ten million lives as a result of ignoring the inutility for a modern, industrializing economy of African chattel slavery. Sarmiento, “Conflicto y armonía de las razas en América.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonía de las razas en América*), 72. See also Sarmiento, “La Doctrina Monroe.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 21 (*Discursos populares. Primer volumen*), 228-29. Elda Clayton Patton, *Sarmiento in the United States* (Evansville, IN: The Univ. of Evansville Univ. Press, 1976).

⁶¹ Sarmiento, *Travels*, 303-4, 305-6. Sarmiento apparently did not enjoy his stay in New Orleans, a city that was “incurably sick” with, among other pestilence, yellow fever. Sarmiento, *Travels*, 307. Sarmiento believed that such diseases were a sort of punishment white Creoles paid for the evil of African slavery. “¡Pero bien cara pagan esta injusticia! La raza blanca de Rio de Janeiro está plagada de enfermedades africanas, que participan del carácter odioso y deforme de las degeneraciones de los trópicos.” In *El civilizador: síntesis del pensamiento vivo de Sarmiento*, 1st ed. Julio R. Barcos, comp. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Antonio Zamora, 1961), 90. Sarmiento charges that in Rio de Janeiro whites are plagued by African diseases proper to the odious and

another large-scale plantation economy predicated on African slavery. His experiences in, and impressions of, Havana and Santiago de Cuba were as severe as those of New Orleans and for much the same reasons.⁶²

Perhaps unavoidably for a nineteenth-century liberal, Sarmiento's anti-religious, specifically anti-Catholic posture is apparent in his argument that African chattel slavery was foisted upon civilized men by the Church. While acknowledging that some form of slavery seems an innate part of the human condition when foreign groups first encounter each other, Sarmiento posits that African chattel slavery in particular has been attributed by churchmen to a kind of "original sin" or Noahide curse that betrayed the primordial Christian spirit of liberty and equality for all. This belief in a "curse of Ham" built on earlier medieval Church doctrines of submission of servants to their feudal lords. However, it was sixteenth-century Dominican friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, whom Sarmiento refers to as "el santo obispo de Chiapas" (holy bishop of Chiapas, in then New Spain or Mexico), who, in his noble but ultimately futile effort to protect the Indians of the New World, unleashed the plague of African slavery that even then still threatened and burdened some countries and colonies.⁶³ Elsewhere he writes in a similar vein.

deformed nature of the tropics. This relation between race, climate, and disease was common among elite thinkers in the nineteenth century. Consult the aforementioned titles by Leys Stepan and Skidmore for more on this topic.

⁶² See Elizabeth Garrels, "Sobre indios, afroamericanos y los racismos de Sarmiento." *Revista Iberoamericana* 63, 178-179 (Jan.-June 1997): 110.

⁶³ Sarmiento, "Vida de Lincoln." *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 27 (*Abraham Lincoln-Dalmacio Vélez Sarsfield*), 11-12. Sarmiento, however, recognizes that Africans themselves partook of the slave trade, selling other Africans captured during slaving raids. Sarmiento, "Conflicto y armonía de las razas en América." *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonía de las razas*

Once more, Sarmiento blames Las Casas for misplaced sentimentality and the poor idea of replacing Indians with Africans in the mines and other Spanish ventures in the Americas—"La filantropía exagerada del Obispo de Chiapas, excitada por las crueldades ejercidas por los conquistadores españoles con indios... trajeron por su mal consejo la idea de introducir negros esclavos de Africa, para reemplazar á los indios en el trabajo forzado de las minas y otras faendas americanas." He goes on, however, to lambast as hypocritical the use by certain English and American writers of the anti-Spanish "Black Legend."⁶⁴ Far from vague or ambiguous, as claims Katra, Sarmiento's views on the slave trade and African slavery in the Americas were consistently negative, for biological, social, and economic reasons, as befits a nineteenth-century Western liberal thinker.⁶⁵

Sarmiento's views on Africans and their New-World descendants, however, were far less noble than his rejection of slavery and also less clear, although still prejudiced by

en América), 51. This position is viewed as unhistorical and politically incorrect in some academic circles today.

⁶⁴ The so-called "Black Legend" was suggested in Las Casas's writings. However, as Sarmiento points out, the United States and other European countries until recently exported about twenty million Africans to their own estates in the New World, and that does not account for the countless more who tossed themselves overseas as a result of nostalgia for their homes or died of starvation and diseases, concludes Sarmiento. This can almost be taken as a singular example in Sarmiento's vast corpus of writings wherein he defends Spain over against both the United States and England. Sarmiento, "Conflicto y armonía de las razas en América." *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonía de las razas en América*), 67.

⁶⁵ Sarmiento maintained that slavery served despotism, and that the "cancer of slavery" degenerated even the domestic sphere, no doubt an allusion to the perfidiousness of African slaves loyal to Rosas. Barcos, comp., *El civilizador*, 91. Sarmiento does concede that the full impact of importing to the New World "a black, African, inferior race" to work on agricultural plantations was still too recent to fully appreciate the long-term consequences of the slave trade. Sarmiento, "Orígenes de la civilización argentina." *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 38 (*Conflicto y armonía de las razas en América. Segunda parte póstuma*), 241.

attitudes towards race prevalent in his era. The eminent Argentine thinker's writings are, as already attested to, vast; it is therefore perhaps inevitable that nuances and even outright contradictions (or at least paradoxes) are prevalent in the thought of anyone who wrote as much and lived as long as did Sarmiento. Consequently, generalizations based on one facet of Sarmiento's ideas or a limited range of his writings are prone to be one sided. It is a relatively easy exercise to go through Sarmiento's collected works and proof text his overtly racist observations about Africans and New-World blacks, slave and freed.⁶⁶ However, the resulting analysis of Sarmiento's representations of blackness from such an exercise would be limited, certainly not incorrect, but most assuredly incomplete. While many others have ably documented the less than palatable thoughts of Sarmiento on blacks, in this section of the dissertation I would like to examine some other facets of his writings representing blacks, which still linger in the national imaginary and memory of Argentines.

For instance, unlike Indians, Sarmiento asserted the fidelity and other positive qualities of blacks: "Los negros son capaces de entusiasmo y sensibles a muchos buenos estímulos. El indígena... es menos susceptible."⁶⁷ Even as slaves, Africans were noble,

⁶⁶ In addition to Andrews, such an exercise has been carried out by his protégé Alejandro Solomianski, *Identidades secretas: la negritud argentina* (Rosario, Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 2003). Along the same if not identical lines, see also Thomas Ward, "Mármol, Sarmiento y la relación inversa entre raza y mercado occidental." *Río de la Plata*, nos. 29-30 (2004): 201-7; and David Solodkow, "Racismo y nación: conflictos y (des)armonías identitarias en el proyecto nacional sarmientino." *Decimonónica* 2, 1 (2005): 95-121.

⁶⁷Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, "Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América." *Obras completas*, vol. 37 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Luz del Día, 1953), 115. For more on Sarmiento's ideas on race in his seminal *Conflicto y armonías*, consult Daniel E. Zalazar, "De *Facundo* a *Conflicto y Armonías de la Razas en América*." *Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía/Inter-*

fidelity constituting an essential quality of their character, attests Sarmiento.⁶⁸ “El negro, aunque esclavo,” Sarmiento wants to believe, “era el amigo del joven criollo su amo, con quien acaso se había criado en la familia, y de cuyos juegos y gustos había participado.” In almost nostalgic tones, Sarmiento recalls that black slaves were often friendly with their masters, with whom they grew up and shared games and tastes.⁶⁹ While certainly susceptible to manipulation by tyrants like Rosas, the fidelity of blacks also made them brave and loyal soldiers. Sarmiento repeatedly comments on the gallantry and bravery of black soldiers during the struggle for independence from Spain and the ensuing civil wars. He remembers what later historians also document: “... la guerra de Independencia se hizo con el concurso de la sangre africana” (“... the War of Independence was made possible by a torrent of black blood”). He recalls, for example, joining with a unit of black veterans of the Brazilian or Cisplatine War (1825-1828). These “grey-haired” black regulars were notable for their extreme morality, discipline,

American Review of Bibliography 35, 2 (1985): 191-200; and María Rodríguez Ozán, “Conflictos y armonías de Sarmiento.” *Cuadernos Americanos* (New Series) 3, 13 (1989): 135-41.

⁶⁸ “Los negros tienen cierta nobleza aun en la esclavitud, siendo calidad esencial de su carácter, la fidelidad.” Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, “Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América.” *Obras completas*, vol. 38 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Luz del Día, 1953), 185. Quoting renowned African explorer Dr. David Livingstone, Sarmiento even agrees that Africans were “originally good,” only to be despoiled by contacts with Arabs and other slave traders. Sarmiento, “Desde Tucumán.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 42 (*Costumbres-Progresos [Cont.]*), 342-43.

⁶⁹ Sarmiento, “Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América*), 75. He goes on to say about blacks: “Es fiel y entusiasta de raza, y sirviendo voluntariamente como asistente acompañaría a la guerra al amo.” By nature, believes Sarmiento, the black race is faithful to their masters and fight for them willingly. Sarmiento then goes on to memorialize the sacrifices of Argentina’s black troops of independence, including “Falucho’s” legendary Number Eight Infantry Battalion. Sarmiento, “Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América*), 75.

and instruction, remembers Sarmiento, going so far as to say that the black veterans of the Brazilian campaign were impeccable saints, according to Sarmiento, and never had to be reprimanded, not even for tardiness: “Eran unos santos, impecables, ni de pecado venial.... Jamás había que castigar alguno, ni aun en las listas de tarde.”⁷⁰ Black soldiers were ennobled by their military instruction, and, in fact, Sarmiento often associated the barracks and classroom and saw both playing important and interrelated roles in national development.⁷¹

Outstanding for Sarmiento as a paragon of military courage, loyalty, and civilization was the afore-mentioned freedman, Lorenzo I. Barcala, who is immortalized in Sarmiento’s masterpiece *Facundo* as “the illustrious black man.”⁷² He also commemorates two other black officers, Colonels Sosa and Morales, and points out that

⁷⁰ Sarmiento, “Instrucción military.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 49 (*Memorias*), 83-84. Cf., for instance, Sarmiento, “Campaña del Ejército Grande.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 14 (*Campaña del Ejército Grande*), 97; Sarmiento, “La escuela ultra pampeana. El Congreso de Tucumán. A propósito del libro de M. Groussac.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 48 (*La escuela ultra pampeana*), 256; Sarmiento, “Derechos de extranjeros y soldados negros.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 27 (*Abraham Lincoln—Dalmacio Vélez Sarsfield*), 225-26; Sarmiento, “Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América*), 75.

⁷¹ Sarmiento, “Instrucción militar.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 49 (*Memorias*), 80-85. For the role played by both arms and letters in guaranteeing social stability in Sarmiento’s thought, consult his *De la educación popular* (1849), part of vol. 11 of *Obras completas*.

⁷² Sarmiento, *Facundo* (2003), 182. More on Sarmiento’s commemoration of Barcala in a later chapter. Another black hero of freedom for Sarmiento, also referred to as “illustrious” by him, was Toussaint Louverture, “aquel Spartaco feliz que aseguró la libertad de la raza esclava negra en Haití,” “that happy Spartacus who liberated the enslaved black race of Haiti.” Sarmiento, “La escuela ultra pampeana. El Congreso de Tucumán. A propósito del libro de M. Groussac.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 48 (*La escuela ultra pampeana*), 96.

Sosa and another black veteran, Mendizábal, honorably served in Congress.⁷³ Given the sacrifices of blacks for their country, in at least one strain of Sarmiento's thought on race and nation, therefore, the black race was a vital element in forging the metal of the nation-state: "la raza negra entró como elemento de aligación del metal de que habría de formarse el pueblo americano, cuando rotas las barreras que los dividían en castas... fuese llamado en virtud del número, á expresar la voluntad comun, por el voto, ó de otra manera."⁷⁴

For Sarmiento, not surprisingly, education was the key for the full development and participation of the black race in modern civilization and the nascent national state. Still, George Reid Andrews states that in spite of the father of Argentina's educational system's support for universal public schools and their putative benefits for the citizenry of the modern nation, Sarmiento "believed that ideas and enlightenment are not so much learned as inherited genetically." Thus, instruction alone would not be enough to pull Argentina (or its black population) out of its barbarism; for that, an actual infusion of white and European genes was necessary.⁷⁵ While this advocacy of European immigration is certainly so in one strain of Sarmiento's complex thought on race and

⁷³Sarmiento, "Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América." *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América*), 76.

⁷⁴Sarmiento, "Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América." *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América*), 68. Sarmiento is here advocating for the inclusion of the black race in the nation as full citizens, in some ways anticipating Frank Tannenbaum's thesis in his seminal *Slave and Citizen* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974 [1946]).

⁷⁵ Andrews, *Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 103. Note that Andrews provides no documentation for the assertion that Sarmiento espoused the view that individual or collective enlightenment was strictly biological.

nation, he also nonetheless highlights the “educability” of blacks and their ability to socially evolve as a result.

Even in a plantocracy like Brazil’s, which so degraded slave and master alike in Sarmiento’s typically liberal view, he found traces of high moral traits among the blacks and mulattoes of Rio de Janeiro and consequently expressed a positive opinion about the educational potential of the black race there.⁷⁶ For Sarmiento, even non-white races were not excluded from future social development by way of education, “because,” he argued, “the progress of intelligence is sure and unfailing in all of them, even the most backward.”⁷⁷ In addition, he praised Abraham Lincoln’s “Reconstruction” of the southern United States for its efforts at educating recently emancipated slaves. In his writings on the life of Lincoln and the post-Civil War reconstruction of the United States, characterized by Elizabeth Garrels as among the least racist in Sarmiento’s canon, he exudes over the development and productivity of the newly freed black race.⁷⁸ He praises white American abolitionists and educational reformers, like his close friends the Manns, for their efforts to civilize African-Americans by way of education. “La difusión de la educación entre los negros hijos de libertos,” assures Sarmiento, “en veinte años contados, no habiendo ni uno en las escuelas antes de aquella fecha, es casi igual á la que dieron en casi dos siglos en Inglaterra á sus correligionarios... y los disidentes y

⁷⁶ Sarmiento, “Viajes por Europa, Africa y América.” *Obras completas*, vol. 5, 60.

⁷⁷ Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América* (1883). Quoted in and translated by Aline Helg, “Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction.” In *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, 2nd paperback printing. Richard Graham, ed. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1992), 39.

⁷⁸ Garrels, “Sobre indios, afroamericanos,” 103.

católicos.” Here, Sarmiento asserts that in the newly reconstructed southern United States, there were now almost as many black school children, when before there had been none, as “dissident” (i.e., Congregationalists, Baptists, etc.) and Catholic students combined in Anglican England in the intervening two hundred years.⁷⁹ The benefits of public schooling for blacks in the southern United States, attests Sarmiento, is evidenced by their growing wealth and productivity, “y ya cuentan por cientos de millones sus depósitos en los bancos.”⁸⁰ Thus, Sarmiento used the United States example to prove that blacks could become prosperous and industrious citizens in the Americas by way of universal, public education.

In Argentina, however, Sarmiento espoused the convenient vanishing of the black race as a useful result of miscegenation and death. The death of black men on the independence and civil war battlefields of Argentina no doubt promoted the mixing of the races in the mid- to late-1800s between Afro-Argentine women and then newly arriving immigrant men. Without any hint of mourning or nostalgia, Sarmiento avers that: “Happily, continuous warfare has decimated the Afro-Argentine male population, who fought for the fatherland and master they served” (“Felizmente las constinuas guerras han

⁷⁹ Sarmiento, “Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 38 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América. Segunda parte póstuma*), 244. This is but one selection of many on Sarmiento’s discussion of the positive effects of education on blacks in the United States. Note that the old secular, liberal Sarmiento cannot help himself and excoriates Britain’s parish schools for not educating more children, regardless of creed.

⁸⁰ Sarmiento, “Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 38 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América. Segunda parte póstuma póstuma*), 243. Sarmiento cites the millions of deposits made by American blacks in banks in that country as proof of the merits of universal education in the making of an industrious and productive lower-class.

exterminado ya la parte masculina de esta población, que encontraba su patria y su manera de gobernar en el amo a quien servía”).⁸¹ In *Conflicto y armonías* Sarmiento bluntly states: “También daba su contribución de sangre la raza negra en la guerra de exterminio,” perhaps implying the use of black troops as cannon fodder.⁸²

While generally hostile to race mixing, Sarmiento, nevertheless espoused a belief in the superiority of the mulatto over the African, an opinion, as shown above, shared by Mármol and other liberals of his generation. Once again commenting on the disappearance of the black race in Argentina, and adding commentary on the virtues of the mulatto, Sarmiento intimated: “La raza negra, casi extinta ya—excepto en Buenos Aires,—ha dejado zambos y mulatos, habitantes de las ciudades que liga al hombre civilizado con el palurdo, raza inclinada a la civilización, dotada de talento y de los más bellos instintos del progreso.” Herein, the author of *Facundo* espoused his ideas about the innate superiority of mulattoes over Africans, who have largely vanished from his country. Mulattoes were urban dwellers, already a sign of civilization for Sarmiento, and

⁸¹ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo* (Barcelona: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1985), 218. War has destroyed the black male population opines Sarmiento. Elsewhere he writes: “Desde luego debemos felicitarnos del diminuto y escaso número en que se halla entremezclada la raza negra entre nosotros; pudiendo espersarse, gracias á nuestra ley fundamental sobre la esclavatura, que desaparezca del todo este color que apenas se hace notar aquí....” Sarmiento, “Estadística.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 10 (*Legislación y Progresos en Chile*), 167. Sarmiento self-congratulates his countrymen for their benevolence in allowing for the eventual disappearance of the black race in Argentina. Sarmiento also credits Argentina for being the first state in Latin America to abolish the slave trade and declare the offspring of slaves free, two “triumphs of human justice” forgotten by history. See Sarmiento, “La razón Krup.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 35 (*Cuestiones Americanas. Límites con Chile*), 249.

⁸² Sarmiento, , “Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América*), 76.

were blessed with many talents and a noble instinct for progress.⁸³ For Sarmiento, furthermore, mulattoes were a virile race, both preserving the passion of the African and displaying the higher intellect of the European: “Raza viril que conserva la sangre ardiente del africano, ... al mismo tiempo que la organización de su cráneo lo liga a la familia europea,” invoking the phrenology then popular in progressive intellectual circles.⁸⁴

The racial ideology of the Generation of 1837 was formed by, on the one hand, then regnant (pseudo-)scientific notions of Darwinian biology and, on the other, their own personal and collective experiences with gauchos, Indians, and blacks. As previously stated, it would be easy to proof-text the writings of these thinkers for passages that proffer a one-sided view of their complex, at times paradoxical, thoughts on race, national identity, and their interstices. The men (and women) of '37 certainly espoused racial views denigrating people of color in mid-nineteenth-century Argentina and elsewhere. However, these views were not always consistent or constant. At times, Alberdi, Sarmiento, and company presented views on race in general and on blacks in particular that anticipated later, social-construction of reality paradigms. Rather than strictly a matter of inferior biology, some of these writers opined that the position of blacks and other subalterns was the result of their exploitation by federalist strongmen

⁸³ Sarmiento, *Facundo* (1985), 28. Alberdi, who overall had a higher opinion of miscegenation than did Sarmiento, believed that white genes were always superior to those of other races and therefore miscegenation between Europeans and others overall improved the human species. Cited in George Reid Andrews, *Los afroargentinos de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, 1989), 124.

⁸⁴ Sarmiento, “La esclavatura,” in *El civilizador*, 91.

who kept them ignorant and uncivilized for political purposes. Education and liberal indoctrination could thus elevate even racial inferiors. In this way, some noble men of color were heralded and fondly remembered, thereby opening a space, however limited, for later thinkers to continue to reflect on and nostalgize Afro-Argentines in the context of a growing Creole nationalism by the end of the 1800s.

José Hernández and the Incipient Nostalgia of Blackness, Late Nineteenth Century

In some ways, Argentine writer José Hernández was a transitional figure, bridging the Generation of 1837 and later nineteenth-century Creole romantics and nationalists. Hernández's poetry also expresses an incipient nostalgia over the rapid demise of central protagonists of Argentina's society and history until then, namely, cowboys and Afro-Argentines. He was born in 1834 and lived until 1886. Hernández, a faithful disciple of Alberdi, had a multifaceted public career as a legislator and member of the National Board of Education, a major officiating agency of national memory. Also, he writes his masterpiece, *El gaucho Martín Fierro*, in two parts over the span of five to seven years: *La ida de Martín Fierro* (1872) and *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* (1877-1879). The poem's first part was published four years into Sarmiento's presidency and apparently blamed the new administration for the sufferings of his gaucho hero. Combined, both epics serve as homage to a Creole way of life threatened by the increasing centralization of state power on the one hand and global capitalist economic modernization on the other. For many later Creole nationalists, the name Martín Fierro was remembered and associated with all things truly Argentine.⁸⁵ In his manual for Argentine school children

⁸⁵ For instance, cultural nationalist intellectual Leopoldo Lugones canonized Hernández's gaucho epic in his seminal treatise on Argentine folklore, *El payador* (1916). Lugones hoped that

to prepare for the centennial, for example, Carlos Octavio Bunge reaffirms the valor of the gaucho (and Afro-Argentine) and the importance of rural traditions and folklore as sources of authentic national memory and identity.⁸⁶

José Hernández in his epic takes on the role of an apostle of nostalgia for a “traditional” Argentine culture threatened by alien social, political, and economic forces, all of which pushed the gaucho (as well as the Afro-Argentine) to the point of extinction. Nancy Vogeley writes that Hernández’s national classic is essentially backward looking and sans any note of future optimism.⁸⁷ In 1935, literary critic José Espinosa observed that by the time of the publication of *Martín Fierro* “the gaucho had practically ceased to exist as the type depicted in literature.”⁸⁸ Early-twentieth-century intellectual and writer

celebrating the epic would insulate Argentine culture from the radical “corruption” of foreigners. Sommer, *Foundational Fictions*, 113. Fellow nationalist Ricardo Rojas in his landmark studies of Argentine literature, *La literatura argentina* (1917-1922), also declared *Martín Fierro* the national epic. Shumway, *Invention of Argentina*, 277. Jorge Luis Borges and other modernist writers published a literary journal entitled *Martín Fierro*, which ran from 1924 to 1927. Adolfo Prieto, ed., *El periódico Martín Fierro* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Galerna, 1968). To this day, patriotic societies throughout Argentina bear the name of the legendary gaucho, and even Argentina’s version of the Grammy Awards is named “El Premio Martín Fierro.” On José Hernández, see Tulio Halperín Donghi, *José Hernández y sus mundos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, Inst. Torcuato di Tella, 1985); Horacio Zorraquín Becú, *Tiempo y vida de José Hernández, 1834-1886* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1972); and Katra, *Argentine Generation of 1837*, 32, 207, 251, 282-83, 290, 298-300, 305. On his legacy in Argentina, consult Roque Raúl Aragón and Jorge Calvetti, *Genio y figura de José Hernández* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1973).

⁸⁶ Carlos Octavio Bunge, *Nuestra patria, libro de lectura para la educación nacional*, 8th ed., corr. and exp. (Buenos Aires: A. Estrada y Cía., 1910). Along with Ricardo Rojas’s already cited *La restauración nacionalista*, published the year before, Bunge’s *Nuestra patria* served as a key site of official memory for countless children throughout Argentina in the early twentieth century.

⁸⁷ Nancy Vogeley, “The Figure of the Black *Payador* in *Martín Fierro*.” *CLA Journal* 26, 1 (Sept. 1982): 36. Most scholars of memory define nostalgia in this essentially conservative and pessimist way.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Elena Castedo-Ellerman’s “The Gaucho’s Attitude on Race and Nationality in Gauchesque Literature.” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 3, 1 (Jan. 1984): 13. Sarmiento asserted that by

Ezequiel Martínez Estrada wrote of Hernández's classic: "... podríamos decir que Martín Fierro recuerda con intensa emoción y rememora con fiel nitidez." Martínez Estrada is arguing that this national epic, which so inspired his own writings on the countryside, is both intense in its evocation (i.e., "recuerda") and faithful in its mnemonic reconstruction (i.e., "rememora") of the past.⁸⁹ On the one hand, Espinosa wrote as a historicist and doubted the veracity of literary depictions of the gaucho in *Martín Fierro*. Martínez Estrada, on the other hand, treated Hernández's characterizations as pure memory and remembrance. In fact, *Martín Fierro* was inspired by nostalgia rather than realism. Hernández's representations of the black and gaucho were predicated on rural traditions as well as folklore, two sites of Creole and national memory. Moreover, in its canonical role, *Martín Fierro* generates images and memories about Afro-Argentines for subsequent generations of Argentines (and Uruguayans). Rather than an exhaustive treatment of the subject of blackness in José Hernández's national epic, I will concentrate instead on a few scenes most often cited and that seem to resonate in the Platine national imaginary and memory.⁹⁰

1845 black gauchos were already extinct, having been assimilated into *zambos* (mixture of Indian and black) and mulattoes. Castedo-Ellerman, "The Gaucho's Attitude," 15.

⁸⁹ Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, *Muerte y transfiguración de Martín Fierro. Ensayo de interpretación de la vida argentina*, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1983 [1948]), 366. On Martínez Estrada's own views of the gaucho and his role in national identity, see Alejandro González Acosta, "La figura del gaucho como elemento de la identidad nacional en *Radiografía de la Pampa*, de Ezequiel Martínez Estrada." *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 117 (Jan.-June 1994): 23-39.

⁹⁰ For much more detailed and sophisticated literary analyses, consult René L. F. Durand, "La figura del negro en el *Martín Fierro* de José Hernández." In *El ensayo y la crítica literaria en Iberoamérica*. Kurt L. Levy and Keith Willis, eds. (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970), 175-84; Carlos Reyes M. Gajardo, "El indio, el negro y el gringo en *Martín Fierro*." *Revista del Instituto de Antropología* 9, 1 (1958): 53-99.

Before proceeding to Hernández's representations of black cowboys, some context is warranted. In light of some contemporary accounts about the scarcity of blacks in the River Plate's hinterlands, René Durand observes that the importance of black characters in both parts of Hernández's national epic is significant.⁹¹ Indeed, both male and female black characters are prominent in the two parts of *Martín Fierro*, their mutual relations and interactions appearing rather mixed. Nancy Vogeley opines that relations between blacks and gauchos must have been simultaneously hostile and friendly during those years in the nineteenth century.⁹² Certainly, that is the impression the reader of *Martín Fierro* derives from the text(s).

Thus, the gaucho Martín Fierro's exchanges with Afro-Argentine characters are marked by a double voice of violence on the one hand and familiarity or even camaraderie on the other. For example, one of the main episodes of *La ida* is Fierro's encounter with a black couple in a *pulpería* (rural store). Drunk and wanting to start a brawl, Fierro insults the black woman with gross sexual remarks. Then he turns on the black gaucho. Martín Fierro, in ways typical of Argentine cowboys at the time, memorably ridicules the black man by rhyming: "God made the whites;/Saint Peter made

⁹¹ Durand, "La figura del negro," 176. Nineteenth-century British traveler William MacCann, for instance, observed that on the *estancias* (agricultural estates) of the Río de la Plata the black "is becoming rapidly extinct." William MacCann, *Two Thousand Miles' Ride through the Argentine Provinces*, vol. 1 (New York: AMS Press, 1971 [1853]), 191. Once again, the disappearing or vanishing "Other" so vital to the nostalgic imagination is documented in a contemporary, nineteenth-century source.

⁹² Vogeley, "The Figure of the Black *Payador*," 43. On the cover of the anthology edited by Lyman L. Johnson, *The Problem of Order in Changing Societies: Essays on Crime and Policing in Argentina and Uruguay, 1750-1940*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1990), a reproduction of a painting from the National Archive of Buenos Aires features a black and Creole gaucho engaged in a *payada* in a rural store, just as in Hernández's epics.

mulattoes;/The devil made the blacks/To feed hell fire” (Canto 7, lines 1167-1170).⁹³

Subsequently, Fierro and the black gaucho engage in a fierce knife fight in which the black man is killed. The black woman glared at Fierro with eyes like “ají” (hot pepper), and began to “howl like a she wolf” at the death of her mate.⁹⁴ Fierro wanted to give the black woman “a drubbing,” “but upon reflection and out of respect for the dead [black] man I did not beat her.” The gaucho’s possible sense of regret is expressed in the lines: “Never can I forget/The agony of that Negro” (Canto 7, lines 1237-1238).⁹⁵ One can possibly read into Fierro’s words a desire to remember the trauma of the dying black gaucho (and, symbolically enough, that of the vanishing black race in general).⁹⁶

In *La vuelta*, another Afro-Argentine gaucho, who turns out to be the brother of the dead black man from part one, challenges the gaucho Martín Fierro to a *payada* or

⁹³ “A los blancos hizo Dios;/A los mulatos San Pedro;/A los negros hizo el diablo/Para tiz[ó]n del infierno”. The translation is by Prof. John F. Matheus, “African Footprints in Hispanic-American Literature.” *The Journal of Negro History* 23, 3 (July 1938): 270. Matheus is working from a critical edition of the epic, José Hernández, *Martín Fierro*, annotated ed., vol. 1. Eleutario F. Tiscornia, ed. (Buenos Aires: Imp. Casa Editora “Coni,” 1925). I have looked at this edition myself to assess the accuracy of both Prof. Matheus’ citations and translations; all I have added were a few accents and changed a couple of letters (in brackets) to update the language. Unless otherwise noted, this is my source for Hernández’s epic(s). These verses are among the most remembered in the poem(s). My own father recalls having to memorize these lines and recite them as a child in school on many occasions.

⁹⁴ Note once more the “bestialization” of the black female so common among the men of ’37 in their writings.

⁹⁵ “Nunca me puedo olvidar/De la agonía de aquel negro.” Matheus, “African Footprints in Hispanic-American Literature,” 270. On gaucho knife-fighting see John Charles Chasteen, “Violence for Show: Knife Dueling on a Nineteenth-Century Cattle Frontier.” In *The Problem of Order in Changing Societies*, ch. 3. Chasteen avers that race and class distinctions were omnipresent in these encounters. Chasteen, “Violence for Show,” 61.

⁹⁶ Nicolás Shumway proffers a directly opposite reading in his *Invention of Argentina*, 273.

sung verbal duel.⁹⁷ This is the centerpiece of the second part of the national classic. Unlike the knife fight in *La ida* which clearly favored the hegemony of the white gaucho Fierro over the black man, the long, contrapuntal discourse between Fierro and the “Moreno” (black man) is represented in *La vuelta* as almost a clash of equal wills. The black *payador* insists on his inherent dignity as a man of color: “Under the blackest face/There is thought and life;/Let the peaceful people listen/And not make me reproach:/The night, too, is black/And it has stars that shine” (Canto 30, lines 4043-4048).⁹⁸ The black gaucho then explicitly contradicts Fierro’s racial “creation account” to his deceased brother, the black man of *La ida*, when he rhymes: “The Creator did not make/Two distinct classes of men” (Canto 30, lines 4071-4072).⁹⁹ Fierro even seems to concede this point to his black opponent: “God made the white and the black man/Without declaring who was the better;/He sends them equal anguish/Beneath the cross unchanged.”¹⁰⁰

Unlike the encounter in *La ida*, there is no fight and no death here. Both the black gaucho and Martín Fierro eye each other warily at the end of the *payada* and exit the

⁹⁷ Nancy Vogeley suggests that the *payada* is related to certain West-African musical and poetic traditions. Vogeley, “The Figure of the Black *Payador*,” 46-47.

⁹⁸ “Bajo la frente más negra/Hay pensamiento y hay vida;/La gente escuche tranquila,/No me haga ning[ú]n reproche:/Tambi[é]n es negra la noche/Y tiene estrellas que brillan.” Matheus, “African Footprints in Hispanic-American Literature,” 273.

⁹⁹ “De los hombres el Cr[e]ador/No hizo dos clases distintas.” Matheus, “African Footprints in Hispanic-American Literature,” 273. Cf., Chasteen, “Violence for Show,” 57, who intimates that when gaucho knives were drawn, equality reigned.

¹⁰⁰ “Dios hizo al blanco y al negro/Sin declarar los mejores;/Los mandó iguales dolores/bajo de una m[i]sma cruz.” Matheus, “African Footprints in Hispanic-American Literature,” 274.

scene as almost equal victims of a time quickly passing both of them and their culture ways by. Consequently, Nancy Vogeley reads Hernández's national epic as his cry of sorrow at the loss of both the Afro-Argentine and the gaucho, in effect turning both once vital social groups into subjects of a kind of incipient Creole "imperialist nostalgia" at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰¹

The vanishing of the black race in Argentina by the end of the nineteenth century was largely a given among intellectual elites. For some, the disappearance of the blacks from their country was laudable. For example, early twentieth-century positivist José Ingenieros, referencing his fellow positivist Carlos Octavio Bunge, cites approvingly from the latter that "alcoholism, smallpox, and tuberculosis—thankfully!—decimated the indigenous and black populations."¹⁰² It was a thus commonly espoused idea among late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Argentine intellectuals that disease had decimated the Indian and black races within their borders.

Others, however, mourned the loss of their black population. A flush of nostalgia for the past they represented started gaining momentum by the late 1800s. Sarmiento himself in his memoirs of youth seemed to be caught up in a kind of colonial nostalgia that belies his negative reminiscences elsewhere of blacks and their association with Rosas, remembering: "¡Costumbres patriarcales de aquellos tiempos, en que la esclavitud no envilecía las buenas cualidades del fiel negro!" Here, Sarmiento is nostalgically

¹⁰¹ Vogeley, "The Figure of the Black *Payador*," 48.

¹⁰² Ingenieros: "el alcoholismo, la viruela y la tuberculosis—¡benditos sea!—habían diezmado a la población indígena y africana." José Ingenieros, "Sociología argentina." *Obras completas*, vol. 4 (Buenos Aires: Mar Océano, 1961 [1913]), 81.

recalling the patriarchal customs of his youth. Not even slavery perverted the positive traits of loyal blacks then, remembers Sarmiento.¹⁰³ José Antonio Wilde, another nineteenth-century liberal, mourned the loss of blacks, once so common a sight in Buenos Aires. Writing in his memoirs, Wilde laments that the number of blacks in Buenos Aires “ha ido disminuyendo gradualmente, y hoy los negros son relativamente escasos,” thereby noting the gradual decline of the black population in his day. He states that occasionally one encounters an old black veteran, a representative of a vanishing race: “un monumento que el tiempo ha carcomido.” A few, younger Afro-Argentine men were then employed as orderlies in both the national and provincial chambers of representatives.¹⁰⁴ Along with Wilde, *Caras y Caretas* also depicted the Afro-Argentine congressional orderly as a nostalgic if not always honorable figure in the late 1800s and early 1900s.¹⁰⁵ As will be seen in the following chapters, nostalgia for a putatively

¹⁰³ Sarmiento, *Recuerdos de provincia*, 33.

¹⁰⁴ José Antonio Wilde, *Buenos Aires desde setenta años atrás* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Universitaria, 1960), 124. Sarmiento makes the same observation about younger Afro-Argentines. Sarmiento, “Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América*), 76. On black congressional orderlies, see the memoirs of Mamerto Fidel Quinteros, *Memorias de un negro del Congreso* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Argentinos de L. J. Rosso y Cía., 1924). Also, Laura Colabella, *Los negros del Congreso: nombre, filiación y honor en el reclutamiento a la burocracia del estado argentino*, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Antropofagia; IDES, Centro de Antropología Social, 2012).

¹⁰⁵ E.g., in one cartoon, a black congressional orderly is depicted sweeping up a deposit box with the word “treasury” written on it, while the caption implies it was an act of political larceny. “Chafлонía.” *Caras y Caretas* 7, 300 (July 2, 1904): n.p. See also “Fray Mocho,” “En las antesalas del congreso.” *Caras y Caretas* 3, 99 (Aug. 25, 1900): n.p.; and Julio Castellanos, “Las injusticias políticas ó ¡Qué ingrato es el gobierno!” *Caras y Caretas* 7, 316 (Oct. 22, 1904): n.p. Whenever the widely-circulated weekly ran a feature on the Argentine Congress, inevitably a black porter would be featured in the accompanying photographs, establishing visual proof of the continued existence of at least a small segment of the black population of Buenos Aires well into the twentieth century. A black man is also pictured among the staff of the National Archive in

vanished race (and time) continued to gain momentum at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries and led in turn to multiple commemorations of Afro-Argentines, especially black military heroes.

Conclusion

Sarmiento, anticipating Ernest Renan, wondered on what basis, racial or otherwise, Argentina was a nation.¹⁰⁶ Afro-Argentines, predominantly remembered and represented in nineteenth-century Unitarian circles as uncivilized agents and unconditional supporters of a sanguinary dictator, were living proof for liberals that Argentina needed to “whiten” its population to therefore develop into a properly governed modern nation. For that to happen, however, the Generation of 1837 realized that two social developments were required: first, an increase of the white population, only possible in an expedited manner by way of massive, state-sanctioned European immigration, and, secondly, the disappearance of the Afro-Argentine (and Indian) population within the country, either by virtue of their total physical extinction or through race-mixing. Fortunately for the men of '37, by the second half of the nineteenth century both social processes were well under way, at least in their minds (and writings). The negative representations of blacks transmitted by the writings of the Generation of 1837 served as mnemonic sites for literate Argentines and remained hegemonic in the national consciousness into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

1901. “El Archivo General de la Nación en su 80o aniversario.” *Caras y Caretas* 4, 153 (Sept. 7, 1901): n.p.

¹⁰⁶ Sarmiento, “Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América.” *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 37 (*Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América*), 23.

However, right around the turn of the nineteenth century, Argentina's social and political landscape changed and with it old memories and representations took on new meanings. Aline Helg asseverates: "By the end of the nineteenth century, the themes of blacks, Indians, and miscegenation were losing currency in favor of debates regarding immigration."¹⁰⁷ European immigrants, once espoused by Alberdi, Sarmiento, and others as the panacea to Argentina's social, racial, political, and economic ills, were just then at the very end of the nineteenth century suddenly regarded as a foreign menace, enemies from without. Blacks in the River Plate, previously remembered as past allies of barbarism and enemies of the (liberal) state from within, were now by the late 1800s and early 1900s suddenly and romantically reimagined and nostalgically remembered, more than ever, as true Argentines and loyal patriots by a new generation of cultural nation builders animated by a renewed spirit of Creole nationalism over against foreign cosmopolitanism.

CHAPTER 7

“¡Abajo los extranjeros!”—Anti-Cosmopolitanism and Creole Cultural Nationalism in the Río de la Plata, Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

¹⁰⁷ Helg, "Race in Argentina and Cuba," 43. In fact, as my dissertation establishes, Helg overstates her case. Rather than losing currency, discourses and memories about Afro-Argentines gain in symbolic importance at the end of the 1800s. However, Helg's quote nicely summarizes the equally growing significance of debates over cosmopolitanism and immigration among Creole elites in the River Plate at the end of the nineteenth century.

“Los pueblos que olvidan sus tradiciones pierden la conciencia de sus destinos y los que se apoyan en sus tumbas gloriosas son los que mejor preparan el porvenir.” Nicolás Avellaneda (Argentine writer and politician, 1837-1885).

Introduction

The previous two chapters examined in some detail the ideology of race and national identity and consequent representations and social remembrances of Afro-Argentines by leading luminaries of the liberal Generation of 1837. Their later writings also intimate an incipient Creole nationalism and the beginnings of nostalgic discourses lamenting the decline of traditional social groups, especially cowboys (*gauchos*) and Afro-Argentines, surfacing in the 1870s. This chapter moves the historical narrative beyond the middle of the nineteenth century. It documents how the often tumultuous transition of the River Plate republics from *caudillo* (strongman) rule to liberal democracy, with all the attendant social, political, and economic problems, galvanized a generation of conservative and nationalist intellectuals at the *fin de siècle*.¹⁰⁸ The chapter first addresses politics after Caseros and Pavón and then looks at the Creole nationalist backlash against European immigration and cosmopolitanism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Knowledge of the Rosas regime served as helpful background to understand how and why the liberal Generation of 1837 reacted to and represented Afro-Argentines in the mid-1800s. Similarly, knowledge of the historical factors that molded Creole nationalists

¹⁰⁸ Here, this dissertation sides with Fredric Jameson when he opposes the view that literary creation (and interpretation) somehow occurs in isolation of socio-political context(s). See Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981).

in the River Plate at century's end will, in turn, undergird subsequent discussions of their historical remembrances of the region's black inhabitants at the time. Moreover, this historical background is relevant given the point articulated several times already in this dissertation, namely, that social or collective memory is contextual and ultimately more about those doing the remembering than about those being remembered. In this respect, then, collective remembrances are contingent on the worldviews, ideologies, social activities, beliefs, expectations, and such that makeup a social group's *habitus*.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, R. Eyerman and B. Turner redefine the Mannheimian concept of generation as a historical cohort sharing a common *habitus*.¹¹⁰ In order to know a bit about how the *habitus* of Creole nationalists influenced their reactions to European immigrants and subsequently memories about Afro-Argentines (documented in Chapter eight), a look at the foundational period in their generation's history is thereby warranted.

Like most of the men (and women) of the Generation of 1837, many of these younger Creole writers and intellectuals were also members of the River Plate's nineteenth-century elite, and they too wrote extensively about Argentina's and Uruguay's social and political conditions at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s. Unlike their

¹⁰⁹ One should understand that a given group's *habitus* is itself socially constructed and dependent on historical context. Any collective remembrances emanating from the *habitus* of a given social group are therefore also contingent on their socio-historical context. Pierre Bourdieu, the classic theorist on the social *habitus*, understands the phenomenon as necessarily dependent on both history and memory. Cf., Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977), for an early exploration of the subject.

¹¹⁰ Sharing a common *habitus* and culture serves a given generation by affording them "with collective memory that serves to integrate the cohort over a finite period of time," suggest Eyerman and Turner. R. Eyerman and B. Turner, "Outline of a Theory of Generations." *European Journal of Social Theory* 1, 1 (1998): 91.

more liberal counterparts from a previous generation, however, many of the intellectuals of the Generation of 1880 were more socially and culturally conservative.¹¹¹ They came of age in a time and place undergoing rapid economic, social, and political transformations. The civil wars of the first half of the nineteenth century gave way to processes of state formation and nation building in both Argentina and Uruguay.¹¹² Cattle and agricultural export-oriented economies in the two countries underwent swift modernization in this period and both countries were fully inserted into the then fast-developing global capitalist economy of the latter 1800s. This sudden and impressive regional economic expansion of the River Plate was aided by large-scale foreign, namely, European, capital and technological investments and massive labor migration. The latter, especially, transformed the demographics of Argentina and Uruguay by the end of the 1800s and, in the process, also complicated traditional social and class relations in those two nations.¹¹³ These large-scale social, political, and economic realities therefore

¹¹¹ On Argentine cultural nationalism in this period, consult Carlos M. Rama, "El nacionalismo cultural argentino." *Latinoamérica* 9 (1976): 139-67. David Rock examines the roots of conservative nationalism in his "The Intellectual Precursors of Conservative Nationalism in Argentina, 1900-1927." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 67, 2 (May 1987): 271-300. Jeane H. Delaney somewhat challenges Rock, however, especially his view that conservative nationalists were anti-positivists. Jeane H. Delaney, "Imagining *El Ser Argentino*: Cultural Nationalism and Romantic Concepts of Nationhood in Early-Twentieth-Century Argentina." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, 3 (Aug. 2002): 625-58.

¹¹² Mark D. Szuchman covers the literature on these processes of Argentine state formation and nation building in the nineteenth century. Mark D. Szuchman, "Imagining the State and Building the Nation: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Argentina." *History Compass* 4, 2 (2006): 314-47.

¹¹³ In the following section of the chapter, these historical themes will be more fully developed as the context for the rise of Creole nationalism. A helpful synthesis of this transitional period for the Platine republics is proffered by Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 68-83.

defined the Generation of 1880 a la Mannheim and, consequently, shaped their individual and collective views and memories of this period in their nations' histories.

The Generation of 1880 and other Creole nationalists first questioned, then challenged, and ultimately rejected most (albeit not all) of the received wisdom about politics and society from earlier in the century. Rather than repudiating, as Alberdi and Sarmiento were prone to do, Spain and the Iberian heritage of Argentina and Uruguay, for instance, several social commentators and writers of the period, notably Argentines Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, Ricardo Rojas, and Manuel Gálvez, among others, lauded *la madre patria* (Motherland) as the cradle of the River Plate's cultural heritage and promoted Castilian Spanish as the national language.¹¹⁴ For example, Creole nationalist Manuel Gálvez's *El solar de la raza* (1913) was dedicated to the memory of the author's Spanish grandparents and extolled the many cultural and even spiritual virtues of the Spanish race in the Americas.¹¹⁵ Many men of the Generation of 1880, furthermore, were also staunchly anti-materialist and very religious, promoting Roman Catholicism to the level of state religion.

¹¹⁴ As early as May 7, 1822, the revolutionary government of the River Plate provinces passed a "Ley de Olvido" or "Law of Forgetting" regarding Spaniards. Vicente Fidel López, a father of Argentine liberal historiography, characterized the legislation as needful and generous, uniting Argentines and Spaniards as co-citizens and equals before the law. Vicente Fidel López, *Manual de la historia argentina. Dedicado á los profesores y maestros que la enseñan* (Buenos Aires: A. V. López, 1910), 611. López's teacher's manual was commissioned for the centennial as part of a pedagogical reformation promoting patriotism in the classroom.

¹¹⁵ Manuel Gálvez, *El solar de la raza* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Calleja, 1920 [1913]). Significantly, on the title page of this edition appears the following: "This work was awarded a prize by the government of the Republic of Argentina," marking an official state endorsement of the then burgeoning Creole nationalist sentiments, including its Hispanophilia. Carlos Payá and Eduardo Cárdenas, *El primer nacionalismo argentino en Manuel Gálvez y Ricardo Rojas* (Buenos Aires: Peña Lillo Editor, 1978).

As significant, several of these thinkers in addition questioned the putative social and economic benefits for Argentina (and Uruguay) of unfettered European immigration espoused by Alberdi, Sarmiento, and others in the previous generation of intellectual nation builders.¹¹⁶ Thus, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada's seminal *Radiografía de la pampa* (1933) is a work similar in its hybridity of genre to Sarmiento's *Facundo* but reaches radically different conclusions about Argentina's ethnic and cultural heritages.

Radiografía indicts previous Argentine social, political, and cultural elites, especially the men of '37, for having wrong-headedly tried to remake Argentina in the image and likeness of northern Europe.¹¹⁷ Consequently, a modicum of historical background about the circumstances of this key period assists in one understanding the nature of such views, leading to the advent of intense nationalist sentiments and pride on the eve of the River Plate's centennial in 1910.

Liberal Politics, Immigration, and Growing Social Tensions, 1880s-1910s

This section of the chapter outlines key historical moments in the development of Argentina at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s.¹¹⁸ Social, political, and

¹¹⁶ However, even Sarmiento toward the end of his life turned against (some) immigrants and denounced attempts to simplify naturalization procedures. "Los emigrados ciudadanos," somewhat sarcastically writes Sarmiento, "han declarado su mala voluntad para pedir carta de ciudadanía y el plañidero recuerdo del lugar o lugarejo, del castillo o del rincón que tuvo el honor de verlos nacer." Sarmiento bemoans the desire of immigrants to not fully identify with their adopted nation and their insistence on also having their Old-World homelands recorded on their citizenship papers. Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Domingo Faustino Sarmiento*. Victoria Galvani, comp. (Madrid: Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica, 1990), 93.

¹¹⁷ Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, *Radiografía de la pampa* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1942 [1933]).

¹¹⁸ Developments in neighboring Uruguay largely paralleled those in Argentina in this period. By the early 1900s, Uruguay, like Argentina, saw an end to civil wars, the institutionalization of modern party politics and constitutional government, promulgation of progressive social legislation, booming foreign trade, which allowed Uruguay to enjoy the highest per capita GDP in

economic developments in this period rapidly transformed the River Plate and molded the experiences and consciousness of both the Generation of 1880 in Argentina and other Creole nationalists in the region. These intellectuals and artists matured in an age of often disconcerting transformations to traditional society. The immediate present of their respective nations, in turn, affected their individual and collective recollections of their national pasts. As Pierre Nora and others building on his insight posit, such moments of social transition are often threatening to social elites and prompt them to manufacture mnemonic sites that effectively reify an idealized national past. These realms or sites of collective memory serve as tangible markers of socially constructed national identity precisely when threatened by perceived external forces.¹¹⁹ Along these lines, then, Creole nationalists reacted to the transformations of traditional Platine society by explicitly appealing to nostalgia, including, as will be highlighted in the subsequent chapters, the positive remembrances of Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans.

Latin America by 1913, and mass European immigration. A useful English-language survey is Arthur P. Whitaker, *The United States and the Southern Cone: Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976). Also, Benjamín Nahum, ed., *Manual de historia uruguaya*, 2 vols. (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1993-95). A major difference between Platine republics in this period would have been the continued demographic presence and, consequently, visibility of Afro-Uruguayans in that country. On this topic, consult George Reid Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation: A History of Afro-Uruguay* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2010).

¹¹⁹ Cf., Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.” Marc Roudebush, trans. *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24. Pierre Nora, dir., *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols. L. D. Kritzman, ed. A. Goldhammer, trans. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996-98). A recent, updated translation of Nora’s ideas on realms of memory is Pierre Nora, dir., *Rethinking France: les lieux de mémoire*, 4 vols. M. Trouille and D. P. Jordan, trans. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001-10).

State formation and modern politics in Argentina started in earnest after 1860.¹²⁰ With the end of *caudillo* (strongman) rule in the River Plate by the middle of the 1800s, in Argentina, at least, after the downfall of federalists Juan Manuel de Rosas and Justo José de Urquiza, there began the almost century-long tenure of democratic republicanism and administration, whether liberal or conservative, in the region. For example, the 1853 Constitution of the Argentine Confederation practically enshrined all of liberal Juan Bautista Alberdi's principles for republican rule and capitalist economic development, including his emphasis on the appropriate populating of Argentina by way of open European immigration. Whether it was Bartolomé Mitre and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento achieving Argentina's highest office; or the promulgation of the *Ley de Inmigración y Colonización*, better known as the "Ley Avellaneda" (1876), welcoming foreign laborers; or the "Ley Roque Sáenz Peña" (1912) affording secret ballots, universal male suffrage, and compulsory voting; or the implementation of Sarmiento's dream of mass public education—in Argentina, the liberal Generation of 1837 witnessed how one by one several of its leaders were enshrined in the national pantheon and its major tenets promoted in pursuit of consolidation in the mid-1800s and beyond.¹²¹ Furthermore, the so-called "Conquest of the Desert" in 1880, led by future Argentine president General Julio Argentino Roca, during the administration of Autonomist Nicolás

¹²⁰ See David Rock, *State Building and Political Movements in Argentina, 1860-1916* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2002); and Hilda Sabato, *The Many and the Few: Political Participation in Republican Buenos Aires* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2001).

¹²¹ Eduardo A. Zimmermann, *Los liberales reformistas. La cuestión social en la Argentina, 1890-1916* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, Univ. de San Andrés, 1995) summarizes the major players, ideas, movements, and reforms among late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Argentine liberals in the spheres of society, law, economics, politics, and culture.

Avellaneda (president after Mitre and Sarmiento), subdued the remaining hostile Indians and marked the last of the major territorial conquests of the country's interior.¹²² That same year, the contentious role of Buenos Aires was finally resolved and the capital city was declared a federal district, with its citizens afforded full voting rights in national elections, thereby marking the decisive step in the nation's territorial consolidation.¹²³ In addition, as will be established, economic and demographic transformations were equally significant.

The River Plate also experienced major economic and population growths after the mid-nineteenth century. By the late 1880s, Argentina was a primary world producer and exporter of beef and sheep byproducts and wheat and other grain cereals, becoming a major provider of many basic goods to the industrial world. By 1894, for example, wheat

¹²² The conquest and settlement of the frontier facilitated the geographic mapping and imagining of the Argentine national state by the late 1800s. Geography played an important role in Argentine state formation and the construction of national identity. On this theme, consult Klaus-John Dodds, "Geography, Identity and the Creation of the Argentine State." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 12, 3 (1993): 311-31; and Marcelo Escobar, Silvina Quintero Palacios, and Carlos Reboratti, "Geographical Identity and Patriotic Representation in Argentina." In *Geography and National Identity*. David Hooson, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), ch. 23. Dodds intimates that Afro-Argentines and Indians were neither totally accepted nor rejected by nation builders, and therefore served as a limited source of identification for the developing state. Dodds, "Geography," 313, 319. This is in keeping with Creole nationalist racial views in the era of nation building in the River Plate described by Lea Geler, "Afro-Porteños at the End of the Nineteenth Century: Discussing the Nation." *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 7, 2 (2014): 105-18.

¹²³ The historiography of the economic, military, and political dominance of Buenos Aires city, its government, and its role in state formation in the first part of the nineteenth century is documented in Juan Carlos Garavaglia, "La apoteosis del Leviathán: el estado de Buenos Aires durante la primera mitad del siglo XIX." *Latin American Research Review* 38, 1 (2003): 135-68. For the continued economic and political importance of Buenos Aires, even after its federalization, see James R. Scobie, "Buenos Aires as a Commercial-Bureaucratic City, 1880-1910: Characteristics of a City's Orientation." *The American Historical Review* 77, 4 (Oct. 1972): 1035-73.

exports climbed from less than 500,000 metric tons a few years earlier to 1.6 million.¹²⁴ Contemporary Buenos Aires businessman Ernesto Tornquist was enthusiastic and encouraged by the spectacular growth of Argentina's favorable foreign trade balance from 1890 to before World War I. By 1910-1914, Tornquist documented that Argentina had an important trade surplus.¹²⁵ Thus, in large measure thanks to the considerable total value of its exports, especially to Europe, from 1880 to the onset of World War I, Argentina's economy grew at a yearly rate of about five percent.¹²⁶ However, as economic nationalists complained at the time, foreign investors, attracted by the River Plate's booming economy, controlled thirty-five percent of Argentina's total fixed investments from 1900 to 1929, furthering the country's economic dependence on Europe. Great Britain was the major European investor, followed by France and Germany.¹²⁷ Europeans also contributed to the River Plate's expansion as members of the labor force.

¹²⁴ David Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonization to Alfonsín* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987), 164.

¹²⁵ The total value of Argentina's exports was 402 million gold *pesos* compared to 359 million gold *pesos* in imports. Ernesto Tornquist, *The Economic Development of Argentina in the Last 50 Years* (Buenos Aires: Ernesto Tornquist y Cía., Lim., 1919), 140.

¹²⁶ David Bushnell and Neill Macaulay, *The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 234. Export growth did not lead to national wealth, however, as heavy foreign investments to offset budget deficits during the late 1800s made the River Plate more dependent on global capital markets, setting the stage for the financial crisis at the end of the century, as a result of the Baring Bank crash, and the attendant collapse in Buenos Aires of the conservative administration of Miguel A. Juárez Celman in 1890. On the Baring Crisis and its political, social, and economic impacts on the River Plate, consult Carlos Marichals' *A Century of Debt Crises in Latin America: From Independence to the Great Depression, 1820-1930* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989).

¹²⁷ Skidmore and Smith, *Modern Latin America*, 74.

Argentina's economic development was also largely aided by massive foreign immigration to provide workers for field and factory. By 1895, there were already over one million immigrants from Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Of a total population that year of 3,954,911, foreigners numbered 1,004,527.¹²⁸ Between 1892 and 1913, Argentina (as well as Uruguay) added millions of new residents to their populations as a result of immigration. Overseas immigration to Argentina reached a peak of 379,117 foreigners arriving in Buenos Aires in 1912, mostly from Italy and Spain, but also from central Europe and the Middle East. David Rock estimates that by 1914, about one-third of Argentina's population was foreign-born, with almost eighty percent of the inhabitants comprised of immigrants and those descended from immigrants arriving since 1850.¹²⁹ Almost one million Italians and more than 800,000 Spaniards resided in Argentina by the early 1900s, for instance.¹³⁰ Foreign immigrants settled down

¹²⁸ Figures are for May 1895. Manuel C. Chueco, *La República Argentina en su primer centenario*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1910), 131. This was the official publication of the Argentine government for the commemoration of the 1910 centennial.

¹²⁹ For more on what David Rock refers to as a "trinity" of foreign investments, trade, and immigration in this period, see his eminently useful, *Argentina, 1516-1987*, 120-31, 131-52, 164, 166-67. Rock estimates that between 1871 and 1914 about 5.9 million immigrants arrived in Argentina, 3.1 million of whom stayed and settled in the country.

¹³⁰ Rock, *Argentina, 1516-1987*, 166. Ernesto J. A. Maeder, "Población e inmigración en la Argentina." *La Argentina del ochenta al centenario*. Gustavo Ferrari and Ezequiel Gallo, eds. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1980), 555-73. An important study of Italian immigration to Buenos Aires in English is Samuel L. Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise: Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1999). On Spanish immigrants to Argentina, see the contribution of José C. Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1998). Also, more recently, María Liliana da Orden, *Inmigración española, familia y movilidad social en la Argentina moderna. Una mirada desde Mar del Plata (1890-1930)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2005) provides a useful local history.

throughout the River Plate, but especially in the region's major urban centers and port areas, like Buenos Aires's "La Boca," where they, along with the native working classes, often lived in poor neighborhoods and *conventillos* (tenement housing).¹³¹ As will be documented, however, since the end of the nineteenth century this massive population shift came accompanied by numerous social and political tensions.

The liberal Radical Party (*Unión Cívica Radical*), led by former president Bartolomé Mitre and Congressman Leandro N. Alem, played a major role in the ousting in 1890, during the so-called "Revolución del Parque," of the conservative Juárez Celman regime.¹³² The Radical Party would for the first decade and a half of the twentieth century compete for political power with Roca's right-wing and oligarchic National Autonomist Party (*Partido Autonomista Nacional*).¹³³ Mitre and Alem's progressive Radical Party

¹³¹ Carl Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism: Argentina and Chile, 1890-1914* (Austin: Inst. of Latin American Studies; Univ. of Texas Press, 1970), table 4, documents the distribution of foreigners throughout the provinces and territories of Argentina by 1914. Working-class housing in Buenos Aires during this period is treated by Horacio Vázquez Rial, "Tu cuna fue un conventillo. La vivienda obrera en Buenos Aires en la vuelta del siglo." In *Buenos Aires 1880-1930. La capital de un imperio imaginario*. Horacio Vázquez Rial, ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Alianza, 1996), 254-64.

¹³² As a legislator, Leandro N. Alem played a key role in the debates on both education reform and the federalization of Buenos Aires in the last quarter of the 1800s. See the edited and translated text of his congressional speeches on national secondary schools in Buenos Aires and his support for the federalization of the capital city in Natalio R. Botana and Ezequiel Gallo, comps. and eds., *Liberal Thought in Argentina, 1837-1940*. Ian Barnett, trans. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2013), pages 264-70 and 279-83, respectively.

¹³³ Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald H. Dolkart, eds., *The Argentine Right: Its History and Intellectual Origins* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1993). Roberto Etchepareborda, "Las presidencias de Urriburu y Roca." In *La Argentina del ochenta al centenario*, 255-90. Natalio R. Botana's *El orden conservador. La política argentina entre 1880 y 1916* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1977) serves as the counterpoint to Zimmermann's study of liberal reformers in the same time period and is one of the most important primers on the Autonomists and Argentine conservatism in the fin de siècle. On the genesis and politics of the Autonomist Party, see also Paula Alonso, "La política y sus laberintos: el Partido Autonomista Nacional entre 1880 y 1886." In *La vida política en la Argentina del siglo XIX: armas, votos y*

was supported by urban laborers and the sons of immigrants. By exploiting the “Roque Sáenz Peña Law” (1912) allowing for universal male suffrage, with the election of Alem’s nephew and new Radical Party leader Hipólito Yrigoyen as president of the Argentine Republic, the Radicals eventually took power from the Autonomists in 1916.¹³⁴ Among certain progressives and working class sectors, President Yrigoyen was heralded as a “messiah.” Yrigoyen’s government passed a mild but progressive income tax and later an agricultural export tax. Furthermore, his Radical party continued to expand its extensive patronage network, which after Yrigoyen’s election extended to include the middle class.¹³⁵ The Radicals’ multi-class alliance, however, did not win over everybody, and many of the more conservative Creole intellectuals rejected what they perceived as ongoing liberal threats to traditional Argentine values and heritage.¹³⁶

voces. Hilda Sabato and Alberto Lettieri, ed. (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003), 277-92. According to Alonso, party and national unity were the primordial goals of the Roca and Juárez Celman administrations. The latter failed at both.

¹³⁴ David Rock, *Politics in Argentina, 1890-1930: The Rise and Fall of Radicalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975), 41-43, 47-48, 50, 52-55. On the formation of the Radical Party, see Ezequiel Gallo and Silvia Sigal, “La formación de los partidos políticos contemporáneos: La UCR (1890-1916).” *Desarrollo Económico* 3, 1-2 (1963): 1-63.

¹³⁵ Rock, *Politics in Argentina*, 109, 110-14. Rock draws a parallel between Yrigoyen’s cross-class political alliance and that of Uruguayan Colorado Party (liberal) president José Battle y Ordóñez (in office from 1911-1915). Rock concludes, however, that Battle y Ordóñez’s reformism was more successful than Yrigoyen’s in Argentina. Rock, *Politics in Argentina*, 119. The ultimate failure in the 1930s and 1940s of the “Revolución del Parque” and *radicalismo* with its inclusive ideals in Argentina and the rise to power of a corporatist and organicist, that is, fascist, military junta, culminating in Peronism, supports a thesis attributed by many thinkers to Walter Benjamin that the rise of every fascism bears witness to a failed (socialist, progressive, or liberal) revolution. Cf., SLAVOJ ZIZEK “No Solution in the Market.” *l’Humanité in English*, Feb. 1, 2010. <http://www.humaniteinenglish.com/spip.php?article1442>.

¹³⁶ For more on the Radical Party and its constituency, see Richard J. Walter, “Elections in the City of Buenos Aires during the First Yrigoyen Administration: Social Class and Political Preferences.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, 4 (Nov. 1978): 595-624. More recently, Noam Lupu and Susan C. Stokes explore the social bases of Argentina’s political parties using

However, ideological threats and contentious party politics were not the only problems facing Argentina's ruling class.

In addition, the Río de la Plata's economic boom at the turn of the nineteenth century did not benefit everyone equally. Traditional landed and commercial elites continued to prosper at the expense of common laborers during the boom years, even under liberal and progressive administrations. Not surprisingly, therefore, socialists, communists, and even anarchists made inroads among workers on both sides of the River Plate during the fin de siècle. The Radical Party in Argentina especially loathed the socialists or communists. According to David Rock, the antipathy of Yrigoyen's party toward the Argentine far left was perhaps even greater than toward the oligarchic Autonomists. Rock cites from contemporary Radical sources evidencing their hostility toward socialists and communists in Argentina; among both radicals and conservatives, socialists, communists, and anarchists were represented as threats to the nation's political order, social stability, and private property.¹³⁷ Part of the radicals' antipathy against the Argentine Socialist Party was no doubt inspired by direct competition for working-class political support. However, Radical animosity against socialists may also have been a byproduct of a sense of betrayal. Originally a member of the Radical Party, Argentine

the most comprehensive database of Argentine elections yet assembled. They conclude that for the period between 1912 and 1940 the party system was not consistently class based. Noam Lupu and Susan C. Stokes, "The Social Bases of Political Parties in Argentina, 1912-2003." *Latin American Research Review* 44, 1 (2009): 58-87.

¹³⁷ Rock, *Politics in Argentina*, 118-19. A history of the origins and early developments of socialism and communism in Argentina are Jacinto Oddone, *Historia del socialismo argentino* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1983); and Daniel Campione, *El comunismo en Argentina. Sus primeros pasos* (Buenos Aires: Inst. Movilizador de Fondos Cooperativos, Centro Cultural De Cooperación Floreal Gorini, 2005).

doctor, writer, and politician Juan Bautista Justo founded the Socialist Party in 1896. He was also the founder and editor of the party's organ *La Vanguardia*, established in the same year as the Socialist Party. Unlike the communists and anarchists, that received funding and ideological support from foreign radicals, Justo's party was more moderate in its politics, preferring reform over revolution, and often lambasted the foreign nature and extreme radicalism of the Argentine far left.¹³⁸ In spite of the apprehensions of some conservative nationalists, including, interestingly enough, long-time black Congressional orderly Fidel Mamerto Quinteros, socialists were by and large accepted as fully Creole and potential interlocutors in national politics by radicals and nationalists alike.¹³⁹

For many on the far left, needless to say, neither radicals nor socialists provided viable alternatives to oligarchic rule in Argentina (and Uruguay). Communists and

¹³⁸ Patricio Geli, "Justo, Juan Bautista." In *Diccionario biográfico de la izquierda argentina. De los anarquistas a la "nueva izquierda" (1870-1976)*. Horacio Tarcus, ed. (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2007), 326-32. Many leading European communists and anarchists sojourned in Buenos Aires during this period, including notorious Italian anarcho-syndacalst Errico Malatesta, friend and colleague of revolutionary Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin. Gonzalo Zaragoza, *Anarquismo argentino* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Torres, 1996), 85-96. *Caras y Caretas* recorded Malatesta's arrival in the city of La Plata in 1884. According to this source, Malatesta gave various conferences and published the first anarchist paper in South America, *La Questione Sociale*. In Adolfo Prieto, *El discurso criollista en la formación de la Argentina moderna* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores Argentina, 2006), 39-40. Gonzalo Zaragoza, "Errico Malatesta y el anarquismo argentino." *Historiografía y Bibliografía Americanistas* 16, 4 (1972): 401-29.

¹³⁹ Ricardo H. Martínez Mazzola, "¿Cuestión social o cuestión nacional? Los debates en torno al naciente movimiento obrero." In *Los contornos de la ciudadanía. Nacionales y extranjeros en la Argentina del centenario*. Susana Villavicencio, ed. (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 2003), 105, 106. A very good English-language primer on Argentine socialism is Richard J. Walter, *The Socialist Party of Argentina, 1890-1930* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1977). Quinteros intimates that socialists are foreign elements in the national body politic. There is some question, however, about whether Afro-Argentine Congressional page Quinteros was alluding to socialists in general or just the party's far-left wing or was perhaps actually talking about communists. Mamerto Fidel Quinteros, *Memorias de un negro del Congreso* (Buenos Aires: L. J. Rosso, 1924), 63.

anarchists made steady inroads in major labor unions in Argentina, including the *Unión General del Trabajo* and the *Federación Obrera Regional Argentina*, and among immigrants and their offspring.¹⁴⁰ While both anarchists and communists promoted and led labor strikes, anarchists also favored more violent means of resistance, including acts of terrorism and homicide. For example, the leading Buenos Aires weekly magazine of record in the early twentieth century, *Caras y Caretas*, ran a story about the murder of a local politician by an Afro-Argentine anarchist in 1902.¹⁴¹ This exemplifies both some of the radical actions favored by anarchists and the presence of Afro-Argentines among the period's organized labor force and radical political organizations. However, foreigners were predominant among radical activists. A few memorable examples of radical activism at the time serve to make this point. For instance, immigrants were at the center of two notorious acts of terrorism leading up to and following the centennial celebrations of 1910. In November 1909, heavy-handed Buenos Aires police chief Ramón L. Falcón was assassinated. The following year, in the aftermath of centennial May celebrations and

¹⁴⁰ On the Argentine far left, consult Jordán Oriolo, *Antiesbozo de la historia del Partido Comunista: 1918-1928* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1994).

¹⁴¹ "Las elecciones del domingo. Episodios sangrientos—los comicios en las 22 parroquias." *Caras y Caretas* 5, 180 (March 15, 1902): n.p. A picture accompanying the article shows the black assassin being physically manhandled by the local police. The Buenos Aires police force was notorious in its aggression against not only radicals but labor activists as well. Justo's *La Vanguardia* repeatedly denounced police brutality. E.g., in one article published on April 23, 1898, the headline captures many of the left's complaints about "police barbarism," "arbitrary roundups and beatings," "dictatorial attitudes," and "denigrating accusations." "Barbarismo policial..." *La Vanguardia*, April 23, 1898, 1.

just prior to the July 9 national holiday, a bomb exploded in the prestigious “Teatro Colón” on June 27, 1910.¹⁴² In both incidents, foreign anarchists were blamed.¹⁴³

A month before the June 27 bombing, writer César Viale remembers another attempted radical attack on then Autonomist president José Figueroa Alcorta at the Colón Theater, the favored reunion place of Argentina’s elites.¹⁴⁴ In his memoirs, Angel Carrasco recalls: “La anarquía en cuya amalgama formaban elementos importados y recibidos aquí con la hospitalidad y cordialidad que nos distingue, se había propuesto descomponernos nuestra fiesta, transformándola en una de sangre, de atropellos y de atentados dinamiteros.” In his own words, Carrasco denounces, in particular, ungrateful foreign anarchists, whom he claims were well-received in Argentina, for trying to ruin the centennial celebrations guided by forces unknown at the time. He then goes on to

¹⁴² *La Prensa*, June 28, 1910, 11, on the Teatro Colón bombing plot, and *La Nación*, Nov. 15, 1909, 9, on the killing of metropolitan police chief, Ramón L. Falcón.

¹⁴³ Víctor Alba, *Politics and the Labor Movement in Latin America* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1968), 223. Richard B. Jensen, “The First Global Wave of Terrorism and International Counter-Terrorism, 1904-1914.” In *An International History of Terrorism: Western and Non-Western Experiences*. Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Bernhard Blumenau, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 21. A Central-European Jew, Simon Radowiski, or Simón Radowitzky, was arrested and sentenced in the murder of Chief Falcón. He was later pardoned by President Yrigoyen with the condition of permanent exile, which outraged establishment conservatives. For a sympathetic view of Radowitzky, see fellow radical Osvaldo Bayer’s “Simón Radowitzky.” Patricia Owen Steiner, trans. In *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2002), 219-30. Anarchists also tried to bomb the Argentine Presidential Palace, but the device failed to explode. *Caras y Caretas* 13, 553-554 (May 15, 1910): n.p. Isaac Oved’s *El anarquismo y el movimiento obrero en Argentina* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1978) provides a detailed and well-documented history of the relationship between labor and the far left in Argentina. Spanish anarchists also played a key role in fin de siècle Argentina. See Carlos Penelas, *Los gallegos anarquistas en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Torres Agüero Editor, 1996).

¹⁴⁴ César Viale, *Estampas de mi tiempo* (Buenos Aires: J. Suárez, 1945). In *Testimonios culturales argentinos. La década del 10*. Osvaldo Pellettieri, coord. (Buenos Aires: Editorial de Belgrano, 1980), 26.

suggest that these “criminal” or “sick” minds behind the terrorism obeyed foreign interests “que entonces no se sospecharon.”¹⁴⁵ Such acts of foreign-inspired or directed acts of social and political terror laid the foundation for a rise in anti-foreign sentiments and a corresponding surge of Creole nationalism by the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s.

“¡Abajo los extranjeros!” (“Down with the Foreigners!”)—Xenophobia and Creole Nationalism in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Radical militancy and xenophobia prompted different governments in Argentina to impose a state of siege and pass restrictive, anti-immigrant legislation. In 1902, for example, the Argentine Congress passed the “Law of Residence” (“Ley de Residencia”) that allowed for the deportation of foreign radicals, while the 1910 “Law of Social Defense” (“Ley de Defensa Social”) strengthened the “Law of Residence” and permitted police throughout the country to summarily arrest and imprison anyone suspected of anarchist tendencies.¹⁴⁶ While a few Creole socialist legislators, such as Pedro J. Coronado of Entre Ríos, spoke out against anti-immigrant legislation, social and political

¹⁴⁵ Angel Carrasco, *Lo que yo vi desde el 80... Hombres y episodios de la transformación nacional* (Buenos Aires: PBOCMO, 1947). In *Testimonios culturales argentinos*, 19. This compilation of primary sources from the time of the centennial bears eloquent witness to the different views about foreigners and the social problems attributed to them, especially their criminal activities and radical politics.

¹⁴⁶ María Inés Pacecca, “El fantasma en la máquina: la praxis política de los extranjeros y la Ley de Residencia.” In *Los contornos de la ciudadanía*, ch. 5. Texts of both laws are found in Néstor Tomás Auza, comp., *Documentos para la enseñanza de la historia argentina*, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Pannedille, 1971), 80 (“Ley de Residencia”) and 175-79 (“Ley de Defensa Social”). Extracts from the parliamentary debates over both laws are provided in “Selección de debates parlamentarios de las leyes de Residencia y Defensa Social.” In *Los contornos de la ciudadanía*, 193-204. See also Juan Suriano, *Trabajadores, anarquismo y estado represor: de la Ley de Residencia a la Ley de Defensa Social* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1993).

problems blamed on foreigners and radicals shaped and dominated public opinion around 1910.¹⁴⁷

Labor unrest in fact peaked in the years after the rise of the Radical Party. Hundreds of minor and major work stoppages and strikes, involving thousands of workers, including many women, took place across Argentina in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Most strikes revolved around low wages, working conditions, hours, and the right to organize.¹⁴⁸ According to statistics compiled by Roberto P. Korzeniewicz from accounts of strikes from the radical press at the turn of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century, laborers in the manufacturing sector were the most militant after 1900; in 1904 alone, manufacturing workers went on strike 181 times.¹⁴⁹ Even the countryside experienced social unrest in the decade of the 1910s, as rural

¹⁴⁷ For the translated text of Coronado's congressional debate speech against the "Residence Law," see *Liberal Thought in Argentina*, 336-38. Coronado laments the impunity of a law by which "... the president of the Republic may... penetrate freely and seize the man accused of holding socialist or anarchist ideas, and frogmarch him to the border!" Coronado, "Speech on the Residence Act," in *Liberal Thought in Argentina*, 338.

¹⁴⁸ Richard J. Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Buenos Aires, 1910-1942* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 14. Also, Ezequiel Adamovsky, *Historia de las clases populares en la Argentina, desde 1880 hasta 2003* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2012). For an English-language overview of the Argentine labor movement, see Ronald Munck et al., *Argentina, from Anarchism to Peronism: Workers, Unions and Politics, 1855-1985* (London: Zed Books, 1987). Rosario, in Santa Fe province (north of Buenos Aires) was a cradle of radical labor. See Matthew B. Karush, *Workers or Citizens: Democracy and Identity in Rosario, Argentina (1912-1930)*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2002); and Agustina Prieto, "Usos de la 'Cuestión Obrera'. Rosario, 1901-1910." In *La cuestión social en Argentina, 1870-1943*. Juan Soriano, ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial La Colmena, 2000), 63-87.

¹⁴⁹ Roberto P. Korzeniewicz, "Labor Unrest in Argentina, 1887-1907." *Latin American Research Review* 24, 3 (1989): 75. Between 1887 and 1907, in a total labor force of 136,481, workers in manufacturing accounted for 706 strikes. In terms of the relative intensity of strikes, however, port workers were far more militant over the same period; with a labor force of only 12,000, they went on strike a total of 223 times, for a relative strike intensity ratio of 1.858 (compared to .517 for manufacturing workers). Korzeniewicz, "Labor Unrest in Argentina," 79.

workers (*chacareros*) established the “Argentine Agrarian Federation” (“Federación Agraria Argentina”) and even socialists made inroads with peasants, threatening the interests of landed elites embodied in the oligarchic “Argentine Rural Society” (“Sociedad Argentina Rural”).¹⁵⁰

David Rock, moreover, records several major work stoppages in early-1900’s Argentina involving mainly workers in the transportation sectors: maritime workers’ strikes, 1916-1917; municipal workers’ strikes, 1916-1918; railway strikes, 1917-1918; *frigorífico* (refrigerated transports) strikes, 1917-1918.¹⁵¹ These strikes were often met with brutal state repression, culminating in the bloody events of early January 1919, known as “La Semana Trágica” (“The Tragic Week”). Ironically, during such a highly symbolic week, the liberal Radical Party government joined with the conservative paramilitary “Argentine Patriotic League”¹⁵² (abetted by the Catholic Church) and clashed with rioting workers, resulting in the injury and deaths of many on both sides and the destruction of much property. The exact number of those injured or killed during the

¹⁵⁰ On socialist agitation in the countryside of Argentina, see Jeremy Adelman, “Una cosecha esquiva: los socialistas y el campo antes la Primera Guerra Mundial.” *Anuario IEHS*, no. 4 (1989): 293-333. Roy Hora, *The Landowners of the Argentine Pampas: A Social History, 1860-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 136-37.

¹⁵¹ Rock, *Politics in Argentina*, 129-39, 152-56. See also Silvia Ospital, *Inmigración y nacionalismo: La Liga Patriótica y la Asociación del Trabajo: 1910-1930* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1994). A compilation of strike statistics for the city of Buenos Aires between 1907 and 1927 is found in Departamento Nacional del Trabajo, “Información social.” *Revista de Ciencias Económicas* 17 (Second Series), 20 (1949): 223-35. See also Korzeniewicz, “Labor Unrest in Argentina, 1887-1907,” 71-98.

¹⁵² On the “Argentine Patriotic League,” see Sandra McGee Deutsch, *The Counterrevolution in Argentina, 1900-1932: The Argentine Patriotic League* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1986); and Luis M. Caterina, *La Liga Patriótica Argentina. Un grupo de presión frente a las convulsiones sociales de la década del '20* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1995).

incidents surrounding “The Tragic Week” has never been reliably established; according to some sources, casualty estimates range from sixty-two to one thousand dead, mostly Russian Jews.¹⁵³ Foreign anarchists and Jews were once more described as the main conspirators, according to the government, official, and conservative sources.¹⁵⁴ As has been hinted to above, at the core of fin de siècle Argentina’s social and political angst was the threat and suspicion of the foreign “Other,” namely, the immigrant from Europe and, especially, from central Europe and the Middle East (read Jew).¹⁵⁵

Some foreign visitors and European residents, however, owing to pragmatic reasons, extolled the virtues of industrious European migrant workers on both sides of the River Plate estuary. For example, in 1910, the Englishman W. H. Hirst wrote in his memoirs that continued European immigration to Argentina was one of the most hopeful signs for the future growth of the country.¹⁵⁶ A few years later, the North American

¹⁵³ Aline Helg, “Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930.” In *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, 2nd ed.. Richard Graham, ed. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1992), 46.

¹⁵⁴ “Agitación obrera en la capital. Graves desórdenes en las calles. La actitud del poder ejecutivo.” *La Prensa*, Jan. 10, 1919, 9. “Acción obrera. El paro general.” *La Nación*, Jan. 11, 1919, 5. Rock, *Politics in Argentina*, ch. 7, “The Semana Trágica.” Vicente Massot, *Matar o morir. La violencia política en la Argentina (1806-1980)* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2003) proffers a useful summary of political and labor struggles and violence in Argentina’s history.

¹⁵⁵ The literature on immigration to Argentina is voluminous. Fernando Devoto and Hernán Otero proffer a very useful historiography in “Veinte años después. Una lectura sobre el crisol de razas, el pluralismo cultural y la historia nacional en la historiografía argentina.” *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 17, 50 (2003): 181-227. Dardo Cúneo, Julio Mafud, Amalia Sánchez Sívori, and Lázaro Schullman, *Inmigración y nacionalidad* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidós, 1967) explore the contentious issue of the naturalization (or lack thereof) of immigrants in Argentina. The immigrant as a social threat is treated by Carl Solberg, “Immigration and Urban Social Problems in Argentina and Chile, 1890-1914.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 49, 2 (May 1969): 215-32.

¹⁵⁶ W. A. Hirst, *Argentina*, 5th ed. (London: T. Fisher Unwin LTD., 1919 [1910]), 137-38. British sojourner Thomas A. Turner in the late 1800s described the Argentine population as “hybrid” and the native as “not admirable.” Thus, foreigners were responsible for Argentina’s development.

journalist Gordon Ross maintained that European immigrants were still welcome in both Argentina and Uruguay and enjoyed the same rights and privileges as nationals.¹⁵⁷ These glowing opinions about resident foreigners in the Río de la Plata, however, were growing increasingly rare as the time of Argentina's centennial celebrations in 1910 drew near.

Surely, liberals and radicals generally continued to support unfettered immigration, for ideological and practical political reasons. As late as 1914, just about the time of the sharp decline of immigration to Argentina and Uruguay, *Caras y Caretas*, for instance, published a brief piece by the then-long-dead Alberdi on early-nineteenth-century immigration as a means of national progress and cultural development.¹⁵⁸ However, generally speaking, the tide of public and learned opinion had begun to turn against foreigners.

In fiction, for instance, European immigrants, notably radicals, Italian, and Jews, were represented by members of the Generation of 1880, including Eduardo Gutiérrez, Lucio V. López, Eugenio Cambacéres, Julián Martel, and Adolfo Saldías, as threats to the

Turner quotes President Juárez Celman in a speech: "Each immigrant that arrives in the country ... is worth so much gold to the State." Thomas A. Turner, *Argentina and the Argentines. Notes and Impressions of a Five Years' Sojourn in the Argentine Republic, 1885-90* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), vi, 115, 116, 125.

¹⁵⁷ Gordon Ross, *Argentina and Uruguay* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916), 52. W. H. Koebel, *Argentina: Past and Present* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. LTD., 1910), 73-81, describes the different immigrant ethnicities and nationalities and their respective contributions to Argentina.

¹⁵⁸ Juan B. Alberdi, "La inmigración como medio de progreso y de cultura." *Caras y Caretas*, 17, 796 (Jan. 1, 1914): n.p. Hans Vogel, "New Citizens for a New Nation: Naturalization in Early Independent Argentina." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 71, 1 (Feb. 1991): 107-31, explores immigration and naturalization in the River Plate in the first half of the nineteenth century.

nation and its unity.¹⁵⁹ Already by the time José Hernández penned his national gaucho epic *Martín Fierro* in the 1870s, the “gringos” or immigrants, especially Italians, were characterized as ignorant and troublesome.¹⁶⁰ In Eduardo Gutiérrez’s 1880’s homage to the notorious gaucho Juan Moreira, the gaucho kills an Italian owner of a rural store to escape an unjust debt.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, in Florencio Sánchez’s Creole stage play *La gringa* (1904), the unscrupulous Italian Don Nicola is shown chopping down an *ombú* tree, an Argentine national symbol often extolled in song and poetry and associated with the gaucho, claiming that the *ombú* is a worthless “Creole” tree not even useful “for firewood.”¹⁶² Consequently, as Carl Solberg abundantly documents, the immigrant

¹⁵⁹ See Luciano Rusich, *El inmigrante italiano en la novela argentina del 80* (Madrid: Playor, 1974). Anarchists especially, however, produced their own counter-hegemonic fiction in response and as an open challenge to their literary denigration by Creole nationalists and xenophobic conservatives. See Pablo Ansolabehere, *Literatura y anarquismo en Argentina (1879-1919)* (Rosario, Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 2011).

¹⁶⁰ José Hernández, *Martín Fierro*, new and exp. ed. Eleuterio F. Tiscornia, ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1947), e.g., Part I, lines 847-852, which mocks the uneducated (“bozal”) speech of the “pa-po-li-tano” (Neopolitan). In Argentine *lunfardo* (slang), “tano” is short for “neopolitano” and is used for Italians in Argentina (in much the same way “gallego” or Galician is used as short-hand for all Spaniards). In Part I, line 895, Fierro claims that Italians “No hacen más que dar trabajo” or “make problems” for the gauchos because of their lack of ranching skills.

¹⁶¹ Eduardo Gutiérrez, *Juan Moreira*. José J. Podestá, ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorail Nova, 1944). This national epic has been adapted to and performed on stage repeatedly since the middle to late 1880s. It is a site of commemoration of the gaucho in the River Plate. I thank Professor Beatriz Seibel, an expert on Argentine literature and stage, for this reference.

¹⁶² Florencio Sánchez, *La gringa*. In *Teatro completo de Florencio Sánchez*, 3rd ed. Dardo Cúneo, ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1964), 135. The *ombú* is a Creole national icon. Bartolomé Mitre even dedicated a romantic poem to it. Bartolomé Mitre, “Libro segundo. Armonías de la Pampa (I): A un ombú—en medio de la pampa.” *Obras completas de Bartolomé Mitre*, vol. 18 (III. *Obras literarias originales y traducciones*) (Buenos Aires: Edición Ordenada por el Honorable Congreso de la Nación Argentina, Ley no. 12.328, 1972 [1938-]), 153-55. See also Afro-Argentine popular poet Higinio Cazón’s ode “The Bushy Ombú,” in Marvin Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse: Another Dimension of the Black Diaspora* (Columbia, MO: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1996), 78-79.

became the convenient “scapegoat” for Argentina’s urban unrest, political problems, and anti-patriotism in the fin de siècle.¹⁶³ In addition, Solberg correctly points out that Creole nationalism emerged by the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s as “the antidote for immigration” in Argentine society and ideology.¹⁶⁴

While state historian Manuel Cosme Chueco could still write in his official publication on the centennial in 1910 in glowing terms about foreign elites and immigrants residing in Argentina, and point out the enthusiasm with which they, too, partook of the national celebrations,¹⁶⁵ by the early 1900s the opinion of many, especially conservative, intellectual leaders in Argentina had turned decisively against the foreign “Other.” In fact, as early as 1899, Senator Miguel Cané had already proposed legislation permitting the summary deportation of “foreign agitators.”¹⁶⁶ Whether they were positivists or romantics, or even a bit of both, Creole intellectuals in this period in

¹⁶³ Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism*, ch. 4 on the immigrant as “scapegoat” and ch. 5 on the resident alien as “unwelcome participant” in national politics. Ana Paula Penchaszadeh, “Ciudadanos, nacionales, habitantes y extranjeros.” In *Perfilar la nación cívica en la Argentina. Figuras y marcas en los relatos inaugurales*. Susana Villavicencio and María Inés Pacea, eds. (Buenos Aires: Inst. Gino Germani, 2008), 239-52 on “la otredad casi absoluta del extranjero” (the almost absolute alterity or “Otherness” of the immigrant) in Argentina in this period.

¹⁶⁴ Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism*, 132 ff.

¹⁶⁵ Chueco, *La República Argentina*, 2-3, 260. Not surprisingly, Chueco also affirmed the diminutive numbers of and insignificant roles Asians and Africans played in the formation of the nation. Chueco, *La República Argentina*, 133. In many ways, Chueco’s “officialism” was in 1910 already at odds with the rising surge of Creole nationalism that both attacked foreigners and elevated (at least some) black Argentines. Along these lines, see Taller de Historia de las Mentalidades, “La Argentina de 1910: sensibilidad, alegorías, argumentos en torno de un centenario.” *Estudios Sociales*, no. 4 (First Semester, 1993): 81-96.

¹⁶⁶ Pacea, “El fantasma en la máquina,” 117.

Argentina and throughout the Río de la Plata extoiled national character, and most renounced European cosmopolitanism.¹⁶⁷

From an early date, *Caras y Caretas* often ran caricatures and stories in which immigrants were featured negatively, for instance, as shiftless malcontents.¹⁶⁸ A totally sardonic caricature in the January 10, 1903 issue of *Caras y Caretas* shows then president of Argentina, Julio Argentino Roca, approaching a heavy-set woman representing Europe, asking her for “selected” immigrants, “not agitators, revolutionaries, strikers, Communists, socialists, anarchists....” To wit the woman replies: “Enough. I know what you want—an immigration composed purely of bankers and archbishops.”¹⁶⁹

Creole nationalists and conservatives, in particular, reacted to the social and political turmoils by blaming foreigners and attempted to restrict their influx to the River Plate. The preparations and centennial celebrations of the River Plate’s struggle for independence from Spain crystalized well-entrenched Creole nationalist and anti-immigration sentiments. Eduardo A. Zimmermann establishes that by the start of the 1900s, European immigrants and especially Jews from Central and Eastern Europe were

¹⁶⁷ Oscar Terán, *Positivismo y nación. Con una selección de textos de J. M. Ramos Mejía, A. Alvarez, C. O. Bunge y José Ingenieros* (Buenos Aires: Puntosur Editores, 1987); as well as idem., “Ideas e intelectuales en la Argentina, 1880-1980.” In *Ideas en el siglo. Intelectuales y culturas en el siglo XX latinoamericano*. Oscar Terán, dir. (Tucumán, Argentina: Siglo XXI Argentina, 2004), 13-95, for background on Argentine intellectual history and selected writings of leading positivist thinkers at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s.

¹⁶⁸ For example, the cover page of the April 15, 1899 issue, “Siete mil gruesas de emigrantes.” *Caras y Caretas* 2, 28 (April 15, 1899). Also, “Villalobos,” “La jornada de ocho horas.” *Caras y Caretas* 2, 37 (June 17, 1899): n.p.

¹⁶⁹ “Ley de Residencia.” *Caras y Caretas* 6, 223 (Jan. 10, 1903): n.p. I have this source in my personal archive. The translation of text is by Carl Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism*, 112. The identification of the male character in the cartoon as President Roca is mine, however.

viewed as a threat to national society; Creole xenophobia and anti-Semitism were often synonymous for the generation of the centennial.

Immigrants and Jews were both often represented as criminals of all sorts and moral (and mental) degenerates.¹⁷⁰ Newly-founded positivist (mostly “Lombrosian”) criminology journals in Buenos Aires published countless articles on the etiology and putative criminal nature of said foreigners.¹⁷¹ Central European Jews were explicitly associated by elites and government officials with the so-called “white slave trade” in young girls to serve as prostitutes in the many brothels in and around the capital cities of the River Plate.¹⁷²

Creole nationalists were also perturbed by what they perceived as a lack of immigrant desire to assimilate to their adopted nations. Neither truly a “melting pot” nor a “tossed salad,” Creole cultural nationalists regarded foreign immigrants as vinegar or oil to their water.¹⁷³ For example, ultra-right nationalist Ricardo Rojas even feared that

¹⁷⁰ Eduardo A. Zimmermann, “Racial Ideas and Social Reform: Argentina, 1890-1916.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 72, 1 (Feb. 1992): 23-46.

¹⁷¹ Among these forensic publications of record were *Criminología Moderna*, *Archivos de Psiquiatría*, *Criminología y Ciencias Afines*, and *Archivos de Criminología, Medicina Legal y Psiquiatría*, all founded at the start of the twentieth century, corresponding to the surge of immigrants and the social problems associated with immigration. Cesare Lombroso was a late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Italian doctor who was one of the founders of “scientific” criminology. Eugenia Scarzanella, *Ni gringos, ni indios. Inmigración, criminalidad y racismo en Argentina, 1890-1940* (Quilmes, Argentina: Univ. Nacional de Quilmes, 2002). On the rise and importance of “scientific” criminology in Argentina in this period, consult Ricardo D. Salvatore, “Criminología positivista, reforma de prisiones y la cuestión social/obrera en Argentina.” In *La cuestión social en Argentina*, 127-58.

¹⁷² Donna J. Guy, *Sex & Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, the Family, and the Nation in Argentina*, 1st ed. (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1991).

¹⁷³ Gino Germani represents the leading academic advocate for the “melting pot” approach. Gino Germani, *La asimilación de los inmigrantes en la Argentina y el fenómeno del regreso en la inmigración reciente* (Buenos Aires: Univ. de Buenos Aires, Fac. de Filosofía y Letras, 1964).

the “excessive quantity” of Italians in Argentina might tempt them to seize power in the name of their homeland.¹⁷⁴ Creole nationalist concerns about foreigners resulted from a combination of factors then present among immigrant communities. First, a high number of European immigrants returned to their homelands after earning enough money in Argentina and Uruguay (they were literally called *golondrinas* or swallows, migratory birds).¹⁷⁵ Second, even those who stayed behind often did not seek out naturalization; Solberg points out that as late as 1914, only some 33,219 Argentine immigrants, accounting for approximately only 2.25 percent of the total foreign-born male population, were naturalized as Argentine citizens.¹⁷⁶ Third, foreign immigrants often founded their own schools, maintaining their native languages and cultures, established sports and social clubs and mutual aid societies, and preserved and passed along their own nationalist traditions and rituals from back home. A *Caras y Caretas* cartoon from December 1908 lampoons Jewish schools teaching in Russian to its students, for

Mark D. Szuchman criticizes Germani’s thesis in both his *Mobility and Integration in Urban Argentina: Córdoba in the Liberal Era* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1980); and idem., “The Limits of the Melting Pot in Urban Argentina: Marriage and Integration in Córdoba, 1869-1909.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 57, 1 (Feb. 1977): 24-90.

¹⁷⁴ Ricardo Rojas, *La restauración nacionalista* (Buenos Aires: Min. de Justicia e Instrucción Pública, 1909), 469-71. For Rojas, significantly for this dissertation, nationality and collective memory are mutually constitutive: “La nacionalidad deber ser la conciencia de una personalidad colectiva. . . , y la memoria o conciencia de un yo constante.” I.e., nationality is the conscience of a collective personality, the memory or conscience of a “constant I” (collectively “we”). Rojas, *La restauración nacionalista*, 42. See Earl Glauert, “Ricardo Rojas and the Emergence of Argentine Cultural Nationalism.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 43, 1 (Feb. 1963): 1-13.

¹⁷⁵ See Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise*, 60.

¹⁷⁶ Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism*, 42.

instance.¹⁷⁷ Vicente G. Quesada complained in his memoirs about Buenos Aires becoming literally a “Tower of Babel,” where the profusion and confusion of tongues was such that even Creoles spoke to each other in French!¹⁷⁸ Afro-Argentine Congressional orderly Mamerto Fidel Quinteros recalled that European immigrants and their descendants in early-twentieth-century Argentina suffered from an appalling lack of patriotism and failure to meet their civic duties, moreover.¹⁷⁹ Legendary black poet and folk singer Gabino Ezeiza also commented on “cosmopolitanism” and the opportunities and freedoms generously given by his country to foreigners and their often un-patriotic responses and ungratefulness.¹⁸⁰

Lilia Ana Bertoni documents the Italian and other foreign communities’ displays of their own flags and other patriotic symbols, even during Argentine national holidays.¹⁸¹ For example, poet, essayist, and philanthropist Delfina Bunge de Gálvez, wife of novelist and historian Manuel Gálvez and sister of sociologist and essayist Octavio Bunge, recorded in her diary the nationalist backlash during centennial

¹⁷⁷ “La escuela judía en Entre Ríos.” *Caras y Caretas* 11, 518 (Dec. 5, 1908): n.p.

¹⁷⁸ Vicente G. Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*. Isidoro J. Ruiz Moreno, prelim. study by and ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciudad Argentina, 1998), 75.

¹⁷⁹ Quinteros, *Memorias de un negro del Congreso*, 41.

¹⁸⁰ Gabino Ezeiza, “Cosmopolitanismo” (1905). *Before the Tango. Argentina’s Folk Tradition, 1905-1936*. “Harlequin” CD. Product of Archivos de Música Antiga/Portugal. Distributed by Interstate Music Ltd., Sussex, England, 1998.

¹⁸¹ Lilia Ana Bertoni, “Construir la nacionalidad: heroes, estatuas y fiestas patrias, 1887-1891.” *Boletín del Inst. de Historia Argentina y Americana “Dr. E. Ravignani,”* Third Series, 5 (First Semester 1992): 83-87. Domingo Sarmiento, for example, denounced foreign flag waiving during national holidays in “La Babel de banderas,” originally published as an editorial in Chile’s *El Diario* on January 3, 1888. In D. F. Sarmiento, *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 36 (*Condición del extranjero en América*) (Buenos Aires: Imp. y Litografía “Mariano Moreno,” 1900), 296-301.

celebrations against foreign radical flag-waving: "... en casa, en la calle, en casa del dentista no se habla de otra cosa.... [L]as banderas rojas arrancadas y reemplazadas por las blancas y celestes..." ("... at home, in the streets, in the dentist's office no one spoke of anything else.... The red flags torn down and replaced by the white and sky blue ones...").¹⁸² Also, foreign heroes often competed with national icons for monumental space in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Buenos Aires, further agitating conservatives and nationalists. For example, Italians resident in the capital city raised monies for and inaugurated a monument to their own national hero Guisepppe Garibaldi in what is today the "Plaza Italia" in downtown Buenos Aires in 1904.¹⁸³ Nationalist counter-reactions to this perceived patriotic slight were adamant and took the form of properly nationalistic festivals.¹⁸⁴ In addition to the national festivals cited by Bertoni, Hipólito Yrigoyen established during his presidency October 12 as "El Día de la Raza" ("Day of the [Hispanic] Race") in Argentina to commemorate the nation's Creole, Iberian

¹⁸² Quoted in Horacio Salas, *El centenario: la Argentina en su hora más gloriosa* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1996), 105.

¹⁸³ Patricia Andrea Dosio, "El monumento a Garibaldi en Buenos Aires (1882-1904)." *Iberoamericana* 10, 40 (2010): 63-84. The idea for a monument to the memory of Garibaldi happened the day after his death on June 3, 1882, in the "Circolo Italiano" of Buenos Aires. Dosio, "El monumento a Garibaldi," 74. Chueco praised the monuments erected to honor the memory of "hombres ilustres nacidos en otros países" ("illustrious men born in other countries") with enhancing the esthetic beauty of Buenos Aires. Chueco, *La República Argentina*, 641. Many compatriots, however, disagreed with this pro-European opinion.

¹⁸⁴ Bertoni, "Construir la nacionalidad," 83-87. For more on public or nationalist rituals in Buenos Aires, see Alejandro Grimson, Mirta Amati, and Kaori Kodama, "La nación escenificada por el Estado. Una comparación de rituales patrios." In *Pasiones nacionales. Política y cultura en Brasil y Argentina*. Alejandro Grimson, ed. (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2007), 418-23.

legacy.¹⁸⁵ Debates in the Argentine Chamber of Deputies and Senate and in the pages of the two major news organs, *La Prensa* and *La Nación*, bear witness to the intensity of Creole nationalist sentiment in this period over and against such foreign collective remembrances of their homelands.¹⁸⁶

At least one European former resident of Buenos Aires recorded his memories of living in Argentina in the midst of nationalist celebrations in 1910. Genaro Bevioni was an Italian journalist who spent some time in Buenos Aires and travelled around Argentina in 1910. He experienced first-hand the centennial and the attendant social and political problems. Bevioni was highly critical of Argentines, their national character, and politics. For example, he denounced the rampant nepotism in Argentine politics, in one case observing that sixteen of the eighteen provincial deputies for La Rioja province in 1910 were members of one clan, who had made politics a family business.¹⁸⁷ He also rejected the notion that Buenos Aires was a cosmopolitan city on par with the great urban capitals of Europe. For Bevioni, Buenos Aires was a somewhat dirty and unattractive city, with poor streets and worse lighting. However, he also criticizes as gaudy (“triumfo

¹⁸⁵ Alejandro Falco, “Estado, nación y nacionalidad en la Argentina, 1887-1910.” *Imago Mundi* 21, 55 (March 4, 2008): 10.

¹⁸⁶ Dosio, “El monumento a Garibaldi,” 74-79. Consistent with Creole nationalism’s fondness for its Iberian roots, however, Spanish monuments were appreciated and promoted. See Marina Aguerre, “Lazos de bronce y mármol. España y la Argentina en los monumentos de la ciudad de Buenos Aires.” In *La memoria compartida. España y la Argentina en la construcción de un imaginario cultural (1898-1950)*. Yayo Aznar and Diana B. Wechsler, ed. (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2005), 49-76. Ironically, the “Law of the Centennial of the May Revolution” (1910) legislated a monument honoring Spain be erected in the “Plaza de Mayo” in Buenos Aires to commemorate Argentine independence. “Ley del Centenario de la Revolución de Mayo,” in *Documentos para la enseñanza de la historia argentina*, vol. 2, 159.

¹⁸⁷ Genaro Bevioni, *Argentina 1910. Balance y memoria* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Leviatán, 1995), 56.

del mal gusto”) the “cantidad fabulosa de lamparitas eléctricas” (“fabulous amounts of electric lamps”) put in the “Plaza de Mayo” for the centennial.¹⁸⁸ He further makes the almost incredible assertion that sculpture in the city was virtually “unknown” (“desconocida”), but immediately after praises the wisdom of some national leaders to call on Europeans, especially Italians, to design and erect their finest monuments.¹⁸⁹

Bevioni goes on to diminish and denigrate Argentine military feats as “inflated” and made up of “fables,” such that when compared to Europe’s “glorious history,” Argentina’s martial exploits seem “juegos de niños” (“child’s play”).¹⁹⁰ While the Italian writer acknowledges the openness of Argentina in originally welcoming European immigrants at the end of the nineteenth century, he nevertheless laments later nationalist attempts to limit newer arrivals and denounces attacks on resident foreigners. For example, Bevioni documents the “drunken” cry of the Creole masses of “Down with the

¹⁸⁸ Other alien residents shared Bevioni’s sentiments, especially denouncing Buenos Aires’s poor streets, lighting, and sanitation. Needless to say, however, not all foreign observers were as rude to their hosts as Bevioni. See the compilation of opinions and observations in García de D’Agostino et al., comps. *Imagen de Buenos Aires a través de los viajeros 1870-1910* (Buenos Aires: Univ. de Buenos Aires, 1981).

¹⁸⁹ Bevioni, *Argentina 1910*, 21-23. This observation by Bevioni is patently absurd in light of the “estatuamania” (“statue-” or “monument-mania”) that befell Argentina in the decade or so leading up to the centennial and indeed beyond. See Dosio, “El monumento a Garibaldi,” 63, for the use of the term “estatuamania.” Bertoni documents private and public initiatives to erect monuments to commemorate past heroes and events. Lilia Ana Bertoni, *Patriotas, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas. La construcción de la nacionalidad argentina a fines del siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), 103-06. Also, “Los monumentos conmemorativos,” *La Nación*, March 4, 1923, 22, for a piece on the importance of national monuments in Argentina in the first few decades of the twentieth century.

¹⁹⁰ Bevioni, *Argentina 1910*, 90. One has to seriously question Bevioni’s motivations for downplaying Argentina’s military history in the year it was commemorating its independence from a former European imperial power. In addition, Bevioni’s aggrandizement of European warfare seems curiously timed on the eve of World War I.

foreigners!” (“¡Abajo los extranjeros!”¹⁹¹); moreover, he blames the xenophobic sentiments of the masses on the centennial and its accompanying jingoism, which culminated in the desecration of the Italian flag in the northernmost province of Jujuy.¹⁹² Needless to say, Bevioni’s own acerbic testimonial would have provided plenty of fodder for Creole cultural nationalists bent on defending their own national heritage and excoriating foreigners and immigrants as anti-patriotic.

While not always in agreement with each other, or doing so in the same vein, Creole intellectuals in the fin-de-siècle River Plate appealed to nationalism and nostalgia as antidotes to what were regarded as foreign modernizing projects, including or especially overseas immigration. Even sociologist José Ingenieros, himself a socialist, published a series of editorials in *Caras y Caretas* in late 1914 and early 1915 in support of Argentine nationalism. Although he denounced nativist xenophobia, Ingenieros nonetheless appealed to patriotism, as did other Argentine socialists of the day.¹⁹³

At the other end of the ideological spectrum was conservative, avant-garde novelist Ricardo Güiraldes, author of the nostalgic paean to the gaucho, *Don Segundo*

¹⁹¹ One Creole nationalist writer records another version of this saying: “Inmigrantes abajo! ¡Inmigrantes, nada más que inmigrantes!” (“Down with the immigrants! Immigrants, nothing but immigrants!”) Luis Pascarella, *El conventillo* (Buenos Aires: La Lectura, 1918). In *Testimonios culturales argentinos*, 42.

¹⁹² Bevioni, *Argentina 1910*, 85-87, 93, 115, 117, 126-27. Bevioni points out that in Buenos Aires, Jujuy was said to be a “town of gauchos and Indians.” Bevioni, *Argentina 1910*, 127. Several other foreigners at the time commented on the patriotic expressions in Argentina in general and Buenos Aires in particular circa the 1910 centennial. See D’Agostino et al., comps. *Imagen de Buenos Aires a través de los viajeros*, e.g., 53-54.

¹⁹³ In order of publication, José Ingenieros, “Patria y cultura.” *Caras y Caretas* 17, 840 (Nov. 7, 1917): n.p.; idem., “El nuevo nacionalismo.” *Caras y Caretas* 17, 841 (Nov. 14, 1914): n.p.; idem., “Filosofía de la argentinidad.” *Caras y Caretas* 17, 842 (Nov. 21, 1914): n.p.; idem.,

Sombra (1926). In his poem “Al hombre que pasó,” Güiraldes bemoans the disappearance and subsequent forgetting of the hero of the Pampas: “Pero hoy el gaucho, vencido,/galopando hacia el olvido,/se perdió.”¹⁹⁴ Thus, in their respective invocations of nationalism and nostalgia, many Creole intellectuals, regardless of their ideologies, at the turn of the nineteenth century thereby opened a small, albeit significant, space in the national imaginary for memories of subalterns, including the gaucho (and, as will be shown, Afro-Platines), and extolled their positive roles in the pasts and heritage of Argentina and Uruguay.¹⁹⁵

Interestingly, in some respects, the fin-de-siècle xenophobia and anti-cosmopolitanism in at least certain conservative Creole nationalist circles harkened back to colonial times or, especially, the days of Juan Manuel de Rosas. Even in colonial times, European immigrants monopolized the best artisanal jobs and excluded locals, which was resented by them. This practice survived into the early-national period. As

“Solidaridad.” *Caras y Caretas* 18, 850 (Jan. 16, 1915): n.p.; idem., “La tradición argentina.” *Caras y Caretas* 18, 856 (Feb. 27, 1915): n.p.

¹⁹⁴ Ricardo Güiraldes, “Al hombre que pasó.” In *Testimonios culturales argentinos*, 43.

¹⁹⁵ Once more, and at the risk of redundancy, one should not confuse white Creole nostalgia with anything like an endorsement of racial egalitarianism. These men shared the racial prejudices of their day. For example, both conservative intellectual Joaquín V. González and socialist José Ingenieros supported eugenics and the elimination of “inferior ethnic elements” from Argentina’s population. Joaquín V. González, “El problema de las razas.” In *Obras completas de Joaquín V. González*, vol.11 (Buenos Aires: Imp. Mercantil, 1935), 392-97; José Ingenieros, “La formación de una raza argentina.” *Revista de Filosofía, Cultura, Ciencias, Educación* 1, 2 (1915): 464-83. Ingenieros’ anti-black racism was particularly virulent. Ingenieros asserted that the genetic inferiority of blacks justified slavery in the New World. He even associated peoples of African ancestry with prehistoric “ape-men,” thereby rendering them incapable of exercising or enjoying modern civil rights. For Ingenieros, therefore, the only solution to the black problem was their extinction. José Ingenieros, *Crónicas de viaje, 1905-1906* (Buenos Aires: R. J. Roggero & Cía., 1951 [1908]), 185, 187-88.

for Rosas, however, it was clear that he and other provincial *caudillos* favored natives, gauchos, and Afro-Argentines, and resented foreigners and foreign influences over national culture. As documented in Chapter four, the populist Rosas ordered his wife and daughter to favor Afro-Argentines and Creole laborers with material gifts and attention.¹⁹⁶ A verse from *payador* (folk singer) Félix Hidalgo laments government corruption favoring immigrants: “Pero nosotros, los criollos/quedamos siempre olvidados/y sin protección ninguna/vivimos siempre aporriaos.”¹⁹⁷ Afro-Argentines in particular had their traditional labor roles usurped by European immigrants, who were said to do the same work for less pay. For instance, an 1876 Carnival song bemoaned: “Now there are no black bottle dealers,/Nor carriers of loads,/Nor black fruit vendors/Nor fishermen any more;/Because of all those Neopolitans/We can’t even sell our pastries,/And now they even want to rob us/Of our jobs as housepainters.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Kevin Kelly, “Rosas and the Restoration of Order through Populism.” *In Revolution and Restoration: The Rearrangement of Power in Argentina, 1776-1860*. Mark D. Szuchman and Jonathan C. Brown, eds. (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994), 217

¹⁹⁷ Félix Hidalgo, “Milonga cantada por un santiagueño que hace años reside en Buenos Aires.” In *El discurso criollista en la formación de la Argentina moderna*, 164. Hidalgo claims the Creoles are forgotten by the state and are left unprotected in the face of immigration.

¹⁹⁸ Horacio Jorge Becco, comp., *Negros y morenos en el cancionero rioplatense* (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Argentina de Americanistas, 1953), 33. The translation is from George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 183. There is some debate about the provenance of this song. Was it sung by actual Afro-Argentine performers or rather by Creole performers or so-called “falsos negros” (white minstrels in blackface)? If the former, the lyrics can then be interpreted as a cry for economic justice or as a complaint by Afro-Argentines themselves against labor discrimination. If the latter, the song then stands as a nostalgic testimony by some white elites to the vanishing black population of Buenos Aires. On blackface Carnival minstrels in Argentina, see John Charles Chasteen, “Black Kings, Blackface Carnival, and the Nineteenth-Century Origins of the Tango.” In *Latin American Popular Culture: An Introduction*, first SR Books ed. William H. Beezley and Linda A. Curcio-Nagy, eds. (Oxford: Scholarly Resources, 2004), ch. 3.

Furthermore, Creole laborers resented the arrogance of European immigrants, as well as their exclusion from mandatory military service.

The already discussed labor activism, the rise of radical political parties, and the political involvement of especially second-generation immigrants after the promulgation of the law on universal male suffrage, prompted conservative governing elites and Creole nationalists to not only reject cosmopolitanism, but also to restore Rosas and other strongmen in the national memory.¹⁹⁹ They also effectively inverted Sarmiento's binary of civilization and barbarism; whereas for (early) Sarmiento civilization was represented by all things European (and North American) and barbarism by the mixed-race natives, for later writers such as Manuel Gálvez, Ricardo Rojas, and Leopoldo Lugones, the gaucho and the Creole were to now be the basis of Argentina's true civilization, and not the cosmopolitan European culture so admired by earlier liberal elites. Gálvez in particular warned about a barbarous "gringocracia" (*gringo* is slang for foreigner)

¹⁹⁹ Recall the point made in note number four of Chapter five that by the early 1930s conservative Rosas apologists rejected the liberal or "official" historiography on the strongman and later founded the "Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos Juan Manuel de Rosas" to promote their revisionist views of Rosas and promote his memory. The social remembrance of Rosas coincided with Lt. General José Félix Uriburu's right-wing military coup of 1930, effectively ending Argentina's era of republican democratic government and ushering in "Argentina's tragic decade." Praetorianism paved the way for Juan D. Perón's fascist regime from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s. At this point in their respective political histories, Argentina and Uruguay part ways. Uruguay would remain a stable democracy until the 1970s. Russell H. Fitzgibbon, *Uruguay: Portrait of a Democracy* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966). Fernando López-Alves, however, maintains that Argentina's strong military tendencies differed from Uruguay's emphasis on autonomy and therefore affected state formation and government in each country from the start of independence. Fernando López-Alves, *State Formation and Democracy in Latin America, 1810-1900* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2000), ch. 2, "Gauchos, Ranchers, and State Autonomy in Uruguay, 1811-1890"; ch. 4, "A Stronger State and Urban Military: Argentina, 1810-1890."

threatening Argentina's social order and national sovereignty.²⁰⁰ For Ricardo Rojas, moreover, the Creole Argentine was undivided by race and united in their common cause of patriotism: "... de suerte que indios, negros, cholos, gauchos y mulatos, todos marcharon con el criollo burgués contra la oligarquía exótica—fundidos ... en ejército, ... en pueblo, ... en nación...."²⁰¹ Here, Rojas brags that all the native residents of the country, regardless of race or class, are united in the effort against a foreign power, fused as one people or nation.²⁰²

"La Ley Avellaneda representa el tiempo del 'extranjero ideal,'" intimates Ana Paula Penchaszadeh. "Luego vendrá el momento del 'extranjero real y sospechado' con las Leyes de Residencia (1902) y Defensa Social (1910)," she summarizes.²⁰³ Along these lines, then, Susana Villavicencio and Ana Penchaszadeh point out that the very concept of citizenship in this period shifted from one of inclusion to one of exclusion of

²⁰⁰ Galen Joseph, "Taking Race Seriously: Whiteness in Argentina's National and Transnational Imaginary." *Identities* 7, 3 (2000): 343. See also Graciela Ferrás, "La figura del extranjero en el proyecto político-cultural de las élites." In *Los contornos de la ciudadanía*, ch 6.

²⁰¹ Ricardo Rojas, *Blasón de Plata* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1946), 119. He goes on to write: "La libertad hispanoamericana y la constitución de nuestras nacionalidades no fue cuestión de razas...; fraternizaron en la obra todos los nativos, ya fuesen blancos de origen europeo como Alvear, semitas africanos como Falucho, o cobrizos indígenas." Rojas argues that Latin-American independence was not a matter of race, but rather a multiracial affair uniting white, black, and Indian. Note the reference to the memory of "Falucho," moreover. Rojas, *Blasón de Plata*, 124.

²⁰² Graciela Liliana Ferrás, "Ricardo Rojas: mestizaje y alteridad en la construcción de la nacionalidad argentina." *Revista Sociedad y Economía*, no. 18 (2010): 9-36.

²⁰³ Penchaszadeh, "Ciudadanos, nacionales, habitantes y extranjeros," 240. The "ideal immigrant" was imagined by the "Avellaneda Law" welcoming foreigners to Argentina, whereas the criminally suspect immigrant prompted the "Residence Law" and "Social Defense Law."

the foreigner in Argentina.²⁰⁴ Whereas for a previous generation of Argentine intellectuals and cultural nation builders, Indians, gauchos, and blacks were represented as a threat to the Creole ruling class, and were therefore represented and remembered in that era's foundational canon as uncivilized and outside the imagined community, by the late 1800s a new cohort of Creole writers were socialized under vastly different social and political circumstances. Subaltern minorities were believed vanished or assimilated into national society by Creole elites in the fin de siècle.

For especially conservative elites in this period, therefore, the threat of the internal "Other" (blacks, Indians, gauchos) gave way to fears of a foreign or external "Other," namely, immigrants (especially political radicals, criminals, and Jews). Xenophobia and anti-Semitism coincided with, and indeed contributed to, a surge of cultural nationalism at the end of the 1800s in Argentina (and Uruguay), reaching a climax with the centennial celebrations of 1910.²⁰⁵ In turn, this climax of nationalist and anti-immigrant sentiments would also create a social environment favorable for the reimagining and remembering of previously denigrated subalterns, including or especially blacks in the River Plate.

Conclusion

The corporate consciousness of the Generation of 1880 and other Creole intellectuals in the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century River Plate, and, consequently, their

²⁰⁴ Susana Villavicencio and Ana Penchaszadeh, "El (im)posible ciudadano." In *Los contornos de la ciudadanía*, 186.

²⁰⁵ Solberg correctly avers that the Creole intellectuals' conception of nationalism in this period was cultural and essentially nostalgic. Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism*, 143.

collective memory of the period, was shaped by those events and movements just outlined. The Río de la Plata was rapidly and often violently thrust into modernity after the advent of national consolidation from 1860 through 1880. The modern liberal project, despite its promise of national progress, however, did not meet with unabashed success in Argentina in the late 1800s and early 1900s (although Uruguay fared better under its own liberal leaders). For example, neither economic nor political developments were even, and social unrest only added to the angst of the Creole ruling class, especially in Argentina. Creole nationalists, moreover, sensed that national culture and heritage were threatened by liberalizing forces in the spheres of politics, economics, society, and culture.

In the minds of many nationalist leaders of the era, the foreign “Other” or immigrant was the main threat to social and political stability in the region in the last few decades of the nineteenth century and the first few of the twentieth.²⁰⁶ These nationalists, regardless of their philosophical or political orientations, generally condemned European immigrants as moral degenerates, criminals, and radical agents provocateurs. Foreign nationals were seen as opportunists who wanted to make a quick buck (at the expense of local labor) and return to their homelands, as shiftless miscreants or malcontents, as criminal masterminds and Mafiosi, as leftist agitators, or, perhaps worse of all, as anti-Argentine, not wanting to be assimilated and/or nationalized and maintaining patriotic

²⁰⁶ Carlos H. Waisman discusses the “inclusive” versus “segmental” (or exclusive) definitions of the “Other” in the case of twentieth-century Argentina in “The Dynamics of National Identity Frames: The Case of Argentina in the Twentieth Century.” In *Constructing Collective Identities and Shaping Public Spheres: Latin American Paths*. Luis Roninger and Mario Sznajder, eds. (Brighton, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 1998), ch. 7.

loyalties to their former homelands. The resultant xenophobia and advent of Creole cultural nationalism manifested itself both in the anti-immigrant and anti-radical Residence and Social Defense Laws and the rise to prominence of the ultra-right-wing “Argentine Patriotic League,” founded during the “Tragic Week” and presided over by Manuel Carlés (professor at Buenos Aires’ War College).²⁰⁷ The cultural construction of national identity was also aided by the literary and artistic production of the Generation of 1880 and other *platense* (River Plate) intellectuals.²⁰⁸ A key component of this surging Creole nationalism in literature and art in Argentina and Uruguay during the late 1800s and early 1900s, furthermore, consisted of nostalgic remembrances of not only gauchos such as Martín Fierro, Juan Moreira, and Don Segundo Sombra but also certain

²⁰⁷ In fact, the Argentine military would become a major promoter of conservative nationalism in the early twentieth century. E.g., Lt. Colonel Carlos Smith’s ode to the Argentine military, dedicated to his countrymen, *¡Al pueblo de mi patria!* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos del Estado Mayor del Ejército, 1918) was intended to rally the people both behind the military and the Argentine state (seen as indivisibly united) and to promote the national remembrance of Argentina’s martial glories. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that both strongman Rosas and Afro-Argentine military heroes would be commemorated in conservative nationalist and military circles in this period. In addition, mandatory military service, beginning in 1901, with the promulgation of the “Ley Ricchieri,” was viewed as a key element in nationalizing the population. General Pablo Ricchieri was then President Roca’s Minister of War. See Riccardo Forte, “El nacionalismo militar argentino: proyecto y realización entre la Ley Ricchieri de 1901 y el golpe de estado de 1943.” In *Fuerzas militares en Iberoamérica. Siglos XVIII y XIX*. Juan Ortiz Escamilla, coord. (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2005), 381-403; idem., “Génesis del nacionalismo militar: participación política y orientación ideológica de las fuerzas armadas argentinas al comienzo del siglo XX.” *Signos Históricos* 1 (July-Dec. 1999): 103-35. Not only twentieth-century conservatives, but even nineteenth-century liberal Domingo Sarmiento also regarded military service as a kind of schooling in patriotism. See his *De la educación popular* in vol. 11 of his *Obras completas* (Buenos Aires: Luz del Día, 1948-56).

²⁰⁸ On the nineteenth-century literary (re-)production of nationality, see Juan-Daniel Ramírez, “Constitución literaria de la identidad nacional. El caso de Argentina.” In *Memoria colectiva e identidad nacional*. Alberto Rosa et al., eds. (Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 2000), ch. 13.

Afro-Argentines. As will be discussed in the next several chapters, blacks in both Argentina and Uruguay were thereby reinserted, however symbolically or paternalistically, by conservative cultural nationalists and Creole intellectuals into the respective national imaginaries on both sides of the River Plate by the late nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 8

“¡Pobres negros!”—“Criollos memoriosos” and the Nostalgia of Blackness in the Río de la Plata, Middle to Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

“Dentro de pocos años más, la ola de cosmopolitanismo los habrá absorbido por completo, como a una gota de tinta caída en el océano. ¡Pobres negros!” A. Taillard, *Nuestro antiguo Buenos Aires. Como era y como es desde la época colonial hasta la actualidad. Su asombroso progreso edilicio, trajes, costumbres, etc.* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Casa Jacobo Peuser, 1927), 357.

Introduction

This chapter explores how the largely negative mid-nineteenth-century representations and remembrances of Afro-Argentines by the Generation of 1837 gradually transformed by the *fin de siècle*. This occurred as a new generation of more conservative Creole intellectuals in the River Plate, first introduced in the last chapter, appealed to the nostalgia of blackness, part of a rising tide of cultural nationalism over against European cosmopolitanism and immigration.¹ By the second half of the nineteenth century in the Río de la Plata, moreover, a black intelligentsia, that included editorialists for the Afro-Argentine press of the day, poets, and artists, also lent their talents to the then burgeoning Creole nationalist movement. White and black Creole intellectuals, writers, and artists thus collaborated in fomenting favorable social remembrances of Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans. Such social remembrances

¹ David William Foster provides an important survey of this intellectual cohort. David William Foster, *The Argentine Generation of 1880: Ideology and Cultural Texts* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1990). See also Adolfo Prieto, *La generación del 80. La imaginación* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1983).

became key sites of cultural nationalism and resistance to the perceived social and political threats attributed to European immigration to Argentina and Uruguay at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries.

The often warm representations and remembrances of blacks in the River Plate by Creole nationalists were consistent with anthropologist Renato Rosaldo's understanding of "imperialist nostalgia" for the disappeared or the vanishing "Other." Alongside this "mood of nostalgia" among elites, argues Rosaldo, a "white man's burden" to civilize the "savage other" also occurs. However, when this so-called "civilizing process" takes place, it destabilizes "traditional" patterns of life and those very agents of change experience such disconcerting social transformations "as if they were personal losses."² In the case of the River Plate and its elite agents of change, the traumatic social, political, and economic transformations of the late nineteenth century precipitated by modernity and liberal government policies gradually generated over the course of several decades a prevalent "mood of nostalgia." It was precisely this nostalgia for a traditional past, just then viewed by Creole nationalists as threatened or already extinct, which Afro-Argentines embodied. As will be documented, as part of this generalized mood of nostalgia, Afro-Platines received especial consideration from "criollos memoriosos" or Creole memorialists, both white and black.

² Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia." *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 107-08. Renato Rosaldo posits that agents of colonialism (or other social elites) mourn for what they themselves have destroyed (or silenced and relegated to the margins of society). In Rosaldo's development, these agents "often display nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was 'traditionally'." This was very much the case among conservative Creole elites in the River Plate at the end of the nineteenth century, as will be demonstrated in their writings and, in the case of Pedro Figari, art.

Although certainly not all—witness José Ingenieros and Carlos Octavio Bunge—by the late 1800s a sizeable cohort of this generation of Platine intellectuals nonetheless rejected the then regnant positivism and racial ideologies of their predecessors, thereby making room in the national imaginary for mixed-race gauchos and Afro-Argentines as (albeit subaltern) members of the nation-state.³ In this chapter, I will first look at the sundry memorializations of blackness in the cultural productions of a talented group of white Creole writers and artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who worked from their own reminiscences and those of others within their social group. Their literary and artistic works subsequently doubled as sites of national memory about Afro-Platines for their compatriots. Then, the chapter examines the historical remembrances about their own race and their importance to the republics of Argentina and Uruguay by a leading cohort of black Platine popular poets and intellectuals, especially the *payadores* (folk singers) “Ansina” and Gabino Ezeiza. Sources or sites of remembrances for this chapter include memoirs, popular songs or *cancioneros*, learned poetry, *costumbrista* drawings and paintings (romantic and folkloric depictions of the quotidian, mannerisms, customs, etc.) rendering Afro-Platines. Newspaper and magazine articles from the period also serve as additional evidence of the “mood of nostalgia” among white and black Creole memorialists.

³ On race, racial ideologies, and policies in Argentina in the late 1800s and early 1900s, see Eduardo A. Zimmermann, “Racial Ideas and Social Reform: Argentina, 1890-1916.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 72, 1 (Feb. 1992): 23-46. Aline Helg traces the shift in racial ideology in Argentina from the end of the nineteenth to the start of the twentieth century, precisely from “whitening” discourses to xenophobia, in “Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction.” In *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, 2nd pub. Richard Graham, ed. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1992), ch. 3.

**“Cosas de negros” (“Things Black”): *Criollos (blancos) Memoriosos*, Late
Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries**

The writings (and art) of the Generation of 1880 and other Creole intellectuals in Argentina (and Uruguay) expanded the national canon beyond the narrow boundary established previously by the Generation of 1837. Such narratives further re-imagined and somewhat expanded the ideas of the nation and the national. As Juan-Daniel Ramírez Garrido intimates, canonical (i.e., historical and literary) texts constitute powerful instruments for inventing the nation and defining the national.⁴ Going beyond Ramírez, however, literary critic Adolfo Prieto emphasizes Creole discourse as fundamental to the formation of modern Argentina and the *argentinización* (“Argentinization”) of the population.⁵ Creole nationalism increasingly became identified with “Argentinization” itself in the fin de siècle. This Creole nationalism also unabashedly appealed to historical memory in its foundational texts (and art) and linked it explicitly to national identity. Finally, as will be established, in many cases, these “criollos memoriosos” and cultural nationalists vindicated the memory of the black in the River Plate as an expression of both “imperialist nostalgia” for the vanished/vanishing “Other” and anti-cosmopolitanism.⁶ Examples of this appear in various sources,

⁴ Juan-Daniel Ramírez Garrido, “Constitución literaria de la identidad nacional: el caso de Argentina.” In *Memoria colectiva e identidad nacional*. Alberto Rosa Rivero et al., eds. (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2000), 338. For Ramírez, Sarmiento’s *Facundo* is the key text in the Argentine national imaginary.

⁵ Adolfo Prieto, *El discurso criollista en la formación de la Argentina moderna* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1988), 183.

⁶ Cf., Dolores Aponte-Ramos, “Cuando La Pampa se colorea: los negros en la Argentina decimónica.” *Revista Iberoamericana* 65, 188-189 (July-Dec. 1999): 733-39. I freely

including folklore, which thus serves as both an example and point of entry for nostalgic remembrances of Afro-Platines in the fin de siècle.

Creole intellectuals often turned to folklore in their works as mnemonic sites and to also promote a sense of *argentinidad* or national identity in the River Plate. These traditional sources of oral history and popular culture gave voice to the multi-racial quality of Creole identity in the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century River Plate.⁷ Carlos Vega, the founder of modern Argentine musicology, however, seems mistaken when during the 1930s he eliminated the African component from the national Creole *cancionero* or folk songs and poetry.⁸ As both Ricardo Salvatore and Ariel de la Fuente have brilliantly demonstrated, folk traditions preserved in oral history and collective memory, document the social and political tensions among competing factions during the era of civil wars of the first half of the nineteenth century and are key resources for historians of the period. Furthermore, as Salvatore and de la Fuente also document, these folk traditions testify to the historical importance of Afro-Argentine representations and

appropriate and adapt the term “criollos memoriosos” from Daniel Schávelzon, *Buenos Aires negra. Arqueología histórica de una ciudad silenciada* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2003), 41-49.

⁷ Ezequiel Adamovsky maintains the “criollismo” of certain thinkers patronized by the Argentine state leading to the centennial in 1910 functioned to strengthen national identity. Adamovsky also argues that “lo criollo” (“the Creole”) entailed not only differentiation from the European and cosmopolitan but an acceptance of the ethnic-racial descent as well. Ezequiel Adamovsky, “La dimensión étnico-racial de las identidades de clase en la Argentina. El caso de Cipriano Reyes y una hipótesis sobre ‘la negritud’ no diaspórica.” In *Cartografías afrolatinoamericanas: perspectivas situadas para análisis transfronterizos*. Florencia Guzmán and Lea Geler, eds. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2013), 96.

⁸ Carlos Vega, “Eliminación del factor africano en la formación del cancionero criollo.” *Cursos y Conferencias*, no. 7 (1936): 765-79. The national music institution in Buenos Aires bears the name of Carlos Vega. Vegas repeatedly sought to eliminate from national collective memory all references to the Afro-Argentine.

remembrances as part of the emerging national canon of popular cultural expressions among both elites and common sectors alike.⁹ Recently, studies of Argentine folklore have further documented this fact.

For example, Oscar Chamosa has in the last years researched the importance of the folklore movement in Argentina as part of the politics of Creole nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century. Chamosa documents the key role played by cultural nationalists, including Joaquín V. González and Ricardo Rojas, in associating the Creole (including the Afro-Argentine) and the national in the efforts to institutionalize folklore within the Argentine public school curriculum. According to Chamosa, “criollismo” was the precursor of the folklore movement “by familiarizing Argentine elites with the idea that Argentine nationality was rooted in rural culture.”¹⁰ In neighboring Uruguay, moreover, the same wave of cultural nationalism and interest in both the folkloric and the rural swept that nation and was promoted by especially conservative (Blanco Party) politicians and intellectual elites in the early 1900s. For instance, the Buenos Aires popular magazine *Caras y Caretas* reported on and praised a large congress of different

⁹ Ricardo D. Salvatore, *Wandering Paysanos: State Order and Subaltern Experience in Buenos Aires during the Rosas Era* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003); Ariel de la Fuente, *Children of Facundo: Caudillo and Gaucho Insurgency during the Argentine State-Formation Process (La Rioja, 1853-1870)* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2000). Both Salvatore and de la Fuente record the African voice within their sources.

¹⁰ Oscar Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement: Sugar Elites, Criollo Workers, and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism, 1900-1955* (Tucson: The Univ. of Arizona Press, 2010), 25, 40-41, 45. Chamosa presents “criollismo” as resting on a romanticized rendering of the past, which is to say, nostalgia. Chamosa, *The Argentine Folklore Movement*, 24. Ironically, even though Chamosa has written extensively about Afro-Argentines, blacks are mostly absent from this study of national folklore, largely because his focus is on folklore in Argentina’s countryside and not its cities.

Uruguayan Creole and patriotic associations, both rural and urban, held in Montevideo in late 1907.¹¹ For multiple white Creole memorialists in both Argentina and Uruguay, then, the black in the River Plate served an essential folkloric (and thus nostalgic) function in their respective national imaginaries.

Early folklorists in the region compiled legends and folk tales from throughout the River Plate and among different ethnic and social groups. Folklore by and about blacks proved a key element in the Banda Oriental's (i.e., Uruguay's) national heritage. For instance, Uruguay's Daniel Granada as early as 1896 recorded and compiled the many legends of his land and its peoples (Creole, Indian, and black). He highlights the importance of black Uruguayan folklore in the culture of both the white Creole and the mixed-race gaucho, for example. To be sure, some of these legends involved Afro-Platine association to rather negative characters such as devils or demons. The *mandinga* or devil of the Creole appears associated with African stories about wandering evil spirits; therefore, in the countryside of the River Plate, bad luck or misfortune is commonly referred to as "¡es cosa de mandinga!" Consequently, given this association between the black man and evil, Daniel Granada also records the use of African or Creole black amulets and charms found among different races in Uruguay and Argentina to ward off evil spells. These African charms were regarded as indispensable to counter the potentially negative influences of the black *mandinga* by Creoles of all ethnicities in the

¹¹ "Montevideo: fiesta en 'La Criolla.'" *Caras y Caretas* 11, 486 (Jan. 22, 1908):n.p. On this theme in Argentina, see Alfredo V. E. Rubione, ed., *En torno al criollismo Ernesto Quesada, "El criollismo en la literatura argentina" y otros textos: estudio crítico y compilación* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1983).

Río de la Plata.

The devil in the traditional folklore of the River Plate's culture was and is clearly represented as black, although its rural origin, so frequently referenced in the gauchesque literature of the era, was disputed by folklorist Daniel Granada. Unlike the many literary associations of the black devil or *mandinga* with the black gaucho and the vast countryside of the Río de la Plata, Granada insisted that this folktale was really more urban: "*Mandinga* es duende ó diablillo, más que en el campo, habita en las ciudades." Regardless of its true place of origin or residence, in the countryside or cities of the Río de la Plata, such references to legends involving the *mandinga* document that they were already a well-established part of the folkloric canon of the region by the late 1800s. More importantly, the *mandinga* was associated in the *rioplatense* imaginary with not only the African or Afro-Platine but with the Creole as well; therefore, Granada concludes that *mandinga* was both (and simultaneously) African and Creole.¹²

Other African folk tales popular in the River Plate, forming part of the common heritage and cultural memory of different social-racial groups there, were and are the *lobisón* (werewolf or large dog) and sundry black water spirits.¹³ These folk legends

¹² D. Daniel Granada, *Reseña histórico-descriptiva de antiguas y modernas supersticiones del Río de la Plata* (Montevideo: A. Barreiro y Ramos, Editor, 1896), 44, 455, 456, 457, 458. On the *mandinga* legend and other African folk tales in La Rioja, Argentina, see Enrique de Gandía, *Cuentos y tradiciones de la Rioja* (La Rioja, Argentina: Ediciones Tribuna, 1946). However, Félix Coluccio, "El calendario folklórico argentino." In *Miscelánea de Estudios Dedicados a Fernando Ortiz* (Havana: Ucar y García, 1955), 361-68, does not mention any Afro-Argentine folklore, festivals, or traditions.

¹³ Granada, *Reseña histórico-descriptiva*, 174, 456-57, 582-83, 586, 604, 607. On Afro-Uruguayan folklore and superstitions, see Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, *El negro rioplatense y otros ensayos* (Montevideo: Claudio García & Cía., 1937), specifically "Supersticiones africanas del

were preserved and passed along by whites and blacks in the collective memory of the Río de la Plata not only in oral traditions but more formally by way of ethnographic anthologies like Granada's and institutional school curricula documented by Chamosa. Thus, such compilations of Afro-Platine legends and folklore from the late 1800s were instrumentally no different than other official realms of memory in that period, whether works of literature or monuments. Most importantly, folk traditions also manifest in *cancioneros* or compilations of popular poetry and folkloric songs.

Cancioneros preserved and compiled by white Creole intellectuals, especially in the late 1800s and early 1900s, constitute key realms or sites of collective memory about blacks and blackness in the River Plate. "El negro," writes José Juan Arrom, "que ha estado presente en nuestra sociedad desde su inicio y ha sido factor importante en su desarrollo, no podía tampoco faltar como tema de la poesía folklórica."¹⁴ Arrom here is sustaining that the African could not be absent as a theme in folkloric poetry given his/her presence and importance in Latin American societies from their very origins in the colonial period.

From northwestern Jujuy in Argentina, for example, comes the plaintive verse of a lover for his departing (vanishing?) black woman: "No puedo vivir sin ti,/y no te puedo olvidar:/buena pena la que tengo;/mi negra, ¿por qué te vas?" The (white?) man tells his black female lover that he cannot live without her and promises not to forget her, begging

Río de la Plata"; and Paulo de Carvalho-Neto, *El negro uruguayo (hasta la abolición)* (Quito: Editorial Universitaria, 1965). See Chapter 3.

¹⁴ José Juan Arrom, "El negro en la poesía folklórica Americana." In *Miscelánea de Estudios Dedicados a Fernando Ortiz* (Havana: Ucar y García, 1955), 83.

her to stay and not to leave him.¹⁵ Unlike much learned literature of the earlier nineteenth century, the black woman in popular verse is not despised, but is rather an object of not just sexual attraction but also of romantic affection. In utterly and personally nostalgic terms, furthermore, a popular poem from Argentina's western Mendoza province rhymes: "Linda mi negra querida,/¿dónde estará?/Si me tendrá en la memoria/o me habrá olvidado ya...." Here, the male admirer of his black companion longs for her and wonders if she remembers him or has already forgotten him.¹⁶ Note in both these songs the symbolic absence of the black female lover, perhaps reminiscent or symbolic of Afro-Argentine disappearance from the national scene, if not from the popular Creole imagination, by the fin de siècle. In both poems, the black object of desire has apparently vanished from the scene and is thus remembered longingly by the male Creole.

Another charming ditty from Argentina also captures the affectionate love of a black man for his black woman without any shame concerning either the color of their skins or the quality of her hair (socially and historically, two racial markers of black inferiority in the Americas): "Los cabellos de mi negra/son crespos y muy crespitos,/y le forman en la cara/racimitos, racimitos." That is, the very curly hairy of the black man's

¹⁵ Arrom, "El negro en la poesía folklórica americana," 86. Arrom took these verses from Juan A. Carrizo, comp., *Cancionero popular del Jujuy* (Tucumán, Argentina, 1934), 237. It is possible that the male figure is white. In another popular poem from Jujuy a white man proudly boasts: "A mí me llaman El Negrero/porque yo quise una negra;/¿a quién no le va a gustar/tener una cosa buena?" The poet refers to himself as one who openly admires the beauty of black women. Arrom, "El negro en la poesía folklórica americana," 105.

¹⁶ Arrom, "El negro en la poesía folklórica americana," 85. From Juan Draghi Lucero, comp., *Cancionero popular cuyano* (Mendoza, Argentina, 1938), 299.

lover form like little clusters around her face.¹⁷ These verses, more likely than not composed or at least redacted by whites, although possibly emanating from black *payadores* (singers) and Afro-Platine folklore, nonetheless express some kind of albeit qualified solidarity with African descendants and are reminders to its denizens of the once important social presence of blacks throughout the Río de la Plata. However, romantic expressions were not the only ones present in early national compilations of folklore and vernacular poetry. Others explicitly exalted the value and virtues of blackness itself.

Thus, in another popular poem from Argentina's northwestern Jujuy province, going back to the end of the nineteenth century, and in words that are intended to remind its listeners of the black pride of the Afro-Argentine gaucho in the centerpiece *payada* in Hernández's *La vuelta de Martín Fierro*, a (black?) singer intones: "El ser negro no es ofensa,/ni es color que quita fama,/que también el charol luce/al pie de la mejor dama." In other words, the popular poet does not regard black skin a handicap when it comes to seducing the finest of (white) ladies.¹⁸ Also from the folk poetry tradition of Jujuy is a rhyme that begins by explicitly inverting Martín Fierro's famous challenge: "Lo moreno lo hizo Dios,/lo blanco lo hizo un platero,/como mi vida es morena/por una morena

¹⁷ José Luis Lanuza, comp., *Coplas y cantares argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1952), 250.

¹⁸ Arrom, "El negro en la poesía folklórica americana," 100. Once more, inter-racial unions are openly praised by the singer, thereby perhaps symbolizing or evidencing more open race relations in the more rural Platine provinces as opposed to more rigid attitudes in the region's major urban centers. Alternatively, these popular verses can be interpreted as endorsing "whitening" discourses and policies promoted by intellectual elites and constituting a key element in the mythology of the vanishing black.

muero.” The putatively Afro-Argentine singer claims, contra the gaucho Martín Fierro, that “God made the black man, and a silversmith the white man.” The clear implication being the superior, divine provenance of the black compared to the very base or earthly origins of the white race. But since he is a black man, the song continues, he dies for the love of only a black woman.¹⁹

In early-twentieth-century Uruguay, one of that country’s most important intellectuals and folklorists, Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, wrote extensively about Afro-Uruguayans and additionally collected/compiled their folklore and stories about them.²⁰ Pereda Valdés, like his contemporaries across the Platine estuary, was a polymath and an accomplished writer, who also had a distinguished career as a lawyer and politician. Along with near contemporary avant-garde artist Pedro Figari, discussed below, Pereda Valdés in his writings and anthologies inscribed the black Uruguayan into the national imaginary and collective memory of his countrymen. A prominent “criollo memorioso” in his day, Ildefonso Pereda Valdés represented the black as Creole and therefore Uruguayan. While not facing many of the same social and political problems associated

¹⁹ Lanuza, comp., *Coplas y cantares argentinos*, 92.

²⁰ His *El negro en el Uruguay. Pasado y presente* (Montevideo: Revista del Inst. Histórico y Geográfico del Uruguay, XXV, 1965) remains valuable and compares favorably to George Reid Andrews’s *Blackness in the White Nation: A History of Afro-Uruguay* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2010). Brazilian jurist and intellectual Dante de Laytano writes in the preface of *El negro en el Uruguay* of Pereda Valdés: “El negro Uruguayo [sic.] tiene en Ildefonso Pereda Valdés un estudioso sereno, intérprete muy culto y ensayista escrupuloso y fuerte.” In Pereda Valdés, *El negro en el Uruguay*, 10. The Brazilian writer praises Pereda Valdés for his steadiness, learning, and vigor as a writer on black Uruguayan themes. Other prominent late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century white Uruguayan intellectuals remembering blacks in their respective writings were Isidoro de María, Lino Suárez Peña, and Lauro Ayestarán. The Brazilian ethnographer and folklorist Paulo de Carvalho-Neto also wrote extensively on blacks in the Banda Oriental in this period.

with massive European immigration as in neighboring Argentina, Uruguayans nevertheless also appealed to Creole nationalism to galvanize their population at the start of the twentieth century and foster a national identity that was truly “Oriental” (i.e., Uruguayan). The Afro-Uruguayan and their culture were increasingly nationalized and romanticized in the first part of the 1900s. Therefore, Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, among others, strove to incorporate their voice(s) into the growing national(ist) discourse as Uruguay celebrated its own patriotic anniversaries in the early twentieth century.

In his 1929 anthology *Raza negra*, for instance, Ildefonso Pereda Valdés compiled poems by and about blacks in Africa and Uruguay dating to an even earlier time. In a charming Afro-Uruguayan cradle song, *canción de cuna*, sung by especially black but also white Creole mothers, a frightened black child is instructed to sleep (“Cierra esos ojitos negrito asustado”), because if he stays awake the “white boogeyman” can eat him alive (“el mandinga blanco/te puede comer”). Here, the white rather than the black man is called “el mandinga,” thus representing an inversion of traditional folklore in the River Plate, as established above. Significantly, the poem goes on to emphatically inform the black child to not fear, that he is free and no longer under bondage: “Ya no eres esclavo!” The social memory of emancipation was therefore transmitted by the parent who remembers slavery to their free-born child.²¹ The mnemonic and nostalgic nature of this cradle song, with its powerful associations to infancy, family, and the home, merited its inclusion for Pereda Valdés in his compilation of Uruguayan folkloric

²¹ Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, comp., “Canción de cuna para dormir a un negrito.” In *Raza negra*. 1. *Poemas de negros*. 2. *Cantos africanos*. 3. *Cancionero afro-montevideano* (Montevideo: Edición del Periódico Negro “La Vanguardia,” 1929), 9. The most popular Afro-Uruguayan children’s song and one that is still recited in Uruguay is “La ronda catonga.” In *Raza negra*, 21.

favorites.

Furthermore, the African drum was and is an essential part of not only Afro-Uruguayan but also white Creole culture, in Montevideo especially. African drumming united (and continues to bring together) multi-ethnic communities to collectively recall and experience their black heritage. Therefore, Ildefonso Pereda Valdés celebrates “Los negros de largos tambores” (“The blacks with their long drums”) in a poem “Los tambores de los negros.” Unlike the disgust of an earlier generation of intellectual elites for the *candombe* (African dance and music featuring drumming) in the River Plate, documented in the previous chapters, this poem instead favorably recalls the color and joyfulness of black performances in almost nostalgic terms: “The *candombe* exudes passion/on its winding stage,/where the blacks dance to the beat of their drums” (“El candombe derrocha color/en el tablado de serpentinas,/donde los negros danzan al son de los tambores”).²² The Afro-Platine *candombe* is here remembered as a joyous community event, where the gaze of Creoles delighted in the performance of the African “Other,” harkening to days gone by when such dances were common communal spectacles, but conveniently forgetting past negative associations among whites.

A terribly haunting and historically evocative poem about the slave trade

²² Pereda Valdés, comp., “Los tambores de los negros.” In *Raza negra*, 11. See also, “El candombe.” In *Raza negra*, 15. Pereda Valdés even invokes the memory of blacks as federalist supporters. For additional early ethnographic descriptions of Afro-Uruguayan drums and *candombe*, see the writings of Isidro de María (1888), “Mandinga” (1900), Lic. Peralta (1922), Lino Suárez Peña (1924), Marcelino Bottaro (1934), Arthur Ramos (1937), Miguel Angel Jáuregui (1953), and Lauro Ayestarán (1953), all published in Paulo de Carvalho-Neto, *El negro uruguayo (hasta la abolición)* (Quito: Editorial Universitaria, 1965), 295-309. By far, the most important contemporary scholar on Afro-Uruguayan music and culture is my friend Gustavo Goldman. Among his many publications on this theme, consult his *Lucamba. Herencia africana en el tango, 1870-1890* (Montevideo: Perro Andaluz Ediciones, 2008).

preserved in Pereda Valdés's above-cited anthology, "El buque negrero" ("The Slave Ship") captures the agony and trauma of captured Africans shipped across the Atlantic to Uruguay. "Entre un dolor de esclavos/el barco de los negros se va tragando el mar!" ("Amidst the pain of black slaves/the slave vessel races across the sea!") Once more, this poem intends for the memory of the trauma of bondage for blacks be recorded and not forgotten by either the descendants of slaves or their former masters.²³ In addition, in "Caserío de negros" or "Slave Quarters," the poet sings of both the trauma of African slavery and also its opposition by the same slaves. Africans and their descendants turn to their ancestral beliefs and customs, including song and dance, to oppose their dehumanization under slavery: "El candombe apaga sollozos de esclavos!" ("The *candombe* quenches the sighs of the slaves!"). The "white devil" ("diablo blanco") or slave master in this case, upon seeing and hearing the boisterous and joyous music of the blacks, his soul (with fear and hatred) blazed: "Zurucu, curucú, manite/Zurucu, curucú, mandinga./El alma del diablo blanco/en el fuego arde!"²⁴ For Ildefonso Pereda Valdés and other Creole intellectuals in the River Plate, then, the trauma of Africans and their descendants needed to be collectively remembered and transmitted in popular verse from

²³ Pereda Valdés, comp., "El buque negrero," In *Raza negra*, 13.

²⁴ Pereda Valdés, comp., "Caserío de negros." In *Raza negra*, 25. Note the use of *bozal* (African) speech. This is only a selection of popular poems compiled by Pereda Valdés and others that I have in my personal archives. See, e.g., Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, comp., *Cancionero popular uruguayo...* (Montevideo: Editorial Florensa & Lafón, 1947). One could easily write an entire thesis or dissertation on the representation or remembrance of Afro-Platines using and analyzing the many *cancioneros* compiled and published in both Argentina and Uruguay in the early 1900s. Such an endeavor would nicely complement and build on the works of Ricardo Salvatore and Ariel de la Fuente, cited above, which by far are the most sophisticated in their appreciation and appropriation of these and other oral history resources.

generation to generation so as not to be forgotten by their countrymen.

Arguably the master of Uruguayan nostalgia of blackness in the early 1900s was the late-impressionist-era artist and writer Pedro Figari, mentioned above, who drew his inspiration from the same black Platine culture remembered and preserved by Ildefonso Pereda Valdés. Pedro Figari's paintings and drawings about blacks and their heritage are among the most important realms or sites of memory à la Pierre Nora on either side of the River Plate.²⁵ Although the son of Italian immigrants, Pedro Figari was nonetheless regarded by contemporaries, and considered himself, as a Creole. In his art work and writings, he identified the gaucho, the black, and the working class with Uruguayan national identity. A prolific painter and illustrator, Figari produced literally thousands of paintings and sketches representing the multi-racial makeup of Uruguayan society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He also had a unique relationship with the Afro-Uruguayan population of Montevideo; before becoming an artist, Figari was a lawyer who often was found litigating on behalf of the poor and blacks of the Banda Oriental's capital city. His voluminous production of drawings and paintings on black themes, especially the *candombe*, reveal an artist steeped in nostalgia for a folkloric and traditional past. In this regard, perhaps his most quintessentially Afro-Uruguayan paintings are the undated works "Nostalgias del candombe" ("Nostalgias for the

²⁵ Pedro Figari and Fernando Guibert, *Tango y candombe en el Río de la Plata, 1861-1979. 8 dibujos de Pedro Figari. 8 dibujos de Fernando Guibert. Testimonio de un pasado histórico* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, SA, 1979). Along with Figari, Guibert's equally evocative depictions of Afro-Uruguayans form part of the Banda Oriental's artistic patronage.

candombe”) and “Nostalgias africanas” (“African Nostalgias”).²⁶

Art historian Kim Grant describes Pedro Figari as “a quintessential nostalgic painter.” For Grant: “Figari’s painted memories and visions of his homeland transcend the particularities of his ... age and position to take their place in the development of a modern national [Uruguayan] self-consciousness.”²⁷ Thus, Pedro Figari himself elects to remind his compatriots: “... I take the Negro as my example, bearing in mind that we white men carry a black man, a very black man, within us....”²⁸ In his art, as well as his prose, Pedro Figari, in a nuanced and nostalgic manner, (re-)created a unique stylistic vision that evidenced his unmistakable admiration for Afro-Uruguayans and especially their folkloric dances. This distinguished him from an earlier generation of liberal writers, which despised African music and dance as savage. Figari’s work sought to fashion a multi-racial national identity for Uruguay by, as he says in his own words, setting “out our traditions” based on “my memories.”²⁹

According to Pedro Figari, moreover, his “painted memories” of Afro-Uruguayans and their *candombe* were based on personal childhood memories; however,

²⁶ There is a large literature on Pedro Figari, his art, and his writings. There are also several published collections of his drawings and paintings available. Lyneise E. Williams provides a very serviceable bibliography in her Yale University dissertation, “‘Sacudiendo de los espíritus adormecidos’ (‘Awakening the Sleeping Spirits’): The Art of Pedro Figari.” Ph. D. diss., Yale Univ., 2004. Consult Appendix I for a reproduction of one of Pedro Figari’s Afro-Uruguayan art works.

²⁷ Kim Grant, “Pedro Figari: The ‘Candombe’ Paintings.” *Latin American Art* 3, 2 (Spring 1991): 21.

²⁸ Figari quoted in Marianne Manley, *Intimate Recollections of the Río de la Plata: Paintings by Pedro Figari, 1861-1938* (New York City: Center for Inter-American Cooperation, 1986), 14.

²⁹ Pedro Figari, *Essai de philosophie biologique: Art, Esthétique, Idéal*. Desire Roustan, trans. (Paris: Ed. de la Revue de l’Amérique Latine, 1926). Quoted in Grant, “Pedro Figari,” 22.

according to Kim Grant, Figari's paintings and drawings were not exact representations of events he saw as a boy but rather, in keeping with the artist's own philosophy of art, re-creations or re-imaginings. Grant, therefore, concludes: "By painting the blacks' traditions and history, while ostensibly painting his own memories, Figari lays claim to a past and a land which is not ancestrally his own."³⁰ In short, Pedro Figari's own nostalgia of blackness was appropriated memory from Afro-Uruguayans themselves; in turn, Figari's artistic nostalgia was subsequently transformed into painted social remembrances of blackness in the River Plate for generations of his compatriots, and these painted memories have been displayed in galleries and art museums throughout the world.

Moving to the other side of the River Plate, but in the same historical period, Lyneise E. Williams 2004 Yale dissertation on Pedro Figari's art documents the Uruguayan artist's connections and relationships with fellow Argentine Creole artists and intellectuals of that day.³¹ Like Figari, these cultural nationalists in Argentina also personally remembered blacks and their customs from their own childhood and culturally transmitted those memories in their collective writings. Therefore, while individual, the remembrances of Afro-Argentines by members of the Generation of 1880s and other

³⁰ Grant, "Pedro Figari," 24. A far less generous assessment of Figari's black art is Andrea María Ferreiro, "The Black Image in Latin American Art: A Study on Race Representation in the Vanguard Art of Don Pedro Figari and José Sabogal." MA thesis, Univ. of Texas, 2000. Ferreiro accuses Figari of "sub-conscious racism" and therefore negatively depicting blacks in his drawings and paintings.

³¹ Williams, "Sacudiendo de los espíritus adormecidos," ch. 3. Williams records Figari's associations with Argentina's avant-garde "Martinierrista" writers of the 1920s, especially his friendship with the author of the gaucho classic *Don Segundo Sombra* (1926), Ricardo Güiraldes, himself a cattle rancher.

Creole intellectuals recorded in their late 1800's and early 1900's memories were nonetheless socially framed by their collective experiences and *habitus*. Moreover, these personal memories were published with the intention of becoming a part of the national discourse and memory about race and nation at the turn of the nineteenth century. By carefully editing their reminiscences of blackness in the *fin de siècle*, these Creole nationalist intellectuals re-inscribed the (for them) by then largely “disappeared” or “vanishing” Afro-Argentine into the national imaginary with the explicit purpose of defining the national as exclusively Creole over against the alien (i.e., European, especially Jewish) interloper. Among two of the more accomplished members of this cohort of *criollista* nationalists in Argentina were Vicente G. Quesada (alias Víctor Gálvez) and his younger contemporary Vicente Rossi. As with their Uruguayan near contemporaries already discussed, both these writers contributed important memorials to and about Afro-Argentines and their cultural contributions to the nation at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries.

Like the author of *Martín Fierro*, José Hernández, Don Vicente G. Quesada straddled the Generations of 1837 and 1880, although he is more closely associated with the latter. Quesada, born in 1830, was a man of many talents and services to his nation. According to his contemporaries he was both a distinguished orator and a fine man of letters. In his early public career, Quesada was a congressman representing Corrientes province. He also presided over the then newly founded Historical and Geographic Institute of the Argentine Confederation, which played a major role in territorially imagining the national state's boundaries, itself an important development for the consolidation of both the national state and its imaginary. In 1871, Quesada was

appointed to the prestigious post of director of the National Library in the city of Buenos Aires. In 1877, Quesada was named Interior Minister of Buenos Aires province. Later, President Roca asked Quesada to come out of retirement and made him an ambassador and diplomat. Quesada's last public charge was as president of the University of Buenos Aires's Academy of Philosophy and Literature (Letters). The author of many articles and books, Vicente Quesada strove to, in his own words, "Raise the national spirit by way of remembering who we were [as a people].... Recall for the gratitude of the people, the memory of those who contributed to founding the nation or cultivating it.... Remembering the fine examples of that patriotism so full of humility but resolute in its faith...."³²

For Vicente G. Quesada, erstwhile federalist in his early years, it is perhaps therefore unsurprising that blacks constitute key social figures in his patriotic remembrances. In fact, he devotes an entire chapter to them in his aforementioned autobiography.³³ In distinctly patronizing, but no less equally nostalgic tones, Quesada briefly retells the history of the black race in Buenos Aires and the memories of them shared by his contemporaries. Almost inevitably, he begins his narrative by bringing to

³² Isidoro J. Ruiz Moreno, "Estudio preliminar." In Vicente G. Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*. Isidoro J. Ruiz Moreno, ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciudad Argentina, 1998), 7-22. Ruiz Moreno quotes Quesada thusly: "Levantar el espíritu nacional por el recuerdo de lo que fuimos.... Recordar a la gratitud del pueblo la memoria del los que contribuyeron a fundar la Patria o a ilustrarla,... mostrar los bellos ejemplos de aquel patriotismo lleno de modestia pero firme de fe...." Ruiz Moreno, "Estudio preliminar," 22. Also published as Víctor Gálvez, *Memorias de un viejo. Escenas de costumbres de la República Argentina*. Antonio Pagés Larraya, ed. and prelim. study. (Buenos Aires: Academia de Letras, 1990).

³³ Originally published as Víctor Gálvez, "La raza africana en Buenos Aires." *Nueva Revista de Buenos Aires* 8 (1883): 246-60.

mind the patriotic and “enthusiastic” participation of blacks in the defense of Buenos Aires during both British invasions of the River Plate in 1806 and 1807. Quesada recalls that the Spanish colonial state rewarded the Africans by freeing seventy of them in a public ceremony after the final repulsion of the British attackers in 1807. This memorialist goes on to remind his readers that “the black race joined in the wars of independence and shed their blood with the same enthusiasm and valor than during the British invasions.”³⁴ For Quesada and his generation, therefore, blacks were largely remembered as cannon fodder for the nation, thereby recalling General José de San Martín’s famous lament for his black troopers, cited previously: “¡Pobres negros!”

Vicente G. Quesada cannot fail but also remember the traditional jobs and colorful dances of the Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires of his youth in the first half of the nineteenth century. Unlike other Rosas-era federalists, however, Quesada, characterizes black music and songs as “savage” and “barbaric,” “producing a repugnant impression” on white elites.³⁵ Once more invoking the vanishing so necessary as a precondition of nostalgia as per Renato Rosaldo, Vicente Quesada intimates that the black race of Buenos Aires sung in their native dialects because they perhaps sensed that they were destined to become white and thus disappear as a distinct social group in

³⁴ Vicente G. Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*. Isidoro J. Ruiz Moreno, ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Ciudad Argentina, 1998), 79-80, 80-81, 82-83. The quote reads: “La raza negra se mezcló en la guerra de la Independencia y derramó su sangre con el mismo brío y heroicidad con la que lo hizo en las invasiones inglesas.” Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*, 85.

³⁵ Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*, 88-89. Quesada is here remembering as a conservative at the end of the nineteenth century and not as a mid-1800s federalist. Again, social memory tells us more about those doing the remembering and their present condition than it does about the past subject being remembered.

Buenos Aires city.³⁶ Once gone, Afro-Argentines were then open to being romanticized and fondly remembered by the city's elites.

Almost immediately comes the nostalgia for the vanishing "Other" common among social elites and described by Rosaldo in other colonial centers in modern times. Thus, Quesada favorably remembers that black slaves were respected as family members by their masters, and that their social equality with whites was evident in the informal way blacks and whites, especially their respective children, interacted.³⁷ Quesada even asserted the racial and intellectual superiority of the Creole Afro-Argentine over that of brutish Africans: "The black race known in these provinces [then including Uruguay or the Banda Oriental] and especially in the Capital [i.e., Buenos Aires], was of a superior type to the deformed black race of Dakar [i.e., Sub-Saharan West Africa]...." He goes on to invoke social Darwinian ideas then current and popular among intellectuals and scientists to argue the racial superiority of Afro-Argentines over against "those naked savages from Africa." Afro-Argentines, thanks to their communion with their masters and Creole society, were consequently highly intelligent and artistically gifted, rightly aspiring to reach the same cultural development as the whites.³⁸ In short, Quesada's words reveal that in late-nineteenth-century Argentina (Creole) blacks were remembered

³⁶ Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*, 90. Quesada: "De esta misma raza era la que bailaba cantando en sus dialectos africanos, como si tuviera el presentimiento de que estaban destinados a fundirse en la raza blanca y a desaparecer como agrupación colectiva en esta Capital."

³⁷ Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*, 269.

³⁸ Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*, 91-92. Quesada is far less sympathetic about Argentina's Indians, whom he characterizes as "miserable wretches" ("desgraciados"). Quesada, *Memorias de un viejo*, 93.

nostalgically by Creole elites as members (even if socially inferior ones) of the nation.

Without a doubt, the most notable literary nostalgic tribute to the cultural memory of the Afro-Platine in the first decades of the twentieth century was Vicente Rossi's *Cosas de negros*, first published in 1926. Even Jorge Luis Borges praised Rossi's literary style and his influences on the national language.³⁹ The title of this book has offended many contemporary scholars of race in Argentina, who unfailingly point out that the expression "cosas de negros" is actually racist and offensive, suggesting something dirty or poorly done.⁴⁰ As a man of his time, Vicente Rossi, born in 1871, held racial views that today are no doubt highly suspect. Having said this, however, Rossi represents one of the most progressive voices of his day when it came to remembering blacks in the River Plate. In fact, one way of reading Rossi's *Cosas de negros* is as a mnemonic corrective to Carlos Vegas's consistent historical amnesia concerning blackness in the Río de la Plata.

Vicente Rossi was a thorough-going Creole, one who totally accepted the "melting pot" idea of Argentina, a writer who concentrated on Platine folk types and

³⁹ Jorge Luis Borges, "idioma nacional rioplatense," in the journal *Síntesis*. Horacio Jorge Becco, "Estudio preliminar." In Vicente Rossi, *Cosas de negros* (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2001), 9. Rossi denounces in an opening epigram "the error of linguistic servility in the Americas, cradle of liberty; melting pot of races, doctrines, and languages" ("*Error del servilismo idiomático en esta maravillosa América, cuna de la Libertad; crisol de razas, doctrinas y léxicos*"). Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 36. Italics in the original.

⁴⁰ Even my good friend Dr. Alejandro Frigerio, one of the world's leading authorities on Afro-Argentines, has often pointed this out. Alejandro nonetheless acknowledges the importance of Rossi's book. I thank him for sending me a signed copy of a new edition of *Cosas de negros* several years ago.

traditions.⁴¹ Horacio Jorge Becco insists that Rossi strove to faithfully remember the characters and scenes of his day, especially the gaucho and the black, two social actors then considered as gone from the national stage or at most *mise en scène*.⁴² Among the themes Rossi treats in his elegiac prose are the evolution of the *candombe*, the *milonga*, and the tango, whose development he credits totally to the ingenuity of blacks and the creativity of the African race in the River Plate, long before notable historians George Reid Andrews, John C. Chasteen, and Simon Collier ever did.⁴³ It would be impossible in the limited space of this chapter to fully develop the breadth of Vicente Rossi's treatment of Afro-Platines and their cultural contributions. Hence, just a few illustrations of Rossi's historical remembrances of blacks and blackness will be addressed.

Rossi begins by insisting that the black man in the River Plate, both in Argentina and in Uruguay, had totally forgotten his ancestral language and heritage, thereby facilitating his assimilation into the Platine "melting pot." He then blames slavery, however, rather than any inherent quality in the black race for Afro-Platine cultural backwardness and ignorance. On the contrary, in views totally at odds with some of the

⁴¹ The subtitle of the original edition, reproduced by Becco, reads: "Rectificaciones y revelaciones de folklore y de historia" ("Corrections and Revelations on Folklore and History"). Becco, "Estudio preliminar," 33. Rossi seems to imply that folklore (social memory?) and history are complementary and not antagonistic to each other.

⁴² Becco, "Estudio preliminar," 10, 12, 13.

⁴³ Cf., John Charles Chasteen, "Black Kings, Blackface Carnival, and the Nineteenth-Century Origins of the Tango." In *Latin American Popular Culture: An Introduction*, first SR Books ed. William H. Beezley and Linda A. Curcio-Nagy, eds. (Oxford: Scholarly Resources, 2004), ch. 3; Simon Collier et al., *Tango! The Dance, the Song, the Story* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995); George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

ideas of the previous generation and even those prevalent among his more positivistic contemporaries, especially Ingenieros and Bunge, Rossi regards the African as sincere and faithful (“honrado y fiel”), of an exemplary morality (“de ejemplar moralidad”). Moreover, the black African instinctively felt loyalty for the *patria* (nation) and bravely fought for it. As such, and opposed to European immigrants and foreign radicals, the Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan were true Creoles for Rossi.

The real genius of Africans and their descendants in the River Plate was found precisely in their Creole songs, music, and dances, “sus modalidades criollas” (“Creole modalities”). In totally nostalgic terms, Vicente Rossi describes the colorful *cadombes* of Carnival, the “Golden Age” of which took place in Montevideo in the late 1870s and first half of the 1880s. He mourns the passing of both the “last [African] kings” and their *candombes*. The second half of Vicente Rossi’s tribute to the cultural memory of blacks shows how the tango evolved over the course of the nineteenth century in the River Plate by way of African music and dance, including the African-influenced Creole *milonga*.⁴⁴ Vicente Rossi’s *Cosas de negros* stands as a tribute to the cultural contributions of blacks in the Río de la Plata and, despite the ideologically motivated and misplaced opinions of some regarding this title, continues to serve as an explicitly nostalgic site of historical memory on blackness in Argentina and Uruguay.

In a footnote, Rossi’s recent editor Horacio Jorge Becco expands on the drums

⁴⁴ Vicente Rossi, *Cosas de negros*. Horacio Jorge Becco, prelim. study. (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2001), 37-39, 49, 63, 74-75, 94-95, 100. If the summit of the *candombe* and Carnival was in the late 1800s, for Rossi the nadir of black dance was during Rosas’s regime in the mid-nineteenth century. Here, Rossi is in keeping with more liberal memories of the dictator. Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 85-89. On the *milonga* and the tango, Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 115 ff.

accompanying the dances of African Argentines and Uruguayans remembered by Rossi by citing a source contemporary to *Cosas de negros*, Alfredo Taullard's 1927 memorial to the Buenos Aires of yesteryear.⁴⁵ To commemorate the five hundredth anniversary of the River Plate's designation by the Spanish Crown, many books were written about the region and its capital cities. Prominent among these commemorative tomes was A. Taullard's *Nuestro antiguo Buenos Aires*.⁴⁶ Several of these commemorative volumes, including Taullard's, took the form of memoirs of the River Plate's major locales. Rather than simply retelling local history, however, the authors sought to actively memorialize the traditions, invented and otherwise, of these places. Needless to say, Buenos Aires, discovered in 1516 and definitively settled in 1580, received the most attention from Creole memorialists.

A. Taullard's richly illustrated volume, originally written with the explicit intent of boosting Argentina's capital city to native and stranger alike, exploited many realms or sites of memory to document his memoirs of Buenos Aires city and its environs. For example, Taullard illustrates his text throughout with paintings and other art drawn from those sites of modern national memory per excellence, both art and historical museums. He also borrows from the published memoirs of early foreign travelers to the River Plate. Consequently, an early illustration in the book is a wonderful *costumbrista* painting of the folkloric black washerwomen of Buenos Aires working along the banks of

⁴⁵ Rossi, *Cosas de negros*, 79n.14.

⁴⁶ A. Taullard, *Nuestro antiguo Buenos Aires. Como era y como es desde la época colonial hasta la actualidad. Su asombroso progreso edilicio, trajes, costumbres, etc.* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Casa Jacobo Peuser, 1927).

the River Plate, with the city's fort in the background and part of its old walls in the right foreground, framing the entire scene; this painting is derived from British dignitary Emeric Essex Vidal's early-nineteenth-century travelogue.⁴⁷ Black laundresses were once memorable characters in the Río de la Plata, and, along with black women selling meat-pies (*empanadas*) and pastries, they were often represented in past art and literature on Argentina and Uruguay and are even used today in school performances as a social remembrance of blackness.⁴⁸ Another painting from 1832 depicts a rich white maiden in church accompanied by her well-dressed black chaperone or duenna. Black women, as seen in Mármol's novel *Amalia*, often waited on their Creole female mistresses; in addition, when describing the folklore of serving and drinking *mate* or Paraguayan tea in the Buenos Aires of yesteryear, for instance, Taullard uses a painting by Alfredo Benítez in which a colorfully liveried black maid is depicted preparing her mistress's drink. As for black men, Taullard devotes several pages discussing their traditional roles as day laborers in Buenos Aires city of the past. In almost every instance, the tone of the narrative by Taullard in his memoir of Buenos Aires is romantic, nostalgic, and extols

⁴⁷ Taullard, *Nuestro antiguo Buenos Aires*, 29. See also pages 32 and 86 for more paintings depicting the (in)famous black washerwomen of Buenos Aires. Emeric Essex Vidal, *Picturesque Illustrations of Buenos Ayres and Monte Video, Consisting of Twenty-Four Views: Accompanied with Descriptions of the Scenery and of the Costumes, Manners, &c. of the Inhabitants of those Cities and their Environs* (London: Published by R. Ackermann, 1820).

⁴⁸ See, e.g., "Recordando el pasado. Vendedores ambulantes." *Caras y Caretas* 30 (May 25, 1927): n.p. On this latter theme, see Augustino Pérez Guarnieri, "Relevamiento de las representaciones de los afroargentinos del tronco colonial en los actos escolares por el bicentenario del primer gobierno patrio." *El Corsito* 15, 39 (Oct. 2010): v-vii. A far more acerbic critique of these school performances is Anny Ocoró Loango, "La emergencia del negro en los actos escolares del 25 de mayo en la Argentina: del negro heroico al decorativo y estereotipado." *Pedagogía y Saberes*, no. 34 (2011): 33-50.

the industriousness of the laboring and subaltern classes, including both its folkloric black *jornaleros* or wage-workers and European laborers.⁴⁹

A. Taullard also devotes an entire chapter to “Los negros” of the Buenos Aires city of yesteryear. The chapter opens with a brief but accurate discussion of the unfailing patriotism of blacks and their military services to the nascent republic, similar to Quesada’s and Rossi’s earlier accountings.⁵⁰ He goes on to mention by name black heroes remembered by generations (until recently) of Argentines: “Falucho,” Barcala, and “el negro” Ventura. Not wanting to forget anyone, Taullard immediately adds a word about the many other unknown black heroes, “relegated to oblivion,” “relegados al olvido.” Among these, however, Taullard does not forget to signal out a (once) well-remembered black woman and military heroine, Josefa Tenorio, who fought with distinction in San Martín’s army. He laments that unlike “Falucho,” *doña* Josefa did not have a monument of marble and brass or a medal dedicated to her heroism. A. Taullard then goes on to practically plagiarize Vicente Quesada, when he observes that the Afro-Argentine of Buenos Aires was not repulsive like the native African and was both physically and physiologically superior to his counterparts in Africa. Taullard concludes

⁴⁹ Taullard, *Nuestro antiguo Buenos Aires*, 214, 234-35, 257, 269-73. This contrasts greatly with the depictions of immigrants and other subalterns as lazy in Creole nationalist polemics of the previous decades.

⁵⁰ Jorge Luis Borges later immortalized black soldiers as well, and explicitly contrasted them and radical foreigners: “Alguien pensó que los negros/no eran zurdos ni ajenos/y se formó el regimiento/de Pardos y de Morenos” (“Did anyone think that blacks/neither leftists nor foreigners were/formed the Battalion of Mulattoes and Blacks”). Jorge Luis Borges, *Para seis cuerdas* (1965). Quoted in María Eugenia Faué, “Blanquitud y negritud en los registros literarios rioplatenses.” In *Buenos Aires negra. Identidad y cultura*. Temas de Patrimonio Cultural 16. Leticia Maronese, comp. and ed. (Buenos Aires: Comisión para la Preservación del Patrimonio Histórico Cultural de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2006), 73.

his nostalgic chapter on blacks in Buenos Aires by noting, in keeping with other thinkers of his day, that by the 1890s the black population of the city had practically disappeared. Unlike others, however, A. Taullard laments the fate of Afro-Argentines and explicitly blames their plight on the European immigrant: “In a few more years, the wave of cosmopolitanism will have absorbed them [blacks] completely, as a drop of ink in an ocean.” Taullard closes this thought by invoking the memory of San Martín’s famous words, about his fallen black soldiers, so often repeated or otherwise invoked by Creole elites when historically remembering the black race of the River Plate: “¡Pobres negros!” (“Poor blacks!”).⁵¹

As has been shown, Taullard was not the only white Creole to memorialize blackness in Argentina and Uruguay.⁵² For example, one key nineteenth-century site of Creole nostalgia of blackness, besides the literary and artistic ones discussed above, was the popular Carnival.⁵³ According to Carmen Bernand: “Carnival festivities in [Buenos

⁵¹ Taullard, *Nuestro antiguo Buenos Aires*, 352-58. In Taullard’s original words about the fitness of blacks in Argentina over that of Africans: “La raza negra radicada en este país no ofrecía el aspecto repulsivo de ciertas razas africanas, eran física y fisiológicamente superiores, pues lo contrario aquí nadie los hubiera comprado.” Taullard, *Nuestro antiguo Buenos Aires*, 355. Taullard seems to forget, however, that the blacks originally sold and bought in the River Plate were not Creoles but Africans. On Taullard’s complaint about the disappearance of Afro-Argentines: “Dentro de pocos años más, la ola de cosmopolitanismo los habrá absorbido por completo, como a una gota de tinta caída en el océano. ¡Pobres negros!” Taullard, *Nuestro antiguo Buenos Aires*, 357. Taullard clearly views this vanishing of blacks in Buenos Aires as yet another unfortunate consequence of European immigration to Argentina.

⁵² In 1936, for the four hundredth anniversary of the founding of Buenos Aires, Luis Canepa published *El Buenos Aires de antaño. En el cuarto centenario de su fundación, 1536-1936* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Linari & Cía., 1936), which is equally nostalgic about blacks in that city’s past. Along the same lines, see Julio B. Jaimes Repide, *Paseos evocativos por el viejo Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Peuser, 1936).

⁵³ Donald S. Castro, moreover, intimates that the prominence of black figures in the popular street theaters of Buenos Aires in the first decades of the last century also makes these *sainetes* possible

Aires] provided the opportunity to remember blacks, and if few real blacks remained, then several troops of ‘false blacks’ formed: they were constituted by the scions of elite and upper bourgeois families, painted black, who imitated the processions of yesteryear.”⁵⁴ For example, in his nostalgic book *La gran aldea* (1881), Creole essayist and politician Lucio V. López, son of distinguished historian Vicente Fidel López and grandson of the national poet Vicente López y Planes, recalled the hey-day of black Carnival dances. López recalls being impressed with the “seriousness” and “correctness” of the black dancers performing “quadrilles” and the waltz, almost as proper as the “English.” He was less impressed, however, with their performance of the “mazurka” or the “habanera,” with its “ridiculous body movements.”⁵⁵

In addition, *Caras y Caretas*, especially, often ran stories that remembered the importance of blacks during the traditional Carnival. For instance, in 1899, “Figarillo” recalled how the *candombe* gave way to Carnival, and how whites would often imitate blacks. Creoles of all stations, rich and poor, paid tribute to the tradition of black Carnival by mimicking Afro-Argentines, painting themselves “black”: “From the

sites of memory about blackness in Argentina. See Donald S. Castro, *The Afro-Argentine in Argentine Culture: El Negro del Acordeón* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001).

⁵⁴ Carmen Bernand, “La población negra de Buenos Aires (1777-1862).” In Mónica Quijada, Carmen Bernand, and Arnd Schneider, *Homogenidad y nación con un estudio de caso: Argentina, siglos XIX y XX* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas; Centro de Humanidades. Inst. de Historia, Departamento de Historia de América, 2000), 136. In the original, the text reads: “Las fiestas de Carnaval celebradas en la ciudad brindan la ocasión de recordar a los negros, y si sólo quedan pocos auténticos, muchos ‘falsos negros’ forman comparsas: se trata de los hijos de familias burguesas, tiznados de carbón, que remedan los desfiles de antaño.” I thank Dr. Bernand for sending me an autographed copy of this excellent tome.

⁵⁵ Lucio V. López, *la gran aldea* (2000), 160. www.elaleph.com. López whimsically recalled the “colorfulness” and “gaiety” of the Carnival of his youth.

tenements to the palaces of the rich, from servants to their masters, no one failed to pay tribute to tradition, thereby being able to sincerely ask, who hasn't been *black* at one time in their lives."⁵⁶ Far from simple mockery, "Figarillo" assumed that whites were fondly remembering the traditional Carnival with its real blacks, who were now largely vanished.⁵⁷ In 1902, "Figarillo" published another explicitly nostalgic piece, "El carnaval antiguo. Los candomberos." In it, the author allegedly speaks to an old Afro-Argentine, who reminds him that blacks are the last remnants in the country who truly remember what Carnival and old Buenos Aires were really like.⁵⁸ However, as John Chasteen, George Reid Andrews, and Oscar Chamosa ably demonstrate in their respective studies, blacks in the River Plate contested their own marginalization and mimicry during Carnival, and preserved their own ancestral memories in their traditional music and

⁵⁶ "Desde los conventillos hasta las casas aristocráticas, desde los sirvientes á los patrones, nada ni nadie dejó de pagar tributo á la tradición, pudiéndose decir con verdad ¿quién no ha sido *negro* en su vida?" "Figarillo," "El candombe callejero." *Caras y Caretas* 2, 19 (Feb. 11, 1899): n.p. The translation is mine.

⁵⁷ In 1907, José Manuel Eizaguirre remembered the African nations of yesteryear and their performances during Carnival, stating that "Buenos doctores de la más flamante aristocracia fin de siglo, lamentaban hoy de aquellos buenos tiempos..." ("Good doctors of the most aristocratic families of the end of the century today lament the passing of those good, old days..."). José Manuel Eizaguirre, *Páginas argentinas ilustradas. Dieciseis capítulos de historia y comentarios sobre hechos militares, políticos y sociales de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Maucci Hermanos, 1907), 283. The Afro-Argentine press of the day also often ran stories about their community's involvement (or lack thereof) during Carnival. E.g., "Sociedad Estrella del Sud: Danza 'Estrella del Sud.'" In *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer*, 96; "Nuestras sociedades carnalescas." In *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer*, 216-17; "[A la sociedad 'Negros de Sud,' la co-...]." In *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer*, 220-21.

⁵⁸ "Figarillo," "El carnaval antiguo. Los candomberos." *Caras y Caretas* 5, 176 (Feb. 15, 1902): n.p. Lea Geler makes excellent and extensive use of *Caras y Caretas* in her chapter on Carnival. Lea Geler, *Andares negros, caminos blancos. Afroporteños, estado y nación argentina a fines del siglo XIX* (Rosario, Argentina: Prohistoria Ediciones, 2010), ch. 5. Geler does a much better job than does this dissertation of teasing out especially the gender dimensions of the representations of blackness in this publication.

dance.⁵⁹ In this sense, therefore, Carnival was simultaneously a (contested) ritual, mnemonic site, and public sphere of blackness in the River Plate.⁶⁰

Homi Bhabba has written about the ambivalence of mimicry as a problematic of colonial (and post-colonial) “subjection” and the simultaneous attraction to and repulsion of the “Other” mimicry suggests.⁶¹ Essentially, black-face *comparsas de negros lubolos* offered white Creoles a polyfunctional mechanism which they could employ to

⁵⁹ See Chasteen, “Black Kings, Blackface Carnival, and the Nineteenth-Century Origins of the Tango”; George Reid Andrews, “Remembering Africa, Inventing Uruguay: Sociedades de Negros in the Montevideo Carnival, 1865-1930.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 87, 4 (Nov. 2007): 693-726; Oscar Chamosa, “‘To Honor the Ashes of their Forebearers’: The Rise and Crisis of African Nations in the Post-Independence State of Buenos Aires.” *The Americas* 59, 3 (Jan. 2003): 247-78.

⁶⁰ To unpack this dense theoretical triad of symbol, site, and sphere during Carnival in the River Plate would require a separate dissertation. However, for starters, see Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), on the role of ritual and performance in preserving and disseminating social memory. A ritual is here defined as a repeated and standardized performative and communicative action, in which performance or communication is not merely through signs but also symbols. Stephan Feuchtwang, “Ritual and Memory.” In *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2010): 281. As Salvatore has established, moreover, Afro-Argentines were an essential component of the Rosas-era public sphere, much to the horror of Unitarians. Ricardo D. Salvatore, “Integral Outsiders: Afro-Argentines in the Era of Juan Manuel de Rosas and Beyond.” In *Beyond Slavery: The Multilayered Legacy of Africans in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Darién J. Davis, ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), ch. 3; idem., “Fiestas federales: representaciones de la república en el Buenos Aires rosista.” *Entrepasados: Revista de Historia* 5, 11 (1996): 45-68. On the political importance of the public sphere in Latin America, see Víctor Uribe-Urán, “The Birth of the Public Sphere in Latin America during the Age of Revolution.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, 2 (March 2000): 425-57. Uribe-Urán draws on Jürgen Habermas, the classic public-sphere theorist. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Formation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Thomas Burger, trans. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

⁶¹ “The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry—a difference that is almost nothing but not quite—to menace—a difference that is almost total but not quite. And in that other scene of colonial power, where history turns to farce and presence to 'a part' can be seen the twin figures of narcissism and paranoia that repeat furiously, uncontrollably.” See Homi Bhabba, “Of Mimicry and Men: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” in his *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994): 85-92.

simultaneously derive affirmations of their own inner feelings and paternalism and, through the representation of the black as a hapless clown, a reassurance against whatever physical threat the (remaining) Afro-Platine putatively posed. The apparent nostalgia of blackness evidenced by Creole elites in the late 1800s and early 1900s, even mimicking the African nations at Carnival, established precisely this ambivalence, as well as a tension inherent in their thinking and values concerning the politics of race and nation. On the one hand, blacks were to be remembered as founding but “disappeared” members of the nation, as military heroes and folkloric types, thereby necessitating their mimicry during Carnival in traditional roles; on the other hand, however, the “vanishing” of blacks nonetheless facilitated for elites the creation of a national imaginary of Argentina (and Uruguay) as white and Creole.⁶² The mutual, almost dialectical, relationship in the Creole imaginary between remembering (attraction to) and forgetting (repulsion) of blacks, accepting them or rejecting them, bears witness to the cultural struggles

⁶² The perpetual “vanishing” of the Afro-Argentine, which putatively was well underway by the time of the Generation of 1837, was still ongoing in the twentieth century. Creole writer Juan José Soiza Reilly begins his 1905 nostalgic piece “Gente de color” (“People of Color”) by almost casually observing: “Poco á poco esta raza se extingue” (“Little by little this race disappears”). Intermarriage with whites, for social promotion, seems to have been common and a leading reason for the race’s “vanishing.” Juan José Soiza Reilly, “Gente de color.” *Caras y Caretas* 8, 373 (Nov. 25, 1905): n.p. As late as 1940, leading Argentine intellectual and writer Alvaro Yunque, in a public lecture on black poetry in the Americas, intimated that as the years pass, the black race of Argentina disappears. Black men lie rigid, facing the sky (an allusion to battlefield deaths) throughout the Americas, while in his country Afro-Argentine women unite with “amorous Italians.” Then, sadly invoking Bunge and Ingenieros, Yunque concludes that “tuberculosis finishes the job” of eliminating blacks. Thus, “La gente de color desaparece” (“The black people disappear”). Alvaro Yunque, “Atisbos sobre poesía negra. Conferencia pronunciada por Alvaro Yunque en la década de 1940—Buenos Aires.” <http://alvaroyunque.com.ar/enasyos/alvaro-yunque-atisbos-sbore-poesia-negra.html>.

surrounding national identity and its construction at the end of the nineteenth century in the River Plate republics.⁶³

The commemoration of the black heritage of Argentina and Uruguay among Argentina's Generation of 1880 and other Creole nationalists on both sides of the River Plate estuary was neither random nor isolated. Rather, the widespread nostalgia of blackness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries corresponded to the need of cultural nationalists to invent Creole national myths or traditions to foster a sense of *argentinidad* to offset the threats of European cosmopolitanism.⁶⁴ In this era, both the gaucho and the Afro-Argentine, thought to be largely vanished in actuality, were reimagined as Creoles and recalled nostalgically by cultural nationalists beginning towards the end of the 1800s and growing in intensity by the start of the 1900s. Some, like the fictional gaucho Martín Fierro and the almost equally legendary black soldier of

⁶³ David Guss documents how popular festivals (like Carnival) are contentious and often subversive ideological battlegrounds. David M. Guss, *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2000). The Buenos Aires Carnival of the middle to late nineteenth century, with its mimicry and dueling visions of the nation between Creoles, Afro-Argentines, and even foreign immigrants, serves nicely as a test case for Guss' observations on the cultural performance of ideology. On Italian immigrant performance during Carnival in Buenos Aires in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and their contestation and subversion of embodied Creole discourses on national identity, see Micol Seigal, "Cocoliche's Romp: Fun with Nationalism at Argentina's Carnival." *The Drama Review* 44, 2 (Summer 2000): 56-83. *Cocoliche* was the hybrid dialect developed by Italian immigrants in the Río de la Plata.

⁶⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, and their contributors maintain that national myths and traditions are largely invented and, like social memory itself, largely oriented in the present. These "invented traditions" are a set of practices governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, seeking to inculcate specific values and norms by repetition; although never as old as claimed, these traditions strive for continuity with the past. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions." In *The Invention of Tradition*, Canto ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992 [1983]), 1. Bartolomé Mitre, for instance, invented many such myths and traditions in nineteenth-century Argentina, including the legend of "Falucho," as will be shown in a later chapter.

independence “Falucho,” even became national icons and myths for Creole nationalists at the end of the 1800s. Moreover, an educated cadre of black artists and intellectuals also lent their talents to the Creole nationalist project of memorializing blackness in the Río de la Plata in the fin de siècle.

“Los bienes de nuestros abuelos” (“Our Grandparents’ Legacies”): *Criollos (negros) Memoriosos, Middle to Late Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century*

At around the same time as they were putatively vanishing, at least in the opinions of some within the white *rioplatense* intelligentsia, Afro-Platines were in fact commenting on their communities’ social and political plight in their own cultural production in the second half of the nineteenth century. Often in these cultural manifestations, whether black literature or journalism, the social memory of and about the black community itself in the River Plate was invoked. Black *payadores* (troubadours), especially the legendary Afro-Uruguayan “Ansina” in Paraguayan exile with his leader José Gervasio Artigas and the equally renowned Afro-Argentine Gabino Ezeiza, returned to their respective national pasts by way of specific historical remembrances. Many of these Afro-Platine intellectuals considered themselves as both Creoles and nationalists, and were esteemed as such by their white counterparts, in spite of their often strident criticisms of social injustices in their respective countries. With their white contemporaries, moreover, black writers and artists in the River Plate were concerned about European cosmopolitanism and its deleterious effects on national society. The cultural production of Afro-Platines, as well as their engagement with the dominant social problems of the era, belies the notion of them being some sort of pre-

ideological subjects or agents, lacking a public voice and/or political consciousness.⁶⁵

The recent scholarship of Paulina L. Alberto and Melina Pappademos highlights the roles and importance of black intellectuals as state agents and political activists in the early twentieth century in Brazil and Cuba, respectively.⁶⁶ Significantly, in specific contexts of social and political subalternization, like those experienced by blacks throughout the Americas, even after decolonization, possessing specialized and/or specific knowledge about how and why the hegemonic groups institutionalize their control places some subalterns in a higher or more privileged position or status within their peer group. One can rightly characterize these “subaltern thinkers,” to borrow Lea Geler’s term, as “organic intellectuals” as per Antonio Gramsci. According to Gramsci, every social group in the capitalist world order organically produces within itself a subgroup or class of intellectuals, who give it homogeneity as well as a consciousness of its own function in the social, political, and economic fields. These “organic intellectuals” serve as functionaries mediating between themselves and their social group and the “whole fabric of society” and its “superstructures.”⁶⁷ In post-colonial Latin America,

⁶⁵ On Afro-Argentine intellectuals and their challenges to the hegemonic society, see Lea Geler, “Afro-Porteños at the end of the Nineteenth Century.” *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 7, 2 (2014): 109-13. Of course, the pioneering works of political anthropologist James C. Scott in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1985) and *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1990) ably demolish the myth of the pre-ideological or apolitical subaltern.

⁶⁶ Paulina L. Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2011); and Melina Pappademos, *Black Political Activism and the Cuban Republic* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2011). Pappademos documents that one particular Afro-Cuban writer and intellectual, Rafael Serra Montalvo, a contemporary of José Martí’s, had “El Negro Falucho” as his *nom de plume*.

⁶⁷ Antonio Gramsci, “**Prison Notebooks**: The Intellectuals.” In *An Anthology of Western Marxism: From Lukács and Gramsci to Socialist-Feminism*. Roger S. Gottlieb, ed. (Oxford:

these black intellectuals spoke for their race in the face of a hegemonic society, albeit not always with one voice, and also often evidenced a “double consciousness” as simultaneously members of both a given racial group and nation.⁶⁸

As documented in Chapter three, the River Plate had an appreciable amount of black artisans, artists, and bureaucrats from colonial times. One of the earliest of these black professionals and intellectuals was the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Afro-Uruguayan lawyer and writer Jacinto Ventura de Molina. A “defender of the poor” as a lawyer, Ventura de Molina, writes William G. Acree, Jr., worked among whites and learned to navigate multiple discourses and manipulate the social codes “of the lettered city” of Montevideo as an intellectual and writer.⁶⁹ In his impressive corpus of writings and poems, the lettered black attorney evidenced a deep concern for both the past and

Oxford Univ. Press, 1989), 113, 118. For more on Latin-American intellectuals and their ideological roles, consult Nicola Miller, *In the Shadow of the State: Intellectuals and the Quest for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Spanish America* (London: Verso, 1999). Miller is doubtful of the applicability of Gramsci’s ideas about intellectuals to Spanish America.

⁶⁸ W. E. B. Du Bois originally wrote about the “double consciousness” of African-Americans in his classic *The Souls of Black Folk*, Bantam Classic ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1989 [1903]). See also the more recent treatment of this theme by Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 4th printing (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996). Building and expanding on Gilroy, Kendahl Radcliffe et al. look at black Diasporic intellectuals and their interconnections. Kendahl Radcliffe et al., eds., *Anywhere but Here: Black Intellectuals in the Atlantic World and Beyond* (Jackson, MS: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2015). Despite claiming to broaden Gilroy’s understanding of the African Diaspora, this collection, as is typical in broader academic circles, ignores blackness in the River Plate.

⁶⁹ William G. Acree, Jr., “Jacinto Ventura de Molina: A Black *Letrado* in a White World of Letters, 1776-1841.” *Latin American Research Review* 44, 2 (2009): 37. See also, William G. Acree and Alex Borucki, eds. and comps., *Jacinto Ventura de Molina y los caminos de la escritura negra en el Río de la Plata* (Montevideo: Linardi y Risso, 2008). For a concise biography of Ventura de Molina, Alejandro Gortázar, *El licenciado negro: Jacinto Ventura de Molina* (Montevideo: Ediciones Trilce, 2007).

present of his people.⁷⁰ Jacinto Ventura de Molina thus served as a precursor to or predecessor of other cultured Afro writers and black “organic intellectuals” in both Argentina and Uruguay from the late 1800s until the early 1900s.

Marvin Lewis has written a wonderful book on Afro-Argentine discourses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Working with and building on the ideas of the likes of post-structuralist literary critic Gilles Deleuze and post-colonial theorist Félix Guattari on “minority literature,” Lewis examines a range of themes in the writings of Afro-Argentine literati, including issues of race, personhood, and national identity. Lewis also adopts an explicitly post-colonial approach to interpreting Afro-Argentine literature; however, he also underscores their Creole identity as well as deep-rooted sense of nationalism. While depending on my own readings and drawing my own conclusions from late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Afro-Argentine writers, I will nonetheless freely appropriate Lewis’ exact and elegant translations of their writings.⁷¹

Early, romantic black Argentine poets, especially Mateo Elejalde and Horacio Mendizábal, anticipated later Creole nationalist writers, both white and black, and served as their role models, as they strove to vindicate blacks from the charges of racial inferiority and barbarism previously levelled against them by Sarmiento, Echeverría, and

⁷⁰ Jacinto Ventura de Molina, *Jacinto Ventura de Molina: antología de manuscritos (1817-1833)*. Alejandro Gortázar et al., comps. (Montevideo, Uruguay: Universidad de la República, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, Departamento de Publicaciones, 2008).

⁷¹ See Marvin A. Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse: Another Dimension of the Black Diaspora* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1996), “Introduction.” Specific page citations will be provided in the following notes. Unless otherwise noted, I have retrieved and read for myself many of the works consulted and referenced by Lewis. I will indicate if I am relying solely on Lewis’ translation for any source sight unseen by me.

Mármol. While often writing in a typically romantic vein, extolling love or natural beauty, Elejalde and Mendizábal nonetheless did not forget the sufferings of their race. Elejalde was especially optimistic about the possibility of his brethren's redemption after the trauma of slavery.⁷² In their writings, these Afro-Argentine literati marked the first evidence of a developing Creole nationalism among the blacks in that country in the second half of the nineteenth century, one that would subsequently be further elaborated by others of their race.

Horacio Mendizábal was perhaps the most learned of the Afro-Argentine writers of the era; his poems were published in *Primeros versos (First Verses)* (1865) and *Horas de meditación (Meditation Hours)* (1869). Often, his poetry took on explicitly Afrocentric dimensions, such as in his cry of emancipation "La libertad" ("Liberty"). However, Mendizábal was also motivated by devout passions for the nation and its heroes, especially those of his own race. For example, he devotes two poems to the distinguished black Argentine officer Colonel José María Morales, who fought in the wars of independence and against Rosas.⁷³ In "Alert," the author invokes for his compatriots the memory of the victories of black troops during the wars of independence from Spain: "Remember the renowned victories/Of Ayacucho, Maipu and

⁷² Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 30-33. Elejalde's ode "La redención" ("Redemption") first appeared in the Afro-Argentine newspaper *La Broma* on March 18, 1882. Lewis says that this poem is both a reaction to racist ideology and a call for national unity. What Lewis fails to note is that for many Creole intellectuals, black and white, combating anti-black racism and promoting national unity were seen as part and parcel of the same project of *argentinidad*.

⁷³ For a brief biographical sketch on Colonel Morales, consult Marcos de Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano: 34 biografías* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1979), 141-45.

Junín,/Remember the splendid glories,/Where my forefathers found out how to die.”⁷⁴ In “Commemoration of the Battle of Cepeda,” an 1859 skirmish during the Argentine civil wars of the 1800s, a clear impression of the heroism of Colonel Morales appears: “A bright day it was, sir, how brave/The strong arm of a happy warrior,/Powerful and towering,/A fatal blow, horrible discharge/Against his rival, who fought for the rewards.”⁷⁵ Both of Mendizábal’s martial odes stand as indisputable sites of national memory for his compatriots, black and white alike, about the heroism of colored soldiers on behalf of the Argentine nation.

Perhaps the most extreme example of literary *négritude* in the Afro-Argentine canon, however, is Casildo G. Thompson’s “Song to Africa,” first published in 1877. The poem explicitly attempts to recall the plight of African slaves transported across the Atlantic Ocean during the course of sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. In Thompson’s “Song to Africa,” for instance, the atrocities of the “Middle Passage” continue for the enslaved Africans and are followed up by the destruction of black culture in the New

⁷⁴ “Recordad las insignes victorias/De Ayacucho, de Maipu y Junín,/Recordad las espléndidas glorias,/Do mis padres supieron morir.” Horacio Mendizábal, “Alerta.” *Primeros versos* (Buenos Aires: Imp. de Buenos Aires, 1865), 33. Translation from Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 38.

⁷⁵ “Un lustro hoy há, señor, que valeroso/El abrazo fuerte de feliz guerrero,/Pujante y altanero,/En el combate rudo, pavoroso/Golpe fatal, horrendo descargaba/A su rival, que el lauro disputaba.” Mendizábal, “Commemoración de la Batalla de Cepeda.” *Primeros versos*, 72. Mendizábal states in a disclaimer at the start of the poem that he will not directly identify any of the combatants. However, the figure of Colonel Morales is unmistakable, according to Lewis. Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 38. Lewis is wrong, however, to insist that the service of black soldiers to the nation “was forgotten.” Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 39. As early as the 1806-1807 British invasions of the River Plate, the loyalty of blacks was commemorated, e.g., in Pantaleón Rivarola’s “Romance de la Defensa,” which highlights the part played by “Pablo Jiménez, esclavo.” Pantaleón Rivarola, “Romance de la Defensa.” In *Spanish America in Song and Story: Selections Representing Hispano-American Letters from the Conquest to the Present Day*. Henry Alfred Holmes, comp. and ann. (New York: Holt and Co., 1932), 9-10.

World. Thompson curses the white slavers to never forget their crimes against his race: “May you be white man without faith, may your cruel memory/Be an eternal curse for your history/Let it dishonor the children of your children/And let them wear it on their faces.”⁷⁶ However, if the white man cannot escape from or omit from memory his infamy against the African, Thompson nevertheless urges his colored brethren, in the spirit of national unity, to both forgive and forget the injustices done them: “Now in the name of [national] love slaves and tyrants/Shake hands/Thus the Equality of Justice joins/Them in a confused embrace.”⁷⁷ The Afro-Argentine press of the day praised the poem for its verses against oppression and for its call to unity.⁷⁸ In “Song to Africa,” Casildo G. Thompson invokes collective memory as weapon against racial injustice and as a call for national unification.

“The adaptation of Afro-Argentines to *criollo* values is extremely logical,” writes Lewis, “given their historical sense of loyalty and dedication to the *patria*.”⁷⁹ Argentine literary critic Adolfo Prieto, furthermore, regards turn-of-the-century “criollismo” as

⁷⁶ “Ah! maldito, maldito por mil veces/Seas blanco sin fe, tu cruel memoria/Sea eterno baldón para tu historia/Que deshonne a los hijos de tus hijos/Y lleven en la frente/La mancha de la infamia que tu hicieras.” Casildo G. Thompson, “Canción á Africa.” Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 61-62. The white nineteenth-century Uruguayan poet Francisco Acuña de Figueroa authored a very similar and emotional poem “La madre africana,” thereby illustrating enlightened Creole indignation with slavery and solidarity with the slave. See *Spanish America in Song and Story*, 452-53.

⁷⁷ “Ya en nombre del amor se dan las manos/Esclavos y tiranos/Pues la Igualdad de la Justicia hermana/Los quiere en un abrazo confundidos.” Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 64-65. Here perhaps the last line is better interpreted as suggesting that there is no distinction in law between white and black, a common goal for Creoles, but one that was all too often vitiated or violated in reality.

⁷⁸ Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 66.

⁷⁹ Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 74.

either an expression of nostalgia or a surrogate form of rebellion against the alienation and impositions of urbanity, both associated with the cosmopolitan and foreign.⁸⁰ This thesis maintains that fin-de-siècle “criollismo” was in fact, however, a matter of remembrance as well as a rebellion against cosmopolitanism rather than one of either nostalgia or xenophobia. In this respect, then, the quintessential Creole nostalgists of the period were the Afro-Argentine popular poets or *payadores*, especially Gabino Ezeiza.⁸¹ According to Beatriz Seibel, the “Golden Age” of the Afro-Argentine *payador* tradition coincides perfectly with the development of Creole nationalism between 1890 and 1915, with the Argentine centennial in the middle.⁸² Often, the Creole Afro-Argentine poets bemoaned the passing and forgetting of the traditional; in “The Gaucho,” for example, the black poet Higinio Cazón laments the vanishing of the rural cowboy: “Of the gaucho;

⁸⁰ Prieto, *El discurso criollista*, 18-19.

⁸¹ Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 170. George Reid Andrews insists that the greatest *payadores* of the era were in reality Afro-Argentine and that the *payada* was “almost purely African in its derivation.” The most well-known and remembered Afro-Argentine popular poets of the late 1800s and early 1900s were, besides Ezeiza, Higinio Cazón and Luis García Morel. See Marcelino M. Román, “Los payadores negros.” *Nativa*, Dec. 31, 1953, 20-24. These Creole folk singers often competed in rural stores and circuses. See Raúl H. Castagnino, *El circo criollo. Datos y documentos para su historia, 1757-1924* (Buenos Aires: LaJouane, 1953), esp. ch. 9, “El drama criollo y los circos finiseculares.” A very famous *payada* between Gabino Ezeiza and the Creole Pablo Vásquez is remembered word for word in Pablo Vásquez and Gabino Ezeiza, *Contrapunto entre los payadores Gabino Ezeiza y Pablo Vásquez*, 6th ed. (Rosario, Argentina: Alfonso Longo, 1937?). Perhaps suggestively, the names of the singers are inverted in the interior title page. “Esta payada lleva el sello característico del nacionalismo” (“This contest bears the characteristic stamp of nationalism”), opines Carlos T. Rodríguez in the book’s preface, where he also states that Ezeiza was the winner of the duel.

⁸² Beatriz Seibel, comp. and ed., *El cantar del payador: antología* (Bueno Aires: Ediciones del Sol), 15. In Argentina, July 23 is “The Day of the *Payador*,” to commemorate the famous encounter between Juan Nava and Gabino Ezeiza. In Uruguay, “The Day of the *Payador*” is celebrated on August 23, in honor of the birth of national poet Bartolomé Hidalgo. “Payadas.” <http://payada.com/dia-del-payador>.

not even a memory!”⁸³ Moreover, according Alejandro Solomianski, the greatest Creole Afro-Argentine singer, Gabino Ezeiza, was also very political and promoted national identity against foreign capitalism and cosmopolitanism in his popular and learned verse.⁸⁴

A true “organic intellectual” a la Gramsci, Afro-Argentine Gabino Ezeiza was equally adept at composing popular and erudite verses. As proof of his eminent status as a Creole writer and not just a black folk singer, many of his most famous popular poems—such as “Saludo a Paysandú” (“Greetings to Paysandú”), “El paisano” (“The Countryman”), and “El rastriador” (“The [Gaicho] Tracker”)—have been included in national and patriotic anthologies of folk literature.⁸⁵ One of the few surviving photographs of Gabino Ezeiza shows him immaculately dressed while strumming his legendary guitar.⁸⁶ While clearly a Creole nationalist, Ezeiza did not forget his own African heritage, however, and promoted its memory to his countrymen by way of his poetry. Thus, in “The Slave,” narrated from the vantage point of the African bondman, Ezeiza records that two of the slave’s children were taken from him and sold to other

⁸³ “Del gaucho; ¡ya ni recuerdo!” Higinio Cazón, “El gaucho.” *Alegrías y pesares: canciones nacionales* (Buenos Aires: Maucci, n.d.), 69.

⁸⁴ Alejandro Solomianski, “Desmemorias y genocidios discursivos: cultura letrada afroargentina de fines del siglo XIX.” *PALARA* 7 (Fall 2003): 28.

⁸⁵ <http://www.todotango.com/english/music/song/4333/Saludo-a-Paysandu/> to hear Ezeiza himself sing of the herosim of the Uruguayan people, including the “bravos treinta y tres.”

⁸⁶ The photograph’s caption reads “Argentine ‘payador’ Gabino Ezeiza, considered the best of the genre in his country.” *Caras y Caretas* 5, 204 (Aug. 30, 1902): n.p. For more, go to <http://www.todotango.com/english/history/chronicle/257/Gabino-Ezeiza-the-payador-of-San-Telmo/>. This website has been officially recognized as of “national interest” by the Argentine state.

slave masters. The impotence and trauma suffered by generations of Africans in bondage is alluded to often in Ezeiza's poem.⁸⁷

Gabino Ezeiza combines his sense of racial and national pride, thereby evidencing a "double consciousness" common among black minorities in the New World, in "I Am" ("Yo soy"). The poem begins by immediately invoking the historical memory of the legendary Afro-Argentine independence hero, "Falucho": "I am of the race of Falucho" ("Soy de la raza de Falucho"). However, he then laments the nation's employment of blacks to win and consolidate independence only to cast them to the side once victory was secured: "old shield that has saved/the life of who carried it/and with disdain threw it away/when it became a hindrance" ("viejo escudo que ha salvado/la vida a quien lo llevaba/y con desdén lo arrojaba/cuando le llegó a estorbar").⁸⁸ Gabino Ezeiza thus makes no secret of his (and his race's) loyalty to the nation even as he challenges his compatriots to remember the sacrifices of his black brothers and to live up to the democratic ideals of independence and the national Constitution.

⁸⁷ "Of the children I had/The two of them were born slaves/And my owners sold them/Where will I find them?" ("De los hijos que tenía/Los dos esclavos nacieron/Y mis amos los vendieron/¿Dónde los encontraré?") "There is nothing for me! Eternal night/Of misfortune!" ("No hay para mí! noche eterna/De desventura!") Gabino Ezeiza, *Cantares criollos por Gabino Ezeiza, payador argentino* (Buenos Aires: N. Tommasi, 1886), 15. Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 107-8.

⁸⁸ Gabino Ezeiza, *Nuevas canciones inéditas del payador argentino Gabino Ezeiza* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Gauchesca, 1897), 42. Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 120. In "El combate de San Lorenzo," in his *Recuerdos del payador: composiciones populares por Gabino Ezeiza* (Editorial Andrés Pérez Cuberes, 1946), 37, 39, Ezeiza invokes the memory of another Afro-Argentine hero of independence, one far less mythical than "Falucho," Juan Bautista Cabral, who died defending General San Martín at the Battle of San Lorenzo (1813). For "Cabral they have already built a colossal monument," writes Ezeiza ("a Cabral ya le erigieron/una estatua colosal" [my translation]).

Lewis intimates that Gabino Ezeiza expanded the meaning of the Creole to incorporate the Afro-Argentine, expressing himself in a way familiar to blacks and whites alike, while maintaining “a strong sense of his black personhood.”⁸⁹ Consequently, Gabino Ezeiza’s poems are powerful reminders of the importance of blackness in the River Plate, and Ezeiza himself has been often remembered by his fellow Creole nationalists of the fin de siècle and early twentieth century as a truly national (and nationalist) poet.⁹⁰

Gabino Ezeiza did not forget to commemorate his racial brethren across the River Plate either. In “A los treinta y tres” (“To the Thirty Three”), Ezeiza poetically recalls the heroism of the “immortal thirty three” Uruguayans, led by Juan Antonio Lavalleja, who fought for the liberation of the Banda Oriental (Uruguay) from the Brazilian Empire in

⁸⁹ Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 125. For more on Gabino Ezeiza, see Luis Soler Cañas, “Gabino Ezeiza: verdad y leyenda.” *Todo es Historia* 1, 2 (June 1967): 65-77; Donald S. Castro, “The Afro-Argentine ‘Payador’ Tradition: The Art of Gabino Ezeiza.” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 13, 2 (Fall 1994): 9-17; and Alejandro Solomianski, “Gabino Ezeiza y su recuperación dentro del imaginario de la identidad nacional argentina.” *Cincinnati Romnace Review* 30 (Winter 2011): 53-68.

⁹⁰ The 1933 milonga-homage “El adiós de Gabino Ezeiza,” lyrics by Héctor Blomberg and music by Enrique Maciel, begins and ends with the singer, Ignacio Corsini, acting as Ezeiza, pleading for his native Buenos Aires to not forget him. <http://www.todotango.com/english/music/song/1148/El-adios-de-Gabino-Ezeiza/>. *La Prensa* even published a note on his burial, “Gabino Ezeiza. Sepelio de sus restos.” *La Prensa*, Oct. 14, 1916, 7. A watherbeaten bust of Ezeiza is located in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, in the Mataderos district. Ofelio Vecchio, *Plazas, plazoletas y monumentos de Mataderos* (Buenos Aires: n.p., 1995), 61. A newer monument to Ezeiza was inaugurated in 2010 during the “XXIX Encuentro Nacional del Payador,” held in the sea-side community of San Clemente del Tuyú, in southern Buenos Aires province. *Otra Mirada* (March 2010). http://otramirada-gala.blogspot.com/2010_03_01_archive.html. Gabino Ezeiza is often remembered as the last of the *payadores*. E.g., Rodolfo Senet, “Como improvisaba Gabino.” *La Prensa*, June 24, 1928, 5; and Francisco García Jiménez, *Memoria y fantasmas de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Corregidor, 1976), “Gabino Ezeiza: el último payador,” 131-38.

1825.⁹¹ Among the heroes were several Afro-Uruguayans. The most memorable black Uruguayan hero and *payador* was “Ansina,” however.⁹² “Ansina” (Joaquín Lencina or Lenzina or Manuel Antonio Ledesma?) fought alongside his leader José Gervasio Artigas, Uruguayan national hero, during the Banda Oriental’s civil wars and followed his *caudillo* into Paraguayan exile.⁹³ Because of his loyalty to Artigas and skills as a folk singer and popular poet, “Ansina” earned the title of “fiel payador de Artigas” (“Artigas’ faithful troubadour”).⁹⁴ Often called “Tío Lencina” (“Uncle Lencina”), Oscar Montaña observes that the black hero was a hybrid of sorts, part shield-bearer and part folk

⁹¹ Gabino Ezeiza, “A los treinta y tres.” *Colección de canciones del payador Gabino Ezeiza* (Buenos Aires: N. Tomassi, 1900?), 16-19. A painting by Juan Manuel Blanes, “El Juramento de los Treinta y Tres Orientales” (“The Oath of the Thirty Three Orientals [Uruguayans]”) (1877) hangs in the Montevideo National Museum of Visual Arts and serves as a visual reminder to the Uruguayan people of their struggle for independence from Brazil. Jacinto Carranza, *¿Cuántos eran los treinta y tres?* (Montevideo: Talleres Gráficos “33,” SA, 1946), on the makeup of these Uruguayan patriots.

⁹² For a ready biography of this black military hero, see Roberto Pacheco, “Ansina (1760?-1860).” In *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*. Carole Boyce-Davies, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008): 90-91.

⁹³ Daniel Hammerly Dupuy, “Rasgos biográficos de Artigas en el Paraguay.” In *Artigas. Estudios publicados en “El País” como homenaje al jefe de los orientales en el centenario de su muerte, 1850-1950*, 2nd ed. Edmundo M. Narancio, ed. (Montevideo: Ediciones “El País,” 1959), 249-60. Hammerly Dupuy identifies Joaquín Lenzina as the real “Ansina.” Hammerly Dupuy, “Rasgos biográficos de Artigas,” 260n.17. Mario Petillo, then Inspector of Primary Education for the Uruguayan Army, however, affirms that “Ansina” was in reality Manuel Antonio Ledesma. Mario Petillo, *El último soldado artiguista, Manuel Antonio Ledesma (Ansina)* (Montevideo: Imp. Municipal, 1937). The “Comité Pro-Homenaje a Don Manuel Antonio Ledesma (Ansina)” was established in 1939 and published a journal annually between 1939 and 1942, *Ansina: Manuel Antonio Ledesma*, to preserve the memory of the black gaucho hero. Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation*, 106, 202n.104.

⁹⁴ Daniel Hammerly Dupuy, “Ansina: el fiel payador de Artigas.” In *Artigas en la poesía de América*, vol. 1. Daniel Hammerly Dupuy and Víctor Hammerly Peverini, comps. and eds. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Noel, 1951), ch. 3. “Ansina” has a monument to his memory in downtown Montevideo. I. Casaretto, *Estatuaria urbana de Montevideo (capital de la República Oriental del Uruguay)* (Montevideo: n.p., 1948), n.p.

singer.⁹⁵ Of “Ansina,” Ildefonso Pereda Valdés notes that he was an indisputable symbol, the very incarnation of the *patria* (fatherland) and of the struggle for national liberation.⁹⁶ Early-twentieth-century black Uruguayan poet José Roberto Suárez, however, invokes the memory of “Ansina” as a political challenge for the present. In his poem “Es así” (“It Is This Way”), first published in the black journal *Nuestra Raza*, he writes: “Enough boasting/With the loyalty of Ansina/The rage of Falucho and Videla,/It is not this way we will reach the top.” (“Basta ya con ufanarnos/Con fidelidad de Ansina/El coraje de Falucho y Videla,/No es así que subiremos a la cima.”)⁹⁷ The historical memory of “Ansina” has recently been preserved and passed on to a younger generation of Uruguayans by white and black Uruguayan activists devoted to remembering their nation’s black heritage and past.⁹⁸ Another truly gifted subaltern

⁹⁵ Oscar D. Montañó, “Ansina: la senda del guerrero.” In *La herencia cultural africana en las Américas*. Colección Afroamérica XXI, vol. 1. Beatriz Santos, comp. (Montevideo: Ediciones Populares Para América Latina, 1998), 117. Montañó also regards Lencina or Lenzina as the authentic “Ansina.”

⁹⁶ Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, *El negro en la epopeya artiguista* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, SA, 1964), 2. The cover page reminds Uruguayans that 1964 marked the bicentennial of the birth of Artigas.

⁹⁷ In Marvin A. Lewis, *Afro-Uruguayan Literature: Post-Colonial Perspectives* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2003), 41. Note the juxtaposition of “Ansina” and two Afro-Argentine heroes of independence, “Falucho” and Videla. In “Ansina,” Suárez entones about the black soldier’s relationship to Artigas: “One is father of the Nation/the other, the most pure expression/of the feeling of the Black Race, who gave his life saving its honor” (“El uno, es Padre de la Patria,/el otro, la más pura expresión/del sentir de la Negra Raza,/que dió su vida salvando el honor”). Lewis, *Afro-Uruguayan Literature*, 42. Afro-Uruguayan poet José Roberto Suárez in these two poems embodies the “double consciousness” of race and nation common within the African-New World Diaspora. For another compilation of Afro-Uruguayan poetry, see Alberto Britos Serrat, comp., *Antología de poetas negros uruguayos* (Montevideo: Ediciones Mundo Afro, 1990).

⁹⁸ E.g., Equipo Interdisciplinario de Rescate de la Memoria de Ansina, *Ansina me llaman y Ansina yo soy...* (Montevideo: Rosebud Ediciones, 1996). This work opens with an 1883 tribute by Luisa Luisi to the memory of “Ansina”: “Si ayer, casi todos te olvidaron,/hoy te

“organic intellectual,” “Ansina’s” poetic *oeuvre* has been compiled over the years to remind generations of “Orientals” (Uruguayans) of their national hero Artigas and the debt owed to his faithful black companions.⁹⁹

“Ansina,” as with most Creole nationalists of the second half of the 1800s, white or black, was fond of nostalgic reminiscences of his homeland, its scenery, and customs, a sentiment no doubt exacerbated by his and his companions’ war-time exile. Despite his clear appreciation for his adopted country, Paraguay, the folkloric *ombú* plant of the Platine plains nevertheless excites the black *payador’s* memory in his poem “¡Viva el oriental que ama al Paraguay!” (“Long Live the Oriental who Loves Paraguay!”).¹⁰⁰ In his recollections or poetic memory about the events leading to his first meeting Artigas, “Ansina” remembers that he was told as a child that his African mother died giving him birth; moreover, he also has strong and fond childhood memories of the traditional Carnival of colonial Montevideo and the “enthusiastic” drumming, music, and dancing of

recordamos,/porque entras en la historia con el Prócer,/¡Artigas y Ansina!” (“If yesterday you were all but forgotten,/today we remember you,/because you have made history with our Founding Father,/Artigas and Ansina!” [my translation]).

⁹⁹ “Ansina” makes these points for himself in his autobiography, *Memorias de Ansina*, edited by Diego Bracco (Montevideo: Editorial Fin del Siglo, 1963-1964?). In 1939, “Ansina’s” remains were repatriated and interred next to Artigas’s in the National Pantheon. His memory is passed on in the number of black social clubs throughout Uruguay named after “Ansina.” Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation*, 202n.104.

¹⁰⁰ Joaquín Lenzina (Ansina), “¡Viva el oriental que ama al Paraguay!” In *Artigas en la poesía de América*, vol. 2, 403. See also his ode to Paraguay, “La tierra del puma y la del jaguar.” In *Artigas en la poesía de América*, vol. 2, 450.

“the blacks.”¹⁰¹ He also remembers as a young man working as a water carrier, a typical job for black men in that day, from morning to sunset.¹⁰²

His most moving poetic recollections, however, are reserved for his leader, Artigas, and for his fellow black compatriots as well. For example, perhaps writing about himself or other black soldiers faithful to Artigas, such as his good friend and benefactor Manuel Antonio Ledesma, “Ansina” rhymes: “Morito te llaman,/¡Heroico moro oriental!/Los patriotas te aclaman/Hasta la hora fatal” (“Little Moor they call you,/Oh heroic Uruguayan Moor!/The patriots cheer for you/Until the fatal hour comes!).¹⁰³ To the memory of his deceased leader, “Ansina” sings to the eternal glory of the “Protector.” He also asks his listeners, regardless of race, to remember together when the “chains of injustice and vile oppression that they carried with pain and shame,” were lifted from them by the “Protector” Artigas, who represented “their freedom.”¹⁰⁴ Afro-Uruguayan “Ansina’s” popular poems, like those of Ezeiza in Argentina, were important memorials to the black race of the Río de la Plata and their services to their nations in the years leading up to the region’s centennial of independence in the early twentieth century.

¹⁰¹ Joaquín Lenzina (Ansina), “Así lo conocí a Artigas....” In *Artigas en la poesía de América*, vol. 2, 470.

¹⁰² Joaquín Lenzina (Ansina), “Un siglo de recuerdos.” In *Artigas en la poesía de América*, vol. 2, 472.

¹⁰³ Joaquín Lenzina (Ansina), “El morito de Artigas.” In *Artigas en la poesía de América*, vol. 2, 439. Moor was often code for black in the Hispanic-American world, itself a historical memory of Spain’s centuries-long Moorish occupation during the Middle Ages.

¹⁰⁴ “¡Recordemos cuando las cadenas/De injusta y vil opresión/Arrastráramos con dolor y penas!/¡Artigas fué nuestra liberación!” Joaquín Lenzina (Ansina), “Gloria al Protector.” In *Artigas en la poesía de América*, vol. 2, 675.

However, the verses of these two legendary *payadores* were not the only realms of black remembrances of their own past, since the Afro-Platine press of the day also played a major role in socially remembering the region's Afro heritage and contributions.

Solomianski signals the importance of the black press and biographies of Afro-Argentines as key sources of black collective identity.¹⁰⁵ Prominent black writers, including Gabino Ezeiza himself, often published in late-nineteenth-century black newspapers. In fact, Froilán P. Bello, Afro-Argentine journalist, editorialist, and editor, was a well-respected member of the Buenos Aires press of his day and a champion of black causes.¹⁰⁶ Bello and white Creole publisher Héctor F. Varela, arguably one of the most important journalists of the day, often collaborated to denounce anti-black racism in the Buenos Aires of the *fin de siècle*.¹⁰⁷ Notable black newspapers of the end of the 1800s were *El Proletario*, *Los Negros*, *La Broma*, *La Juventud*, and *La Igualdad*. However, as George Reid Andrews shows, opinions were not monolithic and the black press also reflected social, political, and ideological tensions within the Afro-Argentine

¹⁰⁵ Solomianski, "Desmemorias y genocidios discursivos," 29. Incredibly, Solomianski asserts that these texts have been erased from Argentina's cultural history. If this were so, then one would not expect them to be so well-preserved and compiled so that past and present scholars could access them so readily. Moreover, these texts were cited or at least already known to past white Creole intellectuals and memorialists, such as Vicente Rossi.

¹⁰⁶ De Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 172-76.

¹⁰⁷ Varela, another "criollo blanco memorioso," argued that it would be infamous to deny a black person, whose blood was required to defend the country's freedom when threatened, access to public places like a dance hall, when certain whites, who are not worth the soles of the shoes of one of those blacks, are regularly allowed entrance ("sería infame admitir que a ese negro y a ese mulato, al que se les pide su sangre para defender la libertad los días en que está amenazada, se le negase la entrada a un baile de máscaras al cual suelen entrar *blancos* [emphasis in the original] que no valen la suela del zapato de uno de esos negros y mulatos"). Luis Soler Cañas, "Pardos y morenos en el año 80...." *Revista del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas Juan Manuel de Rosas* 23 (1963): 275-76.

community.¹⁰⁸ The journalistic production by Afro-Argentines themselves at the end of the 1800s certainly betrays the idea that they had vanished, however, as a viable social entity. In addition, what Afro-Argentines wrote and wished to preserve and pass on to future generations of black citizens of the Río de la Plata bears witness to the Afrodescended community's interest in being socially remembered on their own terms.¹⁰⁹

The Afro-Argentine press especially remembered the military sacrifices of their community and the recognition and rights owed them by their nation and compatriots.¹¹⁰ Thus, for instance, *La Broma* made clear the intent of the black community to make its presence known at the upcoming national celebrations for the centennial of the birth of San Martín.¹¹¹ *La Broma* also acknowledged the Afro-Uruguayan community's donations for the purchase of a large, metal funeral wreath for San Martín's sarcophagus.¹¹² Black readers are reminded that the rights of African descendants in the River Plate were purchased with blood: "Our rights.... It seems a lie that an enlightened

¹⁰⁸ George Reid Andrews, "Race versus Class Association: The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1850-1900." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 11, 1 (May 1979): 19-39. Afro-Uruguayans had their own news and literary organs, such as *La Conservación* and *Nuestra Raza*. Lewis, *Afro-Uruguayan Literature*, ch. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Tomás A. Platero credits the return of Argentina to democracy in the mid-1980s as stimulating interest in the collective memory about Afro-Argentines. Tomás A. Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros. La Broma y otros periódicos de la comunidad afroargentina (1873-1882)* (Buenos Aires: Inst. Histórico de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2004), 12. I will be using this compilation of primary sources from the black press of Buenos Aires.

¹¹⁰ So, too, did the Afro-Uruguayan press. E.g., in his poem "Song to My Race," published in the Afro-Oriental newspaper "El Periódico" in 1873, black writer Marcos Padín recalled to his racial brethren that "your grandfathers ... won laurels for your august race" through their military services. Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation*, 33-34, 184 n. 46.

¹¹¹ Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros*, 41.

¹¹² Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros*, 35.

society such as ours, so decent and refined, could not recognize the worth of the glorious traditions of the battalions of Blacks and mulattoes who etched with their blood on the fields of Mayo and Chacabuco during the wars of our independence! (“Nuestros derechos... ¡Parece mentira que una sociedad tan ilustrada, tan decente, tan fina, como la nuestra, no supiera rendir culto a las tradiciones gloriosas que en la guerra de nuestra independencia, grabaron con su sangre, en los campos de Mayo y Chacabuco, los Batallones de negros y mulatos!...”)¹¹³ The sacrifices for the nation of black soldiers cannot and should not be forgotten by white or black alike.

Sadly, however, their patriotic sacrifices were apparently too often forgotten by national leaders and social elites, at least according to the Afro-Argentine press of the day. This was in violation of the national Constitution that proclaims racial equality. The black press vigorously protested the exclusion of their community from certain public places and deplored segregation in general. Therefore, black commentators claimed that “equality in our country only exists in form alone.”¹¹⁴ Besieged by massive foreign immigration that undermined their labor and social position in the country and the other social injustices faced by the black community of Buenos Aires, *La Broma*'s editorialist claimed that blacks were in effect “... strangers in their own country.” The response served as a clarion call for unity within and among the different sectors of black

¹¹³ Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros*, 47. All translations here are mine.

¹¹⁴ Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros*, 47-48. Politicians are especially signaled out for hypocrisy and violating black rights guaranteed by the law of the land. Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros*, 50, 53. Also using Afro-Argentines newspapers, Lea Geler makes a similar point in “Aquí... Se habla de política.’ La participación de los afroporteños en las elecciones presidenciales de 1874.” *Revista de Indias* 67, 240 (2007): 459-83.

society at the end of the nineteenth century in Buenos Aires.¹¹⁵ For the black *porteño* or Buenos Aires press of the end of the nineteenth century, then, collective memory served both communal and political ends, namely, to remind their own racial brethren of their sacrifices for the nation and consequently the justice of their demand for civil rights.

Historical memory was thus vitally important for the black press of Buenos Aires in the fin de siècle. For instance, an anonymous piece appearing in *La Broma* on April 30, 1881 asked why current Afro-Argentines cared so little to remember what their forbearers had bequeathed to them. Even the heritage of the African nations and their dances, so denigrated by and among certain liberal elites, should be remembered and praised by all Afro-Argentines, insisted the anonymous editorialist. The grandchildren of blacks even abandoned their ancestral homes, neighborhoods, and communal centers. This historical amnesia among blacks themselves was a tragedy and impediment to race unity. “Our grandparents’ legacies,” the author proclaimed, “should not be exploited indignantly, if for no other reason than respect for the memory of those whose blood we carry in our own veins today.”¹¹⁶ This black editorialist, therefore, resisted hegemonic

¹¹⁵ Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros*, 42, 55. In 1878, Gabino Ezeiza published a poem “La unión” in *La Juventud*: “Unity was the strength/and was vital for our great nations that liberty enjoy;/and unity is the basis of all great societies...” (“La unión era la fuerza/y fueros las vitales/de nuestros grandes pueblos que gozan libertad;/y la unión es la base de grandes sociedades...”.) In Norberto Pablo Cirio, comp., *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer. Los afroporteños a través de sus periódicos entre 1873 y 1882* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Nacional; Editorial Teseo, 2009), 124.

¹¹⁶ Cirio, comp., *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer*, 206-07. In the original, the text reads: “... los bienes de nuestros abuelos, no deben indignamente ser explotados, siquiera por respeto a la memoria de los que llevaron en sus venas la sangre que hoy corre por las nuestras.” The editorial concludes by boasting: “LA BROMA hoy ... se hace defensor de los intereses que por LOS BIENES DE NUESTROS ABUELOS, heredamos!” (“Today LA BROMA declares itself champion of THE HERITAGE OF OUR GRANDPARENTS!”)

discourses of “whitening” by unabashedly appealing to the historical remembrances of his racial forerunners and *confrère*.

The following day, perhaps the same editorialist published a piece in *La Broma* entitled “Cosas que nacen y mueren en el misterio” (“Things Mysteriously Born and Perishing”). The lengthy editorial asked a series of rhetorical questions, all concluding that blacks were the victims of “misery and injustice” in their society. It goes on to recall once more the glorious military feats of black soldiers in the nation’s wars, but queried “who remembers Barcala, Sosa, Mansilla, or the many, nameless others who generously shed their blood and died as heroes on the battlefield?” Railing against the country’s historical amnesia, the writer regretted that national history was so ungrateful, forgetting to record on its pages of glory the names of all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the fatherland (“La historia patria es ingrata, olvidando de grabar en sus páginas gloriosas, los nombres de los que supieron sacrificarse por la patria”). The black editorialist also pointed out the success of Afro-Argentine painters such as Blanco de Aguirre and Bernardino Posadas, apparently unknown to or not remembered by either blacks or whites in that day. Such mnemonic slights forced this author to conclude: “So much injustice in this miserable world!” (¡Cuánta injusticia en este mundo miserable!).¹¹⁷ While in no way suggesting that such critiques by black intellectuals

¹¹⁷ Cirio, comp., *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer*, 207-09. This writer, however, either himself forgets or elects to edit out the already by then growing movement to commemorate blacks in Argentina. None other than former president and father of modern Argentine historiography Bartolomé Mitre enshrined several Afro-descended figures, especially “Falucho,” in his so-called “gallery of Argentine celebrities,” to borrow Nicolás Shumway’s phrase. On Mitre’s “gallery” of national heroes, consult Nicolás Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), ch. 8.

prompted the official memorialization of blackness at the end of the nineteenth century, Afro-Platine Creole nationalists, including the above-named Blanco de Aguirre, nevertheless played major roles in promoting the subsequent remembrances of past black figures, especially “Falucho.”

Writer Jorge Miguel Ford, who like artist José Blanco de Aguirre was a member of the black Buenos Aires elite, was arguably the most significant late-nineteenth-century Creole Afro-Argentine memorialist. His 1899 book *Beneméritos de mi estirpe* (*Worthies of My Race*) was an explicit attempt, as Ford’s contemporary, historian and educator Augusto Marcó del Pont declares in the preface to Ford’s original work, to “redeem” the memory of so many black Argentines who had helped forge the nation and enlighten it with their estimable sacrifices and talents in different cultural fields of endeavor.¹¹⁸ In a prologue to a new and revised edition (2002) of Ford’s book, furthermore, progressive intellectual and lawyer Eduardo Luis Duhalde maintains the continued relevance of Ford’s narrative commemoration of his race because Afro-Argentines were “erased” from Argentina’s official history and remained forgotten in official discourses.¹¹⁹

As an indication of his standing within his own community and in wider social circles of the day, Jorge Miguel Ford dedicated his original book to the distinguished

¹¹⁸ Augusto Marcó del Pont, “La redención de una raza.” In Jorge Miguel Ford, *Beneméritos de mi estirpe. Esbozos sociales* (La Plata, Argentina: Tipografía de la Escuela de Artes y Oficios, 1899), 3. According to Augusto Marcó del Pont, whatever defects the black race possessed were the result of slavery; echoing Sarmiento, he blames “un fraile *humanitario*” (“a *humanitarian* monk”), namely, Father de Las Casas, for slavery and the plight of the black man in the New World. Also, slavery and the abandonment by his nation caused blacks to feel the pangs of collective nostalgia for their own forgotten lands and pasts.

¹¹⁹ Eduardo Luis Duhalde, “Prólogo a la presente edición.” In Jorge Miguel Ford, *Beneméritos de mi estirpe. Esbozos sociales* (Buenos Aires: Catálogos, 2002 [1899]), 11. The “whitewashing” of history to thereby eliminate blackness from national memory is adduced by Paul Gilroy,

Argentine statesman and writer Dr. Joaquín Castellanos, a noted liberal and leader of the Radical Party. Ford did not, however, seem particularly interested in engaging racialist debates of his day, perhaps owing to their divisive nature, a quality most unpopular with black and white Creole nationalists. Instead, his stated goal was to pass along to his readers “la perpetuación de la memoria de tanto hombre activo e intelijente que ha poseído nuestra raza en las riberas del Plata” (“the preservation of the memory of so many active and intelligent black men living along the coasts of the River Plate”).

In what is perhaps a glancing blow at the endemic social problems of his day (e.g., “mercantilismo presente” [“present commercialism”] and “fervido oleaje de la lucha por la vida” [“fervent struggle to make a life”]) and their impacts on his racial brethren, Ford also indulges in a bit of nostalgia of his own and offers his work as a gesture or act of “veneration” to “those indefatigable workers and descendants of the African race” who contributed their natural talents (“naturales dotes”) to the society of the Río de la Plata.¹²⁰ Jorge Miguel Ford begins his own gallery of black celebrities significantly enough with one of the most important black soldiers and patriots of that century, Lorenzo I. Barcala, to whom Sarmiento also dedicated significant space and

“*There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*”: *The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 2002 [1987]). Again, this charge seems at best overstated in Argentina’s case in light of Mitre’s and others’ repeated invocations of black patriots. Mitre’s contributions to the commemoration of blackness in Argentina will be addressed in Chapter nine.

¹²⁰ Jorge Miguel Ford, *Beneméritos de mi stirpe. Esbozos sociales* (La Plata, Argentina: Tipografía de la Escuela de Artes y Oficios, 1899), 7, 8. Ford promised a second volume that never appeared, however. It would have been interesting to see what black “worthies” (perhaps women or “Falucho”?) might have been added to his subsequent biographical compendium.

praise.¹²¹ Ford includes several biographies of other soldiers, e.g., Domingo Sosa and José María Morales, and many distinguished writers, artists, and public figures of the black race in Argentina at the end of the nineteenth century.¹²² Jorge Miguel Ford's *Beneméritos* was a worthy attempt at promulgating the social memory of blackness in Argentina at the end of the 1800s, a time when nationalists and Creoles were increasingly turning to commemoration and other sites of memory, including festivals and

¹²¹ Ford, *Beneméritos de mi estirpe* (1899), 8-20. A portrait of Colonel Barcala is prominently featured in the beginning of Ford's book. Recall that Sarmiento referred to Barcala as the "illustrious black" man in his *Facundo*. See also Domingo F. Sarmiento, "El Jeneral Frai Félix Aldao. Gobernador de Mendoza." *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 7 (*Quiroga, Aldao, El Chacho, 1845-1863*) (Santiago, Chile: Imprenta Gutenberg, 1889), 241-76, which details Barcala's military and political involvements in his native western Mendoza province during the Rosas era, and his eventual execution by federalist leader Aldao in 1835. A commemorative biography of Colonel Barcala published at the height of conservative nationalism, just before the 1930 military coup d'état, was José Canale, *El Coronel Lorenzo Barcala (contribución al estudio de la vida militar argentina)* (Buenos Aires: Soc. de Publicaciones El Inca, 1927).

¹²² Ford, *Beneméritos de mi estirpe* (1899). Solomianski argues that Ford exhibits racial consciousness. No doubt that *Beneméritos* evidences as much; however, I could find no sustained commentary on Ford's explicit racial ideology in his own words, and Solomianski provides no such documentation either. Solomianski, "Desmemorias y genocidios discursivos," 29. Solomianski also attacks Marcos de Estrada's *Argentinos de origen africano* (cited above) as racist and fascist and explicitly associates the book with the military junta then in power. His "proof" for this charge is the number of entries dedicated to soldiers in *Argentinos de origen africano*. Solomianski, "Desmemorias y genocidios discursivos," 29-30. Yet, Ford devotes several entries to blacks with a military past as well. According to George Reid Andrews, of the fifteen prominent Afro-Argentines, nine were military officers. George Reid Andrews, "The Afro-Argentine Officers of Buenos Aires Province, 1800-1860." *Journal of Negro History* 64, 2 (Spring 1979): 97. Again, since Jorge Miguel Ford himself alluded to a second volume that was never published, it is impossible to prove or disprove who else he would have included among his worthies of remembrance. However, it is not inconceivable that other black military figures would have been featured given 1) their role in Argentina's (military) history and 2) Ford's own inclusion of soldiers in *Beneméritos*. Perhaps de Estrada was a fascist; yet, I remain singularly unconvinced by Solomianski's logic on this matter and suggest that his discourse is motivated by a certain Afrocentric "political correctness" and barely concealed ideological bias.

monuments, to inculcate a sense of national identity among a growing and heterogeneous population.¹²³

By the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, the black intelligentsia of the River Plate had united with some white Creole elites to promote the historical memory of the black race in their countries for explicitly nationalistic purposes. While far less nostalgic than their white counterparts about their race's and nations' pasts, Afro-Platine writers and thinkers nevertheless appealed to historical remembrances to demand respect from their compatriots and equality before the laws of their respective lands. By the start of the twentieth century, Creole memorialists and traditionalists continued to use fond (if paternalistic) memories of their black past and heritage to simultaneously promote a conservative brand of cultural nationalism and further discredit liberal cosmopolitanism, as was documented in the last chapter. One of the main ways the black was historically remembered and socially commemorated in the Río de la Plata on the eve of centennial celebrations, as has already been alluded to and will be shown in the next two chapters, was their condition of soldiers and national heroes.

Conclusion

¹²³ Patriotic festivals were essential nation-building practices throughout Latin America after independence. Rebecca Earle, "'Padres de la Patria' and the Ancestral Past: Commemorations of Independence in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, 4 (Nov. 2002), 775-805. These festivals repeated the same rituals: fireworks, raffles, religious services, alms giving, and patriotic speeches. For Argentine civic festivals in the post-independence era, consult Juan Carlos Garavaglia, "A la nación por la fiesta: las fiestas mayas en el origen de la nación en el Plata." *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana "Dr. Emilio Ravignani"* Third Series, no. 22 (Second Semester 2000): 73-81; and Hans Vogel, "Fiestas patrias y nuevas lealtades." *Todo es Historia* 25, 287 (1991): 42-50. The role of monuments in nation-building in Latin America is discussed by Miguel A. Centeno, "War and Memories: Symbols of the State in Latin America." *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, no. 66 (June 1999): 75-105.

As seen in the preceding chapter, Creole cultural nationalists, who came of age in the 1880s, grew up in a time of rapid social, political, and economic transformations in the River Plate region. These disconcerting times simultaneously generated among certain cultural conservatives both xenophobia and “a mood of nostalgia” for a putatively better and more traditional past, one in which blacks and gauchos were still present. The putative vanishing of both once viable social groups, however, allowed for them to be romanticized by Creole nationalists by the end of the 1800s. Afro-Argentine nationalists also weighed in on the dominant social issues of the time, however.¹²⁴ The black Argentine newspaper *La Igualdad*, for example, denounced the disinterest among immigrants to take advantage of that country’s generous naturalization laws. The writer pointed out that the foreigners were also enemies of Argentina’s patriotic battles and wars, thus betraying their anti-nationalism.¹²⁵ Another writer in *La Broma* expressed his sadness over the plight of blacks in Argentina and resented the social problems of the country, associated with foreigners.¹²⁶ Afro-Argentine Congressional orderly Mamerto Fidel Quinteros, who self-identified as a conservative, patriot, and traditionalist, furthermore, denounced the lack “patriotic instinct” among immigrants and their descendants, who lack “memory” of the greatness of the *patria*. Quinteros thus stated that if he ever occupied a political post above that of orderly, which, interestingly, attested to

¹²⁴ E.g., Gabino Ezeiza’s measured anti-immigration song “Cosmopolísimo” (1905). Compact Disc. *Before the Tango: Argentina’s Folk Tradition, 1905-1936* (Portugal: Arquivos de Música, 1998).

¹²⁵ Cirio, comp., *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer*, 104.

¹²⁶ Cirio, comp., *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer*, 181.

his faith in the government to look past his race, he would propose legislation that only permitted native-born Argentines, at least one generation removed from their immigrant forbearers, to serve in Congress.¹²⁷

Beyond simple xenophobia, however, Creole nationalists and memorialists responded to the perceived threat of the foreign “Other” by nostalgically commemorating the previously denigrated Afro-Argentine. Erstwhile federalist Lucio V. Mansilla, a key member of the nineteenth-century Creole intellectual elite, fondly remembered from his youth the days of black street vendors, before they were displaced by immigrants, and also the lively *candombes*. Mansilla especially recalled his family’s loyal black servants with a tinge of nostalgia; “tío Tomás” was remembered for his scary ghost stories, while “el negro Perico” gave the family’s children rides on his back.¹²⁸ Domingo F. Sarmiento in his *Recuerdos de provincia (Reflections of a Provincial Past)* also remembered with nostalgia the “noisy groups of black slaves of both sexes” (“bandadas de negros esclavos de ambos sexos”) who attended the powerful Albarracín clan of his native San Juan de la Frontera province. For example, two young slave girls dutifully watched over the family matriarch, Doña Antonia, while she slept in her “gilded bed chamber” (“la dorada alcoba”). At meal time, Sarmiento fondly reminisced about a six-piece orchestra of male slaves, who played beautiful “sonatas on violins and harps to liven the feasts of their

¹²⁷ Mamerto Fidel Quinteros, *Memorias de un negro del Congreso* (Buenos Aires: L. J. Rosso, 1924), 41-42.

¹²⁸ Lucio V. Mansilla, *Mis memorias: infancia, adolescencia* (Buenos Aires: Hachette, 1955 [1904]), 35, 83, 89; idem., *Charlas inéditas* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1966), 17-21. Mansilla’s positive remembrance of the *candombe*, as opposed to those of his liberal contemporaries, is explainable because of his own family ties to Juan Manuel de Rosas.

masters” (“A la hora de comer, una orquesta de violines y harpas, compuesta de seis esclavos, tocaba sonatas para alegrar el festín de sus amos...”).¹²⁹ Over the course of the latter part of the nineteenth century, then, some white Creoles progressively imagined blacks as faithful servants and potential members of the nation, romantically remembering them from this safe distance of time and space.

Furthermore, the equally liberal Joaquín V. González shares similar memories to both his contemporaries Domingo F. Sarmiento and Lucio V. Mansilla. In his 1893 book *Mis montañas* (*My Mountains*), the black is recalled by the author in practically idyllic terms. In an utterly nostalgic manner, for instance, González writes about the good old days when slaves and their masters lived happily together, united by bonds of affection and mutual respect. Like Mansilla, he remembered his great-grandfather’s faithful slave Joaquín, his namesake, as a manly and imposing figure, possessing a keen intellect. The black slave was for González a fine friend and teacher.¹³⁰ Interestingly, the widely-circulated weekly *Caras y Caretas* had an obsession about very old Afro-Argentines, especially black women, and their fascinating personal histories, almost as if these *ancianos* (elderly people) of color represented in the Creole imagination of the day

¹²⁹ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Recollections of a Provincial Past*. Elizabeth Garrels and Asa Zatz, trans. Elizabeth Garrels, ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2005), 43. The Spanish comes from Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Recuerdos de provincia* (Barcelona: Linkgua, 2011), 34.

¹³⁰ Joaquín V. González, *Mis montañas*. In *Tres clásicos argentinos*. Miguel Cané, comp. and ed. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1953), 217-18.

embodied memories and their own nostalgia for a bygone era.¹³¹

As attested to in the previous chapters, in these struggles to define national identity, social memory played a key role. Leading theorist of nationalism Anthony D. Smith, echoing both Eric Hobsbawm et al. and Benedict Anderson, has observed that memory is one of the key cultural foundations of the modern national state.¹³² The Generation of 1880 in Argentina and other romantic Creole nationalists throughout the River Plate turned to literature, folk poetry, art, and folklore to define what was Creole and therefore national. By the end of the nineteenth century, Afro-Argentines were being socially remembered as Creole and loyal members of the nation, especially by conservative elites then waging a battle for the soul of the nation against the forces of liberalism, materialism, capitalism, and cosmopolitanism, represented and viewed as exotic or foreign ideas.

Specifically, these Creole elites at the time sentimentalized their own past and blacks. Afro-Argentines slowly developed over the course of the last few decades of the nineteenth century into the subjects of nostalgia, a process facilitated by their putative disappearance, at least in Argentina's case, from the nation and its socially- and artistically-constructed imaginary. However, it would be up to the quintessential turn-of-

¹³¹ E.g., "El último censo. Algunas curiosidades." *Caras y Caretas* 7, 322 (Dec. 3, 1904): n.p.; "Muerte de la tía Rosa. Á los 133 años de edad." *Caras y Caretas* 5, 209 (Oct. 4, 1902): n.p.; "Hijos de tres siglos. Centenarios del Plata." *Caras y Caretas* 4, 118 (Jan. 5, 1901): n.p.; "El más antiguo cochero de tramway." *Caras y Caretas* 3, 83 (May 5, 1900): n.p. "Fray Mocho" even wrote a featured piece on the adventures of the ancient and folkloric "morena Florentina." "Fray Mocho," *Caras y Caretas* 3, 66 (Jan. 6, 1900): n.p.

¹³² Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant, and Republic* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 29-32, 34-36, 86-88, 184-87.

the-century “criollo memorioso,” Bartolomé Mitre, to fully immortalize and transform into national mythology the memory of black heroes, especially one Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz, better remembered (at least until recently) by generations of Argentines as “el negro Falucho.”

CHAPTER 9

“Negros de la patria”: Remembering Afro-Platine Military Heroes, Late Nineteenth and Early to Mid-Twentieth Centuries

“SOLDADO DE LA LIBERTAD”...“HONOR DE SU RAZA Y GLORIA DE SU PATRIA.” Reverse Side, Colonel Lorenzo Barcala Commemorative Medal (1895).

Introduction

This chapter documents some important realms of social memory or memorializations of the Afro-Uruguayan “Ansina,” mixed-race Argentine national hero Juan Bautista Cabral, the Afro-Argentine Unitarian officer, Col. Lorenzo I. Barcala, and, to a lesser extent, fabled independence martyr “Falucho.” At different points throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these national military icons have been commemorated in many ways, including having neighborhoods and even towns in their native provinces named after them. In the case of Cabral, furthermore, Argentina’s war college for non-commissioned officers is dedicated to his memory.

While focusing mostly on documentary or narrative memorials, other icons of remembrance of black heroes “Ansina,” Cabral, “falucho,” and Barcala are catalogued in the following pages. Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century stamps, postcards, and medals, not to mention many street name, schools, and clubs,¹ bearing the names or

¹ E.g., Lorenzo Barcala still had a social club named in his honor in Mendoza. The club was founded by Afro-Argentines and was mentioned by the black press in the late 1800s. *La Broma*, for instance, published a long piece on the “Club Barcala” in its August 11, 1882 issue. Tomás A. Platero, comp., *Piedra libre para nuestros negros. La Broma y otros periódicos de la comunidad afroargentina (1873-1882)* (Buenos Aires: Inst. Histórico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2004), 199. In 2010, another social club commemorating the black Unitarian officer celebrated its 80th anniversary. “80 años del Club Barcala.” *ARN Diario*, Aug. 24, 2010.

images of these black soldiers represent not only sites of memory but also sites of the modern nation itself (viewed as indistinguishable, in fact, by Pierre Nora). These icons of remembrance reinforced by way of their semiotic and political contents social identities and thus can be regarded as icons of identity as well. Such “everyday monuments” afford insight into the social reality of groups and nations; as Alan Radley puts it: “no account of social remembering can ignore that everyday life involves the fabrication of the past through a construction of the material world.”² Barry Schwartz intimates that material icons embody a social or collective interpretation of time itself, while Eviatar Zerubavel states that relics and memorabilia allow people and social groups to cling to the past but live in the present.³ In short, there is no social memory without its material manifestations or representations.

“Negros de la Patria” (“Blacks of the Fatherland”): Remembering “Ansina,”

<http://arndiario.com/notas/ver/id/3112/2012-03-07/80+Anos+del+Club+Barcala>. Barcala, Cabral, and “Falucho” also all have streets in Buenos Aires city named after them. The street named after “Falucho” is especially well-known and extensive. Vicente Osvaldo Cutolo, *Buenos Aires: historia de las calles y sus nombres*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Editorial ELCHE, 1988), 131, 213, 453-54. In addition, the three have towns named after them in Argentina’s interior provinces. More than just sites on a map, these streets and towns named after black Argentine heroes constitute “cognitive maps” that locate memories spatially. See Adraian J. Bergero, *Intersecting Tango: Cultural Geographies of Buenos Aires, 1900-1930*. Richard Young, trans. (Pittsburgh, PA: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), 43-44.

² Rebecca Earle uses the expression “everyday monuments” in “*Sobre Héroes y Tumbas: National Symbols in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America.*” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 85, 3 (Aug. 2005): 377. Alan Radley, “Artefacts, Memory and a Sense of the Past.” In *Collective Remembering*. David Middleton and Derek Edwards, eds. (London: Sage, 1990), 53.

³ Barry Schwartz, “The Social Context of Coememoration: A Study in Collective Memory.” *Social Forces* 61, 2 (Dec. 1982): 377. Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), 43.

Cabral, and Barcala

As documented in Chapter four, the pages of Argentina's and Uruguay's military history are replete with the heroic deeds and historical memories about black Argentine soldiers. Most were unknown.⁴ However, several others have become national legends and icons. For example, Captain Antonio Videla, a black Argentine soldier of independence, born a slave, led his colored troops at the siege of Montevideo against the Spaniards. After being surrounded by enemy soldiers, Captain Videla, rather than flee to save his life, fought on to the bitter end, answering the demand of his imperialist foes to surrender by shouting back: "¡Viva la Patria!" ("Long Live the Fatherland!"). He was killed on the spot by the Spaniards.⁵ Thus, Videla's heroism and that of several other Afro-Platines became a subject of subsequent celebration and commemoration.

Along with the *prohombres* or founding fathers of Argentina and Uruguay, with whom they are often associated in the national memory, Afro-Platines like Captain Videla have been variously commemorated as heroes from the late nineteenth century until well into the twentieth (and, indeed, until recently). Sites of memory a la Pierre Nora et

⁴ That does not mean that they were forgotten, however. Like the United States, Argentina also commemorates a day of Homage to the Unknown Argentine Soldier in May. The inaugural commemoration took place, appropriately enough, in one of the main rooms in the Mitre Museum in Buenos Aires on May 22, 1923. The event, marked by patriotic speeches, recalled all those who died defending the nation, from the time of the British invasions to the "Conquest of the Desert." The session ended with a moving speech by a Colonel Fernández of the Argentine Army and a reading of a patriotic poem by Miss María Eugenia de Elías, "Los granaderos." "Homenaje al Soldado Argentino Desconocido." *La Prensa* May 23, 1923, 8.

⁵ Francisco C. Morrone, *Los negros en el Ejército: declinación demográfica y disolución* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1996), 37-38. A year later, in Buenos Aires, Videla's daughter was freed in honor of the memory of her father's sacrifice for his nation. The government decree extolled Videla: "whose memory should be remembered with the tenderest emotion."

al. about Afro-Platine military heroes include stories, poems, songs, memoirs, biographies, histories, references in school textbooks, memorabilia, stamps, postcards, medals, and monuments, among many other symbolic and material memorializations, as well as the lending of their names (and images) to schools and other private and public institutions throughout Argentina and Uruguay. As already mentioned, for instance, in Buenos Aires, since the early 1930s, the military school for the Argentine army's non-commissioned officers is dedicated to the memory of the hero of the Battle of San Lorenzo, Juan Bautista Cabral.⁶ More recently, the advent of the internet has generated countless virtual sites of memory remembering these and other black national heroes; the blogs accompanying these sites, moreover, are themselves useful for a sort of "virtual ethnography" of national or historical memory.⁷ Later commemorations of Afro-Platines will be reserved for a subsequent chapter.

In this part of the chapter, however, I will catalog some of the earlier sites of collective memory concerning Afro-Platines, thereby challenging the regnant view among some scholars that blacks in the River Plate are forgotten by the national societies. Rather than "thick descriptions" or "deep histories" of these mnemonic sites,

⁶ On March 31, 1933, by way of decree 19426, inserted into the *Boletín Militar*, number 2792 (2nd Part), the school for non-commissioned officers was officially designated "Sargento Cabral," "to honor the memory of one who set an example for the military of abnegation and heroism." Pedro Pablo Haas, *Cabral, soldado heroico. Juan Bautista Cabral, sargento epónimo* (Buenos Aires: Edivern SRL, 2004), 155.

⁷ See Appendix II for a select listing of some of these internet sites about Afro-Argentines. Lack of time and space does not afford me the chance to tease out the meaning of or to fully deconstruct the comments on the blogs of these sites. My initial impression, worthy of follow-up by an interested researcher, is that they reveal a great deal about on-going debates over memory and national identity in both Argentina and Uruguay.

accompanied by rich historical details about their production, transmission, and reception, for now I will merely attempt to enumerate and briefly describe them in their contexts. It should be remembered that these collective social memories and their attendant artifacts about black heroes coincided, as previously established, with the advent of Creole patriotism over against European cosmopolitanism at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s, circa the centennial commemoration of the start of the May Revolution. In this patriotic context, then, everything Creole was Argentine, and all things Argentine were necessarily Creole. And Afro-Platines, especially those legendary defenders of their respective fatherlands, were definitely regarded as Creole by the nationalist “memory makers” of those days on both sides of the River Plate.

“Ansina” was the nickname or *nome de guerre* of Joaquín Lenzina (Lencina), one of Uruguayan patriot José Gervasio Artigas’s most trusted officers and companions.

“Ansina” followed his leader into exile in Paraguay during the Banda Oriental’s civil wars. He was one of numerous Afro-Uruguayan soldiers, such as his friend, Antonio Ledesma, believed by some to be the real “Ansina,” who remained loyal to their *caudillo* to the very end.⁸ In terms of historical memory, the real identity of “Ansina” is not as significant as his construction as a national symbol or myth by Creole patriots in the Banda Oriental by the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, Uruguayan army

⁸ I have published a concise biography of “Ansina” as Roberto Pacheco, “Ansina (1760?-1860).” In *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*, vol. 1. Carole Boyce Davies, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2008), 90-91, which also discusses the already alluded to controversy over the true identity of the Afro-Uruguayan warrior. Alejandro Gortázar has recently revived the debate over “Ansina’s” identity. Alejandro Gortázar, “Ansina: ¿un héroe en clave afro-uruguayo?” In *Los héroes fundadores. Perspectivas desde el siglo XXI*. Carlos Demasi and Eduardo Piazza, eds. (Montevideo: CEIU/Red Académica “Héroes de Papel,” 2006), 123-32.

officer and instructor Mario Petillo, who avers that Ledesma and not Lenzina was the real “Ansina,” opines that in the name of this “humble” Afro-Uruguayan “the collective spirit of those [black] warriors” was symbolized.⁹ “Ansina” was represented and remembered by his later compatriots as more than a symbol of heroism and fidelity, however; thus, Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, an early-twentieth-century national memorialist of things Afro in Uruguay, affirmed that “‘Anisna’ es un símbolo, tal vez un mito [nacional].”¹⁰ More than merely a national symbol, then, “Ansina” was remembered by generations of *orientales* (Uruguayans) as a national myth, one which embodied the fidelity to the *patria* and fighting spirit of his people (“la garra charrúa”).

Debates over his historical identity notwithstanding, “Ansina” was memorialized in song, verse, prose, and stone by nationalists in Uruguay, especially after 1900. As will be discussed below, the Uruguayan postal service even issued a commemorative stamp bearing the black warrior’s likeness, thereby transforming his image into a national icon. In Uruguay’s interior, moreover, towns and social institutions bear “Ansina’s” name, while in Montevideo, until recently, one of the more important tenements (*conventillos*) in the city, a center of black culture and a site of memory and the preservation of Uruguay’s Afro heritage, also bore his nickname.¹¹ Needless to say, such memorials

⁹ Mario Petillo, *El último soldado artiguista* (Montevideo: Imprenta Militar, 1936), 15. Incidentally, the “Ansina” monument in Montevideo, inaugurated in September 1943, is dedicated to the memory of Ledesma, not Lenzina. Gortázar, “Ansina: ¿un héroe en clave afro-uruguaya?” 6.

¹⁰ Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, *El negro en la epopeya artiguista* (Montevideo: Barreiro y Ramos, 1964), 16.

¹¹ For example, in the provincial town of Tacuarembó, by way of Law 15.539, as of April 24, 1984, the former “pueblo” of “Paso del Borracho” was renamed “Villa Ansina,” population 2,712 (per 2011 census). “Ley N° 15.539.” República Oriental del Uruguay, Poder Legislativo, 1984.

explicitly attempt to preserve and pass along collective remembrances of past generations into the future, constituting “usable pasts” for the architects of the national in the present.

As early as 1860, Isidoro de María, then one of Uruguay’s main nationalist “memory makers,” in his seminal *Vida del Brigadier General Don José Gervasio Artigas, fundador del la nacionalidad oriental* (1860), labored to immortalize “Ansina” as a loyal follower of national leader Artigas.¹² Still, “Ansina” remained largely ignored by the end of the nineteenth century. “Ansina” was rediscovered in the early 1900s, however. Thereafter, around the time of the centennial of Independence, Leogardo Miguel Torterolo further rescued the memory of the black hero from oblivion and reminded his compatriots in a brief 1912 article that “Ansina” was the prototype of fidelity and self-negation. Interestingly, Torterolo contrasts “Ansina” with “Falucho,” the former a “stoic,” the latter a “romantic martyr.”¹³ In addition, the black Uruguayan literary journal *Nuestra Raza* also promulgated the memory of “Ansina” in the 1930s and 1940s. Marvin Lewis documents the journal’s many literary commemorations of the

“Censos 2011 Cuadros Tacuarembó.” INE, 2012. “Los conventillos de MEDIOMUNDO y ANSINA, cumplieron un papel preponderante en la cultura, ya no Afro, sino que nacional” (“The tenements of MEDIOMUNDO and ANSINA played a major role in not only Afro but national culture”) <http://barriosur.es.tl/Conventillo-Medio-Mundo.htm>. “Club Social Ansina de Castillos.” *Informe Uruguay* 2, 87 (July 16, 2004) <http://www.uruguayinforme.com/news/16072004/16072004rocha.htm>. A new socialist university in Uruguay also adopted the “Ansina” name as a statement of its inclusive values. “CONSTRUYENDO LA UNIVERSIDAD POPULAR ‘JOAQUÍN LENCINA’.” <http://upjoaquinlencina.es.tl/>

¹² Isidoro de María, *Vida del Brigadier General Don José Gervasio Artigas, fundador del la nacionalidad oriental* (Gualeduachú: Di María y Hermano, 1860).

¹³ Leogardo Miguel Torterolo, “El héroe olvidado.” *Revista Histórica* 5, 13 (1912): 214-16. Although this author does not positively identify the identities of either of the Afro-Platine heroes, their historical existences were taken for granted by him.

Afro-Uruguayan hero and efforts to give him credit for forging Uruguay's national identity. For example, "Ansina's" significance for Afro-Uruguayans was summed up in a 1930 editorial in *Nuestra Raza*: "Ansina, the loyal servant of the protector of free peoples [i.e., Artigas], is a hero—symbol of the loyalty of a race...." ¹⁴ In his previously referenced 1942 poem "Es Así" ("It's This Way"), recall that black Uruguayan poet José Roberto Suárez juxtaposed "Ansina" with "Falucho" and Captain Videla, two other Afro-Platine military heroes.¹⁵

Moving to Argentina, one of the first Afro-descended national heroes immortalized in the River Plate was the Juan Bautista Cabral. Cabral was a *zambo*, his father was a Guaraní Indian and his mother was black. He was an infantry soldier killed at the Battle of San Lorenzo (Santa Fe province) on February 3, 1813.¹⁶ It was in the midst of this bloody conflict that the leader of the revolutionary forces, General José de San Martín, had his horse shot from under him. According to legend and history, as the general was about to be killed by a Spanish soldier, Cabral sacrificed himself for the sake of San Martín, his commanding officer and a founding father of Argentina.¹⁷ In his

¹⁴ Marvin A. Lewis, *Afro-Uruguayan Literature: Post-Colonial Perspectives* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2003), 37. Although this author does not positively identify the identities of either of the Afro-Platine heroes, their historical existences were taken for granted by him.

¹⁵ Lewis, *Afro-Uruguayan Literature*, 41. In the 1950s, compilations of the nationalistic folk poetry by Joaquín Lenzina also represented attempts by some intellectual elites to preserve and pass along his memory to the next generation of Uruguayans, instructing them in patriotic virtues and shaping their identities as citizens of the Republic of the Banda Oriental. See especially the compilations from Daniel Hammerly Dupuy and Víctor Hammerly Peverini, comps., *Artigas en la poesía de América*, 2 vols (Buenos Aires: Editorial Noel, 1951).

¹⁶ Lt. Col. Camilo Anschütz, *Historia del Regimiento de Granaderos a Caballo (1812-1826)*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar, Biblioteca del Oficial, 1945), on Cabral's mounted regiment.

¹⁷ On the battle and its background, see Meliton Francisco Hierro, *Orígenes de San Lorenzo* (San Lorenzo, Argentina: n.p., 1968); Col. (ret.) Bartolomé Descalzo, *La acción de San Lorenzo*

martyrdom for the revolution, Juan Bautista Cabral entered the select pantheon of Argentina's heroes, remembered in verse, music, and monuments. Streets and public schools throughout Argentina bear Cabral's name, and, as already mentioned, so too does the Argentine Army's school for non-commissioned officers in Buenos Aires. There is even a Colonia Sargento Juan Bautista Cabral in his native north-eastern Corrientes province.¹⁸

To this day, much of Juan Bautista Cabral's life remains a matter of dispute among his countrymen. What was his race? Did he in fact save the life of San Martín at the Battle of San Lorenzo? Was Cabral a sergeant or just a private? Not even the year of Cabral's birth is known for sure. What is believed about the racially mixed hero of San Lorenzo tells more about the person, or persons, doing the remembering than it does about Cabral himself.

Unlike fellow Afro-Argentine independence hero, Antonio Ruiz ("Falucho"), the historical existence of Juan Bautista Cabral is known for certain. However, according to Cabral biographer Pedro Haas, not even the traditional date of his birth, August 13, on which schoolchildren across Argentina render honors to Cabral's memory, has been verified. It is known that he was born in Saladas, Corrientes province to José Jacinto Cabral and Carmen Robledo, described in historical records as a "morena" (black). On

1813-3 de febrero-1943, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Inst. Nacional Sanmartiano, 1948). Colonel Descalzo's tome is in itself a memorial to the battle and documents commemorations of San Lorenzo from the early nineteenth century to the early 1940s, a time in which Argentina's martial past was glorified by the military state.

¹⁸ This and the next few background paragraphs on Cabral are derived from my forthcoming (2015) article in the *Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American Biography*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Franklin Knight for Oxford University Press.

November 15, 1812, Cabral enlisted in the mounted infantry. According to one contemporary source, he quickly rose to the rank of sergeant. On that fateful day in early February 1813, Cabral and fellow grenadier Juan Bautista Baigorria saved the life of San Martín, earning the recognition and gratitude of their general. With his dying breath, Cabral is reported to have immortally cried out: “Long live the Fatherland! I die content having vanquished the enemy!” (These words are prominently reproduced and displayed on the Cabral monument at the entrance of the school for non-commissioned officers in Buenos Aires that bears the black hero’s name and are inscribed on almost every memorial to Cabral throughout the country as well.) Cabral’s death is recorded on the official death toll after San Lorenzo (wherein his rank is that of just soldier) and San Martín ordered a plaque honoring his martyrdom on the site of the battle. Moreover, a revolutionary government decree dated March 6, 1813 conferred full military pension and honors to the memory of Juan Bautista Cabral.¹⁹

Similar to fellow Afro-Platine soldier “Ansina” in Uruguay, Juan Bautista Cabral was, and continues to be, historically remembered throughout Argentina as a national hero. For instance, Bartolomé Mitre, who was arguably the greatest Creole nationalist “memory maker” of his day, praised Cabral’s sacrifice. Significantly, Mitre, whose

¹⁹ See Pedro Pablo Haas, *Cabral, soldado heroico. Juan Bautista Cabral, sargento epónimo* (Buenos Aires: Edivern SRL, 2004). Haas’ tome richly documents the various commemorations of Cabral over the course of the last century and a half, in Argentina and throughout South America. He also details all the geographical locations in Argentina bearing the name of the hero of San Lorenzo. The decree is reproduced in full in Ercilio Domínguez, comp., *Leyes y decretos militares concernientes al Ejército y Armada de la República Argentina, 1810 á 1896 (con anotaciones de derogaciones, modificaciones, etc.)*, vol. 1 (1810 á 1853) (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1898), 94-95. See also Gen. Gerónimo Espejo, *El paso de los Andes. Crónica histórica de las operaciones del Ejército de los Andes para la restauración de Chile en 1817* (Buenos Aires: “La Facultad” de Juan Roldán, 1916), 72-79.

curriculum vita is rivaled only by fellow man of '37 Sarmiento, is esteemed, along with his contemporary Vicente Fidel López, as the father of modern Argentine “liberal” or “official” historiography, thereby marking his commemoration of Juan Bautista Cabral as canonical. In his *The Invention of Argentina*, Nicolás Shumway compares Mitre’s approach to history writing to the former general’s battlefield strategy, where only “Buenos Aires could triumph.” In other words, Mitre remembered the past with a nationalist agenda, useful for a then newly-minted republic. Thus, *Galería de celebridades argentinas* (*Gallery of Argentine Celebrities* [1857]), edited by Mitre with the aid of Sarmiento, as well as his biographies of San Martín and Belgrano, represented an explicit attempt to memorialize the nation’s foundational men and set them up as examples for generations of his countrymen.²⁰ Although *Galería* focused exclusively on white, Creole founders of the Argentine nation, Bartolomé Mitre nevertheless commemorated in his other historical writings black patriots, notably Juan Bautista Cabral and “Falucho,” Antonio Ruiz.

For example, in his seminal *Historia de San Martín y de la emancipación sudamericana* (1887), Mitre was one of the first to remember Cabral’s heroism and immolation for the *patria*. In San Martín’s biography, Mitre details the moment of Cabral’s sacrifice for his leader at the Battle of San Lorenzo. “With Herculean strength and serenity,” remembers Mitre, “[Cabral] freed his chief [i.e., San Martín] from under

²⁰ Nicolás Sumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), 188, 190, 191. Mitre’s historical writings are as canonical as the fictions and other prose of his fellow members of the Generation of 1837, demarcating what was to be remembered by the nation and taught in its schools, thereby shaping Argentine national identity over the last century and a half. See José A. Campobassi, *Mitre y su tiempo* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1980).

his dead horse, which pinned him down.” Upon seeing the Spanish enemy charging his fallen leader, shouting “Long live the King!,” Cabral launched himself into the fray to save San Martín, “in the act receiving two mortal wounds.” With his dying words Cabral proclaimed: “I die content! We have defeated the enemy!” However, in his patriotic historical account of Argentine independence, the statesman-scholar identifies Cabral as only a regular line soldier (“de última fila”), and not a sergeant, from Corrientes. According to Mitre, Cabral died two hours after uttering his immortal words.²¹

Bartolomé Mitre fully intended to represent Cabral as an example of selfless devotion to the nation and consequently remembered in the national memory among future generations. His biographies and histories remain key sites of memory for Argentines of different ages and social classes. However, Mitre was not the only contemporary to immortalize Cabral and other black martyrs of the nation. One of the principal compilers of Argentine folklore and corporate remembrances was Pastor Servando Obligado, the son of Pastor Obligado, the governor of Buenos Aires who succeeded Rosas and who formally ended African slavery in the province. Pastor Servando Obligado, like his progenitor, also served as a governor of the province of Buenos Aires. A Creole nationalist par excellence, Obligado was an initiator and member of the “Argentine Patriotic League,” an ultra-right-wing nationalist group established in 1918-19 to combat labor protests and assist the fatherland in the restoration of traditions and order. Between 1888 and 1920, furthermore, he published his memories

²¹ Bartolomé Mitre, *Historia de San Martín y de la emancipación sudamericana*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1968 [1887]), 110-11.

and those of his generation in a series of books on the lore and traditions of Argentina in general and Buenos Aires in particular. He was also a frequent contributor to the popular weekly magazine *Caras y Caretas* and the prestigious daily organ *La Nación*, founded by Mitre.²²

In *El General San Martín en las tradiciones de Pastor S. Obligado* (*General San Martín in the Traditions of Pastor S. Obligado*), the late-nineteenth, turn-of-the-century “memory maker” devoted a lengthy chapter, addressed to a descendant of Juan Bautista Cabral (Dr. E. Cabral), to the battle and the black hero of San Lorenzo’s exploits. In “El primer granadero. Tradición del año 1813,” Pastor Servando Obligado early on explicitly proclaims his intentions to “exhume the immortal deeds” of “the forgotten second-file hero.” Obligado then details the actions of the battle, including Cabral’s famous last words. Cabral’s funeral, with full military honors, is movingly recaptured and detailed by Pastor Servando Obligado, who also recalls that as the hero’s remains were laid to rest in the San Lorenzo monastery. Cabral was then and there declared “primer granadero” (“first grenadier”). Subsequently, San Martín ordered a memorial to Cabral etched on a stone in front of the mounted infantry’s barracks declaring that “Juan Bautista Cabral, murió heroicamente en el campo del honor” (“Juan Bautista Cabral, died heroically in the field of honor”). In an explicitly populist turn, moreover, the Creole memorialist also demands that the deeds of other “humble heroes” such as “Falucho” and Cabral not be forgotten in favor of remembering only those of great men like San Martín and Belgrano.

²² Biblioteca Nacional (Argentina), “Archivos y colecciones particulares: Fondo Pastor Servando Obligado. Descripción archivística.” <http://www.bn.gov.ar/descargas/salas/DescripcionFondoPastorSObligado.pdf>.

Pastor Servando Obligado concludes his homage to San Martín's rescuer by being the first to identify him as "sargento Cabral," and thus he has been remembered and memorialized ever since by countless Argentines, especially educators and school children.²³

Cabral's memory has been preserved and passed on through the generations to inspire patriotism in verse and song as well as prose.²⁴ Afro-Argentine popular poet and folk singer Gabino Ezeiza immortalized Cabral, for example, in his poem "El combate de San Lorenzo" ("The Battle of San Lorenzo"), written sometime before 1900. "The battle, more than ever/becomes violent and bloody/and the royalists in an instant want to kill the commander;/but quickly to his feet raises,/deflecting bayonets,/that athlete among athletes/who is Juan Bautista Cabral."²⁵ Thus does the legendary black poet-singer

²³ Pastor S. Obligado, *El General San Martín en las tradiciones de Pastor S. Obligado*. Justa Dose de Zemborain, comp. (Buenos Aires: Angel Estrada y Cía. SA, 1950), 50-69. First published in 1888 in *Tradiciones de Buenos Aires*. However, Miguel Navarro Viola and Vicente G. Quesada, *La Revista de Buenos Aires: historia americana, literatura y derecho*, vol. 4 (Buenos Aires: Imp. de Mayo, 1864), 567-68, do not refer to Cabral as a sargeant. For Vicente Fidel López in the centennial edition of his public school history manual for Argentine teachers, Cabral's rank of sargeant is a historical given, however, as was his sacrifice to save San Martín by shielding him with his own body from a Spanish attack. Vicente F. López, "LECCION XII. Victorias de San Lorenzo y de Salta." *Manual de la historia argentina. Dedicado á los profesores y maestros que la enseñan* (Buenos Aires: A. V. López, 1910), 417. See also Victoriano E. Montes, "Enseñanza de la historia: el mapa histórico de de la República Argentina." *El Monitor de la Educación: Publicación del Consejo Nacional de la Educación* 11, 177 (March 31, 1890), 1054, "27. El sargento Juan Bautista Cabral."

²⁴ E.g., Juan Manuel Cotta, "San Lorenzo." In *Cancionero del Libertador: itinerario de la vida y los hechos gloriosos del gran capitán*. Lidia Rosalia B. de Jijena Sánchez, comp. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Albatrós, 1950), 53-54. Cotta's poem has a wounded San Martín yelling out for "Don Juan Bautista Cabral," and, upon realizing his soldier was dead, proclaiming: "En el campo del honor/murió, con gloria, peleando" ("In the field of honor/[Cabral]died, with glory, fighting"). Cotta was a late nineteenth-century patriotic poet. The "translations" here and below are mine.

²⁵ "El combate, más que nunca/se empeña rudo y sangriento,/los realistas al momento/quieren al jefe ultimar; mas de pronto echa pie a tierra,/desviando las bayonetas,/aquel atleta entre atletas/que es Juan Bautista Cabral." Gabino Ezeiza, "El combate de San Lorenzo." *Recuerdos*

immortalize in verse the heroism of Cabral for his audiences as well as their posterity.

Ezeiza concludes his ode to the military action at San Lorenzo, a foundational episode in national history, by singing of Cabral's enduring memory among Argentines: "Today that the fatherland is at peace,/ we venerate his [Cabral's] memory,/and in the gilded letters of history/will he be eternally remembered;/and with the same cannons that so much glory have to us rendered,/to Cabral a colossal statue has already been erected."²⁶

Furthermore, another Afro-Platine, the Uruguayan-born Cayetano Alberto Silva, who was raised in Buenos Aires after 1878, immortalized "sargento" Cabral in his moving and patriotic "Marcha de San Lorenzo," "San Lorenzo March," composed in 1902. Born the son of African slaves, Silva was a military musician of some repute in his day. The San Lorenzo march, whose lyrics were written by a contemporary, Carlos J. Benielli, was composed for the "Argentine people" and was also dedicated to Defense Minister Pablo Ricchieri, previously identified as the architect of the country's 1901 compulsory military service legislation (Ley N° 4031), and a major exponent of the armed forces as instruments of nationalist indoctrination. The march fast became an unofficial second national anthem, performed repeatedly since 1902 in schools, military events, and patriotic holidays throughout Argentina, thereby representing an important site of national memory about Cabral for well over a century. The march's final stanza invokes the memory of the legendary hero of San Lorenzo: "Cabral, heroic

del payador. Composiciones populares por Gabino Ezeiza (Buenos Aires: Editorial Andrés Pérez Cuberes, 1946), 37.

²⁶ "Hoy que la patria está en calma,/veneramos su memoria,/y en letras de oro en la historia/tendrá recuerdo eternal;/y con los mismos cañones/que tanta gloria nos dieron,/a Cabral ya le erigieron/una estatua colosal." Ezeiza, "El combate de San Lorenzo," 39.

soldier,/covered in glory,/what a price paid for victory, his life surrendered, achieving
immortality;/and there his sacrifice saved/the nascent freedom/of half a continent,/Honor,
honor to the great Cabral!”²⁷ Marcos de Estrada considers Silva’s tribute to the memory
of Cabral worthy of its own commemoration, moreover: “La nación, toda, está en deuda
inexcusable con el ilustre maestro *Cayetano Alberto Silva*. Construyamos en su
memoria, en la capital de la República, un monumento de enaltecimiento y gratitud”
 (“The entire nation remains inexcusably in the debt of the illustrious mastero *Cayetano
Alberto Silva*. Let us then erect in the republic’s capital a monument of exaltation and
gratitude [to his memory]”).²⁸ Cayetano Silva’s 1902 musical homage to the memory of

²⁷ “Cabral, soldado heroico,/cubriéndose de gloria,/cual precio a la victoria,/su vida rinde,
haciéndose inmortal;/y allí, salvó su arrojo/la libertad naciente/de medio continente./¡Honor,
honor al gran Cabral!” Cayetano Silva (music) and Carlos J. Benielli (lyrics), “Marcha de San
Lorenzo.” In *Efemérides culturales argentinas*. Ministerio de Educación (Argentina),
Subsecretaría de Coordinación. <http://www.me.gov.ar/efeme/17deagosto/cansanloren.html>. The
march has an interesting story outside Argentina. It was selected by Adolf Hitler for his army’s
triumphal march into Paris during World War II; in return, Dwight D. Eisenhower symbolically
ordered its playing after the victory of Allied forces at Normandy. Furthermore, it is Great
Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II’s favorite military march and is played at the changing of her guard
at Buckingham Palace, something that left an indelible impression on Jorge Luis Borges on one
of his visits to London. Marcos de Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano: 34 biografías*
(Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1979), 184-87. One can only marvel at the irony of Hitler
(unwittingly) selecting a military march composed by a black man in honor of the memory of
another man of color, or that the queen of England’s guard plays the Argentine military’s official
anthem in light of the historical and military relations between Argentina and England.

²⁸ De Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 185. In addition to Silva’s march, one of the
earliest known tangos, Manuel Campoamor’s “El Sargento Cabral” (1899), also remembered the
black hero’s heroism and sacrifice for the nation. On Campoamor’s tango,
http://www.piazcollazzo.com.ar/biografias/biotango_v.html. Folk music from Cabral’s native Corrientes
province, the *chamamé*, further immortalized the memory of the hero of San Lorenzo among the
people of Argentina. Alejandra Cragolini, “Representaciones sobre el origen del ‘chamamé’
entre migrantes correntinos residentes en Buenos Aires: Imaginario, música e identidad.” *Latin
American Music Review* 20, 2 (Autumn-Winter 1999): 234-52. The famous Argentine folkloric
troupe “Los Chalchaleros” long preserved the remembrance of the mixed-race hero in their
chamamé “Sargento Cabral.” “Sargento Cabral de los Chalchaleros.”
<http://www.albumnacionalyletra.com/print.aspx?id=177104>; “Los Chalchaleros,” official site.
<http://loschalchaleros.com.ar>. As part of my private collection, I have the score for guitar for a
1923 *zamba* (a Creole folkloric dance from northern Tucumán province of possible black origins)

Juan Bautista Cabral epitomized the then growing conservative Creole nationalism, abetted by especially the Argentine military, which presented war heroes as exemplars of patriotism for particularly the country's youth.

If there is some debate over the race and military grade of Juan Bautista Cabral, there are no questions concerning the origins or career of Lorenzo Barcala, arguably one of the most distinguished Afro-Argentine soldiers of his generation. Born a son of African-descended slaves, Barcala was emancipated by order of then governor of Cuyo (Mendoza), José de San Martín. Barcala's long military career began in 1818, when he enlisted in the Regiment of *Pardos* (Mulattoes) during the wars of independence from Spain. In 1826 he fought in the Argentine Confederation's war against Brazil (1825-1828), where he was captured, sold into slavery, and eventually released after a prisoner exchange. However, it was during Argentina's protracted civil wars of the late 1820s and 1830s between federalists and centralists that Lorenzo Barcala truly achieved immortality in the annals of the country's military history.²⁹ None other than Domingo Faustino Sarmiento immortalized Barcala in his historical writings about the struggles for Argentina's destiny and national identity in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Colonel Lorenzo Barcala first made his military reputation under the command of General José María Paz in the western province of Córdoba. In his memoirs, General

by Paraguayan guitar virtuoso Agustín Barrios Mangoré, *Sargento Cabral*. Richard D. Stover, ed. (Santa Fe, NM: Querico Publications, 1992).

²⁹ For two sites of memory on Barcala, see fellow Afro-Argentine and near contemporary, Jorge Miguel Ford, *Beneméritos de mi stirpe. Esbozos sociales* (La Plata, Argentina: Tipografía de la Escuela de Artes y Oficios, 1899), 8-20. And for a fuller biographical sketch of Barcala, see José Canale, *El Coronel Don Lorenzo Barcala (contribución al estudio de la vida militar argentina)* (Soc. de Publicaciones El Inca, 1927).

Paz remembered that then Lieutenant Colonel Barcala was responsible for the reorganization of the black civic battalions of Córdoba province in the late 1820s, a duty he devoted himself to with great skill and success, according to the memories of the old general.³⁰ His military prowess while serving under General Paz eventually earned him a promotion to the rank of colonel, the highest ever achieved by a man of color.

Colonel Barcala was then transferred to command centralist troops in his native province of Mendoza. While serving as military occupier of Mendoza after the deposition of the federalist regime in the province, Barcala (although not named) was described by British official Samuel Haigh in derogatory terms. Haigh claimed, incorrectly, that the “thick-lipped, wool-headed African” had risen “from a common serjeant... to the rank and title of general.” According to Haigh, this “was the first instance of a negro having been promoted to such eminence.” The British official was especially outraged that Barcala dressed like a white officer and comported himself in a haughty manner, even going so far as to scandalously dance at the governor’s ball with refined white ladies: “I confess it excited my spleen to see his black fingers outspread, and encircling her sylph-like form, whilst he twirled her around with an air of haughty condensation.” Utterly betraying his own racial prejudice, common to that day, Haigh concludes his observations of Barcala’s insolence by condemning sectarianism in the Argentina of the day, asseverating: “To such base shifts do party spirit and politics allow

³⁰ José María Paz, *Memorias postúmas*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2000), 383-84. I thank Dr. Ariel de la Fuente of Purdue University’s History Department for this lead. “Sr. Coronel D. Lorenzo Barcala” and his military exploits for the first months of the year 1833 are documented in José Ruiz Huidobro, “Interior. Documentos oficiales. Ejército de operaciones del Centro.” *El Lucero. Diario Político, Literario y Mercantil*, no. 1,027, April 1, 1833, 1.

people to stoop, by endeavouring, for the furtherance of their own private views, to place upon an equality people who evidently, by Nature, are meant to be distinct.”³¹ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, however, exhibited a far more generous appreciation of Barcala.

In his foundational fiction for the Argentine national imaginary, *Facundo* (1845), composed in the midst of the country’s civil strife, Sarmiento immortalized “the illustrious black man,” Colonel Lorenzo Barcala.³² Sarmiento effusively praises Barcala throughout the work, remembering the black officer as a paragon of civilization and enlightenment: “Barcala, the freed slave who devoted so many years to showing the artisans the right road, and to making them love a revolution that considered neither color nor class when recognizing merit; Barcala was the one entrusted [by General Paz] with popularizing the change in ideas and aims at work in the city [i.e., Córdoba], and accomplished this beyond what anyone hoped. The citizens of Córdoba, since then, belong to the city, to civil order, to civilization.”³³ Thanks to Barcala’s efforts, therefore, Córdoba was now well on the road to freedom and progress, since, for Sarmiento, the city (as opposed to the countryside) and civil order (as opposed to mob rule) were prerequisites for civilized life, without which true nation-building was impossible for the great Argentine thinker.

In his biography of Lorenzo Barcala’s executioner, Félix Aldao, furthermore,

³¹ Samuel Haigh, *Sketches of Buenos Ayres, Chile, and Peru* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1831), 342-44.

³² Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism, the First Complete English Translation*. Kathleen Ross, trans. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2003), 182.

³³ Sarmiento, *Facundo*, 152.

Domingo Sarmiento writes of him as almost a historical singularity: “But what made of Barcala a historical personage is his rare talent for organizing the troops and his ability to take to the masses civilizing ideas” (“Pero lo que ha hecho de Barcala un personaje histórico, es su raro talento para la organización de los cuerpos, i la habilidad con que hacia descender a las masas las ideas civilizadoras”).³⁴ Like the black heroes of the Haitian Revolution so admired by Sarmiento, for example, Alexandre Pétion, “The black Barcala is one of the most distinguished figures of the Argentine revolution,” who has an “impeccable character” so rare in those woebegone days, maintains the future statesman-historian.³⁵ In one of the highest tributes Sarmiento affords any historical person, he claims of the black hero Barcala: “Elevado por su merito, [Barcala] nunca olvidó su color i su oríjen; era un hombre eminentemente civilizado en sus maneras, gustos e ideas...” (“Ennobled by his merit, [Barcala] never forgot his race or background; he was an eminently civilized man in his manners, tastes, and ideas...”).³⁶ Thus, Sarmiento’s

³⁴ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, “El Jeneral Frai Félix Aldao. Gobernador de Mendoza.” In *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento. Publicadas bajo los auspicios del Gobierno Argentino*, vol. 8 (*Quiroga, Aldao, El Chacho 1845-1863*) (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Guttenberg, 1889), 252.

³⁵ Sarmiento, “El Jeneral Frai Félix Aldao,” 252. “El negro Barcala es una de las figuras mas distinguidas de la revolucion argentina, i una de las reputaciones mas intachables que han cruzado esta época tan barracosa...” In his 1849 travel memoirs, Sarmiento mentions Colonel Barcala along with other mulatto dignitaries of Europe and the Americas, Dumas, Heredia, and Pétion. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Viajes* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Belgrano, 1981 [1849]), 62.

³⁶ Sarmiento, “El Jeneral Frai Félix Aldao,” 252. A long poem from 1835, “ESE CORONEL BARCALA...,” also eulogized the Afro-Argentine officer. The poem opens by affirming both Barcala’s military honor and racial pride: “A ESE coronel Barcala/—militar de pundonor—/nada le vino a quitar/el ser hombre de color.” It then narrates his entire military career, up to his execution by Aldao. The poem concludes by extolling Barcala’s memory to all: “Así vivió Barcala,/así murió ese moreno. En la memoria de todos/será tenido por bueno.” “ESE CORONEL BARCALA (1835)...” In León Benarós, *Romances de infierno y cielo. Figuras y episodios nacionales por León Benarós* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1971), 35-44.

opinion of the black “caballero”³⁷ (i.e., both cavalryman and gentleman) was totally unlike the view of Barcala proffered earlier by Samuel Haigh. For Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, then, Colonel Lorenzo Barcala’s civilized virtues and allegiance to the Unitarian cause merited historical remembrance and imitation by his compatriots, regardless of color or class.

Lorenzo Barcala’s military fame was even commemorated in the pages of *Harper’s Weekly* in the United States. Reporting on General Robert E. Lee’s invasion of Pennsylvania in 1863, a letter from Argentine military attache Major Edelmiro Mayer is quoted at length in the prestigious American weekly publication. Major Mayer records “[t]hat the negro is courageous is shown by the history of my country, in which are written the names of many black heroes.” He signals out Barcala for especial honor and remembrance, however. *Harper’s* points out that in a “subsequent letter **Major Mayer** [bold in the original] gives the following account of a celebrated negro chieftain whose fame survives in the Argentine Republik like that of Touissant L’Ouverture in St. Domingo.” Mayer proffers a brief history of Afro-Platine military sacrifices in the wars of independence and then gives a biographical sketch of Colonel Barcala for the American readers, highlighting his gallantry and patriotism. Major Mayer even quotes General Paz, “the most strategical and learned of all South American Generals, and the

³⁷ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Aldao y El Chacho* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tor, 1938 [1845, 1868]), 22, 24. The day of Barcala’s execution has been remembered since the late 1800s. E.g., in Pedro Rivas, *Efemérides americanas desde el descubrimiento de la América hasta nuestros días*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: N. Ramírez y Cia., 1884), 207. This was a widely-circulated chronology of major historical events organized by month and day, which was dedicated to President Julio A. Roca. Furthermore, José Luis Lanuza, based on Sarmiento’s remembrances, dedicated an article in *La Prensa* to commemorate the centennial of Lorenzo Barcala’s death. José Luis Lanuza, “EL CORONEL LORENZO BARCALA. Centenario de su muerte.” *La Prensa*, July 28, 1935, 7.

most severely sparing of eulogies,” who nevertheless praised the military skill and achievements of his black officer, Lorenzo Barcala. The letter concludes by quoting Barcala, who oddly refers to himself in the third person, refusing to surrender to and serve under strongman Facundo Quiroga; to Quiroga’s promise of liberty for service, Barcala replied: “Colonel Barcala will not degrade himself by serving the leaders of barbarism.”³⁸ Ironically, Major Edelmiro Mayer selectively (conveniently?) misremembered Barcala’s military career at this point, for, in fact, the black officer indeed served under Facundo Quiroga, who spared his life.³⁹ In effect, the major’s memory of Barcala was shaped by his own political loyalties as well as by centralist Mitre’s then recent triumph over the last federalist strongman, Urquiza, marking the beginning of final national consolidation.

Such narrative sites of memory about black Platine military heroes were complemented by tangible or material mnemonic artifacts as well. The icons employed both words and images to engrave in national memory the heroism of black heroes such as “Ansina” and “Falucho” at the turn of the past century. As such, they were important

³⁸ The article from the Saturday, June 27, 1863 issue of *Harper’s Weekly*, “The Invasion of the North,” is reproduced in full at “Fuerzas de Defensa de la República Argentina,” Sergio Toyos, “Historia de Edelmiro Mayer, un personaje increíble.” <http://fdra.blogspot.com/2010/05/biografias-edelmiro-mayer-un-argentino.html>.

³⁹ Lucio Funes, “El Coronel Barcala.” *Revista de la Junta de Estudios Históricos de Mendoza* 7 (1937): 133; Ismael Bucich Escobar, “Lorenzo Barcala, el coronel negro que murió en el patíbulo.” *Tragedias de nuestra historia*, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Librería Americana), 49-69. On Quiroga, by far the best work is Ariel de la Fuente’s *Children of Facundo: Caudillo and Gaucho Insurgency during the Argentine State-Formation Process (La Rioja, 1853-1870)* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2000). In the *Cancionero federal*, supporters of Quiroga mock Barcala, joking that the *caudillo* will come to take Barcala and make bullets from his beard, a stab at Barcala’s race given the racist ideas about the “hardness” of black body hair. “Dicen que Quiroga viene.../... a hacer balas/de las barbas de Barcala.” “Dicen que Quiroga viene.” In *Cancionero federal*. Giselda Vignolo, comp. (Buenos Aires: Crisis, 1976), 17.

sites of national commemoration of blackness in the River Plate from the middle of the nineteenth century to the first part of the twentieth.

“La Gritud Nacional”: “Icons of Remembrance” or “Miniature Memorials” to “Anisina,” Cabral, Barcala, and “Falucho”

Marcos de Estrada considers that to honor the worthy memory of Lorenzo Barcala is an indispensable national debt. He cannot fathom why the black hero’s own hometown “aún no le ha consagrado el homenaje en bronce tan merecido” (“has not yet honored him with a well-deserved monument”).⁴⁰ This observation, however, should not lead one to the conclusion that black national icons such as Barcala, Cabral, or “Anisina,” not to mention “Falucho,” lack their own respective iconographies. On the contrary, monuments and “miniature memorials” honoring and collectively remembering Afro-Platine national heroes were surprisignly abundant in the past century. “Miniature memorials” included stamps, postcards, and even commemorative medals. Unlike

⁴⁰ De Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 25, 52. To my knowledge, this is still a pending debt owed the memory of such a national hero. However, a brief note in *La Nación* from August 14, 1906 about the “Centennial Commission” makes reference to a proposal by Don Benedicto Ferreyra, a prominent Afro-Argentine, to erect a monument in Barcala’s memory. “Comisión del Centenario—Monumento al Coronel Barcala.” *La Nación*, August 14, 1906, 9. Ferreyra, as the editorial note recalls, was also a major proponent of the “Falucho” monument. I came across a brief reference online to a 1908 solicitation to the federal Chamber of Deputies by a “Pro-Monument for Colonel Lorenzo Barcala Commission” for the purpose of honoring Barcala by erecting a memorial. Consult the appropriate volume in *Diario de Sesiones de la Camara de Diputados*, 28 vols. (Buenos Aires: Imp. del Congreso de la Nación, 1862-). Also, in an online editorial in the Buenos Aires magazine *La Gaceta*, a fifth-generation descendant of Barcala’s, Tulio D. Barcala of San Miguel de Tucumán, states that he was invited to attend a ceremony at the school No. 4.437 in far north-western Salta province, named after Lorenzo I. Barcala, for the rededication of a recently rediscovered bust of the “illustrious black man.” Tulio D. Barcala, “De esclavo a coronel.” *La Gaceta*. <http://lagaceta.com.ar/nota/481046/opinion/cartas-lectores.html>.

monuments, these icons were small, inexpensive and/or mass produced, and widely circulated. All these “miniature memorials” were fashioned and distributed with the explicit purpose of socially remembering the black patriots whose images adorn the memorabilia, a word whose very etymology, of course, invokes memory.⁴¹ Moreover, their creators intended for these nationalist icons to circulate and be consumed both at home and abroad. The purpose was to thus disseminate among native and stranger alike the inclusive and patriotic image of Argentina or Uruguay official and social elites wished to project at a time of national consolidation threatened by social and political unrest at home, as well as global economic crises abroad. These “miniature messages”⁴² of Creole nationalist elites included Afro-Platines as symbols of loyalty useful to the then still consolidating states of Argentina and Uruguay, precisely at a critical historical juncture when they were in search of national myths and symbols.

Until now, this dissertation has focused almost exclusively, with the exception of the brief excursus on Pedro Figari’s nostalgic Afro-Platine art, on literary and historical remembrances and representations by various Argentine and Uruguayan writers and thinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Blame this on the historian’s bias in favor of documentary evidence and narrative sources. If it is true that an image is worth a thousand words, that only means that for the historian it takes a thousand words

⁴¹ According to Alan Radley, memorabilia include objects which “are made specifically in order that they might help us to remember.” Radley, “Artefacts, Memory and a Sense of the Past,” 48. Recall that Eviatar Zerubavel states that memorabilia, like stamps and postcards, allow people and groups to live in the present but also cling to the past. Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 43.

⁴² I appropriate this clever turn of phrase from the excellent book on the socio-political import and meaning(s) of Latin American postal stamps by Jack Child, *Miniature Messages: The Semiotics and Politics of Latin American Postage Stamps* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2008).

to interpret an image. I, however, will limit myself to document the following images and leave the semiotics to others far more erudite and skilled in such arts.⁴³ Besides attempting to catalogue a few representative mnemonic icons or artifacts commemorating the black heroes already mentioned, some theoretical points derived from the secondary literature will also be raised along the way.

Pierre Nora and other memory specialists have emphasized that sites or realms of social or collective memory are both symbolic and tangible. Memory operates through image production and representation.⁴⁴ However, such representations, images, or memories are not formless or shapeless. The collected and collective memories of people or peoples all have some kind of shape and feel or texture to them. “Textured, three-dimensional forms embody the memory in a socially recognizable way,” avers Robin Wagner-Pacifici, and the “fact of embodiment in form is what all collective memories share, regardless of ideological position.”⁴⁵ Textured memorials thus allow people to

⁴³ E.g., Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image.” *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32-51.

⁴⁴ Susanne Kuchler and Walter Melion, “Introduction.” In *Images of Memory: On Remembering and Representation*. Susanne Kuchler and Walter Melion, eds. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 2, 3, 7.

⁴⁵ Robin Wagner-Pacifici, “Memories in the Making: The Shapes of Things That Went.” *Qualitative Sociology* 19, 3 (1996): 302. Also, Barbi Zelizer, “Reading the Past Against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies.” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12, 2 (June 1995): 214-39; and James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1993). However, here I disagree with Bradford Vivian and Anne Teresa Demos when they state that memory is primarily visual. Bradford Vivian and Anne Teresa Demos, “Introduction.” In *Rhetoric, Remembrance, and Visual Form*. Bradford Vivian and Anne Teresa Demos, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2. Both individual and collective memories are multi-sensual and integrative, often involving more than one sense at a time. Thus, for instance, sight and touch are not mutually exclusive senses for mnemonic purposes or experiences.

literally “get in touch with their history” and forge collective social identities.⁴⁶ However, tangible sites of memories need not be always three-dimensional like a memorial or monument. Other mnemonic iconography, such as paper currency, stamps, or postcards, can in fact be flat, but nonetheless both textured and rich in historical details and significant for national identification. These artifacts or icons of memory, whether two- or three-dimensional, are some of the basic building blocks of social reality; they tie in and interact with other shapers of social identity such as myth, legend, values, idols, and aspirations. Once canonized by a social group, icons of memory accrue symbolic importance from and veneration by a given social group.⁴⁷ In addition, as David Gerald Orr intimates, such icons are indispensable for highly militarized or militaristic societies, which would nicely account for the prevalence of both miniature and monumental memorials for black military heroes of the River Plate, and especially in Argentina, during the rise of conservative nationalism in the early 1900s supported and abetted by the armed forces especially.⁴⁸

When paper is imprinted so as to be transformed into postal stamps, postcards, or currency, it becomes a de facto icon. When that paper icon is printed by a state government or ruling elites, it is transformed further into a de jure national icon. The national paper icon then accrues both economic and symbolic capital which it lacked

⁴⁶ Diane Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1996), 2.

⁴⁷ Marshall Fishwick, “Icons of America.” In *Icons of America*. Ray B. Browne and Marshall Fishwick, eds. (Bowling Green, OH: Popular Press, Bowling Green State Univ., 1978), 6, 7.

⁴⁸ David Gerald Orr, “The Icon in the Time Tunnel,” in *Icons of America*, 17.

until the paper was imprinted by a corporate or individual agency. Among these philatelic icons and/or small “artifacts-as-symbol,” stamps and postcards have a privileged standing as viable *lieux de mémoire*. Donald M. Reid, for example, esteems postage stamps as excellent primary historical sources, affording scholars valuable insights “for the symbolic messages which governments seek to convey to their citizens and the world.”⁴⁹ Stamps have been described as “living history pictures” expressing the “iconography of national life,” at least as imagined by governing elites.⁵⁰ Furthermore, David Curtis Skaggs, writing about the iconography of the American Revolution, maintains that no other governmental artifact so symbolizes the nation’s popular self-image as do postage stamps. In addition, he maintains that portraits of “culture-heroes” have dominated the iconography of postal stamps in the United States and elsewhere. Specifically, postage stamps have been largely dominated by the images of dead national heroes, especially soldiers.⁵¹

The research on the semiotics of stamp politics in Latin America by Jack Child and David Bushnell, among others, confirms the observations of Skaggs and Reid on the importance of stamps as iconic symbols of the nation as well as mnemonic artifacts.⁵²

⁴⁹ Donald M. Reid, “The Symbolism of Postage Stamps: A Source for the Historian.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 19, 2 (April 1984): 223. Carlos Stoetzer, in addition, identifies postage stamps as effective means of cultural and national propaganda. Carlos Stoetzer, *Postage Stamps As Propaganda* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1953).

⁵⁰ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, vol. 1 (*Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*) (London: Verso, 1994), 30, 165n.4.

⁵¹ David Curtis Skaggs, “Postage Stamps As Icons,” in *Icons of America*, 198. “Philatelic icons” visualize the nation and become in themselves symbols of nationhood.

⁵² Jack Child, “The Politics and Semiotics of the Smallest Icons of Popular Culture: Latin American Postage Stamps.” *Latin American Research Review* 40, 1 (2005): 108-37; idem.,

Miguel Angel Centeno characterizes postage stamps in Latin America as “paper monuments,” redolent with political symbolism, “providing an opportunity for the state to portray the glories of national history.”⁵³

However, all these authors overlook the element of racial representation in postal icons. Not surprisingly, most of the stamps analyzed by these academics represent white “culture-heroes,” such as national founding fathers (historically, women were also largely missing from nineteenth-century postage stamps). Taken as a whole, then, nineteenth-century postal stamps in the United States and Latin America, including the River Plate, reinforced hegemonic conceptions of these nations as patriarchal, white, and “Europeanized.”

Afro-Argentine martyr Antonio Ruiz (the legendary “Falucho,” according to some) has, nonetheless, been commemorated on various Argentine postage stamps, especially those in circulation in the early 1900s, on the eve of the nation’s centennial of independence. For example, a centennial 1910 stamp depicts Ruiz’s monument then still centrally located in the “Plaza San Martín,” in the heart of Buenos Aires city. The image on the postal stamp provides a panorama of the monument’s urban landscape,

“The Politics and Semiotics of Argentine Postage Stamps.” *MACLAS Latin American Essays* 18 (2005): 55-85; M. W. Martin, “Postal Gallery of our History.” *Américas* 25, 3 (March 1973): 10-12; John Turner Reid, “The Stamp of Patriotism.” *Américas* 33, 8 (Aug. 1981): 45-48; David Bushnell, “Regeneración filatélica.” *Revista de Estudios Colombianos* 2 (1987): 27-31; idem., “Postal Images of Argentine Próceres: A Look at Selective Myth-Making.” *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 1 (1982): 91-105.

⁵³ Miguel Angel Centeno, *Good and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2002), 179. Centeno, however, seems to be unaware of or not interested in Afro-Platines when it comes to his survey of stamps, currencies, monuments, street names, and other public sites of memory in Argentina and Uruguay.

highlighting the memorial's location in the upscale part of the city. In addition, stamps and postcards of the "Falucho" monument became readily available to the public and, over time, were sold, bought, and distributed as collector's items, both evidencing and representing a nostalgia among Argentines for an imagined past. Suggestively, then, the 1910 "Falucho" stamp mentioned above which I have relied on also contains an original dedicatory writing at the top of its right margin, indicating that it was being given as a birthday gift from a family member. The dedication is dated March 26, 1910, a few months before the one hundredth anniversary of the start of Argentine independence.⁵⁴

Other Afro-Platine heroes more recently commemorated on postal stamps included Juan Bautista Cabral, the savior of General San Martín.⁵⁵ The black hero "Ansina," furthermore, was also memorialized on a commemorative postage stamp by the Uruguayan government to honor his loyalty to national hero José Gervasio Artigas.⁵⁶ The stamp dates circa 1967 and bears the portrait by Uruguayan artist Medardo Latorre of "Ansina." At the far left margin, "ANSINA" is identified as the subject of the stamp. The legend at the top of the perforated stamp identifies "Ansina" as the "FIEL SERVIDOR DEL Gral. JOSE ARTIGAS" ("FAITHFUL SERVANT OF Gral. JOSE

⁵⁴ Stamps and postcards of the "Falucho" monument were (and are) readily available to the public and were bought and sold as collector's items. On Argentine postal stamps, see Víctor Oscar García Costa, "Orígenes del sello postal y de la filatelia argentina." *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 29, 341 (Dec. 1995): 28-35.

⁵⁵ See Appendix I. For the bicentennial of his martyrdom at San Lorenzo, the Argentine postal service issued a commemorative stamp of "sargento" Cabral, which features his likeness from the statue in the center of the eponymous school for non-commissioned officers in Buenos Aires, the image of a nineteenth-century mounted grenadier, and the words "Valor, Honor, Liberty."

⁵⁶ See Appendix I. <http://www.shutterstock.com/pic-112621424/stock-photo-uruguay-circa-stamp-printed-by-uruguay-shows-ansina-portrait-by-medardo-latorre-circa.html>.

ARTIGAS”). Also, at its bottom right margin, the stamp’s inscription reads “IMP NACIONAL” (“NATIONAL IMPRINT”). Thus, the “Ansina” stamp is clearly associated with the Uruguayan government, i.e., “state art,” as Achugar refers to such official icons,⁵⁷ and the Uruguayan government, moreover, wants to remember the black soldier and popular poet “Ansina” as the faithful servant of the country’s founding father, José Gervasio Artigas. In this way, therefore, through the iconography and political symbolism of “Ansina,” specifically, his loyalty to the Uruguayan nation, Afro-Uruguayans were inscribed during the twentieth century in the national imaginary by way of such an artistic, affordable, and mass-consumed *lieu de mémoire*.

Although not usually produced by the national state like postage stamps, postcards nonetheless are equally important realms of memory and “artifact-symbols” of the nation. Like postal stamps, postcards are not very expensive and are intended for mass circulation, thereby serving as viable propaganda artifacts for the nation. Also like postage stamps, postcards are redolent with symbolism and thus semiotic content and meaning. According to cultural scholar Marie-Monique Huss, picture postcards “are privileged documents which present a view of ... the nation which was not just propaganda from above, but reflected popular conceptions adhered to in great numbers by the public itself.” As per Huss, these icons of memory and identity express both “patriotic fantasy” and “sentimental patriotism.” However, they are also by-products of popular culture and therefore representative of not only official memory but also

⁵⁷ Hugo Achugar, “Foundational Images of Latin America.” In *Building Nineteenth-Century Latin America: Re-Rooted Cultures, Identities, and Nations*. William G. Acree, Jr. and Juan Carlos González Espitia, eds. (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 2009), 18. Consult Appendix I for reproductions of some of the stamps and postcards described in these paragraphs.

vernacular memory because they had to be bought by, and appeal to, an entirely individualized market.⁵⁸

The inscriptions and images on postcards also reveal what the producers want inscribed in the national imaginary and passed on to future generations. As such, Greg Grandin describes postcards as quintessential “icons of remembrance.”⁵⁹ Further, Grandin avers that, similar to stamps, the circulation of postcards through post offices creates correspondences between social groups and the official state bureaucracy, a point of conjunction between the actual state and the imagined nation.⁶⁰ For Grandin, then, postcards and photographs in general are both reflective and constitutive of national imagined communities.⁶¹ Along similar lines, William Garret Acree, Jr. documents the symbolic capital of postcards in the River Plate from the late 1800s to the early 1900s and their engagement with the region’s collective memory and “modes of seeing [itself].”⁶²

⁵⁸ Marie-Monique Huss, “Pronationalism and the popular ideology of the child in wartime France: the evidence of the picture postcard.” In *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918*. Richard Wall and Jay Winter, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), 333, 337, 357-58.

⁵⁹ Greg Grandin, “Can the Subaltern Be Seen? Photography and the Affects of Nationalism.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, 1 (Feb. 2004): 86. David Prochaska, moreover, considers nostalgia as an important factor in the popularity of postcard collecting over the last few decades of the twentieth century. David Prochaska, “Thinking Postcards.” *Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation* 17, 4 (2001): 383.

⁶⁰ Grandin, “Can the Subaltern Be Seen?,” 84-85.

⁶¹ Grandin, “Can the Subaltern Be Seen?,” 107. David Prochaska identifies several genres of postcards, including those that depict other art works. Prochaska, “Thinking Postcards,” 387-89. In my personal collection, for instance, I have several art cards from the early-twentieth-century representing the Cabral monument in Corrientes and the “Falucho” monument in its original location in the “Plaza San Martín” in downtown Buenos Aires.

⁶² William Garret Acree, Jr., *Everyday Reading: Print Culture and Collective Identity in the Río de la Plata, 1780-1910* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 2011), 168, 172, 173.

Although not addressed by Acree, in early-nineteenth-century Argentina, at the height of cultural nationalism in anticipation of the centennial of the May Revolution in 1910, the Argentine imagined community's social elites commissioned the production of several art postcards depicting Afro-Argentine heroes, especially Juan Bautista Cabral and Antonio Ruiz ("Falucho").

For example, a very old black-and-white postal card in my private collection produced perhaps in the early 1900s represents the Cabral monument, constructed in 1887 and inaugurated in 1889, in the provincial capital of Corrientes, the hero of San Lorenzo's native land. In the Cabral postcard, the black hero's monument resides in a then still sparsely developed plaza. The vintage card depicts a full, frontal view of the monument, with the image of the sculpture of "sargento" Cabral valiantly wielding his saber residing at the art card's top-center. The monument as a whole dominates the entire postcard, and the legend at the bottom informs possessors or viewers of the art card that the Cabral monument resides in the eponymous plaza. The designer(s) of the card obviously intended for it to celebrate Cabral's memory by featuring his monument located in a plaza also bearing his name; the postcard's imagery thereby effectively constitutes a site of memory within another site of memory. Many art postal cards of the "Falucho" monument also constitute doubly embedded sites or realms of social memory and were widely circulated in the early 1900s and have since been preserved and collected by Creole nostalgists. For instance, a 1910 postcard depicts on its front side the "Falucho" monument in its central location in the plaza honoring the memory of General

San Martín.⁶³

It is not a coincidence that so many mnemonic artifacts appeared in 1910. As already indicated, that year marked the one hundredth anniversary of the start of Argentina's fight for freedom from Spain in 1810. National and governmental elites took advantage of the patriotic moment to commemorate national heroes, including Afro-Argentines Cabral and Ruiz. After all, as Maurice Halbwachs and almost every student of memory since agree, social remembering is always in some way shaped by the present and its concerns. Hence, Argentine social and political elites during the centennial strove to inculcate patriotic sentiments among both citizens and foreigners alike and employed the nostalgic memory of subalterns (blacks and gauchos) by way of mnemonic icons such as stamps and postcards to promote national unity at a time of intense social and political upheaval in the country. The nationalistic programs of Argentine governing elites in the years leading up to 1910, attempting to mediate between the triumph of classical liberal ideas and cultural conservatism, promoted the diffusion of sundry realms of memory to unite the people and afford them patriotic (invented) traditions, recalling the sacrifices for the *patria* (fatherland) of Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz and other Afro-Argentine soldiers and officers.⁶⁴

Unlike paper iconography such as stamps or postcards, commemorative medals

⁶³ Images of some of these cards in my own collection will be reproduced in Appendix I. In Chapter eleven, I will address the history of the "Falucho" monument.

⁶⁴ On the attempts by governing elites to construct the Argentine nation at the end of the nineteenth century by way of honoring past heroes, see Lilia Ana Bertoní, *Patriotas, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas. La construcción de la nacionalidad argentina a fines del siglo XIX* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), especially ch. 3, "Héroes, estatuas y fiestas patrias: construir la tradición patria, 1887-1891." Interestingly, in early August 1910, *La Prensa* evidenced elite sentiments concerning "patriotic motherhood" by juxtaposing the history of

(and coins) are made of enduring materials, usually copper, bronze, silver, or some other metal alloy. Thus, they serve as a kind of imperishable icon or site of collective memory. Like stamps and postcards, however, commemorative medals also bear with them symbolic meaning and capital and are subject to historical nostalgia among subsequent collectors. In the nineteenth century, commemorative medals became ubiquitous nationalistic icons in Western Europe. Napoleon Bonaparte, for instance, especially used medals as means of political propaganda for his regime.⁶⁵ “Metallic propaganda” of the national also swept through Latin America in general and the River Plate in particular from the middle to the late nineteenth century and especially by the start of the twentieth century.⁶⁶ María Inés Rodríguez Aguilar observes that medals and coins, along with monuments and other memorials, were essential liberal nation-building cultural artifacts in Argentina after 1852 and served important roles in the development of national identity and for the nation’s collective memory and its traditions.⁶⁷

Afro-Argentines were also remembered by national elites in late-nineteenth and

heroic female patriots with the memory of “Falucho.” The “patriotic abnegation” of both “revolutionary mothers” and that of modest heroes like “Falucho” deserve remembering by the nation suggested the writer. “Actualidad. Glorificación de los héroes modestos.” *La Prensa*, Aug. 5, 1910, 11.

⁶⁵ Wayne Hanley and Michael W. Howell, “The Metallic Propaganda of Napoleon Bonaparte.” In *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750-1850: Selected Papers* (Tallahassee, FL: Inst. on Napoleon and the French Revolution, Florida State Univ., 1998), 341-51.

⁶⁶ José Eduardo de Cara, “La medalla: historia y arte.” *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, no.45 (Jan.-Dec. 1995): 681-703; idem., “Medallas y medallistas en la historia argentina del siglo XIX.” *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, no.48 (Jan.-Dec. 1998): 581-97.

⁶⁷ María Inés Rodríguez Aguilar, “Prólogo. Una colección numismática.” In *Numismática histórica*. Museo Roca, ed. (Buenos Aires: Museo Roca, 2012), n.p.
<http://www.museoroca.gov.ar/articulosytrabajos/inmigracionhistoriaarte/numismatica.pdf>

early-twentieth-century commemorative medals.⁶⁸ National military leaders feel it is necessary to give medals to honor bravery and loyalty. It is felt that some public honor, such as a medal ceremony or striking of commemorative items, must be afforded as a symbol of the collective gratitude of the military and/or the nation since dead heroes cannot enjoy material rewards after all.⁶⁹ Both “Falucho” and Lorenzo Barcala were commemorated in metallic icons of remembrance in the late 1800s and early 1900s. A particularly handsome 1895 commemorative medal of Colonel Barcala, for example, remembers the centennial of the black hero’s birth and features on its obverse side the image of the black officer most commonly known and reproduced in books and other memorabilia about him and/or Afro-Argentines. Wrapping around the top of Barcala’s bust on the upper portion of the medal’s obverse in bold letters are his military rank and the full name of the black national hero; the medal’s designer(s) intended, therefore, that the military career of Barcala be remembered by boldly engraving his elevated rank before his name. Also, on the obverse side’s bottom are remembered Barcala’s date of birth and death. On the reverse side, moreover, the medal features the Argentine national crest in the center, a patriotic symbol par excellence; around the crest, the medal declares in all capital letters, symbolizing the creator’s desire for commemoration, that Lorenzo Barcala was both “A SOLDIER OF LIBERTY” (“SOLDADO DE LA LIBERTAD”) and

⁶⁸ Norberto Pablo Cirio catalogs some twenty-seven such medals. Norberto Pablo Cirio, “Contribución al estudio de medallas vinculadas a afroargentinos.” *El Artista*, no 10 (Nov. 2013): 149-63. In addition to the commemorative medals for Barcala and Ruiz discussed below, Cirio also documents a medal struck in 1913 to honor the centennial of Juan Bautista Cabral’s martyrdom at the Battle of San Lorenzo. Cirio, “Contribución al estudio de medallas,” 161.

⁶⁹ William J. Goode, *The Celebration of Heroes: Prestige as a Social Control System* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978), 169, 171.

“HONOR TO HIS RACE AND GLORY OF HIS FATHERLAND” (“HONOR DE SU RAZA Y GLORIA DE SU PATRIA”).⁷⁰ In the end, it is not surprising that Sarmiento’s “illustrious black man,” who fought against federalism and gave his life for the Unitarian cause, would become a national icon both literally and symbolically at the height of nationalism in the years leading up to the 1910 independence centennial.

In addition, another commemorative medal in my personal collection celebrates the martyrdom of “Falucho,” Antonio Ruiz.⁷¹ The medal was designed to commemorate the inauguration of the “Falucho” monument originally planned for early May 1897, to be discussed in more detail in Chapter eleven. This was one of many commemorative medals produced by “B. Orzali y Compañía.” “B. Orzali y Compañía” was the major medal-striking firm in fin de siècle Buenos Aires, a true production center of commemorative medals in the “Beaux-Arts” style which had been first developed in France at the end of the 1800s.⁷² The 1897 “Falucho” commemoration medal was one of

⁷⁰ See Appendix I. The medal was minted by “B. Orzali y Compañía” from plated copper. Academia Nacional de la Historia, *Catálogo de las colecciones medallísticas de la Academia Nacional de la Historia* (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1987), 120. In this period, the artistic medal was monopolized by two main Buenos Aires firms: the National Engraving factory founded by Juan Gottuzzo on Piedad 860 and the National Medal Factory owned by Ignacio Orzali, José Bellagamba, and Constante Rossi on Calle Florida 152. By the centennial, the latter had forty workmen at the factory located on Corrientes 4050, stamping all kinds of metals. Arnoldo J. Cunietti-Ferrado, *Monedas y medallas. Cuatro siglos de historia y arte* (Capital Federal, Argentine Republic: Manrique Zago Ediciones, 1989), 146.

⁷¹ See Appendix I for images of this medal and other selected Afro-Platine memorabilia.

⁷² “B. Orzali y Compañía” began in the 1890s by the partners Ignacio Orzali, José Bellagamba, and Constante Rossi. After Orzali’s death in 1898, the company continued as “Bellagamba y Rossi” until circa 1910. It later became Constante Rossi SRL and closed its operations in 1958. Cunietti-Ferrado, *Monedas y medallas*, 146. I thank Dr. Alan M. Stahl, Curator of Numismatics, Firestone Library, Princeton University, for passing along these details to me. Further information on “B. Orzali y Compañía” can be found at: <http://www.museorca.gov.ar/articulosytrabajos/inmigracionhistoriaarte/numismatica.pdf>. In 1913, for the centennial of the Battle of San Lorenzo, the province of Corrientes commissioned

several remembering Argentine national heroes, historical events, and major institutions made by the firm for patriotic events or to be sold to collectors at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s in advance of the centennial celebrations.⁷³

On the 1897 medal's obverse is an engraving of Lucio Correa Morales's famous sculpture of "Falucho," which resides at the eponymous monument's summit, originally located, symbolically enough, directly opposite the memorial to General San Martín in the major Buenos Aires plaza bearing the "Liberator's" name. The gallant black soldier is depicted embracing the flag that, at least according to Bartolomé Mitre, he did not betray. The heroic action took place at Callao (Lima, Peru's port) on February 6 or 7, 1824, the latter date recorded along the borders of the medal's front side, commemorating the alleged day of "Falucho's" martyrdom. "Falucho" is also represented in both the sculpture and corresponding medal image holding his right hand over his heart in a clear patriotic gesture. The commemorative "Falucho" medal's reverse side is decorated by intertwining laurel leaves (from ancient times a symbol of victory or heroism) all around its borders; in the reverse's center are minted in bold letters: "LA GRATITUD NACIONAL A FALUCHO 9 DE MAYO 1897" ("NATIONAL GRATITUDE FOR FALUCHO 9 MAY 1897").⁷⁴ Originally, May 9 was the appointed day for the

"A. F. Rossi y Compañía" to produce a commemorative bronze medal in honor of Cabral: "Al Mártir de San Lorenzo. 1913. Corrientes en el Primer Centenario del Granadero Juan Bautista Cabral." Academia Nacional de la Historia, *Catálogo de las colecciones medallísticas*, 206.

⁷³ Lists of some of these can be found in Leonar Forrer, *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists: Coin, Gem, and Seal-Engravers, Mint-Masters, Etc., Ancient and Modern, with Reference to Their Works BC 500-AD 1900*, 8 vols. (London: Spink and Son, 1902-1930). Again, I thank Dr. Stahl for his assistance tracking down this information.

⁷⁴ See Appendix I. Academia Nacional de la Historia, *Catálogo de las colecciones medallísticas*, 122. Another bronze commemorative "Falucho" medal was minted to honor the visit of Brazilian

dedication of the monument to the black hero of Callao; however, heavy rains in Buenos Aires that day forced the monument's inauguration to be postponed until the following week. Further, as will be established in the subsequent chapters, while the time around the centennial of independence in the River Plate marked a high point in the social remembrances of blacks there, commemorations continued well into the twentieth century (and beyond).

With the possible exception of Cabral, no other Afro-Argentine is more commemorated throughout Argentina since first being brought to national consciousness by Bartolomé Mitre in the mid-1800s than "Falucho." According to Jorge Emilio Gallardo, in "Mitre is underlined a sense or criterion of moral debt owed our black men and women." In the pages of his newspaper, the important and prestigious *La Nación*, Mitre repeatedly reminded his compatriots of that debt owed to their black citizens and

president Manuel Ferraz de Campos Salles and his entourage to Buenos Aires in October 1900. The medal was commissioned by "La Asociación Patriótica Falucho" ("The Falucho Patriotic Association") to commemorate the then Brazilian head of state's stay in Argentina and was minted by "Bellagamba and Rossi." The medal's obverse once more features Correa Morales's statue honoring the memory of "Falucho" and records as initiators of the "Falucho" monument "TTE. GRAL. [LT. GEN.] BARTOLOME MITRE," "TTE. CNEL. [LT. COL.] DAVID MARAMBIO CATAN," and "TTE. CORONEL [LT. COLONEL] J. M. ESPORA." "The Falucho Patriotic Association" was composed of military and retired officers and was representative of the conservative Argentine cultural nationalism on the rise in the early twentieth century, culminating in the military coup of 1930. The Argentine military was (and is) a major promoter of the commemoration of Afro-Argentine national heroes. See, for instance, the multiple remembrances of black heroes, including Cabral, Barcala, and "Falucho," in Lt. Juan Román Silveyra's, *Anecdotario histórico militar*. Brig. Gen. Juan Bartolomé Boeri, prologue. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Argentinas "Brunetti," 1955). Brigadier General Boeri explicitly appeals to historical memory of military glories passed on to children as a key means to strengthen patriotism and preserve national identity into the future. Cirio, moreover, lists a plated copper medal struck in 1911 by "G. y Af. Rossi" to commemorate the 89th anniversary of "Falucho's" sacrifice. Cirio, "Contribución al estudio de medallas," 159-60.

denounced racism as shameful.⁷⁵ Although not officially a member of Mitre's "gallery of national celebrities," as will be established in the next two chapters, "Falucho" nonetheless became an Argentine icon and national myth, in large measure the product of Mitre's literary-historical efforts to immortalize the black hero (and through him, Afro-Argentines in general).

Bartolomé Mitre, himself an icon and national legend, thus transformed "Falucho" from a common soldier to a national myth embodying the very patriotic virtues needed by a state in desperate need of such foundational fictions, one commemorated in many grand and small sites of memory from the middle to the late nineteenth century until well into the twentieth. Just as it was no coincidence for Barcala to be commemorated given Sarmiento's past praise of the "caballero negro," so, too, one should not be nonplused by "Falucho's" many historical remembrances among social, military, and government elites in light of "Don Bartolo's" eulogizations of the black hero of Callao.

Conclusion

This chapter documents the numerous ways a few exemplary Afro-Platine heroes of the nineteenth century were historically remembered or commemorated from the 1800s until well into the last century by social elites in Buenos Aires and Montevideo. These black heroes of the wars of independence in the River Plate have been remembered by later generations of compatriots as models of patriotism and sacrifice for their nations.

⁷⁵ Jorge Emilio Gallardo, *Indígenas y afroargentinos en el sentir de Mitre*. Colección El Barro y Las Ideas (Buenos Aires: Idea Viva, 1999), 9, 11-12. In the original, Gallardo intimates: "En Mitre subyace un sentido o criterio de deuda moral contraído con nuestros hombres y mujeres negros."

For example, the legendary Afro-Uruguayan folk-singer and soldier “Ansina” has been commemorated by several generations of Uruguayans as the faithful servant of national leader José Gervasio Artigas, just one of many black war veterans who followed their beloved commander into Paraguayan exile. In Argentina, Juan Bautista Cabral is celebrated as the savior of national hero José de San Martín at the Battle of San Lorenzo, who died shielding his leader’s body from Spanish arms. Fellow independence-era and Argentine civil-war veteran, Lorenzo I. Barcala became arguably the most decorated and recognized Afro-Argentine soldier of his day, so much so that even a notorious social Darwinist and no friend of non-white races, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, could not help but extol the many virtues of the “illustrious black man.” However, arguably the most iconic of Afro-Argentine national heroes was Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho,” the martyr of Callao. Ever since he was introduced to the national imaginary by none other than *prohombre* or founder Bartolomé Mitre, “Falucho” has served as a national myth and his social remembrances as sites of memory for the Argentine nation.

While focusing on documentary or narrative memorials of these Afro-Platine national heroes, other icons of remembrance are also catalogued in the above pages. These “miniature memorials” are redolent with political symbolism and thus ideological content, intended by national elites to send a clear message of patriotism and unity to Creole and foreigner alike resident in the River Plate, especially during the *fin de siècle*. For instance, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century stamps, postcards, and medals, not to mention many street names, schools, and social clubs bearing the names or images of these black heroes constitute both sites of the modern nation-state as well as realms of national memory. Thus, a 1923 commemorative medal of Afro-Uruguayan hero

“Ansina,” designed by José Belloni, arguably then Uruguay’s most prominent sculptor, and commissioned by the black nationalist “Comité Patriótico ‘Ansina’,” shows a noble African male figure on the medal’s front; on the reverse side, the legend reads “The men of ‘Ansina’s’ race always faithful to his memory.” It was no coincidence that this commemorative medal was struck in 1923, since that was the year General José Gervasio Artigas was first declared a national hero, thereby also elevating at that time the patriotic standing of “el fiel payador de Artigas,” “Ansina.”⁷⁶ Owing to the semiotic and ideological contents of artifacts like stamps or medals, such “everyday monuments” or “icons of remembrance” provide both insight into the social and political realities of given groups or nations and reinforced their identities at the time as well.

In short, this chapter establishes that there is in fact no social remembrance absent material artifacts or objects of memory such as postcards and postal stamps and their symbolic or representative contents. One such mnemonic artifact is the monument or memorial. In fact, monuments and memorials serve as catalysts that give shape to social memory; in addition, that shape of social remembrance must conform to the established official historiography. Therefore, while perhaps ironic that the first truly national monument in Argentina was dedicated to the memory of an Afro-Argentine, it should not be surprising, however, that Bartolomé Mitre’s legendary “Falucho” was the object of especial commemoration among his later compatriots.

⁷⁶ See Appendix I. I thank Uruguayan numismatist and collector Ariel Cohen for both allowing me to purchase the “Ansina” medal from him and for his insights into the artifact and its symbolic importance.

CHAPTER 10

“A Falucho Recordad”: Commemorating “El negro de San Martín,” Antonio Ruiz, and
Realms of Social Remembrances

“A Falucho recordad/ Como hijo de americano.../Y fué a ofrecer su sangre/En bien de su patrio suelo;/Sólo llevando el anhelo/De que su patria se salve.” In *Antiguos cantos populares argentinos*. Juan Alfonso Carrizo, comp. (Buenos Aires: Impresores Silla Hermanos, 1926), 56.

Introduction

Nationalist Creole folklorist and memorialist, Pastor Severendo Obligado, introduced in the last chapter, documented and preserved in his traditions of Buenos Aires the oral histories of by-gone days. Nostalgia, almost dripping from every word, is a constant motif in Obligado’s renderings of the city’s past. He recorded, among other things, the memories of those “ancient” Afro-Argentines who, in the imagination of

Creole elites, seemed to serve as vestigial organs in the social body of the city in the early twentieth century.⁷⁷ For instance, Obligado collects the reminiscences of a 120-year-old Afro-Argentine war veteran, José Lara. Born at the end of the colonial era, Lara served in the armies of independence of the early nineteenth century. When recalling his military service for the nation, José Lara's eyes filled with honest and tender tears, like those of a child, records Obligado, so moving and vivid were his memories of those glorious days gone by. The emotions prompted by his memories were spontaneous and genuine, insists Obligado; Lara's reminiscences, however, were also aided by material objects of memory, such as the many military medals he surrounded himself with, received long ago from his grateful officers, for his honorable services for the fatherland.⁷⁸ According to Obligado, moreover, "Lara pertenece como muchos otros á esa pléyade de soldados de color, sintetizados en la figura de Falucho; modestos y abnegados..." ("Lara belongs like so many others to the common class of black soldiers, represented in the person of Falucho; modest and abnegated...").⁷⁹ The heavy

⁷⁷ As documented in Chapter eight on Creole nostalgia of blackness, the cultural preoccupation with very old Afro-Argentines, for example, in the pages of *Caras y Caretas* or in the memoirs of Creole elites, suggests that blacks were considered exotic embodiments of days gone by. The Creole fascination with these black centenarians of the centennial proffers insight into both nostalgia and cultural nationalism in the late 1800s and early 1900s in Argentina as a whole, but especially in its capital city.

⁷⁸ The role of military and commemorative medals was alluded to in the previous chapter. Medals are in their iconography and inscriptions sites of national memory. Jean-Pierre Rioux, "La memoria colectiva." In *Para una historia cultural*, 1st ed. Jean-Pierre Rioux and Jean François Sirinelli, eds. (Mexico: Taurus, 1999), 359.

⁷⁹ P. Severendo Obligado, *Tradiciones argentinas*, 6th series (illustrated ed.) (Buenos Aires: "La Semana Médica," Imp. de Obras de E. Spinelli, 1905), 290. Obligado explicitly warns against forgetting black national heroes, rhetorically asking: "... ¿deberían seguir bajo el doble saudario de la muerte y el olvido?" (... "should they remain doubly shrouded in death and oblivion?"). Obligado, *Tradiciones argentinas*, 291. Once again the trope of the dead black Argentine soldier

cost paid by Afro-Argentine soldiers for the freedom of their country and its social remembrance by later Creole compatriots thus came to center by the late 1800s on the figure of one particular black hero, Antonio Ruiz, better recalled by his *apodo* (nickname): “Falucho.”

In the previous chapter, the reader was presented with the social remembrances and commemorations of the heroism of black soldiers in the Río de la Plata, especially their roles in the wars of independence of the early nineteenth century. Bartolomé Mitre’s imaginings of black patriots in particular became central to the national incorporation and subsequent social remembrances about Afro-Argentines by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁸⁰ In this chapter, I will look more closely at Mitre’s (re-)invention of one particular Afro-Argentine national martyr, namely, the above-mentioned Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho.”

While, according to Nicolás Shumway, “Falucho” was certainly not a part of Bartolomé Mitre’s official “gallery of Argentine celebrities,” which was limited to only great (white) men of the past,⁸¹ this black hero nonetheless became an Argentine national

is invoked and associated with the African race’s putative demographic vanishing, as well as its social forgetting.

⁸⁰ Lea Geler anticipated some of my findings in her article “‘Hijos de la Patria’: tensiones y pasiones de la inclusión en la nación argentina entre los afroporteños a fines del siglo XIX.” *Memoria Americana* 20, 2 (July-Dec. 2012): 273-94. Geler’s use of the term “hijos” (principally sons, only secondarily daughters) is appropriate given the gendered and patriarchal/paternalistic nature of discourses of black Argentine inclusion in the national imaginary.

⁸¹ Shumway points out how Bartolomé Mitre fashioned a “gallery of Argentine celebrities” to serve as points of reference for his liberal politics and emphasis on national consolidation. Far from an objective historian, Mitre’s approach to historiography was totally ideological and motivated by the need to discover (or invent) a usable past for his brand of national politics. For Mitre, national celebrities included José de San Martín, Bernardino Rivadavia, Manuel Belgrano, Juan Lavalle, Guillermo Brown, Gregorio Funes, and Mariano Moreno. All were imagined as paragons of liberalism, and although some of his liberal heroes even collaborated with

myth. Mitre's literary reimaginings and selective remembrances of the past immortalized Antonio Ruiz and, through him, all the by then largely "vanished" Afro-Argentines, now targets of nostalgic memory in a country full of troublesome and disloyal foreigners. Lea Geler affirms a similar point: "At the precise moment that talk started about European immigration and the disappearance of the Afro-Argentine population, Mitre stamps the portrait of who was the exemplary Argentine ['Falucho'], a part of anonymous admass, who died serving the nation."⁸²

The chapter shall consider some key sites of nationalistic memory about "Falucho." Throughout the last century or so in Argentina, "Falucho" was further immortalized by Creole nationalists in verse, songs, and stories, among other countless memorializations. For instance, an epic poem by Rafael Obligado, Argentina's national poet at the end of the nineteenth century, "El negro Falucho" (1891), re-published in *La Prensa* on March 15, 1893 and then re-commissioned for the inauguration of the black martyr's monument, has often been put to music and has also been recited during patriotic holidays by many generations (until recently) of schoolchildren throughout

conservative strongman Juan Manuel de Rosas, such details were carefully forgotten or edited out by Mitre. Nicolás Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991), 188ff.

⁸² Lea Geler, "¡Pobres negros! Algunos apuntes sobre la desaparición de los negros argentinos." In *Estado, región y poder local en América Latina, siglos XIX-XX. Algunas miradas sobre el estado, el poder y la participación política*. Pilar García Jordán, ed. (Barcelona: Publicaciones I Ediciones de la Univ. de Barcelona, 2006), 129.

Argentina in the last century.⁸³ In short, then, this chapter seeks to reckon with how Argentines over the last century or so have labored to “a Falucho recordad.”⁸⁴

“Falucho”: History, Legend, or Both?

The controversy over the true historical identity of Uruguay’s black national hero “Ansina” was referenced a couple of times already. Was “Ansina” Joaquín Lencina or Lenzina, the “fiel payador de [José] Artigas,” as per Hammerly Dupuy et al., or was he instead Manuel Antonio Ledesma, according to Mario Petillo, the black hero immortalized in a marble and stone monument in downtown Montevideo? Regardless, the historicity of “Ansina” is a given in the historiography of the black in the Banda Oriental (Uruguay) and in exile.⁸⁵ As was the case with his Oriental counterpart, “Ansina,” controversy also exists over “Falucho’s” real identity among different scholars

⁸³ See Rafael Obligado, “El negro Falucho.” *Poesías completas* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sopena Argentina, 1963), 89-90. Interestingly, several Argentine friends and relatives in their late thirties and early forties collectively recall that public recitation of this poem was often assigned as punishment for poor behavior by their middle-school and high-school teachers in the Buenos Aires of their youth. Whereas for my father’s generation Obligado’s poem is fondly associated with youthful memories of school civic festivals, for much younger Argentines the “Falucho” epic is remembered far less nostalgically. However, among even younger Argentines of my acquaintance or family, the poem “El negro Falucho” is not remembered individually or collectively at all. While anecdotal in nature, this observation nevertheless reinforces the well-entrenched position in memory studies that collective memories are often different among distinct generational cohorts, even if they otherwise share social and other characteristics in common.

⁸⁴ The phrase “a Falucho recordad” basically means “to remember Falucho.” I take the saying from an anonymous popular poem recorded by early-twentieth-century Argentine folklorist Juan Alfonso Carrizo. He recalls first hearing these verses as a thirteen year-old boy being recited by a classmate. Significantly, the song begins by recalling and stressing “Falucho’s” Creoleness: “A Falucho recordad/Como hijo de americano...” (“Remember Falucho/As a son of the Americas...”). Juan Alfonso Carrizo, comp., *Antiguos cantos populares argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Impresores Silla Hermanos, 1926), 56.

⁸⁵ Roberto Pacheco, “Ansina (1760?-1860).” In *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*, vol. 1. Carole Boyce Davies, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 2008), 90-91.

in Argentina. Was “Falucho” really Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz of San Martín’s Infantry Battalion Number Eight? Was there another Antonio Ruiz in that same battalion? Was there more than one black Argentine soldier known by the same nickname? Or, perhaps, “Falucho” was purely a legendary character invented whole-cloth by Bartolomé Mitre in his historical writings to instill patriotism for the national cause at a time prior to the final consolidation of the Argentine nation-state, as a moral exemplar of patriotic virtues. I shall look at some biographical details about “Falucho” and examine some of the controversies surrounding the black martyr’s historical identity, highlighting Mitre’s role in the promulgation of Antonio Ruiz’s memory among his compatriots and contemporaries.

It is practically impossible to tell the history (and/or legend) of “Falucho” without first taking into account the interests of his principal promoter and memorialist, Don Bartolomé Mitre. With the exception of the great national liberator, José de San Martín, no other Argentine *prohombre* or founding father is as fundamental to the national imaginary of Argentina as “Don Bartolo.”⁸⁶ Of the men of ’37, moreover, only Domingo Faustino Sarmiento rivals Mitre in both historical popularity among his countrymen and in political and literary achievements. In Bernardo L. Peyret’s patriotic anthology published in the aftermath of the centennial celebrations for the Argentine schools, for instance, Bartolomé Mitre and his writings were prominently featured. Alongside heroes he himself helped to fashion and other notable contemporaries, including Moreno,

⁸⁶ E.g., see the articles in a supplement to *Caras y Caretas* that was entirely devoted to honoring Bartolomé Mitre. “Homenaje á Mitre.” *Caras y Caretas* 4, supplement to no. 142 (June 26, 1901).

Rivadavia, Alberdi, Sarmiento, and Avellaneda, Bartolomé Mitre was eulogized in both prose and verse. Essayist Ramón J. Cárcano thus intoned: “Mitre es grande, sobre todo por su grandeza moral, y después de [George] Washington, no tiene paralelos en la historia de inmortales. Se parece en Sud América á la cima immaculada del Aconcagua, dominante en la montaña sobre los reyes de la altura.”⁸⁷ Furthermore, *Caras y Caretas* editorialist José M. Niño eulogized Mitre a few weeks after his death in January 1906 as an Argentine nonpareil, “una personalidad única, genuina é intensamente argentina.” Niño goes on to say no other countryman is so identified with Argentine nationality; in short, for Niño as for so many other contemporaries, “... Mitre encarna la historia del país. Es que Mitre es único.”⁸⁸ For generations of Argentines, then, Bartolomé Mitre was the very embodiment of the nation.

He was also a great military leader among the liberal forces during the civil wars of the first half of the nineteenth century and was, in addition, commander-in-chief of the Cisplatine allied forces during the Paraguayan War of 1864-1870. In addition to his military exploits and service as president from 1862 to 1868 of what would in about two

⁸⁷ “Mitre is great, especially because of his moral grandeur, and after [George] Washington, has no equivalent in the history of the immortals. He is in South America as the immaculate summit of the Aconcagua [range], dominant in the mountaintops over the kings of the great [moral] heights.” Ramón J. Cárcano, “Mitre, su grandeza moral.” In *Antología patriótica, prosa y verso. Contribución á la enseñanza patriótica de la escuela argentina*. Bernardo L. Peyret, comp. and ed. (Buenos Aires: J. LaJouane y Cía., 1911), 290. See also the poems in this anthology dedicated to the memory of “Don Bartolo” by Darío Valrosa, “La muerte del patriarca,” and Francisco Podestá, “Mitre el grande.”

⁸⁸ “... Mitre embodies the history of the country. There is only one Mitre.” José M. Niño, “Mitre y su símbolo.” *Caras y Caretas* 9, 382 (Jan. 27, 1906): n.p. In the same issue, José Ignacio Garmendia recalls Mitre’s military career. José Ignacio Garmendia, “Mitre militar.” *Caras y Caretas* 9, 382 (Jan. 27, 1906): n.p. A week later, another writer for the same organ published an article about Mitre’s battlefield prowess and philosophy. “Grifo,” “Mitre en la guerra.” *Caras y Caretas* 9, 383 (Feb. 3, 1906): n.p.

decades finally and fully become the Republic of Argentina, Mitre was the founder in 1870 of his country's most important newspaper, *La Nación*. Bartolomé Mitre was additionally a prolific writer of poetry and prose; his collected works span seventeen volumes. He is widely considered the patriarch of modern Argentine historiography, who wrote extensive biographies of national heroes, including those on San Martín and Mariano Moreno.⁸⁹ For Mitre, furthermore, history writing was more than an intellectual exercise; in fact, it was a major weapon in the war of ideas for the soul of his then embattled and still emerging nation.

Bartolomé Mitre did not simply concentrate on the deeds of great men only, however. He recognized that the common man also has a role to play in history and in the uplifting of his compatriots. This was perhaps motivated by Mitre's appeal to and common association with the masses. Niño, for example, referred to Bartolomé Mitre as an idol of the masses or "ídolo de la muchedumbre."⁹⁰ Recall from a previous chapter that Bartolomé Mitre was one of the founders and leaders of the Argentine Radical Party in the late 1800s and early 1900s that sought to provide greater political access for common workers and the sons of immigrants. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, Mitre's political and ideological concerns centered on defeating conservatism and strongman-rule in the country. To, therefore, combat Rosas's and other *caudillos'*

⁸⁹ Bartolomé Mitre, *Obras completas de Bartolomé Mitre*, 17 vols. Edición Ordenada por el H. Congreso de la Nación Argentina (Ley no. 12.328) (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos de Guillermo Kraft, 1938-1960). For more biographical data on Bartolomé Mitre and the importance of his writings for the nation, consult Shumway's *The Invention of Argentina* and William H. Ktra, *The Argentine Generation of 1837: Echeverría, Alberdi, Sarmiento, Mitre* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1996).

⁹⁰ Niño, "Mitre y su símbolo," n.p.

political and material appeals to unskilled laborers and Afro-Argentines, Bartolomé Mitre used his mighty pen to memorialize (or invent) common-man heroes to serve as moral examples of (liberal) patriotism for the masses.⁹¹ In this regard, then, the black Argentine soldier Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho” (as well as “sargento” Cabral) stands out prominently among Mitre’s gallery of subaltern heroes.

According to Jorge Emilio Gallardo, Bartolomé Mitre makes frequent references to Africans and Afro-Argentines in his historical writings. Mitre in his discourses and literary production emphasizes the moral debt owed to Africans and their descendants throughout the Americas. Gallardo quotes at length, for instance, from the text of a speech Bartolomé Mitre delivered before the Brazilian ambassador to Buenos Aires on May 19, 1888. Mitre celebrates Brazil’s de jure abolition of slavery just a few days earlier, and maintains that the end of African bondage there was one of the major and noble aspirations of Brazil’s founders after its own independence from Portugal earlier in the century. By ending the inhuman institution of African slavery, avers the distinguished Argentine statesman, Brazilians has earned their standing as a free and civilized people.⁹² Like other liberals of the day, including his contemporaries Alberdi and Sarmiento, Bartolomé Mitre was unambiguously opposed to African chattel slavery, considering the institution as inhuman and uncivilized, a pre-modern vestige of Iberian colonial society.

⁹¹ On Mitre’s ideological uses of history, see Tulio Halperín Donghi, “Mitre y la formulación de una historia para la Argentina.” *Anuario IEHS* 11 (1996): 57-69.

⁹² Mitre’s speech is taken from Jorge Emilio Gallardo, *Indígenas y afroargentinos en el sentir de Mitre* (Buenos Aires: Idea viva, 1999), 10.

Mitre, furthermore, often editorialized in the pages of his newspaper *La Nación* about Afro-Argentines, extoling their many cultural and other contributions to the nation. He was especially moved to praise the military exploits of black Argentine soldiers. For example, upon the death of renowned nineteenth-century black officer José María Morales, Mitre recorded the events of the state funeral. Besides Mitre himself, dignitaries at Morales's funeral service included a virtual "who's who" of Argentine politics, society, and high culture at the end of the nineteenth century. Mitre's article quotes from former Avellaneda secretary of state Bonifacio Lastra's dedicatory speech to the memory of the lamented Colonel Morales. Lastra proclaimed that Colonel José María Morales was both a noble man and the exemplary citizen-soldier; moreover, the life of the late black colonel "... será siempre un elocuente *ejemplo a enseñar en la democracia argentina*."⁹³ Lastra's last sentiment, suggesting that José María Morales will forever serve as an eloquent example for the teaching of democracy in Argentina, perfectly captured the importance of the historical memory of black sacrifices for a nation then barely only a few years removed from a coup d'état and also looking to instill democratic values among its native and foreign populations alike.

Given Bartolomé Mitre's political appreciation of blacks and his (selective) rescue of their historical memory, it is thus perhaps not surprising that he was beloved and well-received by certain sectors of the Afro-Argentine population of Buenos Aires.

⁹³ *La Nación*, Oct. 25, 1894, in Geler, "'Hijos de la patria,'" 277, 278. Italics in the original.

For instance, he was made an honorary member and even officer of several black cultural associations and civic societies in Argentina and abroad.⁹⁴

Gallardo maintains that the national debt owed to black Argentines was materialized in Mitre's chronicle of the heroic death of the much-debated "Falucho," "figura que contribuyó a robustecer como un emblema de los de su raza" ("a figure [Mitre] contributed to strengthen as an emblem of those of his race").⁹⁵ Bartolomé Mitre first introduced Argentine readers to Antonio Ruiz or "Falucho" in a series of articles published a week apart on May 14 and May 21, 1857 in the pages of his Buenos Aires newspaper *Los Debates*.⁹⁶ Mitre's serialization of "Falucho's" legend in *Los Debates*

⁹⁴ Gallardo, *Indígenas y afroargentinos*, 11-12. Among his honorary memberships were vicepresident in 1856 of the "Institut d'Afrique" of Paris, honorary member in 1877 of the coral and musical society "La Africana" and in 1878 of the society "Hijos de Africa," and honorary president in 1890 of the "Sociedad Candombera Negros y Negras Bonitas." However, Mitre was not universally endorsed by all Afro-Argentines. Thus, an anonymous editorialist for the nineteenth-century Afro-Argentine newspaper *La Igualdad* on April 12, 1874 characterized Mitre as "a false prophet" of the nation, and his administration supposedly brought about "nothing of worth for the republic." "La explotación del localismo." In *Tinta negra en el gris del ayer. Los afroporteños a través de sus periódicos entre 1873 y 1882*. Norberto Pablo Cirio, comp. (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Nacional, 2009), 100.

⁹⁵ Gallardo, *Indígenas y afroargentinos*, 10.

⁹⁶ "Explicación." Bartolomé Mitre, *Obras completas de Bartolomé Mitre*, vol. 12 (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos de Guillermo Kraft, 1949), xxiv. However, Mitre was not the first writer to extol "Falucho." In 1853, Peruvian author, historian, and politician Ricardo Palma briefly related the tale of the black hero's martyrdom at Callao in his *Corona patriótica*. Ricardo Palma, *Corona patriótica* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Virtual Universal, 2003 [1853]), n.p. <http://www.biblioteca.org.ar/libros/1935.pdf>. Strangely, none of the scholars writing about the "Falucho" story I am aware of cite Palma's patriotic compilation. Perhaps because Palma's work was not originally published in Argentina and does not focus exclusively on Argentine heroes, this mention of "Falucho" has been overlooked in that country. Thus, claims that Mitre "invented" the legend of "Falucho" may well be exaggerated and an example of literary jingoism among his compatriots. Of course, Palma could have received the "Falucho" story from Mitre himself. Both men were close contemporaries and intellectual luminaries who could have easily corresponded on the matter. Perhaps some scholar can make this connection with a bit more research.

must have immediately resonated with the imagination of his compatriots, moreover. For instance, Argentine literary critic Beatriz Seibel, cross referencing both Raúl Castagnino's and Jacobo A. de Diego's respective scholarship, documents the premier in Buenos Aires of the play *Falucho, héroe de Buenos Aires* as early as December 1857, only a few months after the publication of Mitre's first articles on the black hero in *Los Debates*. In addition, around the same time, a radical Uruguayan poet resident in Buenos Aires, Laurindo Lapuente, wrote another drama in verse, *Falucho o la sublevación del Callao*, although there survives no documentary evidence that Lapuente's play was ever performed on stage.⁹⁷ Subsequently, in late September 1873, at the inauguration of a statue in honor of independence hero Manuel Belgrano, the father of the Argentine flag, attended by the president, cabinet members, the provincial governor, federal judges, the archbishop, and other leading political and social dignitaries, the English-language Buenos Aires daily *The Standard* reported that ex-president Mitre once more proudly invoked the memory of "Falucho" and other Argentine soldiers who died defending the nation's colors.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Beatriz Seibel, *Historia del teatro argentino. Desde los rituales hasta 1930* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Corregidor, 2002), 143-44. I would like to thank Profesora Seibel for bringing this to my attention. See also her "La presencia afroargentina en el espectáculo." In *El negro en la Argentina. Presencia y negación*. Dina V. Picotti, ed. (Buenos Aires: Editores de América Latina, 2001), 199-207. Seibel draws on Raúl H. Castagnino, *Literatura dramática argentina, 1717-1967* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Pleamar, 1968), 65; and Jacobo A. de Diego, "Diez años de teatro (1852-1862)." *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, no. 18 (1975), 373-76, for the references to the two early "Falucho" plays.

⁹⁸ "The Belgrano Statue." *The Standard*, Sept. 26, 1873, 2. The same or a very similar article was (re-) published in *The Standard* on Sept. 30, 1873, 2.

Bartolomé Mitre revisited the heroic exploits of Antonio Ruiz in a five-part series “Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana,” published in his own newspaper *La Nación* between April 6 and April 9, 1875, with the final installment appearing on Sunday, April 11.⁹⁹ Thus, by 1875, the legend and history of “Falucho” were well-ingrained in the national imaginary of Argentina, thanks largely to the perorations and journalistic stylings of Bartolomé Mitre, who both benefited from and further contributed to the “mood of nostalgia” dominant among some Creole elites and cultural nationalists for an imagined liberal “Golden Age,” one in which loyal blacks like Juan Bautista Cabral or “Falucho” sacrificed themselves for the *patria* and were therefore later fondly remembered as submissive and faithful members of national society.

Moreover, Mitre even inserted the “Falucho” story into his serious historical *oeuvre* as well.¹⁰⁰ These works, as Nicolás Shumway has pointed out, have served as part of the standard national historical canon for over a century and have been read by Argentines of all ages, shaping their understandings of the country’s past (as well as

⁹⁹ Bartolomé Mitre, “Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana.” *La Nación*, April 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 1875. All installments of “Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana” appear on page 1, columns 1 through 8.

¹⁰⁰ The history and legend of Antonio Ruiz have been repeated often in different editions of Mitre’s historical writings over the decades. These tomes, or excerpts thereof, have often been used in the classrooms of the country for many years and by different generations of students, whose ideas about their national past have been largely constructed from Mitre’s imaginings. A very partial and selective list of titles by Mitre that contain the “Falucho” story includes: part IV of “Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana,” in *Obras completas de Bartolomé Mitre*, vol. 12, 179-82; “Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana.” In *Páginas de historia* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca de “La Nación,” 1906); “Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana.” In *Episodios de la revolución* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1960); and *Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana. El crucero de la Argentina, 1817-1819* (Rosario, Argentina: Editorial Biblioteca, 1968). For an abridged English translation of the history of San Martín and the emancipation of South America containing the “Falucho” story, see William Pilling, trans., *The emancipation of South America. A Condensed Translation of the History of San Martín by General Don Bartolomé Mitre* (London: Chapman & Hall, LTD., 1893). The story of Antonio Ruiz appears on page 448.

present and future) and determining national heroes to emulate.¹⁰¹ Along with “sargento” Cabral, Antonio Ruiz was fondly recalled in the pages of Mitre’s historical writings as a subaltern hero and model for future citizens, one whose memory deserved especial remembrance.¹⁰² Thus, according to Mitre, “Falucho’s” story was among the most interesting and sublime of the wars of independence, “que podría figurar sin mengua en un libro de Plutarco” (“could with-out reservation appear in a book by Plutarch”).¹⁰³ Futhermore, Mitre begins his “Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana” by demanding that so many “unknown heroes” deserve honor and remembrance by a grateful nation: “How many obscure sacrifices, how many humble martyrs, how many unknown heroes and ignored deeds worthy of eternal memory, of those who honor humanity and constitute the highest glory of a nation, does our military history attest!”¹⁰⁴ Among those “humble martyrs” and “unknown heroes” whose “obscure sacrifices” glorify the annals of Argentine military history, few were (are?) more remembered by an entire “pueblo”

¹⁰¹ Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina*, 188ff. E.g., see Mitre’s treatment of “Falucho” in the chapter on the “Sublevación del Callao” (the “Uprising in Callao”) in his canonical *Historia de San Martín y de la emancipación sud-americana*, vol. 4 (Buenos Aires: Félix LaJouane, Editor, 1890), ch. XLIX.

¹⁰² Mitre, “Los sargentos de Tambo Nuevo,” in *Obras completas de Bartolomé Mitre*, vol. 12, 59, on both Cabral and “Falucho.” Mitre, for instance, bemoans that Cabral’s sacrifice has not been honored by his descendants and has not been redeemed by posthumous gratitude, glancing blows at his conservative political foes. In the next paragraph of the same work, Mitre remembers “Falucho” and his martyrdom for the nation (*patria*) and laments that the name of this black martyr has not been registered in the pages of the country’s history.

¹⁰³ Mitre, *Páginas de historia*, quoted in Lea Geler, “‘¡Pobres negros!’,” 125.

¹⁰⁴ Mitre, “Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana,” in *Obras completas de Bartolomé Mitre*, vol. 12, 169. In the original: “¡Cuántos sacrificios oscuros, cuántos mártires modestos, cuántos héroes anónimos y cuántos hechos ignorados dignos de eterna memoria, de esos que hacen honor a la humanidad y constituyen la gloria más excelsa de un pueblo, cuenta nuestra historia militar!”

(nation) than was one Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho,” to whose history, legend, and commemorations this chapter now turns.

As per Mitre’s retelling, “Falucho” is the name by which Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz, an Afro-Argentine hero of independence, was known among his fellow soldiers. Ruiz, born a slave, perhaps in Africa, fought in General José de San Martín’s Army of the Andes, in the all-black Eighth Infantry Battalion. Allegedly, Antonio Ruiz heroically died holding the revolutionary flag during a rebellion among Creole troops at the fort of Callao, Lima’s port, on February 6 or 7, 1824.¹⁰⁵ The traitors called “Falucho” a rebel, to wit the black hero laconically replied “It is bad to be a rebel, but it is worse to be a traitor!” Rather than hoist the Spanish flag over the fort, Ruiz refused to “... honor the flag against which I have always fought,”¹⁰⁶ and he was instead shot by the conspirators, crying out with his dying breath: “¡Viva Buenos Aires!” “Happy is the country that can inspire such feelings in the heart of a rough Negro soldier!,” lauds Bartolomé Mitre. “Falucho did not die a martyr’s death in vain,” however, recalls

¹⁰⁵ There is even debate about what country and what flag Ruiz thought he was dying for, observes Argentine historian Norberto Galasso: “¿Qué patria y qué bandera defendía ‘el negro Falucho’?” Norberto Galasso thinks it unlikely that Ruiz died defending the Argentine flag, and he points out that even according to Mitre, “Falucho’s” last words invoked Buenos Aires, not Argentina. Norberto Galasso, *Seamos libres y lo demás no importa nada. Vida de San Martín* (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 2000), 463-65. Others cited by Galasso who refute the official story of “Falucho’s” martyrdom and its patriotic meaning include A. J. Pérez Amuchástegui, *De Mendoza a Guayaquil* (Santa Fe, Argentina: Univ. de Litoral, 1964), 83; and Miguel A. Speroni, *San Martín. La grandeza del libertador* (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1975), 35.

¹⁰⁶ According to Durkheim: “The soldier who dies for his flag, dies for his country; but as a matter of fact, in his own consciousness, it is the flag that has first place.” Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. J. Swain, trans. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1915 [1912]), 220. See also Karen A. Cerulo, *Identity Designs: The Sights and Sounds of a Nation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1995), 15. The point of national symbols, however, is that they represent the country in the first place.

Argentina's foundational historian. Rather, a few days later, two squadrons of revolutionary mounted infantry or grenadiers, with "Falucho" "... showing them the path of honor," turned their weapons against the traitors and former comrades at Callao. Still, Mitre sadly concludes his recounting of the rebellion of Callao among revolutionary troops and "Falucho's" heroic defiance in the face of the rebels, stating: "Thus was destroyed by rioting and treachery the memorable army of the Andes, the liberator of Chile and Peru".¹⁰⁷

Bartolomé Mitre claims he based his history of Antonio Ruiz on personal testimonies from "Falucho's" commanding officers, including Generals Enrique Martínez and Tomás Guido, among others.¹⁰⁸ Another of "Falucho's" commanders was General Guillermo Miller, one of San Martín's most trusted officers, who was also very familiar with the black troops. General Miller frequently spoke affectionately about blacks, recalling one of his aides as "a faithful and caring African."¹⁰⁹ He also often makes reference to, especially, the all-black Eighth Infantry Battalion, putatively Antonio Ruiz's outfit. In his military memoirs, General Miller recalls many feats of "Falucho's"

¹⁰⁷ I am employing a translation of Mitre's dedicatory speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the "Falucho" monument (discussed in the next chapter) by Dr. Raoul Monserrate Pérez, published in the prestigious African-American history journal *Phylon*. Bartolomé Mitre, "Falucho." Raoul Monserrate Pérez, trans. *Phylon*, 5, 2 (Second Quarter 1944): 136-37. It is significant that a leading African-American academic publication would thus commemorate "Falucho." I published a concise biography on "Falucho." Roberto Pacheco, "Falucho (?-1824)." In *The Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*, vol. 2. Carole Boyce Davies, ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 427-28.

¹⁰⁸ Marcos Estrada, *El Cabo Segundo Antonio Ruiz (a.) "Falucho"* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Julio Faufman S.R.L., 1964), 34-35.

¹⁰⁹ Guillermo Miller, *Memorias del General Guillermo Miller*, vol. 1. Percy Cayo Córdova, prelim. study. (Lima: Editorial Arica, SA, 1979 [1829]), 304.

battalion during the wars of independence from Spain. The Afro-Argentine battalion was with San Martín from the outset and followed him to western Mendoza province when he was named military governor there in 1814. General Miller recalls that by early 1817 the Eighth Infantry was under the immediate command of Colonel Cranmer; at the bloody Battle of Chacabuco on February 12, 1817, under Chilean General O'Higgins, the black Eighth Battalion was defeated by Spanish arms, suffering massive casualties, remembers Miller.¹¹⁰

Of this battalion, General Miller was especially laudatory in his memoirs written around 1829. He recalls that most of the black soldiers of the battalion had been born slaves and only obtained their freedom by serving in the independence armies. “En todo el transcurso de la guerra se distinguieron por su valor, constancia y patriotismo” (“Throughout the war they distinguished themselves by their valor, constancy, and patriotism”), remembers General Guillermo Miller in his memoirs of the independence wars. In addition, Miller commends the blacks of the Army of the Andes as a whole for their docility, ability to receive training, and love of their commanding officers. Black soldiers also rose through the ranks, several becoming “good sergeants.” Unlike racist beliefs then common about the dirtiness and indiscipline of the African race, General Miller, on the contrary, records that many if not most black soldiers stood out for their cleanliness and good behavior (“... muchos se hacían notar por su natural despejo y

¹¹⁰ Miller, *Memorias del General Guillermo Miller*, vol. 1., 61, 69, 87, 89. See also, “Cuerpos de Castas, Pardos y Morenos. Regimiento de Infantería Mecanizado 8, “General O'Higgins”. *Revista Militar*, no. 763 (June-Oct. 2007): 152-56. This is was a special commemorative issue celebrating the bicentennial of the defeat of the second British invasion of the Río de la Plata in 1807. The story of “Falucho's” sacrifice is mentioned on page 153.

limpieza, y casi todos por su buena conducta”). The performance of Afro-Argentine soldiers and their reports back to other freed and enslaved blacks encouraged these to also enlist, insists Miller.¹¹¹ General Miller, however, does not mention by name Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho.” Even in his recollections about the rebellion at the fort of Callao, General Guillermo Miller makes no reference to “Falucho” whatsoever.¹¹²

Another contemporary witness, however, Colonel Manuel de Olazábal also recounts in his own memoirs, written in the 1860s and published posthumously, the details about the uprising in Callao, which do not always line up with Miller’s or Mitre’s versions of events. Unlike General Miller, de Olazábal does recall that on the eve of the rebellion, a black soldier of the Eighth Battalion, a son of Buenos Aires, was on watch at the foot of the flag pole. Manuel de Olazábal admits he cannot remember the soldier’s name but does recall that he was called “Falucho” by his comrades. When confronted by the rebels, Colonel de Olazábal records that “Falucho” refused to take down the revolutionary flag and replace it with the Spanish one. This particular chronicler also puts into “Falucho’s” mouth the same laconic and defiant words attributed to him by Bartolomé Mitre. However, unlike Mitre, who has the black patriot dying after being shot by the traitors and has his last words being “¡Viva Buenos Aires!,” Manuel de Olazábal instead has “Falucho” killed by being stabbed by the bayonets of his enemies. Also, rather than crying out with his last breath “¡Viva Buenos Aires!,” Colonel Manuel

¹¹¹ Miller, *Memorias del General Guillermo Miller*, vol. 1, 187, 193, 201.

¹¹² Miller, *Memorias del General Guillermo Miller*, vol. 2, 78.

de Olazábal remembers the black hero's final words differently as "¡Viva la Patria!"¹¹³ While minor, the differences in the Mitre and the de Olazábal chronicles of "Falucho's" martyrdom are nonetheless important. For example, how did "Falucho" actually die? What were in fact his last words (not to mention who actually recorded them)? Was the black hero fighting and dying for his *patria chica* or province (i.e., Buenos Aires) or for a larger and broader imagined community or *patria* (i.e., Argentina)?

The way the "Falucho" legend was remembered (or forgotten) and had its details edited by General Guillermo Miller, Colonel Manuel de Olazábal, Bartolomé Mitre, and others in the middle of and at the end of the 1800s proffers insights into how collective memory effectively worked in their present time and was also ideologically constructed to then serve certain social and political ends. Both the supporters and detractors of the "Falucho" story have been aware of this fact for a long time, practically from the inception with Bartolomé Mitre of the legend itself. Debates about the historicity and/or identity of "Falucho" and whether or how to commemorate his memory became in their own right polemical sites of memory about blackness in Argentina over the last hundred

¹¹³ Manuel de Olazábal, *Memorias del coronel Manuel de Olazábal* (Buenos Aires: Inst. Nacional Sanmartiniano, 1942), 110. Chilean composer José de Zapiola, who was born in 1802, remembers "Falucho" as a soldier in San Martín's army that crossed the Andes and liberated Chile and Peru. For this memorialist, "Falucho" was the sole black hero of Callao. Zapiola, furthermore, positively identifies Antonio Ruiz as "Falucho." The Chilean composer adds details about Ruiz's short stature ("...su estatura poco más de cuatro pies") and physical appearance I have not found elsewhere among contemporary sources. Otherwise, Zapiola's narrative is basically the same as Mitre's portrayal. Significantly, Zapiola states that Mitre "hace *argentino*" ("makes Argentine") "Falucho," thereby nationalizing his sacrifice and memory. José Zapiola, "La cultura y las armas en Chile. (Extractos del libro 'Recuerdos de treinta años, 1810-1840), por José Zapiola." In *Revista de Derecho, Historia y Letras*, vol. 15. E. S. Zeballos, dir. (Buenos Aires: Jacobo Peuser, 1908), 368.

or so years.

Almost all past and present commentators on the history and legend of Antonio Ruiz, or whomever “Falucho” actually was, agree that in the commemoration of this black national hero Bartolomé Mitre found a useful archetype of republican valor, virtue, and patriotism, precisely at the moment in Argentina’s history when Mitre himself and his centralist political allies were finally forging a unified national state, after decades of regional strong-man rule, and then needed foundational legends or national myths.¹¹⁴ Here, however, myth should not be understood colloquially as meaning an absurd fairy tale or a construction unrelated to social reality; rather, myth should be comprehended, along the lines of Roland Barthes, as comprising a culturally determined system of language, speech, signs, and symbols, as well as their representations socially.¹¹⁵ Social memory both generates and subsequently disseminates myths, which, as per Barthes, often promote very specific ideological ends. One can almost argue that rather than neutralizing ideology, social myths and memories naturalize socio-political agendas in given historical moments or contexts. This certainly seems to me at least was the case with the nostalgic commemoration of blackness in Argentina at the turn of the nineteenth century among ideologues such as Mitre, with conveniently “vanished” heroes like

¹¹⁴ Lilia Ana Bertoni, *Patriotas, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas. La construcción de la nacionalidad argentina a fines del siglo XIX* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), “Los nuevos héroes: Falucho,” 289-92. In fact, Carina Perelli characterizes Argentina as a country with a “mythologized past,” one “where nostalgia flourishes.” Carina Perelli, “*Memoria de sangre: Fear, Hope, and Disenchantment in Argentina.*” In *Remapping Memory: The Politics of Time Space*. Jonathan Boyarin, ed. (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1994), 39.

¹¹⁵ For this understanding of myth and mythology, see Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*. Annette Lavers, trans. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984).

Cabral and “Falucho” serving as national myths and particularly important sites of Creole memory.

The history and cultural construction of the myth of “Falucho” by especially Bartolomé Mitre at the end of the nineteenth century has been documented above. As early as 1889, however, the debate about Ruiz’s true identity and relevance as a symbol of nationalism was manifested on the pages of the then important journal *La Revista Nacional*. On the one hand, prominent historian Manuel Florencio Mantilla raised doubts about the true identity of “Falucho.” Mantilla, for example, cites a letter from General Miller to San Martín reproduced in Mitre’s biography of the great liberator in which a black soldier known as “Falucho” was alive and well, living in Lima in 1830. Thus, concludes Mantilla, there must have been two black soldiers in San Martín’s army with the same nickname. In addition, Mantilla doubts Mitre’s telling of the martyrdom of “Falucho.” He claims that Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz could not have possibly been the black soldier killed during the uprising in Callao because his officer rank would have disqualified him from serving guard duty as Mitre and official historiography and subsequent remembrances maintain. Therefore, Mitre’s Antonio Ruiz could not have perished defending the revolutionary flag.

Mantilla also opines contra the sentiments of many of his contemporaries that what should be memorialized and commemorated by his compatriots were the sacrifices for the nation of all Afro-Argentines and not just “Falucho’s” martyrdom; frankly, argues historian Mantilla, “Falucho vale poco en comparación a su raza,” or, “Falucho is of little account compared to his entire race.” “Un monumento erigido a la memoria de los gloriosos negros de nuestra emancipacion,” concludes Manuel Florencio Mantilla,

“tendría un significado histórico y patriótico de más transcendencia y justicia que el especial dedicado al fiel soldado del Callao....”¹¹⁶

On the other hand, writing in the same issue of the *La Revista Nacional*, the editor, equally renowned writer and historian Adolfo P. Carranza, parts ways with M. F. Mantilla concerning not converting Corporal Ruiz into a symbol of the sacrifices of all common soldiers for the national cause. Thus, according to Carranza, “FALUCHO representó en esa escena la idea del patriotismo de la revolución y fué por decirlo así la protesta argentina...” (“FALUCHO represented in that scene the idea of revolutionary patriotism and was to put it this way the very protest of Argentines...”). Carranza goes on to unequivocally state that “Falucho” was better suited than other obscure heroes to represent the masses of common people. Carranza, also unlike Mantilla, approves of Mitre’s writings and historical details about the Afro-Argentine officer Antonio Ruiz, a “compatriot, man of color... legendary hero, and of a great heart as was proved in the towers of Callao...” (“Un compatriota, hombre de color como el héroe de la leyenda, y de corazón como el que lo probó en los torreones del Callao...”). Once more contra his fellow historian Mantilla, moreover, Adolfo Carranza considers it appropriate to begin immediately raising funds for a monument to the memory of “Falucho.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ M. F. Mantilla, “Los negros argentinos. El monumento á Falucho.” *La Revista Nacional* 10, 43 (Nov. 1, 1889), 170, 173, 180, 182. “A monument erected to the memory of the glorious blacks of our independence would have a historical and patriotic significance of greater transcendence and justice than one especially dedicated to the faithful soldier of Callao [i.e., “Falucho”]....” Mantilla, “Los negros argentinos,” 182.

¹¹⁷ Adolfo P. Carranza, “Falucho-Gómez.” *La Revista Nacional* 10, 43 (Nov. 1, 1889), 94-95. Interestingly, Carranza seems to misremember the date of Ruiz’s martyrdom, placing it on February 4, 1824. Lilia Ana Bertoni somehow misunderstands Carranza’s sentiments, incorrectly characterizing him as an ally of Mantilla, who doubted the worthiness of memorializing “Falucho” alone. Bertoni, *Patriotas, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas*, 291. Clearly, however, in

Neither Mantilla nor Carranza had the final word on the matter, however. Debates about the historicity and myth of “Falucho” continued well into the twentieth century. For instance, to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the rebellion of Callao and its subsequent quashing by San Martín’s grenadiers, the Buenos Aires magazine *El Hogar* featured a piece by distinguished Creole intellectual Juan José de Soiza Reilly entitled “Mistificaciones históricas. El negro Falucho no existió jamás. A propósito del 101.º aniversario de la sublevación del Callao.” The writer considers Mitre’s story about the back hero of Callao a “romantic fantasy.” Juan José de Soiza Reilly maintains it is impossible to document the existence of just one “Falucho,” a nickname that was in fact generic to all black soldiers of the independence armies. Among his stronger arguments against Mitre, the writer asseverates that neither Generals Miller nor San Martín ever mention “Falucho” as the hero of Callao. Also, he could find no documentary evidence for “Falucho’s” existence in the archives of Buenos Aires. However, de Soiza Reilly is quick to defend Mitre’s civic motives in inventing the legend and myth of the black martyr. “De acuerdo. La invención de Falucho no significa que Mitre haya falseado la moral. A los historiadores de talento les están permitidas estas inocentes mistificaciones históricas, que honran tanto a quienes las hacen como a quien la descubre.” In short, Juan José de Soiza Reilly maintains that Bartolomé Mitre’s invention of “Falucho” does

context, Carranza’s brief article supports Ruiz’s homage. Thus, speaking for *La Revista Nacional*, Carranza as editor-in-chief writes that it “joins with pleasure such a sympathetic cause” of erecting a monument to the memory of “Falucho.” *La Revista Nacional* served as an important venue for the publication of Creole nationalist prose in the Argentina of the fin de siècle and thus is an important site of nationalism and national memory. Bertoni maintains that this journal was among the most enthusiastic agents of the construction of patriotic history and Creole identity. Bertoni, *Patriotas, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas*, 255-60.

not betray the morality of his purpose or his accomplishments as a gifted historian. Such “historical mystifications” (perhaps what would be called today historical memory) are important to teach children lessons in civics, according de Soiza Reilly.¹¹⁸

Contra Juan José de Soiza Reilly, Marcos Estrada in his biography of “Falucho” relies on Mitre’s writings and his historical sources to promote the “official” version of the legend. Estrada unsurprisingly, then, concludes that Antonio Ruiz was indeed the “Falucho” who died at Callao.¹¹⁹ More recently, the debate over the existence of “Falucho” was taken up by two scholars in the pages of the popular Argentine history magazine *Todo es Historia*. Pedro Olgo Ochoa basically takes up the same line of argumentation as Juan José de Soiza Reilly a generation earlier. Olgo Ochoa considers “Falucho” a historical or “romantic” invention of Bartolomé Mitre. However, like de Soiza Reilly, he considers the invention of “Falucho” as nothing more than “innocent mystification” on Mitre’s part, without ulterior motive. Olgo Ochoa nevertheless rejects the idea that “Falucho” served as a symbol of his entire race, as Mitre and others posit, but consider that he was rather one among many (some remembered, some forgotten) blacks who died fighting the same enemy.¹²⁰

A few decades later, Ernesto Quiroga Micheo insists that Mitre was right about

¹¹⁸ Juan José de Soiza Reilly, “Mistificaciones históricas. El negro Falucho no existió jamás. A propósito del 101.er aniversario de la sublevación del Callao.” *El Hogar*, Jan. 23, 1925. Juan José de Soiza Reilly claimed to have written a biography of “Falucho,” but I have not been able to locate it or any references to it other than in this article.

¹¹⁹ See Estrada, *El Cabo Segundo Antonio Ruiz*.

¹²⁰ Pedro Olgo Ochoa, “El invento de Falucho.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 4, 41 (Sept. 1970): 32-39. See also Eduardo Hourcade, “‘Del Diario al libro.’ Episodios trágicos

the historicity of “Falucho,” but simply misidentified him as Antonio Ruiz. Quiroga Micheo admirably traces the historiography for and against the existence of “Falucho” both before and after Bartolomé Mitre. For example, he points out that before Mitre, the distinguished Afro-Argentine artist Juan B. Aguirre (whom Quiroga Micheo inexplicably states he could not identify) wrote a brief biography of Antonio Ruiz (“Falucho”). According to this scholar, the Aguirre text is housed in the Zeballos Collection in the Museum of Luján, in rural Buenos Aires province. Quiroga Micheo categorically rejects any idea that the father of patriotic historiography, Mitre, invented “Falucho”; instead, he argues that Mitre simply nationalized the Afro-Argentine soldier: “El general Mitre hace *argentino* a Falucho, fundado en llamarse Antonio Ruiz, que, sin duda, era el apellido de sus amos.”¹²¹ The fact that “Falucho’s” story and legend were debated in the pages of the leading popular history journal in Argentina, whose long-time editor-in-chief was then the distinguished historian Félix Luna (ironically himself nicknamed “Falucho”), and whose current subtitle emphasizes its desire to record “national memory,” perhaps highlights the ongoing importance of the black hero of Callao in the Argentine imaginary.

Documenting the history and legend of one Antonio Ruiz, purportedly the “Falucho” who died defending the revolutionary flag during the insurrection at the fort of Callao in early 1824, is thus appropriate. As seen, much debate has existed about the

de la Revolución en la pluma de Mitre.” *Estudios Sociales* 5, 8 (First Semester 1995): 161-70, especially pages 163-66 on Mitre’s invention of “Falucho.”

¹²¹ Ernesto Quiroga Micheo, “Mitre tenía razón: la verdad sobre Falucho.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 30, 354 (Jan. 1997): 72-82. Quiroga Micheo rejects the idea that “Falucho” never existed and is thus a mythological character, the position of George Reid Andrews in *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 125.

historical reality and identity of “Falucho” practically since first being introduced to Argentine readers and national consciousness by Bartolomé Mitre in the 1850s, and then especially after 1875 in his *La Nación* series “Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana” and other subsequent historical writings. Many have dismissed Mitre’s history of “Falucho” as purely a literary invention, albeit an innocent one. Some, like Andrews, however, have claimed that Mitre’s creation of “Falucho” as a mythological character was an attempt to distort the actual historical participation of blacks in the Argentine military.¹²² Still others side with Bartolomé Mitre and affirm both the historicity of “Falucho” and the importance of his legend and memory for the nation.

Who “Falucho” was, or whether or not he was Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz of San Martín’s Eighth Infantry, is ultimately of little importance for this dissertation—“*se non è vero, è ben trovato*” (“even if it is not true, it is well conceived”). Instead, what is significant for this study was that Bartolomé Mitre, arguably the most important Argentine thinker and historian of his era, and one of the leading national icons of all time, “nationalized” “Falucho’s” sacrifice, as well as those of all Afro-Argentine soldiers. That Mitre, the father of modern Argentine historiography, and himself a leading Creole memorialist, included a black man in his gallery of national myths and heroes is compelling and of interest for this dissertation. “Falucho” was indeed (re-)imagined and

¹²² Along these lines, see Daniel Sorín’s *Palabras escandalosas. La Argentina del centenario. Narrativas históricas del siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2003), 17. Sorín essentially labels “Falucho” a national lie: “Hubo en la historia del país otros mitos como el de Falucho, transformados por la mentira o la imaginación en hombres de carne y hueso.” This is problematic on at least two levels. First, that a real “flesh and bone” black soldier known as “Falucho” died at Callao appears historically accurate. Second, to make a myth equivalent to a lie is naïve and theoretically problematic precisely because such a view fails to problematize the culturally complex ways myths are discursively or otherwise fashioned in specific contexts a la Barthes.

socially remembered by Creole elites and cultural nationalists by the end of the 1800s as a symbol of true republican virtue for the entire nation. Thus, Lea Geler intimates: “La idea del héroe anónimo/negro (Falucho)... fue glorificada y monumentalizada por distintos sectores de la élite [de Buenos Aires]” (“The idea of the anonymous/black hero [Falucho] ... was glorified and ‘monumentalized’ by different sectors of the [Buenos Aires] elite).¹²³ It is precisely to these elite “monumentalizations” or social commemorations of “Falucho” that we now turn.

**“A Falucho Recordad” (“To Remember Falucho”): “El negro de San Martín,”
Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz and Social Remembrances**

The case study of (allegedly) Antonio Ruiz or “Faucho” proffers a viable examination of issues related to collective memory and the representation of blackness in Argentina at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s (and, indeed, beyond). Once introduced into the consciousness of his compatriots by none other than Bartolomé Mitre, the myth of “Falucho” was enshrined in the national imaginary and subsequently commemorated in various sites or realms of social memory throughout the country but especially in Buenos Aires city. Consistent with the insights of Pierre Nora et al., these sites or realms were generated by an Argentine social and government elite, as well as by contemporary Creole nationalists. All of these social sectors were at the time desperately seeking to either glorify the then nascent national state and its icons or, alternatively, rejecting modernity and its attendant social problems, such as the undoing of traditional class relations as a result of massive European immigration. In either case, nostalgia for

¹²³ Geler, “¡Pobres negros!’” 129.

a traditional past, then longed for in the face of serious social and political disturbances, was at the core of the social commemorations of “Falucho” and other Afro-Argentines in the fin de siècle.

I will document and discuss some examples of the memorializations of “Falucho” by different social sectors in the Argentina of the nineteenth century and beyond. For most of this time, perhaps only “sargento” Juan Bautista Cabral received more attention in the national imaginary and collective memory of Argentina concerning its black past and heritage than did Antonio Ruiz.¹²⁴ This section primarily concentrates on literary remembrances of “Falucho.” Both the literary memorials and the monument have been employed over the decades as sites of memory for several generations of Argentines, especially schoolchildren in Buenos Aires and throughout Argentina. In fact, as will be seen in the next chapter, Argentine students in the early 1900s were especially devoted to the memory of “Falucho” and the proper upkeep of his monument. Therefore, following up and building on Bartolomé Mitre, Argentines for many years after 1875 committed themselves to remember “Falucho”—“a Falucho recordad.”

In the previous chapter, iconographic memorializations, such as stamps, post cards, and commemorative medals of “Falucho” and other Afro-Argentine heroes were documented. Thus, through the centennial in 1910, the iconic image of “Falucho” and his eponymous monument in “Plaza San Martín” were commonplace in such “icons of remembrance.” These artifacts of memory were sponsored or produced by both state and

¹²⁴ For the remainder of this chapter and dissertation I will take for granted that Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz was in fact “Falucho.” I adopt this posture for strictly narrative purposes only. It should not be taken as an endorsement of the “official” historiography or any other ideological position on this matter.

private companies for domestic and foreign consumption. Later, these same mnemonic artifacts themselves became collectibles and were thus transformed into sites or realms of nostalgia for and among cultural nationalists in the decades leading up to and after the rise to power of the military in the 1930s and 1940s.

In addition to such material sites of collective memory of “Falucho,” additional mnemonic realms among his compatriots were then important from the middle of the nineteenth to the start of the twentieth century. For instance, Corporal Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho” was the object of numerous literary remembrances by Argentine (and even Uruguayan) writers and poets. The legend of “Falucho” was also related in early nationalist textbooks, intended to inculcate patriotic virtues among Argentine schoolchildren around the time of the centennial in 1910. Finally, Antonio Ruiz was socially remembered in popular folklore, music, and song as well. Let us first look at a select list of some literary or narrative memorials to “Falucho,” the hero of Callao.

As previously noted, the earliest printed reference to “Falucho” (not identified as Antonio Ruiz, however) that I have unearthed appeared in a compilation of brief patriotic Peruvian biographies by one of that country’s most respected thinkers of the nineteenth century, Ricardo Palma. Four years before Bartolomé Mitre’s first articles in his news organ *Los Debates*, Palma wrote in 1853 a very brief entry about the black hero’s death for the revolutionary cause, complete with the same details later encountered in Mitre about “Falucho’s” refusal to honor the royalist flag and his immortal words “Malo es ser revolucionario; pero peor es ser traidor” (“It is bad to be a revolutionary; but it is worse to be a traitor”). Palma concludes that such heroism and loyalty as displayed by

“Falucho” were justly rewarded with a glorious death.¹²⁵ In Argentina, however, the literary and other narrative memorializations of Antonio Ruiz began in earnest at the very end of the nineteenth century, after Mitre’s legendary depiction of the Afro-Argentine martyr had already embedded itself in the nation’s imagination.

Beyond Bartolomé Mitre’s early journalistic and quasi-historical writings about Antonio Ruiz, one of the first and foremost attempts to commemorate “Falucho” in words was late-nineteenth-century national poet Rafael Obligado’s famous ballad “El negro Falucho,” published and re-published, as well as put to music, many times over the course of the 1890s and beyond. Obligado was a leading Creole nationalist and nostalgist at the close of the nineteenth century, who romanticized his country’s folkloric figures, especially the gaucho, in his many poems, plays, and prose. Obligado was also a literary scholar and one of the founders of the University of Buenos Aires’s Department of Philosophy and Literature.¹²⁶ Not to be forgotten by Obligado, of course, was the Afro-

¹²⁵ Ricardo Palma, *Corona patriótica (colección de apuntes biográficos)* (Lima: Biblioteca Digital Andina, with the support of the National Library of Peru, n.d.), 15. <http://www.comunidadandina.org/bda/docs/pe-oc-0004.pdf>. Again, one can only speculate on how this very early reference to “Falucho” escaped both Palma’s contemporaries, including Mitre, and subsequent scholars. After all, it is not as if Ricardo Palma was some unknown and unimportant figure on the continent. And while *Corona patriótica* is certainly not his magnum opus, it was widely circulated in its day and has been readily available digitally from various reputable online providers for some time. However, I myself stumbled on it only recently and then by sheer serendipity, following a hunch about the historical memory of “Falucho” in Peru, seeing as that was where his legend began. Unlike Palma, however, Peruvian historian M. Nemesio Vargas, *Historia del Perú independiente*, vol. 2 (Lima: Imp. “La Abeja,” 1906), 171, identifies “Falucho” as Antonio Ruiz, a “moreno argentino” (“black Argentine”), as the hero of Callao: “¡Sublime sacrificio, tan ejemplar y conmovedor como el del héroe que rinde la vida, espada en mano, en el campo de batalla!” (“Sublime sacrifice, so exemplary and moving as that of the hero who, sword in hand, surrenders his life on the battlefield!”).

¹²⁶ On Obligado and his literary corpus, consult M. Isabel Hernández Prieto, *Vida y obra del poeta argentino Rafael Obligado* (Seville, Spain: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1989).

Argentine. For Obligado, as for so many of his contemporaries and ideological colleagues, black Argentines were Creoles and founding members of the nation. As such, his poetic tribute to the sacrifice of “Falucho” was exemplary of both Obligado’s and other Creole nationalists’s remembrances of the importance of Afro-Argentines in the national community and imaginary at the end of the nineteenth century.

Rafael Obligado introduces “Falucho” as “one of the blacks who followed San Martín” (“un negro de los que fueron/ con San Martín...”) across the Andes to liberate Chile and Peru. Interestingly, Obligado does not identify either “Falucho’s” name or rank. For the poet, the black soldier was on night watch when he hears the traitors cry out “¡Viva España! (“Long Live Spain!”). “Falucho” cannot believe what he hears, “... si está loco o soñando” (“... if he is crazy or dreaming”). The flag “Falucho” was defending was “blue and white,” and “el negro de San Martín” (“the black of San Martín”) refused to surrender it or pay tribute to the Spanish flag and king, proclaiming instead: “¡Viva la patria, y no yo!” (Long live the fatherland and not me!”). “Falucho” was then shot by the insurrectionists, with the flag draped around him like a glorious shroud (“como gloriosa mortaja”).¹²⁷ Obligado was clearly cognizant of the legend of “Falucho” introduced in the national canon by Mitre, putting it into poetry, and intending

¹²⁷ Rafael Obligado, “El negro Falucho.” In *Cancionero del Libertador. Itinerario de la vida y los hechos gloriosos del Gran Capitán*. Lidia Rosalia B. de Jijena Sánchez, comp. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Albatrós, 1950), 117-19. Significantly, early-nineteenth-century Uruguayan Creole gauchesque poet Bartolomé José Hidalgo penned a moving ode to the revolutionary victory at Lima and Callao (attributed originally to the oral poem by the Oriental gaucho Ramón Contreras). Hidalgo, however, died two years before the uprising at Callao. Bartolomé José Hidalgo, “Al triunfo de Lima y el Callao.” In *Bartolomé José Hidalgo. Cielitos y diálogos patrióticos*. Horacio Jorge Becco, comp. (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1962), 61-67.

that the poem be memorized and recited at patriotic events to inspire his compatriots with such examples of sacrifice for the nation as the one rendered by “el negro de San Martín.”¹²⁸

Contemporary German ethnographer Robert Lehmann-Nitsche transcribed a version of the Obligado poem in his writings on Argentina and pointed out its use in history textbooks and for recitation at school civic holidays in the early twentieth century.¹²⁹ Therefore, Obligado’s “El negro Falucho,” itself a site of memory, was subsequently reinscribed by later nostalgists in their own cultural commemorations of “El negro de San Martín.”

Afro-Argentine Creole memorialists, including the legendary folk singers Higinio Cazón and Gabino Ezeiza, also historically remembered “Falucho,” thereby demanding the inclusion of the African race in the nation as full equals with their white compatriots. For example, Cazón composed a poem sometime in the last years of the 1800s or first

¹²⁸ An abridged version of this poem was originally intended to be inscribed on a plaque and placed on the base of the “Falucho” monument in 1897. Ironically, another Creole nationalist poet of the day, Adán Quiroga, belittles the “Falucho” monument. In his poem “Al Ejército de los Andes” (awarded in 1903 with a prize from the “Academia Literaria del Plata”), Quiroga claims that to compensate black Argentine soldiers with only a “miserable” statue is to in fact relegate the memory of their heroism to ungrateful oblivion. “Es relegarlos al ingrato olvido/Compensar tan mortíferas hazañas/Con el mísero bronce de Falucho,/Cuando sobra metal en las montañas.” Adán Quiroga, “Al Ejército de los Andes.” In *Antología de poetas argentinos*, vol. 10 (“Lira argentina”). Juan de la C. Puig, comp. (Buenos Aires: Martín Biedma é Hijo, 1910), 373-88. The reference to the “mísero bronce” of the “Falucho” monument appears on page 378. Similar sentiments were first expressed in the article by Mantilla cited above and below. This anthology was commissioned for the celebration of the centennial in Argentina.

¹²⁹ Miguel A. García and Gloria B. Chicote, *Voces de tinta: estudio preliminar y antología comentada de folklore (1905) argentino de Robert Lehmann-Nitsche* (Buenos Aires: EDULP, 2008), “El negro Falucho.” Testimony to the continued popularity among his compatriots of the poem “El negro Falucho” well into the twentieth century include both its numerous republications as well as its reelaboration as a patriotic march, “El negro de San Martín,” by lyricist Juan Fulginiti and score by Agustín Magaldi (son).

years of 1900 with the title “Historical Memories: Tucumán and Salta.” The plain purpose of the poem was to memorialize and recall the heroism of Afro-Argentine soldiers who sacrificed lives and limbs for the nation. Cazón opens his ballad to the “Ethiopian ‘race’” by pointing out that this “humiliated” group nonetheless “Defended the noble cause” and “For freedom they struggled” together with their Creole counterparts. Cazón insists that in the struggle for independence “Differences did not exist”; white and black both “For freedom fought/For freedom they died.” Afro-Argentine soldiers “... bit the bullet” but “... did not betray” the patriot cause. In this loyalty “Falucho” and many others were “immortalized,” sang Cazón. He boastfully concludes his ode by shouting: “Believe me! I am proud/To belong to the race/Of the freedmen of Cuyo.”¹³⁰

In the same year (1897) that the monument to the memory of Antonio Ruiz was unveiled, furthermore, Gabino Ezeiza also paid tribute to the historical memory of “Falucho” in his already mentioned poem “I Am” (“Yo soy”). Once again, the ballad opens plaintively “I am of the race of Falucho/which remains without inheritance.”¹³¹ Thus, Ezeiza, like his contemporary Cazón, invoked the historical memory of “Falucho” and other black martyrs in the struggle for social and racial justice in their nation. In

¹³⁰ Higinio Cazón, “Memorias históricas: Tucumán y Salta.” *Alegrías y pesares: canciones nacionales* (Buenos Aires: Maucci, n.d.), 20-21. Once more, I have relied on the translation of Dr. Marvin Lewis in his *Afro-Argentine Discourse: Another Dimension of the Black Diaspora* (Columbia, MO: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1996), 83-83. The majority of the first Afro-Argentine recruits in San Martín’s army were from Mendoza province (Cuyo) in western Argentina. See Chapter four on Afro-Argentines in the military.

¹³¹ Gabino Ezeiza, “Yo soy.” *Nuevas canciones inéditas del payador Gabino Ezeiza* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca Gauchesca, 1897), 42. Lewis, *Afro-Argentine Discourse*, 120.

addition, Afro-Uruguayan poet and *payador* Juan Pedro López published a nostalgic poem in 1920 in the popular Montevideo magazine *Revista Mundo Uruguayo* in which “Falucho” is mentioned in the same breath as other *rioplatense* (River Plate) icons, San Martín and Santos Vega.¹³² A few years later, furthermore, historian and folklorist Juan Alfonso Carrizo reproduced a poem he first heard as a child on the eve of the centennial. The poem recalls how “Falucho” left his family (“Falucho se ha desprendido/De los brazos de su padre”) and joined the army to offer his blood for the nation (“Y fué a ofrecer su sangre/En bien de su patrio suelo”). The poem then breaks with Mitre’s narrative and has the black hero dying with the beloved flag on the battlefield and not in the fort of Callao; the black martyr’s last words are also recalled differently from Mitre’s rendition, thereby witnessing to the plasticity of tradition and how legend is remembered.¹³³ Hence, for both white and black Creole folklorists, nostalgists, and nationalist poets at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth century, “Falucho” was a source of both artistic and mnemonic inspiration; the historical memory of the “negro de San Martín” in such literary monuments as Obligado’s and Ezeiza’s poetry, white and black Creoles, respectively, was intended to both inspire and educate, inculcating patriotic ideals and values in a heterogenous population on the eve of the centennial in 1910.

“Falucho” was also remembered by writers of prose fiction in the early twentieth century. For instance, the legend of the “negro de San Martín” is even exaggerated in an

¹³² Juan Pedro López, “Agradecimiento.” In *El cantar del payador: antología*, 5th ed. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol, 1998), 76-77.

¹³³ Carrizo, “A Falucho recordad,” 56-57

ironic 1904 short story by Argentine writer Javier de Viana about two gauchos, one of them black, stranded in the wilderness, trying to make their way to join the army (possibly to fight Pampas Indians). Set in 1870, the mixed-race cowboys are wondering the vast solitudes of Argentina's interior, thus giving them plenty of time to talk and debate (as gauchos were prone to do). In addition to bringing up the black *mandinga* legend, so common to the folklore of the rural River Plate, the two wanderers also invoke the memory of "Falucho." One gaucho asks his companion if he "remembers Falucho." Anticipating what was still then (in 1870) a future event for these fictional characters, the black gaucho says to his comrade that the elite of Buenos Aires should for the sake of justice raise a monument to "Falucho's" memory. Of course, that event had already taken place by the time the short story was published. However, the black gaucho completely misremembers the basic story of the black hero. First, he makes "Falucho" a "general" no less. Second, he has him slaying "countless enemies" in battle against "gringos" or foreigners, in keeping with xenophobic sentiments prevalent in nationalist circles in the early 1900s. Third, the legend of "Falucho" seems to exist in something akin to mythological time for the gauchos, "en el tiempo de antes" ("in a time long ago"), rather than as actual history. Regardless, the de Viana piece is wonderfully engaging and perfectly embodies, however ironically, the nostalgia about a folkloric past so common among many Creole intellectuals in that period.¹³⁴

Clearly, then, "Falucho" was the subject of several literary commemorations in

¹³⁴ Javier de Viana, "Con rumbo al ejército (de 'montón de humo')." *El Gladiador* 3, no. 135 (July 1, 1904): n.p.

Argentina (and Uruguay) in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth. Far from forgotten, his legend appeared in numerous stories and poems, usually with the explicit purpose of remembering his sacrifice and that of all other Afro-Argentine soldiers for their *patria* or nation. Often, these memorializations also had pedagogical motivations intended to both inspire and inculcate patriotic ideals and shape the national identity of Argentine youth and schoolchildren. I have even found a record of a brief musical play for elementary school students in Buenos Aires also dating from 1904, entitled *Falucho: operata escolar*.¹³⁵ In addition, Norberto Galasso points out that the “inconsistent myth” of “Falucho” has also often appeared on the pages of early popular children’s and educational magazines such as *Billiken* and *Anteojito*.¹³⁶

Early national school textbooks were important sites of social memory. In fact, textbooks are both ideological and pedagogical instruments, as well as key sites of historical memory. These books were accepted as “official history” by both teachers and

¹³⁵ I have not been able to retrieve the nineteen-page text of this school play. It is available, however, in the Buenos Aires National School Teachers’ Museum, location record SA 003-07-027. The full citation of the work is Leopoldo Corretejer, *Falucho: operata escolar* (Buenos Aires: J. A. Medina, 1904).

¹³⁶ Galasso, *Seamos libres*, 463. Dr. Ariel de la Fuente rendered a similar observation to me in a phone conversation some time back. He also recalled stories about “Falucho” in the pages of *Billiken* (founded in 1919) and suggested I consult that source, as well as *Anteojito* (1964-2001). Sadly, I neither had the time nor resources to do so. I have also unearthed the record of a children’s comic book/graphic novel that featured the legend of “Falucho” in one of its first issues from the 1950s. The title of the comic or graphic novel series was *Gestas heroicas. Historias en historietas*. Issue number two from 1956, apparently the only year of publication, ran a strip “El negro Falucho,” story by José A. Martínez, with illustrations from Oscar Fraga. In a sample page available for viewing online, Antonio Ruiz is depicted as a well-spoken and athletic hero, with demonstrable patriotism. I once had a link to the entire issue, but sadly it was taken down at some point. However, visit the site “Top-Comics: Blog sobre la historieta argentina y mundial creado por Luis Rosales (1944-2009). Mayo/2011/TOP-COMICS/Página 2. <https://luisalberto941.wordpress.com/2011/05/page/2/>. Available as of February 25, 2015.

students.¹³⁷ As was the case with government postage stamps, discussed in the previous chapter, public school textbooks are state sanctioned and regulated, with provincial or national education ministries in charge of funding, approving, and publishing them. Textbooks were employed in the public schools of Argentina to socialize young people into the then newly emerging Argentine identity in the fin de siècle. Their contents, therefore, reflect the hegemonic view of the state and its rulers.¹³⁸

In Argentina, the political usages of public education over the course of the last century and a half have been addressed by several scholars, notably Carlos Escudé.¹³⁹ In particular, history and literature texts in the public schools as sites of nationalism and nation building have recently interested a new generation of Argentine academics, including Valeria Sardi, Gustavo Bombini, Adrián Ascolani, and Héctor R. Cucuzza.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ The ideological-mnemonic significance of school textbooks is highlighted by Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1995), see especially his chapter on “Masada in Textbooks.”

¹³⁸ The official *El Monitor de la Educación Común* sometime in the early 1900s published a comprehensive program of study for schools in the interior provinces. For the first grade, history included mention of the “Sacrificio de Falucho como ejemplo de fidelidad a la bandera” (“Sacrifice of Falucho as example of loyalty to the flag”). *El Monitor de la Educación Común*, 155. First-graders were also expected to be taught about the Battle of San Lorenzo and other major battles of independence from Spain. In second grade, students were introduced to “El Sargento Cabral.” Cabral is also to be studied again in the fourth and fifth grades. Once more, I found this source on line and have not been able to retrieve the full text of the issue. See *El Monitor de la Educación Común*, 157, 160.

¹³⁹ Carlos Escudé, *El fracaso del proyecto argentino. Educación e ideología* (Buenos Aires: Inst. Torcuato Di Tella, Editorial Tesis, 1990); also, Lucía Lionetti, *La misión política de la escuela* (Buenos Aires: Miño & Dávila, 2006).

¹⁴⁰ Valeria Sardi, “El rol de la literatura en la escuela primaria argentina en el marco de la constitución de identidades nacionales (1900-1940).” Ph. D. diss., Univ. Nacional de La Plata, Argentina, 2008; Gustavo Bombini, *Los arrabales de la literatura. La historia de la enseñanza literaria en la escuela secundaria argentina (1860-1960)* (Buenos Aires: Miño & Dávila, 2004); Adrián Ascolani, “Libros de lectura en la escuela primaria argentina: civilizando al niño urbano y urbanizando al niño campesino.” *Educação em Revista* 26, 1 (April 2010): 303-26; and Héctor R.

In fact, the pedagogical texts studied by the above scholars often make mention of Afro-Argentines. The frequent allusions to black patriots, particularly “Falucho,” in school textbooks thus constitute another narrative site of historical memory (and forgetting) about blackness in Argentina over the course of the last hundred years or more and has only recently been studied by Argentine academics.¹⁴¹ For instance, one teacher in the year of the centennial complains that “Falucho’s” military valor is taught in the school history books in such a way that his martyrdom makes the black hero seem more of a patriot than even founding fathers Bernardino Rivadavia or Mariano Moreno, who never fought for their country on the battlefield, but nonetheless did so with their many patriotic writings.¹⁴²

Cucuzza, *Yo soy argentino. La construcción de la Nación en los libros escolares (1873-1930)* (Buenos Aires: Miño & Dávila, 2007). An earlier student of the subject is Cecilia Braslavsky, *Los usos de la historia en la educación argentina: con especial referencia a los libros de texto para las escuelas primarias 1853-1916*. Serie Documentos e Informes de Investigación no. 133 (Buenos Aires: FLACSO, 1992). For neighboring Uruguay, read Jens R. Hentschke, “Artiguista, White, Cosmopolitan and Educated: Constructions of Nationhood in Uruguayan Textbooks and Related Narratives, 1868-1915.” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 44, 4 (Nov. 2012): 733-64.

¹⁴¹ See especially María Soledad Balsas, “Negritud e identidad nacional en los libros escolares argentinos: del surgimiento del sistema nacional de educación al Bicentenario.” *Estudios Sociológicos del Colegio de México* 29, no. 86 (May-Aug. 2011): 649-86. Also, María Mercedes Tenti, “Escuela y centenario. El caso de Santiago del Estero.” *Trabajo y Sociedad* 9, 9 (Winter 2007): 1-14. I would like to thank Argentine education scholar Marta Mercedes Poggi for sending me a copy of her conference paper “La población afrolatinoamericana en los libros escolares argentinos. Memorias y olvidos, 1870-1930,” as well as María Cristina Linares and Mariano Ricardes for providing me with a copy of their unpublished essay “Los habitantes afroamericanos negros en los libros escolares (1885-2000). Modos de invisibilación.” I cannot say that I fully agree with all their conclusions but I am nevertheless grateful for their generosity and our exchanges of ideas.

¹⁴² Clotilde de Fernández, “Educación patriótica.” *El Monitor de la Educación Común* XXIX, no. 446, vol. 32 (Feb. 28, 1910), 365. In the original, the text reads: “Enseñamos nuestros prohombres bajo la faz guerrera más por los hechos que emocionan y deslumbran, cree que fue más patriota un Falucho que murió por defender su bandera que un Rivadavia ó Moreno, que no esgrimaron la espada sino la pluma para trabajar desde su gabinete de estudio por el engrandecimiento de la patria.”

School textbooks, however, were one of many ideological sites of nationalist pedagogy and memory, of course, inextricably intertwined, in the early 1900s. Public monuments were also seen as pedagogical instruments by cultural nationalists and intellectual elites in the Argentina of the fin de siècle and start of the twentieth century. Therefore, both Ramos Mejía and Ricardo Rojas often spoke and wrote about what they called “la pedagogía de las estatuas” (“pedagogy of monuments”).¹⁴³ Rojas especially highlighted the importance for national unity of patriotic education and advocated the pedagogical use of national monuments in his report for the Ministry of Justice and Public Education, published for the purpose of the centennial. One of the main bases behind his advocacy of a “nationalist restoration” was the use, for example, of national symbols, such as the flag.¹⁴⁴ Pointing to the country’s “moral crisis,” Rojas was convinced that only patriotic education could preserve the nation and restore traditional Argentine virtues and values. For this intellectual, then, public education was in fact akin to a “civic catechism,” whose principal obligation was “de levantar sobre todos los sentimientos el de nacionalidad” (“to raise nationalism above all other sentiments”). He

¹⁴³ According to Alejandro Falco, the provenance of this expression is disputed. Although most often ascribed to Rojas in his *La restauración nacionalista. Informe sobre educación* (Buenos Aires: Min. de Justicia é Instrucción Pública, 1909), Falco points out that Ramos Mejía first used “pedagogía de las estatuas” in his speeches to and writings for the federal Superior Council of Education, as well as in his recommendations for the schools. Alejandro Falco, “Estado, nación y nacionalidad en la Argentina, 1887-1910.” *Imago Mundi* 21, 55 (March 2008): 4.

¹⁴⁴ In addition to monuments, Ricardo Rojas also addressed the importance of other patriotic symbols for nationalist education, especially the Argentine flag. Rojas, *La restauración nacionalista*, 449. National symbols are not the exclusive possession of rulers or elites, however, but belong to the entire nation. They bind citizens in a shared consciousness, serving to crystalize national identity and motivate patriotic action. Flags in particular are designed with specific political bonds in mind. Cerulo, *Identity Designs*, 13, 15, 17, 21. For a contrasting take on national symbols, see Michael E. Geisler, *National Symbols, Fractured Identities: Contesting the National Narrative* (Middlebury, VT: Middlebury College Press, 2005).

proposed, among other things, that primary schooling create national citizens, especially of the immigrant children. Along with Sarmiento a few decades earlier, Rojas in addition maintains that compulsory military education also form a part of the national curriculum, since it is patriotic by its very nature, evidencing yet another example of the then increasing nexus between the military and cultural nationalists in this period. Above all, according to Ricardo Rojas, teachers were to impress upon their students the need to “remember the past,” and what better way to do that than by using the many patriotic monuments throughout Argentina commemorating national heroes and major historical events.¹⁴⁵

A year later, on the centennial itself, Carlos Octavio Bunge, a leading intellectual, and one not favorably disposed toward the African race generally, nevertheless praised Argentina’s black patriots, especially “Falucho.” Ironically, in light of his well-documented racial prejudices, Bunge appears to in fact associate blackness with a sense of Creole authenticity. In his pedagogical and historical reader designed for Argentina’s elementary schools, Bunge applies many of the principles of patriotic education proposed a year earlier by Ricardo Rojas. National heroes are thus prominently featured among the

¹⁴⁵ Rojas, *La restauración nacionalista*, 357, 358, 360-61, 367, 372-73, 449, 453-78. In a summary of a speech given by the already cited Clotilde M. G. de Fernández and published in *El Monitor de la Educación Común*, this leading educator concludes by lauding the civic outcomes of such a patriotic education: “La educación patriótica debe inculcar en el niño y en el ciudadano el amor á la patria, por razón convincente que cifra su mayor fuerza en el honor, la justicia y la historia.” I found this article online without its corresponding title page and have sadly been unable to retrieve the full citation. The Fernández speech was given in Posadas (Misiones province) in August 1909. It was published in *El Monitor de la Educación Común* in 1910. The page numbers of the article are 465-72. Clotilde Mercedes González de Fernández Ramos was a pioneer educator of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Argentina, arguably one of the more important public women of her day.

lessons intended to stimulate patriotism in the country's youngest students. For example, Bunge writes about the blue and white national flag that "Falucho" allegedly defended and died for, maintaining that it was not a patriotic symbol for whites only but one for the entire nation, including its loyal black citizens: "Aun los negros introducidos de África la respetaron y la defendieron como propia" ("Even African slaves respected and defended [the flag] as their own"). Bunge reserves an especially moving tribute to the memory of "Falucho," one intended to stir the hearts of patriotic schoolchildren throughout the republic. He writes that the black hero's sacrifice serves as an example of not only how even the common soldier should willingly sacrifice his life for his country's flag, but also of the "beautiful lack of racial and class prejudices" among his compatriots, "who always loved each other as brothers" regardless of race or origins.¹⁴⁶ Thus, Carlos Octavio Bunge would have no doubt sided with Rojas about the pedagogical value of national monuments. Among those monuments commemorating past heroes employed by subsequent educators for educational purposes, following Rojas's advice, was the one dedicated to the memory of the "negro de San Martín," "Falucho," the subject of the

¹⁴⁶ Carlos Octavio Bunge, *Nuestra patria. Libro de lectura para la educación nacional* (Buenos Aires: Angel Estrada y Cía., 1910), 144-45. In the original: "Su ["Falucho"] heroica muerte, a tantas leguas de la patria, no fué sólo un ejemplo de cómo puede caber hasta al más humilde soldado la gloria de morir en defensa de su bandera, sino también de la hermosa ausencia de odios de raza y de clase; cualesquiera que fuesen su color y su origen, los argentinos se amaron siempre como hermanos." However, given Bunge's other writings on race, this observation seems almost ironic. See also Ernesto Nelson's *Plan de reformas a la enseñanza secundaria, en sus fines, su organización y su función social: estudio sometido a la consideración del Señor Ministro de Justicia e Instrucción Pública, Dr. Tomás R. Cullen* (Buenos Aires: La Casa de los Maestros, 1915), 207-08, 211, which proposes as mandatory the reading of Mitre's "Falucho y el sorteo de Matucana" for all the nation's high-school children for the instruction in patriotism.

following chapter.

In addition to historiography, literature, and school textbooks, the legend of the national myth of “Falucho” was also promulgated by way of local traditions and folklore, two key mechanisms for the preserving and transmitting of historical and social memories from person to person, and from generation to generation.¹⁴⁷ In this respect we revisit Pastor Servando Obligado’s and other folklorists’ compilations of Argentine and, especially, Buenos Aires traditions and legends. For Pastor Servando Obligado and other Creole nationalists of that era, folk tales captured their group nostalgia for a pure and traditional past that needed either to be saved from the deprivations of modernity or restored. Thus, as early as 1876, the Uruguayan historian and folklorist Florencio Escardó gathers a narrative description of Latin American, River Plate, and Uruguayan oral traditions and legends. His work was published with the open intention of being “[a]daptada en las escuelas municipales de la República Oriental del Uruguay como texto de *lecciones orales* [italics in the original]” (“adapted for the use of the municipal schools of the Republic of Uruguay as a text of *oral studies*”). As such, Escardó’s text of traditional oral histories and readings was imagined by him as a promoter of collective memories of past generations for the present, embodied in the schoolchildren who were the tome’s intended audience. Published only one year after Mitre’s popularization of the “Falucho” legend in his articles in *La Nación*, Escardó’s descriptive oral traditions also

¹⁴⁷ In the late 1800s, Argentine Creole nationalists, inspired by the example of romantic European folklorists, especially the German Brothers Grimm, employed folk traditions as the basic building blocks to erect “organic” national identities among their heterogeneous population. See Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2002), 19-21, 26-27, on Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm and the cultural roots of nationalism.

included a reference to Antonio Ruiz and his sacrifice for his country (and all South Americans). Escardó uses the legend of “Falucho” to highlight the role of emancipated slaves and Africans in the liberation of South America.¹⁴⁸ In 1900, Pastor Obligado, in his local traditions of Buenos Aires, further perpetuated the legend of Antonio Ruiz as a hero worthy of remembrance on his sacrifice for the national flag, which “... covered like a glorious shroud the body of the black Falucho, the immortal sentry in the fortress of Callao....”¹⁴⁹ For Creole folklorists in the River Plate, then, “Falucho” was as much a legend or national myth as he was a historical actor, his legend serving as a lesson in patriotism and sacrifice for all the readers and hearers of his heroic tale, especially future generations of Argentines (and other South Americans).

Interestingly, “Falucho’s” memory was even invoked in association with the then emerging folkloric heroes of early-twentieth-century Argentina, namely, footballers. In a country just then beginning its prolonged love affair with sports in general and soccer or *fútbol* in particular, recalling the memory of “Falucho” in such a ludic context was significant. Soccer in Argentina and Uruguay became by the early 1900s a popular

¹⁴⁸ Florencio Escardó, *Reseña histórica, estadística y descriptiva con tradiciones orales de las Repúblicas Argentina y Oriental del Uruguay desde el descubrimiento del Río de la Plata hasta el año 1876* (Montevideo: Imp. de La Tribuna, 1876), 225-26.

¹⁴⁹ P. Servando Obligado, *Tradiciones de Buenos Aires, 1580-1880*, 5th series (Buenos Aires: Establecimiento Tipográfico “Galileo,” 1900), 215. Interestingly, Peter M. Beattie highlights a parallel case of a black soldier, “Domingo,” who became a source of myth and folklore in nineteenth-century Brazil, who was also a subject of later commemoration. See Peter M. Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864-1945* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2001), 2-4.

manifestation of nationalism.¹⁵⁰ In an increasingly soccer-mad region, then, to speak of black *fútbol* stars was noteworthy. For example, *Caras y Caretas* ran a one-page story about the local soccer scene in neighboring Uruguay in 1918. The story by “Floridor” was titled “Los Faluchos del Football Uruguayo.” Black Uruguayan footballers were featured in the story and their athletic skills highlighted. In particular, the great Isabelino Gradín was signaled out by “Floridor” for recognition in the pantheon of soccer heroes. Gradín was described by the author in martial terms, reminiscent of the memorizations of Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho.” The black soccer star was like “a gladiator in the ancient and opulent Rome of the Ceasars” (“un gladiador en la antigua y opulenta Roma de los Césares.” Gradín, furthermore, was the “glory” of his team, Peñarol, and a true “paladín de bronce” or “bronze paladin.” “Floridor” somewhat patronizingly observed that “there was not an international match in which the sympathetic blacks [including Gradín] did not participate.” Furthermore, Isabelino Gradín was described like “Falucho” as a hero to both his race and nation, and thus was worthy of the association with the black independence hero of the River Plate in the Argentine imaginary of the early 1900s. Finally, Gradín and his swarthy athletic compatriots were also lauded for their fair play—“no dan golpes ilícitos,” wrote “Floridor.”¹⁵¹ As will be

¹⁵⁰ On this topic, consult, e.g., Pablo Alabarces, *Fútbol y patria: el fútbol y las narrativas de la nación en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2002).

¹⁵¹ “Floridor,” “Los Faluchos del Football Uruguayo.” *Caras y Caretas* 21, 1051 (Nov. 22, 1918): n.p. “Floridor” was either unaware of Uruguay’s own black hero, “Ansina,” or felt his readers would more identify with the memory of “Falucho.” Either way, there is a hint of Argentine jingoism present in the article. Renowned turn-of-the-century Argentine caricaturist José María Cao drew the black “football champion” Isabelino Gradín for *Caras y Caretas* in 1903. For some of Uruguay’s leading **white** sports commentators, moreover, Gradín is remembered as “el negro con el alma blanca.” See, e.g., Héctor López Reboledo’s essay “Isabelino Gradín: Polirrítmico y polifuncional.” *Estrellas Deportivas* no. 44, in *El Diario*

seen, “Falucho” has often been associated in folklore and popular memory with the game of soccer in Argentina and elsewhere.¹⁵²

Moreover, the legend and historical memory of “Falucho” is further perpetuated in music and song. For example, one of the more popular musical groups of the 1920s in Argentina was the “La Orquesta Típica Víctor.” In October 25, 1926, group member José María Cresta composed the tango “Falucho” to honor the memory of the hero of Callao.¹⁵³ It is therefore significant to note the employment of the “Falucho” legend among many popular troubadours of the first part of the twentieth century.

In addition to the Magaldi *file* tango-ode to “Falucho,” perhaps more emblematic was the 1950’s tango “Seis de enero” (“January Six”), music composed by Arturo Gallucci, with lyrics by Reinaldo Yiso. In the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar, January 6 corresponds to the Feast of Epiphany, more popularly known and celebrated as the “Día de los reyes magos” or “Day of the Three Kings” or “Day of the Three Wise Men.” According to medieval Church legend, among the three “kings” was St. Balthasar,

(Montevideo), July 19, 1978, 1-16. Not that such social remembering lifted Isabelino Gradín or his family from poverty, however. In fact, when Gradín died in 1944, the Afro-Uruguayan community organized fundraisers for his offspring and widow. “Comité de ayuda a la viuda de I. Gradín.” *Nuestra Raza* (Montevideo), April 1945, 12, in George Reid Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation: A History of Afro-Uruguay*. (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2010), 92. Like so many other black war veterans and folk heroes in the River Plate, then, Gradín’s skills and sacrifices also went unrewarded in this life.

¹⁵² There is even a curious legend in neighboring Chile of a foreign black man, of short stature, called “Falucho” having introduced a soccer-like game there. He is remembered as a soldier who brought the game to Chile right around 1817, corresponding with the arrival of San Martín’s forces, including the all-black Eighth Infantry, Antonio Ruiz’s battalion. “1810: el ‘deporte’ hace 200 años.” <http://www.pelusso.com/index.php/566-1810-el-qdeporteq-hace-200-anos>.

¹⁵³ Simon Collier, “The Orquesta Típica Víctor 1926-1931” (1996). *Orquesta Típica Víctor 1926-1931*. Compact Disc. Harlequin, HQ CD 90.

who is depicted in art and legend as black or African (Moorish). Thus, in the colonial Americas, including the River Plate, the Feast of Epiphany was a day in which blacks venerated their patron saint and celebrated with song and dance, as often intimidated and disapproving whites looked on. Over time, however, the celebrations of St. Balthasar became progressively Creole and part of national festivities.¹⁵⁴ Through this liturgical holiday, the social memory of and about blacks in the Río de la Plata was transmitted ritualistically, ritual being an always important realm or means of collective remembrance according to scholars, especially social anthropologist Paul Connerton.¹⁵⁵ The tango “Seis de enero” attacks racism on the one hand and celebrates blackness on the other; in this regard, the tango rhetorically asks: “¿Acaso nuestra historia no habla de Falucho,/aquel heroico negro, leal a San Martín,/que antes de entregarle a otro su bandera/pensó primero en ella y prefirió morir?” (“Does not our history boast of Falucho,/that heroic black, faithful to San Martín,/who before surrendering his flag to the enemy/thought first of it and preferred to die?”).¹⁵⁶ This tango, often resorting to very angry lyrics, thus uses the historical memory of “Falucho’s” sacrifice for his nation to demand recognition of the African race and for social justice. Since the tango was then the quintessential Platine popular music, it had both important social mnemonic and

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, two nostalgic pieces in *Caras y Caretas* from the 1910s on the feast day of St. Balthasar. Eduardo Miranda, “La fiesta del rey negro.” *Caras y Caretas* 19, 934 (Aug. 26, 1916): n.p.; Pedro Veronelli, “La noche de San Baltasar.” *Caras y Caretas* 21, 1013 (March 2, 1918): n.p.

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter two for the citations of Connerton’s works on social remembrance and ritual.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Ruben Mario de Luca, “La poesía tanguera a través del tiempo.” *Revista Notas Musicales*. Publicación Trimestral de la Catedra Libre “Historia de la Música Popular Hispanoamericana.” <http://www.ucla.edu/ve/publicaciones/notasmusicales/paginas/poesia.html>.

political functions for Argentines and Uruguayans in the first few decades of the past century.

Conclusion

Addressing a massive crowd on the day of the inauguration of the monument for founding father General Manuel Belgrano on September 24, 1873, then President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, stalwart liberal and founding member of the Generation of 1837, gave a rousing patriotic speech in honor of the Argentine flag, so associated with the memory of Belgrano as its putative creator. In a stentorian voice, the ever eloquent Sarmiento recalled for the government and military high commands, as well as all others gathered around the Belgrano monument, the origins, glories, and symbolism of the national flag. The president also invoked the memories of the national colors during the battles of independence from Spain in the early nineteenth century. Of course, President Sarmiento could not fail but also remind his distinguished compatriots about the memory of a common black soldier who willingly gave his life for the Argentine flag, the “legendary Falucho,” “muriendo al pie de esta misma Bandera en las fortalezas del Callao, libradas por traición al enemigo” (“dying at the base of this same Flag at the fort of Callao, turned over to the enemy in a treasonous act...”).¹⁵⁷ President Sarmiento was

¹⁵⁷ Pres. Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Discurso pronunciado por el Presidente de la República D. Domingo F. Sarmiento en honor de la Bandera Nacional al inaugurar la estatua del General Belgrano el 24 de Setiembre de 1873* (Buenos Aires: Imp. de “La Tribuna,” 1873), 9. Also in idem., *Obras de D. F. Sarmiento*, vol. 21 (Buenos Aires: Imprenta, Litografía y Encuadración Borzone, 1903), 346. General Francisco Fasola Castagno also invoked the historical memory of “Falucho” sacrificing himself for the flag at a celebration on the feast day of the Virgin of Luján, October 13, 1934. “Cuatro prelatos oficiaron la misa de comunión en una ceremonia impresionante.” *La Razón*, Oct. 13, 1934. http://www.mariamadrededios.com.ar/libros/Dios_de_los_corazones_8.asp. In Argentina, the cult of the flag has been for over a century an invented but nevertheless enduring national tradition. June 20 is Flag Day in the country, a high patriotic holiday, where schoolchildren recite

thus following his predecessor's lead, Bartolomé Mitre, in immortalizing in the national memory and imagination the association of "Falucho" dying for the nation's flag.

Almost thirty years later, speaking to his colleagues in the federal Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber of congress) and the minister of war on September 17, 1901, one Deputy Balestra lauded the Argentine military and the Argentine soldier as guarantors of national freedom and unity. Specifically, he invoked for explicitly patriotic purposes the memories of both Cabral and "Falucho" as exemplifying the virtues of the Argentine patriot-soldier. To the repeated applause from his fellow representatives, Balestra stated of both the hero of San Lorenzo and the hero of Callao: "En ese molde férreo ha quedado impresa para siempre la figura del soldado, del tropa de línea argentino, que tiene hoy los caracteres definitivos de un tipo nacional" ("In that mold has forever been engraved the figure of the soldier, the Argentine infantry, that today bears the definitive stamp of national character"). Of Cabral and "Falucho," the representative brags: "El pueblo lo conoce: el arte lo ha esculpido con el bronce de los cañones de la independencia: es el sargento Cabral, es Falucho, humildes héroes de fila que salvaron con su vida la el honor de la bandera y la vida del gran capitán [i.e., San Martín]" ("The populace knows them: art has sculpted them in the bronze of the cannons of independence: it is Sargeant Cabral, it is Falucho, modest rank-and-file heroes who with

the national anthem and stage patriotic plays, especially in honor of Belgrano, and the military salutes the national colors. <http://www.me.gov.ar/efeme/20dejunio/index.html>. There is also a national monument to the flag in Argentina's second city, Rosario, Santa Fe province. <http://www.monumentoalbandera.gob.ar/>. See, for instance, José Manuel Eizaguirre, comp., *La bandera argentina. Noticia sobre el origen de los colores nacionales, y relación de los decretos y leyes sobre la bandera bicolor é insignias militares durante la época de la independencia* (Buenos Aires: Jacobo Peuser, 1900) for a compilation of patriotic stories about the national colors in advance of the centennial of 1910.

their lives saved the honor of the flag and the life of the great captain”).¹⁵⁸ In one discursive move, then, Sr. Balestra “nationalizes” the black heroes and memorializes their heroism in defense of the Argentine nation, an ideological gambit already anticipated almost half a century earlier by Bartolomé Mitre.

Deputy Balestra, however, was merely repeating what by 1901 was becoming well-known. The Afro-Argentine soldier-patriot, represented by especially “Falucho,” was by then the stuff of national myth and legend, and as such worthy of commemoration by their grateful compatriots. Whether or not “Falucho” was a real person or whether he was the invention of Bartolomé Mitre, while an interesting historical problem, is frankly inconsequential in terms of his function as a national myth. Mitre was arguably the most important thinker and statesman of his day. In fact, if Argentina had its own version of Mt. Rushmore, “Don Bartolo” would most certainly be on carved on there. What is thus significant is that the “father” of official national historiography memorialized “Falucho” and other subaltern heroes and included them in the pantheon of the nation for future generations to emulate and venerate. In the memory of “Falucho,” Mitre found a useful archetype of republican valor and patriotism, precisely at a moment in Argentina’s history when “Don Bartolo” and his political allies were forging a nation then in need of foundational myths.

Some contemporaries like historian M. F. Mantilla and others over the years have either questioned the historicity of “Falucho” and/or the appropriateness of

¹⁵⁸ *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, Año 1901*, vol. 1 (Sesiones Ordinarias) (Buenos Aires: “El Comercio,” 1901), 779.

commemorating him only as opposed to his entire race. This should not, however, diminish the significance of various realms or sites of memory dedicated to the black hero over the course of the last half of the 1800s and first half of the 1900s. Along with “sargento” Cabral, Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho” was historically remembered and commemorated in song, verse, and prose. For instance, school textbooks and curriculum plans in the early 1900s stressed the memory of black national figures, especially Cabral and “Falucho.” In addition, national poet Rafael Obligado’s poem dedicated to the memory of “el negro de San Martín” served until well into the last century as a site of trans-generational memory for Argentines. For almost one hundred years, Argentine schoolchildren recited Obligado’s stirring verses under the gaze of teachers, administrators, politicians, and parents. Finally, Obligado’s paean to “Falucho” was also often put to popular music and thus further immortalized the legend of the hero of Callao for young and old alike.

In fact, Rafael Obligado’s ballad to “el negro Falucho” was so entrenched as a site of nostalgic remembrance by the late 1800s that it was originally intended to be engraved into the monument commissioned by the city and provincial governments, supported by different sectors of civil society, to honor the memory of “Falucho.” Although the poem was finally not a part of the finished memorial, it was nevertheless recited as a part of the public commemorations at the inauguration in the middle of 1897. Therefore, along with Rafael Obligado’s poem, the Lucio Correa Morales “Falucho” monument in Buenos Aires was (and remains) the single most important site of memory about Antonio Ruiz (and other Afro-Argentines).

CHAPTER 11

“A Falucho—Este monumento al negro del Callao”: The “Falucho” Monument in Buenos Aires

“A Falucho—Este monumento al negro del Callao simboliza al propio tiempo que su gloria, la de toda su raza.” “El Club Militar” Dedicatory Plaque (1897), “Falucho” Monument, Buenos Aires.

Introduction

Writing on monuments and the politics of memory in post-colonial Buenos Aires, historian Stefan Rinke underscores that “the participation or abstention of ... Afro-Argentines in the sphere of monuments” is a topic that remains to be studied.¹ Therefore, in response to Professor Rinke’s challenge, in this chapter I address some of the interesting backstory about the Buenos Aires monument to Antonio Ruiz, inaugurated in 1897 as tribute to his memory and that of his racial brethren. As the case of the “Falucho” monument suggests, significant historical events, such as war, leave deep memory traces in society, moving the cult of memory onto the level of mass production of heroes regarded worthy of social remembrance or public commemoration.² In this

¹ Stefan Rinke, “Pillars of the Republics: Early Monuments and the Politics of Memory in the Post-Colonial Americas.” *Iberoamericana* 1, 4 (Dec. 2001): 104.

² James W. Pennebaker and Becky L. Banasik, “On the Creation and Maintenance of Collective Memories: History as Social Psychology.” In *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*. James W. Pennebaker, Darío Páez, and Bernard Rimé, eds. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997), 11, argue that the memory traces of significant historical events, like war, can persist for years or even generations; Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History*. (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2006), 25. Also, idem. and Emmanuel Sivan, “Setting the Framework.” In *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 17, 38. According to Arnold Whittick, “The principal purpose of a memorial is to stir remembrance, and to keep alive and ever before us what is commemorated.” *War Memorials*. (London: Country Life, 1946), 6. Finally, Alan Borg affirms that monuments represent patriotic

respect, the national state remains both the bearer of the brunt of war and a major producer of collective commemoration, private and official at the same time. Hence, as Catherine Moriarty intimates, the “memorial becomes the catalyst for giving shape to private memory [of war, e.g.] yet strict instructions encourage that shape to conform with established official history.”³ Nation-states have manipulated the bodies of their heroic dead for political ends, points out Katherine Verdery. Dead bodies, of soldiers, for instance, have served as symbols of political order, always useful for nationalist agendas. Statues in particular are “dead people cast in bronze or carved in stone,” often giving the “illusion of having *only one* significance...,” namely, the agenda of the hegemonic sector of the moment.⁴ In late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Buenos Aires, that hegemonic group was growing ever more ideologically conservative and nationalistic.

confidence. Alan Borg, *War Memorials: From Antiquity to the Present*. (London: Leo Cooper, 1991), 121.

³ Catherine Moriarty, “Private Grief and Public Remembrance: British First World War Memorials.” In *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*. Martin Evans and Ken Lunn, eds. (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 139. Of course, official or patriotic history is the only kind congenial to national governments. Keith Wilson, “Introduction.” In *Forging the Collective Memory: Governmental and International Historians through two World Wars*. Keith Wilson, ed. (Providence: Berghahn, 1996), 2, 14.

⁴ Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postcolonial Change*. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1999), 1, 5, 12, 28, 29. On this topic in Latin America, consult Lyman L. Johnson, ed., *Death, Dismemberment, and Memory: Body Politics in Latin America*. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2004). For Michael Rowlands, war memorials and monuments “decontextualize” the dead in a process of social “sublimation” of the pain of deaths in battle. Michael Rowlands, “Remembering to Forget: Sublimation as Sacrifice in War Memorials.” In *The Art of Forgetting: Materializing Culture*. Adrian Forty and Susanne Küchler, eds. (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 129-45; also, Borg, *War Memorials*, 141.

For national leaders, therefore, the visual imagery of war memorials demands remembrance from the public.⁵ In addition, official monuments such as war memorials are “didactic artifacts,” intended for citizens to be “presented with visual models to internalize, remember, and apply.” This communal sense of ownership of monuments and public participation in commemorative rituals around memorials were crucial for social elites. Thus, “[a]ddressed to the eye of vision and the soul of memory,” writes M. Christine Boyer, “a city’s streets, monuments, and architectural forms often contain grand discourses on history..., of ceremonial power of national unity and progress.”⁶ National unity and progress –cornerstones of nineteenth-century elite ideology–were precisely then, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, foremost considerations for Argentine ruling and social elites. Accordingly, a bronze statue sculpted by Lucio Correa Morales in 1897 of “Falucho” and commissioned by social elites and veterans of the Argentine military, as well as promoted by key members of the Afro-Argentine community, resides near downtown Buenos Aires in Palermo, as a commemoration of African Argentine services rendered to the nation.

⁵ Rowlands, “Remembering to Forget,” 133. However, James M. Mayo is less skeptical. He believes that people want war memorials. Monuments “create a web of remembrance” among local citizens. These memorials can serve several social purposes, including identity, service, honor, and humanitarianism. James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond*. (New York: Praeger, 1988), 11, xv-xvi, 6-8; idem., “War Memorials as Political Memory.” *Geographical Review* 78, 1 (1988): 62-75.

⁶ M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 13, 31, 33-34. Catherine Moriarty also stresses the memorial’s communal, commemorative, ritualistic, and didactic importance for national civic leaders. Moriarty, “Private Grievs and Public Remembrance,” 139.

Afro-Argentine hero Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho” perfectly served nationalist ideological interests, socially recalling for all his compatriots the sacrifices and patriotic sentiments doubly embodied in the (long-dead body) of the historical person of the “negro de San Martín” (whomever he was) and in the tangible monument erected to his memory. Writing at the end of the nineteenth century about the memorial to Antonio Ruiz, historian Manuel Florencio Mantilla commented on the collective debt Argentina owed its citizens of color. The monument to “Falucho” “demuestra felizmente que ha principiado el anhelo de las reparaciones póstumas... y, en tal concepto, cuadra la oportunidad de saldar una de nuestras deudas sagradas” (“fortunately demonstrates that the desire for posthumous reparations has begun... and, given that idea, squares with the opportunity for us to repay one of our sacred debts”).⁷ This sacred duty to socially remember or commemorate Afro-Platine sacrifices for the nation was eventually engraved in the bronze and stone monument to “Falucho.”

“A Falucho—Este monumento al negro heroico del Callao simboliza al propio tiempo que su gloria, la de toda su raza”⁸

Of all the sites of historical remembrance of “Falucho,” perhaps none is as impressive or important as the monument honoring his memory that now resides in a

⁷ M. F. Mantilla, “Los negros argentinos. El monumento á Falucho.” *La Revista Nacional* 10, 43 (Nov. 1, 1889): 180.

⁸ This is from a plaque at the base of the “Falucho” monument in downtown Buenos Aires. Presented by the ultra-nationalist “El Club Militar” of Buenos Aires, composed of former Argentine military officers, it was placed on the monument during its inauguration in 1897. The plaque essentially reads “To ‘Falucho’—This Monument to the Black Hero of Callao Symbolizes at Once His Glory, and that of His Entire Race.” Consult Appendix I of some of the plaques on the memorial. Also see Marcos de Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano. 34 biografías* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1979), 118, n.19.

small plaza, also bearing the black hero's name, in a busy downtown neighborhood of Buenos Aires. The history of this memorial to "Falucho" is as involved as the legend of the Afro-Argentine martyr himself. Once a major point of patriotic reference for different sectors of Buenos Aires society, the "Falucho" monument today is largely forgotten and almost invisible to the many residents and strangers alike walking pass it daily unnoticed. As such, the monument is itself a testimonial to the transience of the "cult of commemoration" of even national heroes, many of whom are forgotten over time, and in some way also symbolizes the vanishing (or at least invisibility) of the remaining Afro-Argentine population of Buenos Aires, especially after the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the western world, including Latin America, it is no coincidence that the "cults" of both the monument and the dead national hero largely overlapped chronologically and developed along-side modern educational systems, which often used both for patriotic instruction. Especially after the mid-1800s, heroes and martyrs, along with flags, national anthems, and other patriotic emblems, increasingly served as key symbols of the nation and sites of national memory for politicians and educators alike. Monuments and memorials, like public schools, served state interests in the "nationalization of the masses," to borrow from George Mosse.⁹ Further, the many wars of the long nineteenth century in Europe (and also the Americas) offered up a ready list of dead soldiers worthy of commemoration by grateful national and governing elites. It

⁹ George Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1975), on monuments see pages 28-72.

is thus historically understandable that the war memorial and other patriotic monuments to national heroes proliferated throughout the western world between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and World War I. Not only great men, however, were honored in the war memorial or monument; ordinary soldiers or “vernacular non-heroes” also found themselves commemorated in bronze and stone in both the Old and New Worlds.¹⁰ In both the United States and Latin America, moreover, even the descendants of the African who fought and died for their countries eventually received memorialization and recognition as heroes worthy of remembrance and inclusion in the imagined community of the nation.¹¹ Kirk Savage, for instance, argues that making the African-American body a monumental subject (after the United States Civil War) in effect militated against its historic and social marginality.¹² At least for a time at the end of the 1800s and start

¹⁰ Jane Holtz Kay appropriates this term “vernacular non-heroes” from J. B. Jackson’s *The Necessity of Ruins, and Other Topics* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1980); Jane Holtz Kay, “Honoring the Quick and the Dead.” *Landscape Architecture* 80 (Jan. 1990): 67.

¹¹ The sources for this paragraph are many, and they include: (on monuments) Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin.” Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, trans. *Oppositions* 25 (1982): 21-51; H. W. Janson, *The Rise and Fall of the Public Monument* (New Orleans, LA: The Graduate School, Tulane Univ., 1976); Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*. Lauen M. O’Connell, trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001); (on war memorials) Arnold Whittick, *War Memorials* (London: Country Life Limited, 1946); Borg, *War Memorials*; K. S. Inglis, “War Memorials: Ten Questions for Historians.” *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 167 (1992): 5-21; Bernard Barber, “Place, Symbol, and Utilitarian Function in War Memorials.” *Social Forces* 28 (1949): 64-68; Colin McIntyre, *Monuments of War: How to read a war memorial* (London: Robert Hale, 1990); Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape*; (on war and remembrance) Martin Evans and Ken Lunn, eds., *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1997); Winter and Sivan, eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*; (on the cult of the dead soldier) George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990); Michael Sledge, *Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, Bury, and Honor Our Military Fallen* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2005).

¹² Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and the Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997), 70.

of the 1900s, this remembrance of the black (at least male) body was also true of the remnant Afro-Argentine population of Buenos Aires, especially as far as some conservative Creole nationalists were concerned, as evidenced by the “Falucho” monument.

In spite of Miguel Angel Centeno’s insistence that war played practically no role in the formation of centralized national states in Latin America after independence, including in Argentina, he does examine how war monuments or memorials to military figured in “making the nation.”¹³ Nonetheless, the symbolic and socio-historical mnemonic capital of the “Falucho” monument was considerable at the time of its founding in 1897, and for many years after that. The monument to the “negro de San Martín,” as per the lines of Rafael Obligado’s famous poem to his memory, served as a site of national memory for decades, regardless of its peregrination across Buenos Aires over the years. Therefore, for instance, it served for many years as a gathering location for several generations of schoolchildren on patriotic holidays. In this era, particularly

¹³ Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2002), especially chapter four, “Making the Nation.” Centeno’s conclusion on the role (or lack thereof) of martial sites of memory in the imagining of the national in Argentina in particular seems over-determined by both his methodology and sources. First, he limits his method to looking at and quantifying mostly street names and monuments in Buenos Aires city only to then generalize about commemoration at a national level. Second, he overlooks a host of other sites of military memory in Argentina at the turn of the nineteenth century; for example, while he does analyze postage stamps and paper currency for their war iconography, he does not include postcards, commemorative medals, coins, or other literary, musical, or artistic realms of social remembrance of military heroes. Third, Centeno seems uninterested in the iconography of race in sites of military memory in Argentina. Also, as has been affirmed several times already in this study, the Argentine military was undeniably a major promoter of both nationalism and historical memory in the early 1900s. Nicola Miller therefore correctly challenges Centeno’s central thesis. Nicola Miller, “The historiography of nationalism and national identity in Latin America.” *Nations and Nationalism* 12, 2 (2006): 209. Miller also emphasizes the importance of historical memory in recent studies of nationalism and nation building in nineteenth-century Latin America.

high-school and university students, then a militantly nationalist social force, seemed especially devoted to the memory of the black hero of Callao.¹⁴ In addition, political parties and groups of varying ideologies all gathered around the “Falucho” monument in the early 1900s to hear discourses (*arengas*) from respected and important figures of the day, including the likes of both *radicalista* (Radical Party) Bartolomé Mitre and *socialista* (Socialist Party) Juan B. Justo. Far from overlooked, then, in the Buenos Aires of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, “Falucho’s” monument was in reality a rallying point for Argentine nationalists and other Creole leaders, who invoked the memory of the black hero’s immolation as an example of patriotism for all his countrymen, regardless of race, class, or creed.

Originally, different sectors of Buenos Aires’s society proposed that a “Falucho” monument be unveiled as early as February 7, 1862, remembering the anniversary of Ruiz’s putative execution at Callao. Those plans, however, never materialized. A brief article in the Buenos Aires-based daily *La Prensa*, published on October 10, 1889, reported that a prominent member of the Afro-Argentine community, the black artist Juan Blanco de Aguirre, had been elected president of the “Falucho Monument Commission” by the diverse civic societies (Creole, immigrant, and black) of the capital city. The note

¹⁴ Which is not to say that socialists and other progressives did not play a role among university students. In fact, Juan B. Justo, Socialist Party chief, and fellow socialist José Ingenieros, for instance, were among the leaders of the so-called 1918 Córdoba University Reforms. Nevertheless, intellectuals such as Joaquín V. González, Ricardo Rojas, Manuel Gálvez, and their writings also greatly imprinted a conservative brand of nationalism among broad sectors of the country’s upper-level students. See Richard J. Walter’s dated but still useful summaries of the university reform movement in early-twentieth-century Argentina and its politics, “The Intellectual Background of the 1918 University Reform in Argentina.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 49, 2 (May 1969): 233-53; and *Student Politics in Argentina: The University Reform and Its Effects, 1918-1964* (New York: Basic Books, 1968).

records Blanco de Aguirre's gratitude for the post and the cooperation of none other than Bartolomé Mitre, the former president and great Creole memorialist, for the proposed "Falucho" monument.¹⁵ Later that same month, *La Prensa* also reported that the Afro-Uruguayan community of Montevideo and the local city government there promised financial support for the creation of a monument honoring Corporal Ruiz, "por la memoria de Falucho."¹⁶ As cited above, the editor of the prestigious *Revista Nacional*, Adolfo Carranza, also supported the initiative to immortalize Corporal Ruiz in bronze. Carranza opined that the name of "Falucho" "es digno de ser recordado y su noble figura perpetuada en el bronce" ("Falucho" is worthy of remembrance and thus have his figure immortalized in bronze"). Such a "memorialization" was therefore "la mejor ofrenda á la abnegación, á los servicios y al martirio de todos los que en las filas del ejército de la independencia, concurren á conquistarla para las Repúblicas, hoy organizadas de

¹⁵ "Boletín del día." *La Prensa*, Oct. 8, 1889, 6. A few days later, on Oct. 11, 1889, *La Prensa* published a one-paragraph news item in its "Boletín del día" (p. 6) on the "reparación de la memoria" or "recovery of the memory" of "Falucho." According to Lea Geler, both Mitre and future president Roca were honorary members of the initial monument commission. Lea Geler, "¡Pobres negros! Algunos apuntes sobre la desaparición de los negros argentinos." In *Estado, región y poder local en América Latina, siglos XIX-XX. Algunas miradas sobre el estado, el poder y la participación política*. Pilar García Jordán, ed. (Barcelona: Publicaciones I Ediciones de la Univ. de Barcelona, 2006), 127. A year earlier, Blanco de Aguirre wrote an article proclaiming that the Afro-Argentine man was the first to see action in battle and thus quickly forgotten, thus his deeds were dead from the start ("El negro es la primera remesa que se envía al campo de batalla, pero es el primero en ser olvidado y sus acciones son siempre muertas en su primera edad." Quoted in María de Lourdes Ghidoli, "Retratos de afroporteños del siglo XIX." *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 56, 553 (Aug. 2013): 20.

¹⁶ "Boletín del día." *La Prensa*, Oct. 27, 1889, 6.

América.”¹⁷

The prominent sculptor Francisco Cafferata won a competition and was originally commissioned to undertake the design and execution of the “Falucho” monument. However, Cafferata committed suicide in late 1890, before beginning work on the monument. An entry in the leading Barcelona art journal of the day, *La Ilustración Artística*, honoring the deceased Argentine sculptor, features several drawings of his studio. In one of them, there is a working model of Cafferata’s proposed sculpture for the “Falucho” monument, rendering the black hero on his knees, eyes lifted to the sky, bravely clutching the national flag in a sublime patriotic gesture.¹⁸ After Cafferata’s untimely death, however, another leading Argentine sculptor, Lucio Correa Morales, took

¹⁷ Adolfo P. Carranza, “Falucho-Gómez.” *La Revista Nacional* 10, 43 (Nov. 1, 1889), 94. The quote intimates that the monument is the best recognition of the self-sacrifice, services, and martyrdom of all the ranks of the independence army, who won freedom for the republics of Latin America.

¹⁸ “El escultor argentino Francisco Cafferata y algunas de sus principales obras, entre ellas la estatua para el monumento que la Municipalidad de Buenos Aires ha de levantar en honor del negro Falucho. En ésta estaba trabajando cuando se suicidó en noviembre de 1890.” *La Ilustración Artística* 10, 494 (June 15, 1891): 373. Cafferata had already completed in 1882 a sculpture in downtown Buenos Aires on an Afro-Argentine subject, “El Esclavo” or, alternatively, “La Esclavitud.” Eduardo Schiaffino, *La pintura y la escultura en Argentina (1783-1894)*. (Buenos Aires: Edición del Autor, 1933), 268-271. For many years, the sculpture resided before the principal staircase of the Rocha family mansion on Calle Lavalle 835. Andrés Gelós, ed., *Buenos Aires escultórica. Sculptures of Buenos Aires*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Tiago Biavez, 2004), 26. Once located along the “Paseo Colón,” presently, this sculpture resides in the “Plaza Sicilia” in the “Parque 3 de Febrero” (in Palermo, Buenos Aires), along Adolfo Berro Avenue, near to the Japanese Gardens. Daniel G. Tejo, *Buenos Aires, arte público: esculturas y monumentos de la ciudad*. (Buenos Aires: Tejo Ediciones, n.d.), 53. At the 1882 South American Exposition in Buenos Aires, Cafferata’s “La Esclavitud” was awarded the gold medal for sculpture. José L. Pagano, *Historia del arte argentino. Desde los aborígenes hasta el momento actual*. (Buenos Aires: L’Amateur, 1944), 183. In 1905, as a tribute, the Argentine government proposed raising funds to acquire for its national museums the art works of Cafferata, a project endorsed by other leading sculptors and artists of the era, including Lucio Correa Morales. *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, Año 1905*, vol. 2 (Sesiones ordinarias, julio 26-septiembre 21) (Buenos Aires: “El Comercio,” 1905): 571-78.

over the “Falucho” monument project. Correa Morales’s daughter, collaborators, and contemporaries recorded their memories of the sculptor and his works, including the “Falucho” monument, which leading painter, art historian, and writer Julio E. Payró recalls as “giving birth” to national sculpture in Argentina.¹⁹ As a part of the monument’s original design, the cultural elite of Buenos Aires planned to incorporate a dedication by the “poeta de la patria,” Rafael Obligado, author of the famous “El negro Falucho” poem, onto the Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz memorial.²⁰

The local Buenos Aires press assiduously reported on the progress of the “Falucho Monument Commission” and its initiative to memorialize the black hero of independence, thereby suggesting the profound impact of “Falucho” on the collective conscience and nostalgia of the city as the turn of the century drew nearer.²¹ Thus, in late November 1889, Mr. Estanislao S. Zeballos and another member of the Buenos Aires

¹⁹ Martín S. Noel, Cristian C. M. de Aparicio, and Julio E. Payró, *Correa Morales*. Monografías de Artistas Argentinos (Buenos Aires: Publicaciones de la Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1949), 37-38. This text is accompanied with rare photographs of Correa Morales’s studio in Buenos Aires, which features working models of his statues, including the one for the “Falucho” monument. See Appendix I. Eduardo Baliari refers to the “Falucho” memorial as the “first [truly] Argentine monument.” Eduardo Baliari, “Monumentos de Buenos Aires.” *Revista Nacional de Cultura*, no. 6 (1980): 158. The irony of Argentina’s first fully national monument being in memory of a black man is in itself memorable. Payró, however, complained that the Argentine press totally ignored Correa Morales and that his “Falucho” monument was the first completely conceived and executed by a Creole on Argentine soil.

²⁰ Patricia Andrea Dosio, “Política estatuaria y representividad en Buenos Aires (1880-1910): el monumento a Falucho.” *Estudios e Investigaciones Instituto de Teoría e Historia del Arte Julio E. Payró*, no. 8 (1998): 96. Catalina Malizia, “Apodado Falucho. Un héroe que no se traicionó.” *Gaceta de la Historia/El Mirador* (Oct. 2009): 2. For the poem “El Negro Falucho,” see “Rafael Obligado. Sus nuevos poemas.” *La Prensa*, March 15, 1893, cited in Lili Ana Bertoni, *Patriotas, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas. La construcción de la nacionalidad argentina a fines del siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), 290-91.

²¹ *La Prensa*, Oct. 11, 1889, 6.

elite accepted the role of honorary spokesmen for the “Falucho Monument Commission,” and Zeballos even contributed 330 *pesos* for the initial cause.²² By the middle of January 1890, the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Patria* recorded a renewed initiative to memorialize “Falucho.” According to the moving sentiments of another subsequent spokesman for the “Falucho Monument Commission,” future Argentine generations needed to recall that “... cualquiera sea el rango, cualquiera sea la raza, el mérito es igual; que el heroísmo tiene siempre derecho á los mismos homenajes y la seguridad de obtenerlos” (“... whatever the rank, or the race, merit is equal; that heroism always has the right to the same honors and the assurance of obtaining them”).²³ In an 1892 letter from sculptor Correa Morales to monument champion and fellow artist Blanco de Aguirre, the former commits himself to finishing in a timely manner the memorial to the black national hero.²⁴

However, as of 1894 the “Falucho” monument remained unfunded and unfinished. That year, the “Falucho Monument Commission,” “which has committed itself to immortalize in bronze the most valient soldier of South-American independence” (“que se ha propuesto inmortalizar en bronce la efigie del soldado mas valiente de la independencia sud americana”), approached the federal legislature in hopes of securing

²² “Boletín del día.” *La Prensa*, Nov. 24, 1889, 7.

²³ Quoted in Geler, “¡Pobres negros!,” 126.

²⁴ Cited in María Lourdes Ghidoli, “‘Falucho vale poco en comparación a su raza.’ Variaciones en torno a un monumento.” In *Estudios afrolatinoamericanos. Nuevos enfoques multidisciplinarios*. Actas de las Terceras Jornadas del GEALA. María de Lourdes Ghidoli and Juan Francisco Martínez Peria, comps. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del CCC Floreal Gorini, 2013), 183.

financing for the project of officially memorializing the black hero of Callao.²⁵ On July 13, and again on September 4, 1894 the “Falucho Monument Commission” solicited monies from both the federal lower chamber and the Buenos Aires provincial Senate in support of their project. On September 5, 1894 the federal Chamber of Deputies held discussions about the “Falucho” monument initiative. Speaking for the project was the legislator from Entre Ríos province, Francisco Quesada, a Creole nationalist. Deputy Quesada began his peroration reminding the legislators that the battle at the port of Callao was then still well-known among all Argentines. Quesada goes on to retell, based on Mitre’s accounts, the heroic tale of “Falucho,” who “clenched his nation’s flag” (“que se arriaba la bandera de su patria”) as he died, and was executed by traitors as he stared at the “bright rays of Lima’s sun,” while famously shouting “¡viva Buenos Aires!” The “valient black man’s” famous shout, Deputy Quesada reminds the chamber’s president and his colleagues, “conmovió el trono de los virreyes, en la tierra de los Incas” (“shook the throne of the viceroys in the land of the Incas”). He concludes by demanding that the historical memory of Corporal Ruiz and “aquella raza de valientes negros” (“that entire brave race of blacks”) who fought for Argentina’s and southern South America’s independence and “proved to the whole world the strength of Argentine arms” (“probaron al mundo entero lo que vale la pujanza del brazo argentino”), be honored by a grateful nation. The Chamber of Deputies unanimously agreed to Quesada’s resolution and approved funds for the “Falucho” monument.²⁶ In its summary of government funding of

²⁵ “En honor del Sargento...Macías.” *La Prensa*, July 11, 1894, 5.

²⁶ “Ley núm. 3162 del 30 de septiembre. Acordando 10.000 pesos á la Comisión encargada al Monumento à Falucho.” *Recopilación de leyes nacionales sancionadas por el Honorable*

public projects for 1894, *La Prensa* noted that the “Falucho Monument Commission” was awarded an initial grant of 10,000 national *pesos*.²⁷

The funds for the “Falucho” monument, however, were slow to materialize, and as of late 1896 there was still no statue or even a place to put it. Although 18,000 Argentine *pesos* had been raised for the project’s completion, 3,000 additional national *pesos* were still needed to finish the monument, which was originally scheduled to be inaugurated on February 7, 1897, honoring the very day of “Falucho’s” martyrdom. To promote its cause and press forward the inauguration of the Ruiz monument, *La Prensa* reported on the planned monument for “Falucho” in the “Plaza San Martín”. The reporter observed that Antonio Ruiz “encarna la fidelidad, el heroísmo de toda una raza” (“embodied the fidelity of an entire race”). Moreover, the monument “will recall to all generations that this land was saturated... with the generous blood of black men” (“recordará constantemente á todas las generaciones que este suelo fué regado... por la sangre generosa de los hombres de color”). In order to visualize for their readers the “gallantry” and “loyalty” of “Falucho” depicted in brass, the news story was accompanied by a preliminary sketch drawing of the Correa Morales statue. “Es bella la actitud del soldado,” opined the journalist of the patriotic gestures of Corporal Ruiz with

Congreso Argentino durante los años 1854 á 1897, vol. 5 (1892 á 1894). Máximo P. González, comp. (Buenos Aires: “El Congreso,” 1899), 365.

²⁷ Congreso Nacional, *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, 1894. Sesiones Ordinarias*. (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del “Congreso,” 1894), 301; Senado de la Provincia, *Diario de Sesiones. Senado de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1894*. (La Plata, Argentina: Imprenta Buenos Aires, 1894), 475; Congreso Nacional, “Monumento á Falucho.” *Diario de Sesiones de la Cámara de Diputados, 1894. Sesiones Ordinarias*. (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del “Congreso,” 1894), 707-8. “Suplemento del Retrospecto de ‘La Prensa,’ Año legislativo.” *La Prensa*, Jan. 7, 1895, 4.

the flag, as depicted by the Argentine sculptor, “estrechando la bandera de los Andes.” The writer is sure that this monument to the black hero of independence “hará honor al arte nacional” (“will be an honor to national art”).²⁸

In order to spur the provincial legislature to come up with the missing funds, Afro-Argentine elite Blanco de Aguirre once more took up the cause of “Falucho’s” “memorialization.” As already established, Blanco de Aguirre was well-positioned to undertake the mission of garnering wide-spread support for the completion of the Ruiz memorial, since he was both a highly regarded member of both the Buenos-Aires African and Creole communities and also himself a respected artist, who received national scholarships to study painting and sculpture in Italy. As a fruit of his labors and those of the entire “Falucho Monument Commission,” and of other Argentine social and political elites, black and white, the monument to Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz (and all Afro-Argentine soldiers) was finally finished sometime around February 1897 and formally inaugurated in May of that same year.²⁹

Both of Buenos Aires’s major dailies, *La Nación* and *La Prensa*, devoted lengthy articles covering the “Falucho” monument’s inaugural event, postponed by a week due to heavy rains, on May 16, 1897. One article begins by recalling Ruiz as “humble” and the “personification of his race” (“un hombre humilde[,] personificación de una raza”). It goes on to recall and relate Ruiz’s bravery and martyrdom and that of all “humble soldiers” fighting for the *patria* – “tienes en tierra argentina sus símbolos perdidos y

²⁸ “Falucho. Estatua de bronce del escultor Lucio Correa Morales.” *La Prensa*, Jan. 28, 1897, 5.

²⁹ See Geler, “¡Pobres negros!” 127. “La estatua de Falucho. El acto inaugural de hoy.” *La Prensa*, May 16, 1897, 4.

venerables.” The piece continues by intimating that the “Falucho” monument should serve to remind all Argentines of that humble sacrifice, “debe ser para los argentinos el significado del nuevo bronce que desde hoy se debeará su uso de los sitios mas notables de la capital.” Payró recalled that a light rain fell during the events of the day of the monument’s inauguration. Regardless, he calculated that about 8,000 people attended the ceremony, thus bearing witness to the fondness felt among his compatriots for “Falucho’s” memory.³⁰

At the inaugural event were present both military and government officials, including Dr. Justiniano Carranza, General Eduardo Racedo, Colonel Amadeo J. Baldrich, representing the “Club Militar,” and, unavoidably, Bartolomé Mitre, who once more regaled the populace with his oft-told story of “Falucho’s” heroism. “Falucho’s” old unit, the Eighth Infantry, under the command of one Colonel Munilla rendered honors to the national colors. Military bands from the Third, Fourth, and Eleventh Infantires performed patriotic marches, including prominent Afro-Argentine composer Zenón Rolón’s march, “Falucho,” written especially for the inauguration of the eponymous monument, to entertain the thousands who attended.³¹ Argentine Army Artillery officer Colonel Feliciano González, a black man, was a special guest of honor at the inaugural. Colonel Páez, president of the “Club Militar,” gave a moving patriotic speech and placed

³⁰ Julio E. Payró in Noel et al., *Correa Morales*, 37. A distinguished historian and art critic, the University of Buenos Aires’s Institute of Art Theory and History is named after Julio E. Payró, thereby making his memories and observations about the “Falucho” monument especially relevant and official.

³¹ Jorge Miguel Ford , *Beneméritos de mis estirpe. Esbozos sociales* (Buenos Aires: Catálogos, 2002 [1899], 88-89. De Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 146-53, on Rolón.

a plaque at the base of the monument. In addition, patriotic, student, and other civic organizations and social groups attended the festivities and paid tribute to the memory of Antonio Ruiz, as did representatives of resident foreign communities and an official delegation from the Peruvian government.³² Representing the country's executive branch and speaking at the inauguration, General Racedo, upon looking at the symbolic positioning of the "Falucho" monument opposite that of San Martín's, appropriately stated: "Ahí quedan ambos, representando la igualdad en el seno de la gloria" ("There reside both, represented as equals in the heart of glory"). Significantly, thousands of African Argentines also numbered among the throngs that attended the inaugural and other festivities surrounding the "memorialization" of Antonio Ruiz in 1897.³³

The event concluded when five-year old América Ferrari (or Ferreyra), dressed in the national colors, recited from the honorary platform Obligado's stirring poem to the "negro de San Martín."³⁴ To accompany their coverage of the inauguration, furthermore,

³² However, the Italian community angered some observers by displaying their own flag at the inauguration, and the local Italian-language newspaper *L'Italia al Plata* published an editorial on the ceremony denigrating Mitre's "fervent fantasy" of "Falucho." Dosio, "Política estatuaría y representividad," 97, 98.

³³ "La estatua de Falucho. El acto inaugural de hoy." *La Prensa*, May 16, 1897, 4; an obituary for the general recalls his speech at the inauguration of the "Falucho" monument. "Teniente General D. Eduardo Racedo. † Ayer en esta capital." *La Nación*, Dec. 31, 1918, 11.

³⁴ *La Nación*, May 17, 1897, 4. After the ceremony, commemorative medals, discussed in the previous chapter, were distributed to those in attendance. For additional details about the monument's inauguration, see Dosio, "Política estatuaría y representividad," 94-95. Interestingly, the story about the "Falucho" monument made its way across the continent. Even Cuban national hero, martyr, and writer José Martí makes mention of it. José Martí, *Obras completas*, vol. 21 (*Cuadernos de apuntes*), 1st reimpression (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), 273. The American Jesuit, Reverend J. A. Zahm, visited Buenos Aires in the early 1900s. Writing about the city's many statues and plazas "worthy of a visit," he opines: "But the most unique statue in the city is that of Falucho. It is remarkable for being, probably, the only monument of the kind erected by white men to the memory of the Negro." Rev. J. A. Zahm,

La Prensa also ran a story by Juan M. Espora especially dedicated to remembering “Falucho” and his courage.³⁵ The following year, symbolically on the eve of the anniversary of Ruiz’s martyrdom in 1824, the “Falucho Monument Commission” invited all civic groups in Buenos Aires, regardless of race or national origin, to once more celebrate the memory of the Afro-Argentine independence hero at the base of his new statue.³⁶

Lucio Correa Morales’s 1897 sculpture of “Falucho” is cast in bronze and sits upon a granite base.³⁷ The noble figure of Afro-Argentine Antonio Ruiz is represented resplendent in full military uniform, with one hand upholding the flag he died defending and the other over his heart, a clear patriotic gesture. In this depiction, then, “Falucho simboliza la lealtad y el ánimo esforzado, y eso sería lo que el artista representaría en su

Through South America’s South Land: With an Account of Roosevelt’s Scientific Expedition to South America (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1916), 151.

³⁵ Juan M. Espora, “FALUCHO (Antonio Ruiz) HOMENAJE Á SU MEMORIA.” *La Prensa*, May 17, 1897, 3.

³⁶ “Homenaje a Falucho. La demostración de hoy.” *La Prensa*, Feb. 6, 1898, 5.

³⁷ According to a recent editorial note in the Buenos Aires daily *Clarín Online*, the Lucio Correa Morales sculpture of Antonio Ruiz was notable for several reasons: 1) it was the first sculpture by an Argentine artist realized entirely in Argentina; 2) the sculpture of “Falucho” was the first artistic representation of an actual Afro-Argentine, “con identidad propia, y no una metáfora racial exótica” (thus counter to the opinions of Mantilla and other past and present writers who both doubt “Falucho’s” historicity and who also bemoan his use as a convenient “racial symbol” putatively allowing for the “forgetting” of real black soldiers in nineteenth-century Argentina); and 3) the monument’s original location in the “Plaza San Martín” was historically appropriate to the site. However, neither the Argentine press at the time of the sculpture’s inauguration nor those speaking at the monument’s inauguration, including Bartolomé Mitre, ever made mention of Correa Morales or his Argentine nationality, an oversight in the opinion of the *Clarín Online* editorialist. Oscar Andrés De Masi, “Una aclaración por la escultura de Falucho.” *Clarín Online*, March 21, 2011. http://clarin.com/opinion/asombro-valores-van-perdiendo_0_4.

obra,” affirms nineteenth-century historian M. F. Mantilla.³⁸ The pose is redolent with the symbolism of both heroism and love of *patria*, messages then congenial to the nationalistic agenda of fin-de-siècle Argentine social and government elites. Therefore, Mantilla also observes: “A possible patriotic sentiment at this moment foments the idea of erecting a monument to the memory of the soldier Antonio Ruiz...” (“Un posible sentimiento de patriotismo agita en estos momentos la idea de erigir un monumento a la memoria del soldado Antonio Ruiz...”). Historian Mantilla further writes, and the monument perfectly embodies, that Corporal Ruiz (if he in fact ever existed) was both a freeman and citizen the moment he donned his nations’ military uniform.³⁹

The monument was first located in the center of downtown Buenos Aires, in the “Plaza General San Martín,” at the busy intersection of Florida, Charcas, and Santa Fe streets. Previously, the site of the San Martín plaza and monument was known as both the “Campo de Gloria,” in memory of the defenders (many of them black) of Buenos Aires after the second British invasion of the Río de la Plata in 1807, and “Campo de Marte,” because of the military exercises performed there in the early part of the 1800s.⁴⁰ This was thus a fitting enough site for the monument to “el negro de San Martín,” since, as Dan Ben-Amos underscores, “[p]lace names engrave on the land the people’s memory

³⁸ Mantilla, “Los negros argentinos,” 171, 174. “Falucho symbolizes loyalty and brave courage, and that is what the artist intended to represent in his work.”

³⁹ Mantilla “Los negros argentinos,” 170, 171.

⁴⁰ Comisión Nacional de Museos y Monumentos, *Monumentos y lugares históricos de la República Argentina*. Ricardo Levene, dir. (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Justicia e Instrucción Pública, 1944), 29. The plaza was declared a national historic site on June 9, 1942 by way of Decree Number 122.096.

of their past,” and public spaces such as this erupt and shape that social memory.⁴¹ Equally fitting, then, was that the entire section of street from Florida to Alem was also re-dedicated to the memory of “Falucho.” A small plaque was placed at the intersection of these streets which recorded the black soldier’s bravery and patriotism: “Falucho ... – prefirió morir como héroe y con honor – antes que hacer traición a su bandera” (“Falucho... – preferred to die as a hero with honor – before betraying the flag”).⁴²

On the granite base of the monument were placed three original commemorative plaques, which are all still there. At the base of the statue is a plaque from the “Club Militar” (May 9, 1897), which reads: “To ‘Falucho’ – This monument to the heroic black defender of Callao, symbolizes the glory of his entire race – grandly serving during the independence war and in all the other struggles for freedom and national honor.”⁴³ Given this dedication, it is therefore certainly ironic that historian Olgo Ochoa insists in an overtly contrarian manner, evidencing his own bias no doubt, that the historical debt was

⁴¹ Dan Ben-Amos, “Afterword.” In *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*. Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg, eds. (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1999), 298. Also, Jonatahn Boyarin, “Space, Time, and the Politics of Memory.” In *Remapping Memory: The Politics of Time Space*. Jonathan Boyarin, ed. (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1994), 20. Ashplant et al. observe that “Shared or common memories enter the public arena when they are articulated in some cultural or artistic form,” such as a monument or memorial. Ashplant et al., “The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration.” In *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*. T. G. Ashplant et al., eds. (London: Routledge, 2000), 20.

⁴² Marcos Estrada, *El Cabo Segundo Antonio Ruiz (a.) “Falucho”* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Julio Faufman S.R.L., 1964), 36, 36n.9. Federal Decree Number 3.688/1944 BM 7.235 officially recognizes the street’s name as “Falucho.” Alberto Gabriel Piñeiro, *Barrios, calles y plazas de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Origen y razón de sus nombres*. (Buenos Aires: Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires – Secretaría de Cultura; Instituto Histórico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1983), 118. Capasso appropriately highlights that the “bulk of memorialization takes place through the naming process.” Nicholas Capasso, “Constructing the Past: Contemporary Commemorative Sculpture.” *Sculpture* 9 (Nov.-Dec. 1990): 56.

⁴³ See Appendix I for images of some of these plaques.

greater and worthy of the remembrance of not only Ruiz but all black soldiers: "... pero conceptuamos que la reparación histórica... debió a ser más amplia y consagrar... no a Falucho, sino a su intrépida y leal raza."⁴⁴ This observation is doubly ironic since, first of all, in his historical writings, as shown, Mitre precisely attempted to recognize the sacrifices of all black soldiers in his remembrances of Ruiz, and, second, the military veterans' commemorative plaque on the monument in fact clearly attests that Ruiz was remembered as the embodiment of his entire race.

In addition to the "Club Militar's" dedicatory plaque already quoted above, the two other originals equally underscore the importance of the collective remembering of Afro-Argentines at the turn of the nineteenth century. A February 1897 plaque, allegedly speaking for the remnant Afro-Argentine community of Buenos Aires – the "jóvenes descendientes – en Buenos Aires – de la heroica raza – de 'Falucho'" – recalls Ruiz's martyrdom for the nation and is dedicated to his "eternal memory." The third plaque to the "black Argentine" or "negro argentino" also reminds all Argentine citizens of "Falucho's" loyalty – "murió gritando "¡Viva Buenos Aires!" In reward, a grateful nation thus correctly immortalized in bronze the memory of this "soldier of the nation," "soldado por la patria," states the memorial inscription.

Six later commemorative plaques equally speak not only to the lingering social memory of Antonio Ruiz, but also of the monument's slow decline into invisibility.⁴⁵ All

⁴⁴ Pedro Olgo Ochoa, "El invento de Falucho." *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 4, 41 (Sept. 1970): 34. Estrada also seems to miss the point that "Falucho" was a symbol of his entire race when he insists "'Falucho' no fue el representante de su raza ni su única figura." Estrada, *El Cabo Segundo Antonio Ruiz*, 35.

⁴⁵ The modernist Austrian writer Robert Musil (1880-1942) famously declared that "there is nothing more invisible as a monument." Quoted in Savage, "The Past in the Present." *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall 1999), 14.

of them originate in the social remembrance of “Falucho” (“Un recuerdo, una reliquia, un símbolo viviente,” according to his biographer⁴⁶) by Creole and nationalist elites at that time. For instance, the Argentine Army dedicates a plaque of its own to the memory of “Falucho” in recognition that he died for refusing to render honors to the Spanish flag. In addition, the ultra-nationalistic “La Agrupación Patriótica’s” dedicatory plaque is simply inscribed to the “hero of Callao,” briefly but evocatively recalling the place of his death and its circumstances. The plaque also invokes the memory of Argentina’s first hundred years of independence, owed in large part to the sacrifices during the wars of the nineteenth century of other black soldiers just like “Falucho.” As Lawrence Weaver wrote in his 1915 work *Memorials and Monuments*, which is apropos of Corporal Ruiz and his memorialization: “The national conscience is stirred to its depths, the hearts of the people will be filled with pride and gratitude, and it is to be hoped that memorials will be worthy of the men and of the occasion.”⁴⁷ For Argentine Creole nationalists in this period, the “Falucho” monument certainly stirred the national conscience and was viewed as very worthy of this black man.⁴⁸

Beyond the discursive contents of the monument’s commemorative plaques, moreover, their dates also speak to the memorial’s own life-cycle. James Mayo,

⁴⁶ De Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 119.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Borg, *War Memorials*, 86.

⁴⁸ This does not suggest, however, that some sectors did not raise certain issues. Thus, an editorial in *La Revista Moderna* commented on the “Falucho” monument immediately after its inauguration that it was practically “sarcastic” to dedicate a memorial to “Falucho” given that many notable founding fathers, such as Rivadavia, Moreno, Alvear, and Pueyrredón, did not yet have one of their own. However, the piece is careful to not slight “Falucho’s” memory or in any way diminish his patriotism, and although critical about some aspects of the Correa Morales monument, “resulta armonioso en su conjunto” (“is harmonious as a whole”). *La Revista Moderna* 1 (May-July 1897), 58, in Dosio, “La política estatuaría,” 100-01.

highlighting the “presentist” aspect of cultural memory, opines that as history changes so too does the social meaning and cultural attachments of a given monument, which can lead to it being forgotten over time.⁴⁹ Jay Winter also observes that monuments have particular life histories of their own, beginning with their erection and dedication and continuing into their slow demise from public interest, when, in effect, they become “white noise in stone.”⁵⁰ These observations sadly hold true in the case of the monument to “Falucho.” The dates on the “Falucho” monument’s commemorative plaques range from the originals in 1897 to that of “La Brigada 23 de La Liga Patriótica Argentina,” dating to “24 de mayo 1929.” There is thus a long gap between the 1897 plaques and the next one dated 1923, the year the memorial found its permanent home, dedicated by the Afro-Argentine civic association “Sociedad Patriótica 25 de mayo.”⁵¹ In part, the dates of the plaques attest to both the peripatetic life of the monument, discussed below, and its slowly diminishing importance as a site of national memory by the late 1920s, as Argentina entered a new historical era, with its own social and political concerns, as well as new heroes and villains.

Almost from its inauguration, and throughout the early twentieth century, the “Falucho” memorial was repeatedly reported about by the Argentine press as then a key contemporary site of both cultural remembering and political mobilizations. In the late

⁴⁹ Winter, *War Memorials as Political Landscape*, 10. Also, Inglis, “War Memorials,” 19-20.

⁵⁰ Jay Winter, “Historians and Sites of Memory.” In *Memory in Mind and Culture*. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), 261, 267.

⁵¹ The Afro-Argentine musician Enrique Maciel remembers from his youth that the society “Patriótica 25 de mayo” was one of the black civic societies of early-twentieth-century Buenos Aires. See Héctor Blomberg, “Los negros de Buenos Aires.” *¡Aquí Está!*, April, 21, 1949, 8-11. De Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 118-19

nineteenth and early twentieth century, for instance, even the very *acriollado* (Creole) Argentine Socialist Party did not fail to make use of the political symbolism associated with gathering at the “Falucho” monument.⁵² After all, Argentine socialists viewed their party as championing the rights and interests of the working poor in the country, among them the bulk of the vestigial Afro-Argentine community. The organ of the Argentine Socialist Party, *La Vanguardia*, subtitled “Defender of the Working Class,” ran several news stories in early 1898 on the socialist party’s calls for electoral transparency to end voter fraud in the Argentina of the late 1800s. On April 23, 1898, for example, *La Vanguardia* reported on a protest of working-class citizens of Buenos Aires sponsored by the Socialist Party.

According to the lengthy article, about 2,000 protestors made their way in a peaceful and orderly fashion to “Plaza San Martín.” At the “Falucho” monument’s base, continues the report, a platform was hastily built (“[s]e improvisó una tribuna”). The working-class and socialist protestors then heard speeches by two radical spokesmen. The first speaker, Dr. Juan B. Justo, one of the founders of the Argentine Socialist Party, no doubt invoked the social memory of “Falucho” when he pleaded for “purity and liberty” in Argentine politics, two qualities associated with the popular remembrances of Corporal Antonio Ruiz in the national imaginary or *imaginario nacional*. Dr. Justo also condemned the hypocrisy of both liberal and conservative politicians who express false concern over the sad state of political customs they exclusively benefit from: “los pícaros de todos los partidos que fingen dolor ante el triste cuadro de las costumbres políticas que

⁵² See, e.g., “Movimiento político.” *La Prensa*, Feb. 12, 1916, 11.

á ellos solos aprovechan.” Justo then went on to demand “free and honest” elections in the country.⁵³ In response to the lawful and orderly socialist manifestation at the base of the “Falucho” monument, however, the Buenos Aires police commissioner ordered his mounted forces to suppress the political rally and arrest as many protesters as possible.⁵⁴ Sadly, therefore, within sight of the memorial to a subaltern hero of independence, authoritarian forces subverted the very principles of liberty and freedom for all Argentines, including those on society’s margins, which “Falucho” died for and had come to embody in the collective memory of Argentina by the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s. This incident highlights the always contentious and contested nature of collective memory among different social groups.

Such events, however, did not discourage other sectors of civil society from further commemorating and gathering around the monument to Antonio Ruiz. Thus, in 1903, *La Prensa* chronicled the seventy-ninth anniversary of Ruiz’s execution and noted that the “Commission to Honor the Heroes of Independence” would be laying a wreath at the base of the “Falucho” monument.⁵⁵ Interestingly, even soccer games were played

⁵³ “Nuestro meeting de protesta.” *La Vanguardia*, April 23, 1898, 1.

⁵⁴ “Barbarismo policial.” *La Vanguardia*, April 23, 1898, 1-2. A few weeks later the socialist organ summarized the day’s events and how it was covered by other media outlets, foreign and domestic. The English-language daily *The Buenos Ayres Herald* recorded about the rally as per *La Vanguardia*: “La columna vino en perfecto orden á la Plaza San Martín, donde cerca de la estatua erigida á Falucho se estableció la tribuna.” “Contra el Fraude electoral. EL ATENTADO POLICIAL.” *La Vanguardia*, May 7, 1898, 2.

⁵⁵ “Falucho. 79o aniversario.” *La Prensa*, Feb. 7, 1903, 4.

near and around the “Falucho” memorial by Buenos Aires youths, enjoying the diversion offered by the emerging national sport.⁵⁶

In January 1911, the “Comisión Homenaje á Falucho” joined hundreds of people representing a cross-section of Buenos Aires society to render honors to the memory of the black martyr of Callao at the monument’s new site across the city; just as in the inauguration of the original monument, patriotic speeches were also made, marches were performed by local bands, and commemorative medals were distributed to the attendees.⁵⁷ Different student groups would also celebrate patriotic days by invoking the historical memory of “Falucho.” The major Buenos Aires daily *La Nación* reported in 1911 that students from throughout the city, always loyal to the memory of their national heroes, had gathered around the then newly rededicated “Falucho” monument to pay their respects to those who had died for the country.⁵⁸

As often reported by the Buenos Aires press, moreover, the “Plaza Falucho” was a central location for patriotic and political groups of all stripes to gather and hear discourses from prominent thinkers, educators, and statesmen in the first decades of the

⁵⁶ E.g., see the advertisement for one such soccer match in *La Nación*, May 15, 1910, 11. As already noted, in Chile, there is a tradition that a black man of “small stature” called “Falucho” introduced a soccer-like game there sometime around 1817. This coincides with the time of San Martín’s crossing the Andes with his black troops. Could the black footballing “Falucho” be the one and same Antonio Ruiz?

⁵⁷ “HOMENAJE Á FALUCHO. CEREMONIA EN LA PLAZA DE SU NOMBRE.” *La Nación*, Jan. 31, 1911, 10.

⁵⁸ “FIESTAS MAYAS—ACTOS EN PREPARACION—LA MANIFESTACION PATRIOTICA. Diversas adhesiones.” *La Nación*, May 22, 1911, 8; “Los muertos por la patria. Homenaje de las escuelas. Actos a realizarse.” *La Nación*, Oct. 27, 1911, 10. Three years later, the same organ remembered the exploits of San Martín and his “Faluchos” in the Army of the Andes which liberated Chile and Peru. “El Ejército de los Andes.” *La Nación*, Feb. 12, 1914, 10.

twentieth century. For example, groups associated with Bartolomé Mitre and his party obviously exploited the populist symbolism of gathering at the newly-minted “Plaza Falucho,” appropriately named after the black hero originally romanticized by Mitre himself. Thus, on May 6, 1914, the “Asociación General Mitre” held its first “conferencia patriótica” at the “Plaza Falucho” to hear patriotic speeches and promote their party’s politics and agenda. The Radical Party also had a large turnout at the “Falucho” memorial for a political rally on the night of April 17, 1915.⁵⁹ A month later, the same pro-Mitre patriotic organization, “Asociación General Mitre,” once again came together at the “Falucho Plaza” to render honors to the black martyr’s memory, this time on the occasion of the May patriotic holidays.⁶⁰

Despite, or perhaps even because, of its prominence as a rallying point for the masses and political groups, “Falucho’s” monument was relocated from from its original, prime real estate location in “Plaza San Martín” and subsequently moved about Buenos Aires in the first two decades of the last century. Almost as if prophesying the monument’s first displacement, in 1907 *Caras y Caretas* published a sarcastic story featuring the “Falucho” statue as a real, talking character. In the story, the “Falucho” statue is afraid to approach the near by San Martín monument, lest he hears his general’s unkind words: “¡Sáquenme ese negro del camino!” (“remove this black from my

⁵⁹ “Movimiento político. Partido Radical.” *La Nación*, April 18, 1915, 9. The Catholic Youth movement of Buenos Aires was one of the first civic groups to meet at the foot of the “Falucho” memorial. See, e.g., “Culto católico.” *La Prensa*, May 9, 1897, 5.

⁶⁰ See, e.g., “Asociaciones diversas.” *La Nación*, May 6, 1914, 14. “Fiestas mayas. El homenaje a Falucho.” *La Prensa*, April 30, 1915, 10; “Fiestas patrióticas. Manifestaciones populares.” *La Nación*, May 25, 1915, 10. See also the news about the “Ateneo Gen. Mitre” and its “manifestación cívica con antorcha” for the night of July 8, 1915 reported the same day in *La Nación*, 9, as well as “Fiestas patrióticas. Manifestaciones cívicas.” *La Nación*, July 9, 1915, 11.

path!”).⁶¹ In a case of real life imitating fiction, in July 1910, with centennial celebrations in full swing, the city council of Buenos Aires petitioned to remove the “Falucho” monument from its privileged location in the “Plaza San Martín.” The stated reason was the need to broaden the intersection of Charcas and Florida streets to improve the flow of motor traffic heading to Palermo, which a note in *La Nación* described as “enormous.” The brief news item reports that the intersection’s proposed enlargement “se hará tomando un buen troso de la plazoleta donde se levanta la estatua de Falucho,” thereby requiring the monument’s relocation.⁶²

The city council then proposed a small intersection formed by Triunvirata and Río de Janeiro streets (barrio of Villa Crespo, ironically a predominantly Jewish neighborhood) for the monument’s new location. A news item on July 29, 1910 notes the proposed relocation of the monument to Second Corporal Ruiz and that the small plaza housing the statue to the hero of Callao would, in honor of his memory, also bear his nickname, “Falucho.” However, the anonymous author of the piece also questions the real motives behind the monument’s removal from the “Plaza San Martín” in the first place, hinting at a possible racist motive. The brief news item, which repeatedly invokes the memory of “Falucho” and his martyrdom, insists that the new location for the monument is unworthy of the Afro-Argentine patriot’s memory, perhaps betraying the writer’s own anti-semitic or xenophobic sentiments. While “Falucho” was not “an

⁶¹ “Sinfonía.” *Caras y Caretas* 10, 451 (May 25, 1907): n.p.

⁶² “La estatua de Falucho. Su traslación.” *La Nación*, July 23, 1910, 11. On July 25, 1910, the city council received another report noting that the traffic on Florida street around “Plaza San Martín” was “difficult and perilous.” Once more, the removal of the monument to Ruiz was proposed as a solution to allow for the widening of Florida street and intersection with Charcas street. “Consejo deliberante. La sesión de ayer.” *La Nación*, July 26, 1910, 10.

eminent man,” opines the unnamed source, he was nonetheless a true independence hero. “Falucho es el hermano de todos los héroes ignorados” (“Falucho is the brother of all forgotten heroes”) who forged Argentina’s independence continues the news story. The writer concludes movingly: “Su estatua está bien en la [‘Plaza San Martín’] frente al monumento de su inmortal caudillo. No cometamos el error de quitarle un puesto que pagó con su sangre.”⁶³ For patriotic reasons, this writer insists that the “Falucho” memorial not be removed from its appropriate location, paid for with his blood, across from San Martín’s monument; after all, in the popular memory of Argentines at the time “Falucho” was remembered as “el negro de San Martín.”

Caras y Caretas also sarcastically reported the memorial’s removal from “Plaza San Martín” (because of the “high rents” in that exclusive part of town, as if to suggest a black man could not afford to live there). “El valiente negrito que en vida supo resistir el fuego de las balas, sabiendo descollar junto á San Martín, no pudo resistir las exigencias de un simple carro de mudanza,” ironically quips the anonymous correspondent for the iconic *porteño* (Buenos Aires) magazine. That is, “Falucho,” who in life dodged bullets alongside his commander San Martín, now could not evade a simple moving truck. The article goes on to point out the wave of discontent among the black denizens of Buenos Aires, whose ancestors fought for national freedom (“que, en su mayor parte, descendían de soldados que contribuyeron a nuestra independencia nacional”), over “Falucho’s”

⁶³ “Municipalidades. Traslado de un monumento.” *La Nación*, July 26, 1910, 13; “La estatua de Falucho.” *La Nación*, July 29, 1910, 8. “His statue is well-placed in the [‘Plaza San Martín’] in front of the monument to the immortal caudillo.” One of the last photographs of the “Falucho” monument in its original location appeared in Manuel Cosme Chueco’s official commemorative centennial publication, *La República Argentina en su primer centenario*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1910), 183. All the commemorative postcards in my collection have the “Falucho” monument still in its original prime location.

removal and relocation. In response, Buenos Aires officials entrusted a member of the city's "black bourgeoisie," engineer Benedicto Ferreyra, with supervising the monument's first move across town.⁶⁴

However, it was not only Afro-Argentines who resented the monument's removal from its original site next to San Martín's memorial. Argentine students of all ages protested "Falucho's" dislocation from the "Plaza San Martín." Thus, *La Prensa* reported on August 10, 1910 that prior to the memorial's transfer across town, students at the "Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires" even formed their own "special committee" to attempt to impede the monument's relocation. They convened a student rally in "Plaza San Martín" to sing patriotic hymns and hear orations about their national heroes. They also started a petition drive to present to the local government in hopes of canceling or at least postponing "Falucho's" removal until after the centennial. The students, then a hyper-patriotic social element, argued that "Falucho" was an "archetype of his race" and a "prototype of the humble soldier" of Argentina's glorious independence.⁶⁵

In an attempt to quell student dissatisfaction, the president of the city council, one Mr. Carrasco, pointed out that the new plaza for the "Falucho" monument would be his own and not one shared with other memorials, as was the case in the memorially-crowded "Plaza San Martín." The government official also pointed out the plaza's then still central location in the city and its proximity to the new Centennial Park. According to an article in Buenos Aires's *La Nación*, the students were apparently temporarily

⁶⁴ Anon., "La mudanza de Falucho." *Caras y Caretas* 13, 619 (Aug. 13, 1910): n.p. Ferreyra was an original proponent of the "Falucho" monument and also headed a drive to create a memorial to Colonel Lorenzo Barcala. "Comisión del Centenario. Monumento al Barcala." *La Nación*, Aug. 14, 1906, 9.

⁶⁵ In Geler, "¡Pobres negros!," 127.

satisfied by Carrasco's logic concerning the relocation of the "Falucho" monument. The city also agreed to give the statue a new base and hold a celebration to commemorate the dedication of the new plaza to the hero of Callao.⁶⁶

Furthermore, an anonymous document – about the place where "Falucho's" monument first resided – from apparently sometime shortly after the statue's relocation in 1910, penned no doubt by a member of the Creole nationalist elite and expressing clear patriotic sentiments, regrets that "algunos subversivos de la historia cambian todo lo que representa el sentimiento nacional" ("some historical subversives who change everything that stands for national sentiment"). For the author of this text, "el negro Falucho" was a unifying figure who embodied "el sentimiento nacional" or "national sentiment" as one of San Martín's brave soldiers. "Algún día," continues the document, "un patriota autentico [sic.] con autoridad nacional, deberá volver la estatua del negro Falucho a la 'Plaza San Martín' y eso será justicia." That is, the author hopes that one day an "authentic patriot" with "national authority" will return the "Falucho" monument to its rightful location in the "Plaza San Martín." The text ends by proclaiming: "*El orden nace, la anarquía se hace,*" "*order is natural, anarchy man made.*"⁶⁷

⁶⁶ "La estatua de Falucho. Su nueva ubicación. Cambio de notas." *La Nación*, Aug. 10, 1910, 11; "Monumento á Falucho." *La Nación*, Aug. 11, 1910, 11. See also, "Actualidad. Glorificación de los héroes modestos." *La Prensa*, Aug. 5, 1910, 11. Students, especially from the universities, remained militant throughout the 1910s and early 1920s. E.g., "UNIVERSITARIAS. FEDERACION UNIVERSITARIA. Sobre el conflicto estudiantil. RESOLUCIONES ADOPTADAS." *La Prensa*, March 1, 1923, 12; "EL CONFLICTO UNIVERSITARIO. Sobre la actitud de la Federación. COMENTARIO PERIODISTICO." *La Prensa*, March 4, 1923, 4.

⁶⁷ "Anexo 14. 'Descripción del lugar donde por primer vez estuvo colocado el monumento al soldado negro Antonio Ruiz más conocido como FALUCHO.'" In Col. Juan Lucio Torres, *El soldado negro en la epopeya libertadora argentina. Integrando el Ejército Argentino y de otros países* (Buenos Aires: Inst. de Historia Militar Argentina, 2003), 267. Italics in the original. According to Malizia, what prompted the monument's first relocation in 1910 was that the

This writer was therefore apparently linking the removal of the monument to foreign subversive elements in Argentina at the time, and is calling on authentic nationalists to undo the injustice to the memory of the black hero. Once again, this exemplifies that historical memory is indeed shaped by current conditions. The new enemies of Argentine national elites and patriots in the early 1900s, like the author of this document attests to, were no longer the black spies and murderers of the Rosas era; instead, in early-twentieth century Argentina, European immigrants with their radical ideologies (e.g., anarcho-syndicalism) represented the true threat to national unity. “Falucho,” on the other hand, came to symbolize for Creole elites the patriotism and sacrifice for the state of its loyal black citizens.

Less than a year after *Caras y Caretas* featured the article on the removal of the monument to Antonio Ruiz from “Plaza San Martín,” the magazine ran a small piece on patriotic celebrations held at the new “Plaza Falucho,” then the monument’s site in Villa Crespo. Schoolchildren from the near by parish district of San Bernardo gathered around the monument to “Falucho” in Villa Crespo and sung the national anthem, while waving the Argentine flag. The children also heard patriotic speeches from prominent statesmen and educators, no doubt often invoking the historical memory of heroism and loyalty to the nation of soldiers such as Antonio Ruiz. These gallants served as paragons of patriotism for the younger generations of compatriots.⁶⁸ Since national or civic honors

wealthy residents of Buenos Aires disapproved of it. She adduces no documentation to that effect, however. Malizia, “Apodado Falucho,” 2.

⁶⁸ Anon., “En la ‘Plaza Falucho’.” *Caras y Caretas* 14, 601 (June 3, 1911): n.p. See also “Homenaje a Falucho. En la parroquia San Bernardo.” *La Prensa*, Jan. 31, 1911, 13. In addition to candy, students were also given commemorative tokens. “Fiestas Mayas. Actos en preparación. La manifestación patriótica.” *La Nación*, May 22, 1911, 8. On the central role in social memory of public commemorations like the one depicted in the *Caras y Caretas* and *La Nación* articles on the patriotic events at “Plaza Falucho,” consult the seminal work of Paul

such as those bestowed on “Falucho” were ultimately lessons in morality, children’s participation in patriotic commemorations was thus deemed important by social and government elites. In fact, as early as a few days after the “Falucho” monument’s first inauguration, the National Council of Education requested that Sr. Blanco de Aguirre, one of the monument’s main promoters and a member of the Afro-Platine elite, make available to the public schools one hundred photographs of the Correa Morales monument in honor of “Falucho” to show Buenos Aires’s schoolchildren.⁶⁹

This story illustrates that commemorating becomes the means of finding a purpose for the past in the present, as well as for the future; or, as Paul Ricoeur, puts it, remembering means transmitting meaning of the past to future generations.⁷⁰ In this regard, Jay Winter emphasizes “Commemoration at sites of memory [e.g., “Falucho’s” monument] is an act arising out of a conviction, shared by a broad community, that the moment recalled is both significant and informed by a moral message. Sites of memory materialize the message.” This suggests, according to Winter, that much commemorative activity involves inviting the public to remember in public. Commemoration is a process of condensing the moral lessons of history and fixing them in place for all time. Hence, as seen in the *Caras y Caretas* article about school celebrations at the monument

Connerton, *How Societies Remember*. See also, Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*. (Maidenhead, UK: Open Univ. Press, 2003), 126-31.

⁶⁹ *El Monitor de la Educación Común*, Session 54 of the National Council of Education, May 22, 1897, 461. Once more, since I retrieved this partial source from the internet I do not have the full citation. I have tried, therefore, to provide as much data about the source as possible.

⁷⁰ Nico H. Frijida, “Commemorating.” In *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*. James W. Pennebaker, Darío Páez, and Bernard Rimé, eds. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997), 125. Paul Ricoeur, “Memory and Forgetting.” In *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley, eds. (London: Routledge, 1999), 9.

dedicated to the memory of the Afro-Argentine hero, this also entails “directing the public towards particular sites of remembrance,” especially those that support straightforward national (meta-)narratives.⁷¹

Regardless of its symbolic, political, and social mnemonic import, already by the early 1910s the “Falucho” monument had fallen into an apparently sad state of disrepair. A brief news item in Buenos Aires’s *La Nación* from 1913, for instance, notes the dissatisfaction of students with the lack of proper lighting in the evening for the monument. According to the news report, the outraged students saw in this public utilities debacle, “una nueva exteriorización de mala voluntad hacia Falucho” (“a new exteriorization of the ill will toward Falucho”) on the part of city officials, who had just a few years earlier slighted the memory of the hero of Callao by relocating him from the “Plaza San Martín” to its then current location in a “foreign” neighborhood, on Río de Janeiro street.⁷² In addition, several years later, in 1919, in the same section of *La Nación*, a small news item titled “un olvido censurable” (“an unforgiveable slight”) once more lamented the state of disrepair of the small “Falucho” plaza in Villa Crespo. The note begins by reminding its readers that in the small plaza or “plazoleta” resides “the monument of national gratitude erected for the humble Falucho” (“el monumento que la gratitud nacional levantara al modesto Falucho”). It goes on to complain that municipal

⁷¹ Jay Winter, “Sites of Memory and the Shadow of War.” In *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nunning, eds. (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 62, 66. Heroic national narratives therefore require a “unilinear story line,” intimates James V. Wertsch in “Collective Memory.” In *Memory in Mind and Culture*. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), 127.

⁷² “Excursiones urbanas por los distintos barrios. Quejas de vecinos.” *La Nación*, Nov. 2, 1913, 12. The note on the “Falucho” monument appears under the subheading of “Alumbrado de una plazoleta.”

authorities in Buenos Aires city have totally neglected to take care of the monument and its grounds. The plaza and its monument are thus in a state of “el más completo abandono,” “total abandonment.” The news item ends by exhorting city officials to do right by the memory of “Falucho” and provide personnel and funds for the proper upkeep of the historic site.⁷³

As these reports indicate, Ruiz’s biographer Marcos de Estrada thus correctly complained that: “Hace ya muchos años que los gobiernos, ejército y las instituciones de cultura [i.e., institutions of official remembering] no rinden homenaje a ‘Falucho’ y enaltacen su lección al pie de su monumento en los actos patrióticos de rememoración.”⁷⁴ It seems that by the late 1920s or early 1930s, and for many years after that, the new national government and military, both once the main promoters of Creole nationalism, themselves forgot to render proper honors to the memory of “Falucho,” thereby failing to capitalize on his symbolic instruction in patriotism for future generations. As noted above, moreover, the monument to “Falucho” not only fell into disrepair and abandonment after the first couple of decades of the 1900s, but was relocated yet again, this time with much less debate but similar fanfare, on May 23, 1923, to its present location in *barrio* Palermo (itself associated with the historical memory of Rosas).⁷⁵

⁷³ “Excursiones urbanas por diversos barrios. Un olvido censurable.” *La Nación*, Feb. 10, 1919, 7.

⁷⁴ De Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano*, 118. A municipal decree from March 2, 1923 ordered the statue’s second relocation. <http://www.aceder.gov.ar/es/1196184>.

⁷⁵ Since May 1923, the monument to “Falucho” sits in a “plazoleta” or small plaza across from the Argentine Army’s “Cuartel de los Patricios” in the neighborhood of Palermo, at the intersection of Fitz Roy, Santa Fe, Bondpland, and Luis María Campos streets, in Buenos Aires. The “plazoleta” on which the “Falucho” monument now resides is itself named after the black war hero (Municipal Ordinance dated May 18, 1923). Adrián Beccar Varela and Enrique Udaondo, *Plazas y calles de Buenos Aires. Significación histórica de sus nombres*. Vol. 1.

Hence, Alfredo Taullard, writing in 1927, recorded ironically about Argentines: “We are surely a people prone to changes and relocations: we do not even leave our monuments in peace in one place. Just ask Falucho!” (“Somos verdaderamente un pueblo muy afecto a los cambios y mudanzas: ni a los monumentos los dejamos tranquilos mucho tiempo en el mismo sitio. ¡Dígalo sino a Falucho!”).⁷⁶

In his important 1989 article on realms of memory in the journal *Representations*, Pierre Nora insists that statues or monuments to the dead owe their social meaning to their “intrinsic existence” more so than to their spatial location. Thus, “one could justify relocating them without altering their meaning.”⁷⁷ However, for certain sectors of Argentina’s early-twentieth-century nationalist elites, Nora’s observation simply cannot hold about the case of the “Falucho” monument’s relocations, especially its first move to a heavily Jewish (i.e., foreign) neighborhood in 1910, the very year of the nation’s centennial no less. The black Creole hero, popularly remembered by his compatriots, thanks to Mitre and Obligado, as “el negro de San Martín,” could only rightfully reside across from the monument dedicated to his general in the “Liberator’s” eponymous

(Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos de la Penitenciaría Nacional, 1910), 322-23; and Piñeiro, *Barrios, calles y plazas de la ciudad de Buenos Aires*, 11.

⁷⁶ A. Taullard, *Nuestro antiguo Buenos Aires Cómo era y cómo es desde la época colonial hasta la actualidad. Su asombroso progreso edilicio, trajes, costumbres, etc.* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Peuser, 1927), 53. Lea Geler suggests that the relocations of the “Falucho” monument in the early 1900s left their impression on the collective memory of the city of Buenos Aires, as attested to in the media coverage accompanying the memorial’s every change of venue. Geler, “¡Pobres negros!” 128. See also, Susana I. Rato de Sambucetti, “Los monumentos del centenario: las obras inconclusas.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 34, 454 (Dec. 2001): 91-111.

⁷⁷ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire.*” Marc Roudebush, trans. *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989), 22.

plaza.⁷⁸ For these Creole nationalists, then, the “Falucho” monument was a mnemonic landmark and its intrinsic meaning was precisely associated with its placement in a privileged location in the “Plaza San Martín,” just across from his old chief’s memorial. Thus, to remove “Falucho” from his rightful spot across from the great San Martín was treasonous for Creole patriots in the early 1910s, and to relocate his memorial to a “foreign” locale was unforgivable, especially in light of the tensions between Creoles, including Afro-Argentines, and immigrants in that time period (already documented).⁷⁹ At the very moment that the immigrant problem pressed most heavily on social and national elites during the centennial celebrations in 1910 (and well into the 1920s), and as the vanishing of the black race in Argentina was considered a *fait accompli*, Bartolomé Mitre and other cultural elites precisely then turned to “Falucho” as representing for future generations the Argentine par excellence, a member of anonymous citizenry, who nevertheless selflessly sacrificed his life for his nation.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ The plaza in Latin America is the quintessential public space and is itself often a site of social memory. On the public space in Argentina, see Jeffrey D. Needell, “Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires: Public Space and Public Consciousness in *Fin-De-Siècle* Latin America.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, 3 (July 1995): 519-40. On the plaza as public space, Setha M. Low, *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2000); and Joseph L. Scarpaci, *Plazas and Barrios: Heritage Tourism and Globalization in the Latin American Centro Histórico* (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2005).

⁷⁹ Dosio, “La política estatuaría,” 98-99, 102-03. However, not all Argentines accepted the memorialization of “Falucho.” A few pro-Rosas historical revisionists and political conservatives in the 1930s denounced the “mentiras de bronce” (“bronze lies”) fomented by earlier liberal elites, such as Mitre. For instance, in an important 1939 article on the political uses of history, revisionist intellectual Ricardo Font Ezcurra denounces the original placement of the “Falucho” monument in “Plaza San Martín” as symbolic of associating the “magnificently authentic” with the “unnecessarily apocryphal.” He goes on to attack the official liberal historiography associated with Mitre. The article was republished as Ricardo Font Ezcurra, “La historia instrumento político.” *Revista del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas Juan Manuel de Rosas*, no. 34 (Jan.-March 1994): 53, 54.

⁸⁰ Geler, “¡Pobres negros!,” 129.

Amos Funkenstein asserts that national heroes like Antonio Ruiz were meant to be remembered in the collective memory. As such, public monuments “anchor collective remembering,” and “they do in some measure work to impose permanent memory” for a society.⁸¹ George Mosse, furthermore, affirms that modern war memorials focus upon figures symbolic of the nation. Public monuments like the one dedicated to “Falucho” in Buenos Aires therefore commemorate not just “vernacular non-heroes,” but, more importantly, official national history.⁸² Such memorials or monuments serve as sites of remembering for the nation and also promote the present agenda of ruling elites. They serve dominant statist ideologies as “oracles of memories.”⁸³

Monuments or memorials “thus met the needs of sponsors, creators and the enfranchised, educated, white, male and affluent segment of the population,” concludes Nicholas Capasso, precisely the hegemonic segment of society promoting nationalist agendas in late nineteenth-century Argentina.⁸⁴ In short, while memories are indeed often contested among and between different social groups, most public representations of history constitute the domain of official or dominant memory. Paul Ricoeur therefore intimates that a “formidable pact is concluded in this way between remembrance,

⁸¹ Amos Funkenstein, “Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness.” *History and Memory* 1, 1 (Spring-Summer 1989): 5. However, as attested to in the case of the “Falucho” monument, even collective remembering is not permanent.

⁸² Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 47.

⁸³ Charles S. Maier, “A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial.” *History and Memory* 5 (1993): 143-44.

⁸⁴ Nicholas Capasso, “Constructing the Past: Contemporary Commemorative Sculpture.” *Sculpture* 9 (Nov.-Dec. 1990): 58. It is important to note, however, that in the case of the “Falucho” monument, as noted above, Afro-Argentines also played a key role in its promotion and subsequent creation.

memorization, and commemoration.”⁸⁵ The monument to the historical memory of “Falucho” in Buenos Aires, at least from the late nineteenth to the first part of the twentieth century, confirms Ricoeur’s conclusion about the relationship between commemoration and official representations, not to mention the ideological dimensions of both.

Conclusion

In spite of the opinions of Maier, Capasso, and Ricoeur, the monument to “Falucho” in fact united different sectors of Buenos Aires society at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries.⁸⁶ Both elite and popular social sectors, including Afro-Argentines, financially and otherwise supported the erection of the monument to the memory of “Falucho.” Black Creole nationalists and nostalgists found in the monument a symbolic rallying point for their compatriots, a site of both national identity and social memory, recalling the heroism of one of their own.⁸⁷ Forgotten or

⁸⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, trans. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), 85.

⁸⁶ There also exists another “Falucho” monument in the headquarters of the black soldier’s old regiment. Now known as the Mechanized Eighth Infantry Battalion, this unit of the Argentine Army is headquartered in Comodoro Rivadavia, in the southern province of Chubut. On the site there is a monument to “Falucho” that therefore proudly recalls for visitors the battalion’s Afro-Argentine heritage. The “Falucho” statue at the memorial’s top is based on a painting of the black hero by early- to mid-twentieth -century Argentine Creole artist Elodoro Marengo. “Museo Histórico Militar, Comodoro Rivadavia.” <http://www.tripin.travel/comodoro-rivadavia/museo-historico-militar.html>. As far as I know, no one has done any academic work on this particular monument. No doubt the monument’s own commemorative plaques and the battalion’s institutional archives would provide scholars with valuable resources. From what I can gather, this seems to be a destination for local and foreign visitors alike, and the “Falucho” monument appears as a central part of the attractions, thus making it an underappreciated site of Afro-Argentine heritage tourism.

⁸⁷ Writing in 1905, socialist Argentine intellectual José Ingenieros observed that in that day, the Afro-Argentine population of Buenos Aires made annual pilgrimages to the “Falucho” monument. José Ingenieros, *La crónicas de José Ingenieros en La Nación (1905-1906)*. Cristina

reinvented among certain white Creole intellectuals at this time were memories of Afro-Argentines and their political associations with Rosas or other strongmen. The monument to “Falucho” instead recalled for them and for all Argentines at the time the sacrifices of loyal blacks for their nation or *patria*. The dedicatory plaques on the monument’s base bear witness to the history of the black race in Argentina that social, military, and Afro-Argentine elites then wished remembered and the others they would rather have consigned to oblivion from the national memory.

The “Falucho” monument was also a site of social and political contestation, however. Diverse political and social groups, often at odds with each other, staged rallies and demonstrations at the site. In their own ways, each group, whether liberal, conservative, or radical, claimed the memory of “Falucho” as their own when they gathered around his monument in the early 1900s. The removal of the memorial from its original, real and symbolically privileged location across from San Martín’s monument also elicited protests and contestations from white and black Creoles alike, who took it as a nationalist slight to have the Afro-Argentine hero’s shrine relocated. The monument’s first move on the eve of the centennial to a heavily immigrant and Jewish neighborhood especially angered Creole nationalists of all races. This was a time of intense xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment among different social and political sectors in Buenos Aires and throughout the country. In their minds, a national hero like “Falucho” had no business residing among Jews and strangers, with their own customs and languages,

Beatriz Fernández, ed. (Mar del Plata, Argentina: Editorial Martín; Univ. Nacional de Mar del Plata, 2009), 22.

many not wanting to assimilate, while others were viewed as criminals and social agitators by Argentine nationals.

Ironically, with the passing of time, the “Falucho” monument slowly slipped into a state of abandonment and disrepair. In 1923, the memorial was relocated yet again, but was even then in the process of being forgotten and becoming invisible, like the Afro-Argentine race itself. In a posthumously compiled work, itself with a strong “mood of nostalgia,” early-twentieth-century Argentine journalist and theater critic Manuel Castro sardonically commented on the coming and goings of the “Falucho” monument and its slow demise into oblivion. “Falucho, the common soldier and kinky-haired black, we have going about here, there, and everywhere,” writes Castro, “until one day we decided to completely forget his loyal suicide in Callao....”⁸⁸ With the advent of military rule after 1930, other sites and other heroes were commemorated. While Cabral remained a part of the national imaginary and memory, “Falucho” was slowly forgotten by younger generations of Argentines. At most, a few elderly Argentines vaguely recalled his name from some old poem, itself largely forgotten, recited when they were very young during patriotic holidays at school. Still others, some mostly too young to even recall the last military dictatorship in Argentina, do not have any memory of “el negro de San Martín,”⁸⁹ a fact that saddens and infuriates their parents and especially grandparents, for whom the memory of “Falucho” invokes both nostalgia and nationalist pride.

⁸⁸ Manuel Castro, “Calles y estatuas de Buenos Aires.” *Buenos Aires de antes*. José Luis Lanuza, prologue. (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Capelli, Oliveto y Cía., 1949), 17. In the original: “A Falucho, por soldado raso y ‘moreno motudo’, lo tenemos de Ceca en Meca, hasta que un día decidimos olvidar por completo su lealtad suicida en el Callao....”

⁸⁹ For instance, Argentine-born Canadian writer and editor, Alberto Manguel writes that the “Falucho” monument did not remind him during his high-school days in the 1960s of Afro-

Perhaps the ultimate irony concerning the “Falucho” monument, however, is that today, near to its original site, now just outside the perimeter of the “Plaza San Martín,” on the old “cortada o pasaje [i.e., shortcut] Falucho,” resides a statue of Esteban Echeverría, a leading member of the Generation of 1837, whose story, *El matadero*, remains one of the cruelest and crudest depictions of the black race in Argentina during the Rosas regime.⁹⁰ “¡Pobres negros!” And yet, perhaps, “el negro de San Martín” and his racial brethren may still have the last word on the subject of how they are socially remembered in their own country.

Argentines, slavery, or the black gaucho killed by Martín Fierro. “The monument had mere anecdotal value,” asserts Manguel. “It did not anchor my memory. It celebrated a character who seemed to me on the verge of fiction. Nothing more.” Alberto Manguel, *Reading Picture: A History of Love and Hate* (New York: Random House, 2000), 250. These sentiments clearly did not hold true for earlier generations of Creole patriots. Manguel goes on to reiterate a position articulated decades earlier by M. F. Mantilla in his article about the value “Falucho” monument compared to the worth of an entire race. Once again, this “‘Falucho’-versus-his-race” was then and remains now a false dichotomy.

⁹⁰ Daniel Balmaceda, *Historias insólitas de la historia argentina. Desde que Urquiza llenó su casa de hijos hasta que Alfonsín se vistió de mar* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2007), 143.

CHAPTER 12

“Memorias presentes, presentes memorias”: Present Memories, Afro-Platines, and Social Remembrances until the Early Twenty-First Century

“Sí señor, o Falucho envuelto en la bandera allá en El Callao antes de entregarla inmolándose, pero fueron los negros y eran de origen angoleño los que iban al frente. Y así fueron las luchas de la liberación en todas las etapas de la Argentina....” Argentine President Cristina Fernández, Speech Commemorating the May Revolution, May 25, 2012.

Introduction

As documented in the previous two chapters, public commemorations of “Falucho” continued unabated until sometime into the mid- to late-1920s, before social remembrances of the black hero of Callao began to dissipate somewhat, as Argentina entered a new historical epoch in 1930, following the military’s coup, with its own political and social problems and thus its own collective mnemonic concerns. However, as late as 1928, the historical memory of “Falucho” was still invoked in the title of a short-lived journal in Buenos Aires, *Falucho: Revista Quincenal Ilustrada*, devoted to promoting and defending the rights of black people in South America. The journal, published by the one-time Afro-Argentine mutual aid society “La Protectora,” by 1928 was run by Creole writers and artists, as well as the descendants of European immigrants, such as the modernist illustrator José Amalzzi (Amalzi). Leading Afro-Argentine chronicler, Jorge Miguel Ford, introduced in the chapter on Creole memorialists, also contributed to the publication. The journal, however, was clearly integrationist and assimilationist, at least judging by the contents of the issues I consulted. Issues six and seven of volume one, for example, featured stories both about past liberal icon Mariano

Moreno and present efforts by *Falucho's* editors and contributors to improve local hospital services for the needy of the city of Buenos Aires. The military contributions of black soldiers were also remembered, for instance, in an article on Paraguayan-War hero, Sargeant Major Ramón Sánchez. Further evidencing its inherently Creole character, the journal devoted considerable space in its back pages to scores, stories, and updates of soccer matches in the local “Liga Atlético Falucho” (“Falucho Athletic League”).¹ *Falucho: Revista Quincenal Ilustrada* represented another Creole-inspired realm of memory about blackness in the River Plate of the early twentieth century.

This chapter seeks to trace commemorations of Afro-Platines after the 1930s, thereby bringing historical remembrances of “Falucho” and other blacks in the Río de la Plata closer to our own date. My dissertation has endeavored to establish the prominence and importance of past social remembrances among different sectors of the populations of Argentina and Uruguay of their respective black heritage. These commemorations, while present from earlier times, peaked in social significance by the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries, corresponding to the River Plate’s centennial celebration, a prime motivation for historical remembrances. As blacks allegedly vanished over this time period from the late 1800s onwards, perhaps unsurprisingly, then, nostalgia for them increased among Creoles and nationalist elites. Even as the Platine republics, especially Argentina, entered a new historical period in the

¹ *Falucho: Revista Quincenal Ilustrada. Defiende los Intereses de la Gente de Color en Sud América* 1, 6-7 (March 15, 1928): 1, 2-5, 7-8, 25-27. I have only been able to track down one volume of this publication, published in Buenos Aires in 1928. There are only two libraries world-wide, according “WorldCat” (OCLC FirstSearch), which have copies of this publication. Both are located in Germany.

1930s and 1940s, social commemorations of blacks in the region nonetheless continued to promote a “mood of nostalgia” among conservative Creole nationalists and intellectuals alike. By tracing social remembrances of blackness in Argentina and Uruguay to the present, this chapter, therefore, in effect represents the “(and beyond)” promised in my dissertation’s subtitle.

“Recordando a los afrorioplatenses”: Nineteenth-Century Afro-Platine Heroes in Social Commemoration from the 1930s to the Present²

While harder to document after the late 1920s or early 1930s, references to “Falucho” and other Afro-Platines continued to appear in both learned and popular sites of memory, especially in literature, history writing, and folkloric compilations. For example, in the mid to late 1920s, late-nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century poet Luis Cané dedicated several poems remembered from his boyhood to especially black women in his *Mal estudiante*.³ In 1933, Cané’s near contemporary, Uruguayan writer Lino Suárez Peña penned a historical novel about the black race and its sufferings under slavery in the Banda Oriental.⁴ Also in the 1930s, theater writers Carlos Max Viale and Héctor P. Blomberg authored a play about Afro-Argentines during the Rosas era, *La*

² Part of this sub-chapter is partially based on Roberto Pacheco, “Invisible but Not Forgotten: Afro-Platines and Their Historiography.” *Latin American Studies and Bibliography*. Pamela Howard-Reguindin, dir. (New Orleans, LA: SALALM Secretariat, Latin American Library, Tulane Univ., 2007), 108-16.

³ Luis Cané, *Mal estudiante. Romancero de niñas. Tiempo de vivir*. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Anaconda, 1941 [1925]). See, e.g., “Romance de negro” and “Romance de la niña negra.”

⁴ Lino Suárez Peña, *La raza negra en el Uruguay. Novela histórica de su pasado por la esclavitud* (Montevideo: Talleres Gráficos Modernos, 1933).

*mulata del Restaurador. Escenas populares de la época de Rosas.*⁵ In addition, in 1935, Argentine literary giant Jorge Luis Borges wrote an odd piece about race relations in the “Jim Crow” United States south, “The Cruel Redeemer Lazarus Morell” (“El atroz redentor Lazarus Morell”). The story, part of Borges’s *A Universal History of Iniquity* (*Historia universal de la infamia*) opens with a cursory “remote cause” or historical background of slavery in the New World. Among other details, Borges recalls the Afro-centric and nostalgic paintings and stories of Pedro Figari and Vicente Rossi, respectively. Almost immediately after, Borges invokes the “statue to the imaginary Falucho,” thereby including the black Argentine hero in his abbreviated and very idiosyncratic history of race relations in the Americas.⁶

In 1938, historian Bernardo Kordon published a short treatise on the contributions of the African race in the River Plate.⁷ Less than a decade later, fellow historian José Luis Lanuza published his own study of the history of the black race in Argentina from colonial times to the end of the nineteenth century, thereby further evidencing a

⁵ Carlos Max Viale Paz et al., *Homenaje popular a Carlos Max Viale* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Porter Hermanos, 1938), 223-86.

⁶ Jorge Luis Borges, “El atroz redentor Lazarus Morell.” *Historia universal de la infamia* (Madrid: “El País,” 2002 [1935]), 17. The translation here is mine. An English translation of this story is found in Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions*. Andrew Hurley, trans. (New York: Viking Press, 1998), 6-12. Andrew Hurley awkwardly translates the above passage as “the statue of the imaginary semblance of Antonio (Falucho) Ruiz.” Kate Jenckes incorrectly interprets Borges to imply that the statue to “Falucho” is “imaginary” because it no longer exists. This, of course, is patently incorrect. Kate Jenckes, *Reading Borges After Benjamin: Allegory, Afterlife, and the Writing of History* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 85.

⁷ Bernardo Kordon, *Candombe: contribución al estudio de la raza negra en el Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Continente, 1938). Later, in a supplement of *Todo es Historia*, Kordon also documented the history of the black race in Argentina and to a lesser extent Uruguay. Bernardo Kordon, “La raza negra en el Río de la Plata.” *Todo es Historia en América y el Mundo*, supplement no. 7 (1969).

continued interest in socially remembering blacks in the country.⁸ Sometime in the second part of the 1940s, Borges's contemporary, the distinguished Argentine socialist writer and literary critic Alvaro Yunque gave a series of public talks on national and Latin-American poetry and literature in Buenos Aires that borrowed much from historians like Kordon and Lanuza. In one of his chats, Yunque spoke at length on black poetry and poets from colonial times to the nineteenth century, starting with a general exploration of the history of the black race in the Americas, including the slave trade and slavery. Focusing on blacks in his own country, Yunque asks his audience to remember the blacks who fought the British in 1806-1807 and against the Spanish during the wars of independence. Then, showing either an appalling historical ignorance for a man of his learning or a deep-seated ideological prejudice, he states that only one black man, Lorenzo Barcala, rose to the rank of colonel, while the rest, including "Falucho," died as cannon fodder in nationalist wars. Yunque nonetheless further revealed the enduring national ideology of the vanishing "Other," shared by fellow progressives as well as some conservatives of his time. He also proclaims, without a hint of romanticism or nostalgia: "The black shared with the gaucho the fortune of those classes which lack class consciousness: They fought and died to forge a nation for their [white] masters."⁹

Regardless of his socialist rhetoric, the references to the dead and vanished Afro-

⁸ José Luis Lanuza, *Morenada* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1946).

⁹ Álvaro Yunque, "Atisbos sobre la poesía negra. Conferencia pronunciada por Álvaro Yunque en la década de 1940—Buenos Aires." "Álvaro Yunque, escritor argentino—1889/1982." <http://www.alvaroyunque.com.ar/ensayos/alvaro-yunque-atisbos-sobre-poesia-negra.html>. In the original: "El moreno compartió con el gaucho el destino de las clases que no tienen conciencia de clase: Peleó y murió para forjarle patria al amo."

Argentine soldiers appeared yet again in Alvaro Yunque's talk, as if to remind his compatriots that their shared white and European national self-image was safe and pure from past (or present) racial contamination.

Other literary productions relating the deeds of "Falucho" and other blacks in the River Plate to younger readers appeared throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, in 1952, Uruguayan folklorist Rubén Carámbula compiled an anthology of literature, songs, and folklore by and about blacks in the Río de la Plata.¹⁰ In 1960, Argentine writer Rodolfo Cuenca published a short story entitled "El negro Falucho."¹¹ Further, in 1965, Jorge Luis Borges once more invoked the memory of Afro-Argentines and "Falucho" specifically in his nostalgic poem "Milonga de los morenos." The famous Argentine poet and novelist captured the sense of self-indulgent nostalgia felt then by many of his generation about the "disappearance" of Afro-Argentines and their culture when he whimsically intoned at the poem's end: "¿A qué ciclo de tambores/y siestas largas se han ido?/Se los ha llevado el tiempo,/El tiempo, que es el olvido" ("Which season of drums/and long siestas have they gone to?/Time has made off with them./That time, that is forgetting"). Several lines earlier, however, Borges invoked the murder of the black gaucho in José Hernández's classic *Martín Fierro* and yet again the imagery of the dead (and therefore disappearing) Afro-Argentine appeared: "Martín Fierro mató un negro/Y es casi como si hubiera/Matado a todos" ("Martín Fierro killed a black man/It is as if/He

¹⁰ Rubén Carámbula, *Negro y tambor: poemas, pregones, danzas y leyendas sobre motivos del folklore afrorioplatense* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Folklórica Americana, 1952).

¹¹ Rodolfo Cuenca, "El negro Falucho." In *Cuentistas argentinos contemporáneos*. Juan Palazzo, comp. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones "El Matadero," 1960).

had killed them all”). Borges, however, then wrote that “Sé de uno/Que murió por la bandera” (“I know of one/Who died for the flag”), clearly bringing to the memory of his readers “Falucho’s” martyrdom and associating it with the inevitable vanishing of the black race in Argentina.¹²

In 1966, the year after Borges published his “Milonga de los morenos,” Rodolfo González Pacheco published another explicitly nostalgic piece, a popular play *Juana y Juan. Cuando aquí había reyes*.¹³ The popular theater performance or *sainete* romanticized the African nations of colonial and early post-colonial Buenos Aires. These were the very Afro-Argentine associations that lent their moral and military support to strongman Juan Manuel de Rosas and other federalist warlords that so terrified and marked the individual and collective memories of the members of the Generation of 1837 over a century earlier.

Just prior to the rise of the mid-1970’s military dictatorship in Argentina, moreover, conservative Catholic novelist Juan Luis Gallardo published his folksome *Los omnibuses del Falucho, “el faluchazo”* (1974). A curious admixture of both futurism and nostalgia, Gallardo sets his novel in the mythical hamlet of “General Falucho,” an intentional misremembrance on the author’s part of the nineteenth-century black hero’s

¹² Jorge Luis Borges, “Milonga para los morenos.” *Obras completas, 1923-1972* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1989), 965-66. Much earlier, in 1927, Borges also wrote about the “milonga” for the Creole journal *Martín Fierro*. “J. L. B.,” “Apunte férvido sobre las tres vidas de la milonga.” *Martín Fierro* 4, 43 (July 15-Aug. 15, 1927), 6. Apparently, however, some have claimed that Borges was a racist and not at all nostalgic for blacks. See, e.g., “Se llama Borges: se le perdona todo... hasta su racismo. Entrevista a Jorge Luis Borges en *Tiempo Nuevo*.” *Revista Extra* 12, 133 (July 1976). <http://sololiteratura.com/bor/borsellamaborges.htm>.

¹³ Rodolfo González Pacheco, *Juana y Juan. Cuando aquí había reyes* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1966).

actual military rank. “General Falucho” is located in the vast expanses of the Argentine Pampas, in some ways symbolizing the “traditional” Argentina of the conservative imaginary, the vast plains then still covered by the *ombú* plant, practically the national foliage. In the backwater town’s plaza resides, of course, a monument to the memory of the black military hero, standing proud and resolute, watching over the vast horizon as if for some imaginary enemy (radical outsiders or foreigners perhaps). Gallardo populates his novel with a diversity of local inhabitants, who symbolize different aspects of what it meant (and means) to be Argentine. The period novelized by the author recalls the rise of far-left ideologies and their concomitant threats to “traditional” ways of life in the small town (standing in for Argentina). Thus, the (all-too Argentine) denizens of “General Falucho” debate all matter of things, especially politics, culture, society, and, of course, soccer. “General Falucho” must also have its own athletic club and soccer team to further and properly commemorate the town’s fabled namesake.¹⁴

Speaking of soccer, a year after Gallardo published his novel, one of Argentina’s most renowned and prolific contemporary authors, Mario “Pacho” O’Donnell, also a former minister of culture, authored a biting piece on the violent sub-culture of Argentine *fútbol* (football) using as his story’s main protagonist a character called “Falucho,” a kind of anti-hero and football hooligan. In O’Donnell’s short story, Antonio Ruiz, “Falucho” to his fellow ruffians, is depicted as an ardent fan of the Buenos-Aires soccer side “Vélez Sarsfield” (this team itself is named after a national founding father).

¹⁴ Juan Luis Gallardo, *Los ombuses del Falucho*, “*el faluchazo*” (Buenos Aires: Ediciones BAESA, 1974).

“Falucho,” like so many other soccer-mad Argentines, lives for his club side, represented by the author as a kind of *patria chica* or “miniature fatherland.” Explicitly invoking the historical memory of the legendary hero of Callao, O’Donnell makes his “Falucho” the “abanderado” or flag bearer of his “barra” or band. One game-day Sunday, “Falucho,” his flag in tow, and his band of fellow “Vélez” hooligans prepare to make their way to the match against archrival “Chacaritas” or “Chaca” at “Vélez’s” stadium, coincidentally, known popularly as “El Fortín” (“The Fort”). After celebrating a “Vélez” goal, violence between the fans of both teams erupts. A group of “Chaca” rowdies yell to attack the “one with the flag.” As Ruiz is assaulted by the “Chaca” supporters, he envelops himself around his side’s colors, a reminder of the “real” “Falucho’s” own alleged patriotic gesture, yelling in pain while looking up at the sky (a transparent allusion to Lucio Correa Morales’s statue of the black martyr). Ruiz cries out, as if with his dying breath: “Viva Vé...”¹⁵ Thus, the parallels between O’Donnell’s fictional Antonio Ruiz and the legendary “Falucho” are unmistakable and a clear case of the author, himself a historian, exploiting historical memory for his own literary and social-commentary purposes.

The advent of military dictatorships in Argentina and Uruguay by the middle 1970s perhaps slowed down but certainly did not curtail the cultural production of sites of collective memory about Afro-Platines.¹⁶ For example, Marcos de Estrada’s already

¹⁵ Pacho O’Donnell, “Falucho.” *Cuentos completos* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2010), 201-47. Also in Roberto Fontanarossa, comp., *Cuentos de fútbol argentino*, 3rd reprinting (Buenos Aires: Extra Alfaguara, 2006), 147-84.

¹⁶ Thus, in 1976, George Reid Andrews recalled attending in Buenos Aires a sung and spoken musical review of Afro-Argentine history, “Calugan Andumba ... y la Ñapa,” by two mixed-race sisters, Susana and Carmen Platero, the descendants of the first black notary public in Argentina,

cited collection of brief biographies of prominent nineteenth- and early- twentieth-century Afro-Argentines, including both Barcala and “Falucho,” was published in 1979, apparently, at least as intimated by Solomianski, with the support or approval of the country’s ruling military junta. Late that same year, the Sunday supplement of *La Prensa* published on December 9 an article by historian and Afro-Argentine expert Néstor Ortiz Oderigo on the African choreography of the tango, which was accompanied by a few illustrations from Pedro Figari. The article is basically a digest of Vicente Rossi’s much earlier study on the black contributions to the River Plate’s musical culture.¹⁷ Furthermore, in November 1980, the widely circulated history magazine *Todo es Historia* devoted an entire issue to “Nuestros negros” (“Our Blacks”), featuring articles on the Afro-centric art of Pedro Figari, the Afro-Argentine nations and their *candombe* dances, and other aspects of Afro-Argentine history and culture. The issue is clearly intended to remind its readers of the past presence and importance of Afro-Argentines, with the emphasis clearly resting on the past presence of blacks.¹⁸

The return of democracy to the region by the early 1980s opened up national debates over war crimes, state acts of terrorism during the so-called “Dirty War” under the military dictatorship, and national reconciliation. It also brought about public

Tomás B. Platero. George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 218.

¹⁷ Néstor Ortiz Oderigo, “Africanismos en la coreografía del tango.” *La Prensa*, Sunday supplement, Dec. 9, 1979, 6.

¹⁸ “Nuestros negros.” *Todo es Historia* 13, 162, Special issue (Nov. 1980). The phrase “nuestros negros” is at best ambiguous. It could be sincerely affectionate or downright paternalistic and patronizing. The late Félix Luna, then the distinguished editor of *Todo es Historia*, perhaps intended the ambiguity.

discourses about the past and historical memory more generally. Both Afro-Platine scholarship and activism increased since then. In 1987, for example, Narciso Binayán Carmona published a concise article in *Todo es Historia* on what the African race contributed to Creole culture in Argentina, thereby reminding his compatriots that every definition of what it means to be Argentine implies an appreciation of the country's black heritage as well.¹⁹ Subsequently, the 1990s and 2000s witnessed an explosion of both research on Afro-Platines and political activism by Afro organizations in the region, often mutually reinforcing each other. As already alluded to, in both Argentina and Uruguay since the 1990s, Afro-centric organizations have also appealed to historical memory to push for legal rights and an end to discrimination, thereby challenging and mitigating both their social marginalization and “invisibility” in those countries. For example, a renaissance of interest in Afro-Uruguayan heritage and black Uruguayan social and political activism have combined to once more thrust “Ansina” into the national consciousness, evidencing the “political lives” of even the long dead.²⁰ In 1993, therefore, historian Diego Bracco allegedly rediscovered and published “Ansina’s” memoirs. Bracco swears by the authenticity of his research and manuscript sources to

¹⁹ Narciso Binayán Carmona, “El negro ¿qué le dejó?” *Todo es Historia* 21, 242 (July 1987): 60-64. The late 1980s also witnessed the translation into Spanish and publication in Argentina of George Reid Andrews’s book. George Reid Andrews, *Los afroargentinos de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, 1989).

²⁰ On this theme, consult Katherine Verdery’s *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1999); and for Latin America, the relevant essays in Lyman L. Johnson, ed., *Death, Dismemberment, and Memory: Body Politics in Latin America* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2004).

faithfully pass along to his compatriots the memories of the “fiel ayudante del General Artigas” (“the loyal assistant of General Artigas”) himself.²¹

A far more ambitious attempt to recover the memory of “Ansina” for the struggle for racial justice in Uruguay, however, was the 1996 publication of *Ansina me llaman y Ansina soy...*, by the “Equipo Interdisciplinario de Rescate de la Memoria de Ansina” (“Interdisciplinary Team for the Recovery of the Memory of Ansina”), produced by the Afro-centric Montevideo publisher Rosebud Ediciones. Significantly, the compilers at the head of the interdisciplinary team of scholars and activists dedicate the volume to the black Uruguayan NGO “Organizaciones Mundo Afro.” Journalist and researcher Nelson Caula, for example, writes about “the return of the forgotten *payador*,” Joaquín Lenzina. Caula several times invokes the prodigious memory of “Ansina” and other blacks loyal to Artigas when it comes to faithfully remembering historical events and their beloved homeland. Furthermore, scholars Isabel Izquierdo and Gonzalo Abella explicitly invoke memory as a weapon in the war to unearth and control the past. The majority of the volume, however, is devoted to gathering and annotating folk poems and traditions of and about Afro-Uruguayans that preserve their ancestral memories and identify them with the broader traditions of the Uruguayan nation.²²

Staying in the Banda Oriental, more recently, the aforementioned Nelson Caula has also published two volumes on Artigas in exile in Paraguay and the importance of his black followers. Interestingly, Caula’s tomes were published under the auspices of the

²¹ Diego Bracco, *Memorias de Ansina* (Montevideo: Productora Gráfica Ltda., 1993).

²² Equipo Interdisciplinario de Rescate de la Memoria de Ansina, *Ansina me llaman y Ansina soy...* (Montevideo: Rosebud Ediciones, 1996).

un-official “Organizaciones Mundo Afro” as well as both the municipal governments of Montevideo and the historical Paysandú, thereby reflecting an interest in or among civil society and the state alike to commemorate Uruguay’s black heritage. The word “ñemoñaré” in the titles of both works connotes remembering of the past in Afro-Uruguayan speech. Caula, himself an Afro-centric, numbers his chapters by employing African or Afro-Uruguayan terms and/or numbers and richly documents the rituals, beliefs, customs, and traditions of Afro-Uruguayans in exile with their leader José Gervasio Artigas. The author also devotes a few pages to the house of Afro-Uruguayan soldier and “Ansina” confidant Antonio Ledesma in Paraguay as a possible heritage site, a place where not only Ledesma’s own descendants, but all African-descended peoples in Uruguay and Paraguay can come to remember together and re-experience their ancestors’ past lives and memories.²³

On the other side of the River Plate, even Afro-Brazilian *capoeira* (a black martial art form) societies in Buenos Aires in the late 1990s got together as an act of “black

²³ Nelson Caula, *Artigas ñemoñaré: vida privada de José G. Artigas, las ocho mujeres que amó, sus catorce hijos. Develando su ostracismo y descenencia en Paraguay*, 1st ed. (Montevideo: Rosebud Ediciones, 1999); idem., *Artigas ñemoñaré II: vida privada de José G. Artigas, sus hijos y nietos. Los afro “Artigas Kué” de Paraguay y su imagen perdida de San Baltasar. Los tres gauchos orientales: Ansina, Ledesma y Montevideo* (Montevideo: Rosebud Ediciones, 2004). “Ansina,” regardless of his true identity, remains a corporate symbol of his race and a national myth for many patriotic Uruguayans. For instance, a casual glance at some of the comments on “Ansina” on a few internet sites devoted to his memory are revealing. On November 26, 2009, “Miguel,” a Uruguayan national, wrote the following on the website “Red Filosófica del Uruguay” in response to an article “Al rescate de la memoria de Joaquín Lencina (Ansina)” (“To the Rescue of the Memory of Joaquín Lencina [Ansina]”) by Elaine Castro: “Hello, I don’t think all Uruguayans think that Ansina merely prepared Artigas’s tea, especially in the interior of Uruguay, where both Artigas and Ansina reside in the hearts of all Orientals.” More recently, however, on January 14, 2014, “raul domine,” a sixty-six-year-old Uruguayan living outside his country, complained that he remembered being taught very little in school about “Ansina” by his teachers and blames this on the Ministry of Education. He demands legislation mandating patriotic education in Uruguay’s schools, and concludes that he respects the memory of “Ansina” for his loyalty to Artigas. <http://lavozeoriental.blogspot.com/archive/2009/02/07/homenaje-a->

consciousness to remember Falucho” and other black historical figures in the Americas. These *capoeira* groups convened, appropriately enough, at the “Plaza Falucho” in Palermo to celebrate and remember together the continent’s black heritage.²⁴

Black and white academics, both inside and outside Argentina and Uruguay, have also contributed their talents and research in solidarity with the cause of Afro-descended peoples in the River Plate. Several important works on Afro-Platine themes have thus appeared in print since the late 1990s and throughout the 2000s, including many already cited in this dissertation.²⁵ *Todo es Historia* even devoted two more special issues

dos-soldados-de-artigas.html.

²⁴ Pablo Azcoaga, “Capoeira Angola en Buenos Aires y conciencia negra.” In *Buenos Aires negra. Identidad y cultura*. Leticia Maronese, ed. (Buenos Aires: Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2006), 309, 314-16. As late as 2012, I found a reference to this same group commemorating “Falucho” on the “Day of Black Consciousness” in Argentina. “Capoeira Angola en Argentina.” <http://instructorcamungere.blogspot.com/>. The historical memory of “Falucho” is remembered by other foreign communities as well. Outside of Argentina, “Falucho” has been commemorated by Afro-Peruvians during their own “Day of Afro-Peruvian Culture” (Law No. 28761), on or around June 4. In early June 2009, for instance, the celebration of Afro-Peruvian culture was held at the very “Real Felipe” castle where “Falucho” lost his life. That day, the legend of Antonio Ruiz was recited by the event’s coordinator to those gathered to remember as a community their African roots. “Festival ‘Son y Sabor Afro’ Homenaje a Nicomedes Santa Cruz.” <http://abejita.lacoctelera.net/post/2009/06/02/festival-son-y-sabor-afro.htm>.

²⁵ A very brief and selective list of monograph-length references published since the late 1990s includes, by earliest date of publication: Juan Carlos Coria, *Pasado y presente de los negros en Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Editorial J. A. Roca, 1997); Dina V. Picotti C., *La presencia africana en nuestra identidad* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol, 1998); Alejandro Frigerio, *Cultura negra en el Cono Sur: representaciones en conflicto* (Buenos Aires: Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Económicas de la Univ. Católica Argentina, 2000); Dina V. Picotti, ed., *El negro en la Argentina: presencia y negación* (Buenos Aires: Editores de América Latina, 2001); Schávelzon, *Buenos Aires negra* (2003); Maronese, ed., *Buenos Aires negra* (2006); Gustavo Goldman, *Lucamba. Herencia africana en el tango, 1870-1890* (Montevideo: Perro Andaluz Ediciones, 2008); Gustavo Goldman, comp., *Cultura y sociedad afro-rioplatense* (Montevideo: Perro Andaluz Ediciones, 2008); Miguel A. Rosal, *Africanos y afrodescendientes en el Río de la Plata. Siglos XVIII-XIX* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Dunken, 2009); George Reid Andrews, *Blackness in the White Nation: A History of Afro-Uruguay* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2010). Furthermore, in March 1998, the official history journal of the province of Buenos Aires devoted an entire issue to Afro-Argentines. See *Revista de Historia Bonaerense* 4, 16 (March 1998).

exclusively to Afro-Platine history in the 2000s, the most recent in 2013, featuring articles by experts including Lea Geler, Lourdes Ghidoli, Florencia Guzmán, and Alejandro Frigerio.²⁶

Thus, any kind of systematic and sustained bibliographic investigation will establish that Afro-Platines continued to be subjects of historical, literary, anthropological, musicological, etc., interest throughout the past century and even into the present one. They have certainly not been forgotten by Latin-American and Platine specialists. Much of this scholarship, however, is in Spanish and published outside of the centers of academic hegemony in the United States and Europe. As such, this literature is not always easy to find or retrieve. It nonetheless exists and much of it is of a very good quality. Truly, the historical scholarship of Miguel Angel Rosal, Lea Geler, Florencia Guzmán, and that of some others on Afro-Argentines holds up very well when compared to that of George Reid Andrews, the acknowledged *éminence grise* in the field. Perhaps there exists some kind of bias against works not published in the *lingua franca* (i.e., English) or outside of the United States and Europe, a sort of academic or intellectual imperialism, if you will, one that marginalizes Spanish-language scholarship. Certainly, despite the existence of fine specialists in the field, in many anthologies on Afro themes published in English by leading American or European commercial and academic presses, the history and contributions of blacks in the River Plate are often left out. If

²⁶ “Los esclavos negros. ¿Por qué se extinguieron?” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional*, no. 393 (April 2000). “Los afrodescendientes y la construcción del país.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional*, no. 553 (Aug. 2013). In the year of the bicentennial, furthermore, *Todo es Historia* also featured on the cover the title “Sobre negros: pleitos y herencias.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional*, no. 512 (March 2010).

Afro-Platines are forgotten historiographically by anyone, then, ironically, it is by some North-American and European African Diaspora scholars, who all too often themselves forget the fact that the black presence in the Americas extended from Nova Scotia to Patagonia, and from the Caribbean coast to the Pacific Ocean.

In addition, the coming of the Argentine bicentennial of the May Revolution in 2010 and its immediate aftermath further stimulated interest in the historical memory of Afro-Argentine independence heroes. As was the case for the centennial in 1910, educators were once again at the forefront of promoting the social remembrances of blacks in the Río de la Plata and their sacrifices for national emancipation. For example, in 2009 writer Mario Méndez published a short personal memory about a favorite high-school teacher, “el Negro Figueroa.” The story was intended for the public schools and was first published in a patriotic pedagogical anthology by the Argentine Ministry of Education. In the Méndez story, Figueroa was remembered as both a fine historian and soccer coach, who taught his pupils lessons about the nation’s past as well as how to dribble and shoot a soccer ball. Needless to say, the boys much admired “el Negro Figueroa,” a living embodiment of “Falucho’s” race. Among the stories of the nation’s past the professor related were of course those of his fellow men of color, Juan Bautista Cabral, saving the life of San Martín, and “Falucho,” immolating himself for the flag. Méndez effectively has Professor Figueroa both re-telling to his young charges the “Falucho” tale as first related by Bartolomé Mitre and then reciting Rafael Obligado’s memorable poem. Although allegedly autobiographical, Méndez intended to take his

generation's own memories about black heroes as passed on by a beloved colored mentor and reintroduce them to a new cohort of Argentine schoolchildren.²⁷

Moreover, in 2012, exemplifying a patriotic reconfiguration of primary public schooling in Argentina after the bicentennial, educator Pablo Antonio Corrado compiled an annotated list of national symbols (by month and day) for use in the nation's classrooms. In the anthology's prologue, Corrado invites his fellow Argentine educators to reaffirm "our national cultural identity" by using "such a group of exalted moral and spiritual paradigms of our Patria." In this "exalted" collection of moral exemplars of patriotism, Corrado inevitably invokes the memory of "Falucho." Thus, the reading for February 7, the traditional date of Falucho's martyrdom, retells in outline form Bartolomé Mitre's recollection of Ruiz's immolation at Callao. Therefore, just as patriotic educators highlighted the historical memory about black heroes, especially Cabral and Ruiz, when Argentina approached its first centennial, so, too, did nationalist pedagogues before, during, and after the country's recent bicentennial celebrations.²⁸ Such patriotic festivities, as has already been intimated, represent perfect historical moments to invoke for impressionable children the social remembrances of Afro-Argentines and their sacrifices for the nation, inculcating nationalist values for future generations.

The Argentine military also contributed to the social commemorations of blackness throughout the twentieth century and into the new millennium. As established

²⁷ Mario Méndez, *Falucho*. "Escritores en escuelas." Jimena Tello, illus. (Buenos Aires: Min. de Educación, Sec. de Educación; "Plan de Lectura," 2009).

²⁸ Pablo Antonio Corrado, *Escuela y efemérides desde la cortelera escolar. Anotaciones para citar en el actual mundo de las aulas. Símbolos de la Nación Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Dunken, 2012), 17-18.

in this work, the military represented key sites of both national identity and social memory for Argentines since the mid-nineteenth century, following the end of the civil wars and the consolidation of the nation-state it participated in. The Argentine military honored its black servicemen in several realms of memory, even notably renaming in the early 1930s its school for non-commissioned officers in Buenos Aires after “sargento” Juan Bautista Cabral, the hero of San Lorenzo. In Comodoro Rivadavia, in southern Argentina, moreover, there is also another monument to the “Faluchos” of the armies of independence at the base of the Mechanized Eighth Infantry Battalion, the new name for the former all-black troops of independence, a major part of San Martín’s Army of the Andes that freed first Chile and then Peru from Spanish rule by the 1820s.

In 2001, Argentine congressman Lorenzo Pepe delivered an address before the country’s lower chamber. He praised black soldiers of independence, asking for the nation’s remembrance of and gratitude towards them. Pepe pointed out that these black soldiers lived in an age of intolerance, in a slave society. However, Afro-Argentines loyally served their nation and bravely fought to liberate South America. Representative Pepe specifically addressed the memory of “Falucho” and Colonel Barcala as national heroes worthy of remembrance. The congressman then highlights the “presentness” of historical memory, by declaring that in uncertain times, when the very national identity of its people is threatened by globalization and other outside influences, the nation must take a break and look back towards its past patriots and identify with their sublime acts of heroism. Therefore, Pepe concludes, the nation must rescue its historical memory, and pay overdue and well-earned tribute, to be remembered by future generations, to “the heroism of our illustrious blacks, our beloved blacks, those who knew how to sacrifice

everything for the fatherland, including their lives, for their glory, and that of their descendants and all Argentine society, united as brothers in the common and supreme mission of building the Republic daily.”²⁹ In these stirring lines delivered to his fellow representatives, Deputy Pepe thereby captures national memory’s main task, namely, that of identifying unity for all citizens by remembering those who have sacrificed everything for the fatherland, and thereby represent patriotic models for future generations.

Often cited in this study, furthermore, Colonel Juan Lucio Torres explicitly attempts to recover the memory of Afro-Platine military contributions to the armies of independence. His 2003 survey of black military history in Argentina and other countries of the hemisphere, published by the Argentine Military’s official Historical Institution, served as a stimulus for subsequent national commemorations of Afro-Argentines by the armed forces and government. An explicitly memorialistic tribute by an Argentine army officer, Torres seeks to correct the forgetting of Afro-Argentines and remind the country’s citizens of the patriotism and sacrifices of black soldiers. Colonel Torres repeatedly invokes the “olvido” (“forgetting”) of black soldiers in the Americas and Argentina. Torres, for example, devotes an entire lengthy chapter on black military heroes (and even heroines) of independence struggle and subsequent civil and foreign wars, including both Lorenzo Barcala and Antonio Ruiz. The colonel goes so far as to lament that the monument to Antonio Ruiz has been largely forgotten, even by fellow

²⁹ Lorenzo Pepe, “Los negros de la Revolución de Mayo.” *Bibliopress*, no. 9 (2001). <http://bcnbib.gov.ar/bibliopress/bibliopress9-1.htm>. The speech was originally titled “Homenaje a los soldados negros del Ejército del General Don José de San Martín que lucharon con bravura por la Emancipación Americana,” and was delivered before the federal legislature’s lower chamber on September 13, 2001.

Afro-Argentines, “... como si... ya no hubiera negros en nuestra patria, para recordar y homenjear a sus hermanos” (“... as if... there were no longer blacks in our country, to remember and honor their brethren”).³⁰ Consequently, far from forgetting Afro-Argentines or denying their present existence, Colonel Torres in fact demands an official remembrance of the race’s past contributions and recognition of the continued black presence in Argentina. The colonel also exhorts Afro-Argentines to not forget one of their own ancestors, “Falucho.” As will be adduced shortly, a few years ago the Argentine Congress even proposed federal legislation to have a special day set aside to annually honor Afro-Argentine soldiers at the “Plaza Falucho.”

Colonel Torres also commemorates the bravery and patriotism of Afro-Platine soldiers and emphasizes the national debt owed their sacrifices for the *patria*, including their remembrance in history and other books: “Los gobiernos y las instituciones tienen el deber moral de reconocer y premiar las acciones destacadas realizadas por los conciudadanos [negros] y no deben por acción u omisión, ocultar la verdad.” In short, national governments and their institutions (like public schools) have a moral debt to

³⁰ Colonel Juan Luico Torres, *El soldado negro en la epopeya libertadora argentina. Integrando el Ejército Argentino y de otros países* (Buenos Aires: Inst. de Historia Militar Argentina, 2003), 163. Retired Argentine Division General Dr. Pacífico Luis Britos, then president of the Institute of Argentine Military History, an official site of memory for the national armed forces, wrote the “presentation” for Torres’s book. General Britos openly commended Colonel Torres for his work of historical memory, remembering the black soldiers of the nation. Although not an official military commemoration, Silvia Mallo and Ignacio Telesca edited a recent anthology “*Negros de la patria. Los afrodescendientes en las luchas por la independencia en el antiguo Virreinato del Río de la Plata*” (Buenos Aires: Editorial SB, 2010). The editors recognized that the 2010 bicentennial afforded a unique historical opportunity to re-examine certain issues relating to Afro-Platines, their sacrifices for their respective nations, and the inclusion/exclusion of the black race in both Argentina and Uruguay.

recognize the distinguished actions of their black citizens.³¹ On the eve of the bicentennial, other writers and artists have heeded Colonel Torres's call.

Thus, history books, articles, works of fiction, and even cinema also honoring black military participation in building the nations of Argentina have recently been released, in advance of the region's bicentennial of independence.³² The novel *Carimba. La marca de Africa en nuestra independencia* (2006) builds on the historical military service of black Platines researched by, among others, Colonel Torres, and narrates the fictional story of "Bembé," rebaptized "Francisco," and his fellow black soldiers in the armies of independence. The novel addresses both the hardships of battle and the continued discrimination and sufferings faced by Afro-Platine soldiers after the wars.³³ Further, the bicentennial of the British invasions of the River Plate witnessed the publication of a commemorative issue of the official *Revista Militar*, which features several references to Afro-Argentine participation in the reconquest of Buenos Aires in

³¹ Torres, *El soldado negro en la epopeya libertadora argentina*, 227-30. Colonel Torres cites racial discrimination as the main source of historical forgetting of black soldiers, and in turn advances three propositions to mitigate that oblivion: 1) to make national society aware of the contributions of the black race in the armed forces and for the nation; 2) to have public sites of memory commemorating blacks (e.g., streets, plazas, monuments) restored and revitalized as part of national activities; and 3) to have the heads of national militaries permanently remember in official armed-forces publications and presentations the heroism of black soldiers. Torres, *El soldado negro en la epopeya libertadora argentina*, 228, 230.

³² See, for instance, Mallo and Telesca, eds., "*Negros de la Patria.*"

³³ Pablo Marrero, *Carimba. La marca de Africa en nuestra independencia* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Luxemburg, 2006). Another recent novel, Miguel Rosenzvit, *Fiebre negra*, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires: Novela Planeta, 2008), reimagines the yellow fever epidemics of the end of the 1800s that, along with wars, decimated the black population of Buenos Aires, leading some to conclude its extinction.

1807.³⁴ Although not an official government or military publication, historians Silvia C. Mallo and Ignacio Telesca co-edited a scholarly 2010 anthology of Afro-Platine military history during the wars of independence. The editors openly acknowledge the bicentennial moment as motivating the publication of their work, which features contributions from such renowned experts as Liliana Crespi, Marta Goldberg, Alex Borucki, and Miguel Angel Rosal.³⁵

Also for the bicentennial of independence, even a feature-length film about General José de San Martín and his largely black army's crossing of the Andes was produced in 2010 and premiered in 2011, featuring Argentine film star Rodrigo de la Serna in the title role of San Martín. Lyman L. Johnson has pointed out that movies and television, as well as radio and theater, are ideal media for putting words into the mouths of the long dead, thereby appropriating the past to serve present political or ideological needs.³⁶ The film prominently features black extras as infantry soldiers and Alberto Morle in the role of "Sargento Blanco," an Afro-Argentine officer, who has an interesting and ideologically-loaded conversation with de la Serna's San Martín character about race

³⁴ *Revista Militar: Bicentenario de la Defensa de Buenos Aires 1806-1807—2006-2007*, no. 763 (June-Oct. 2007). <http://www.1884editorial.com.ar/revista.pdf>. In addition, a commemorative publication on the Battle of San Lorenzo for the 195th anniversary of the declaration of independence in the Río de la Plata ran a feature article, handsomely illustrated, about the story of Juan Bautuista Cabral. *A 195 Años de la Declaración de Independencia. Batallas que Hicieron Historia: El Combate de San Lorenzo*. <http://www.soldadosdigital.com/2011/174-febrero/174-pag-26-27.pdf>.

³⁵ Silvia C. Mallo, "Introducción." In "*Negros de la Patria*," 7.

³⁶ Lyman L. Johnson, "Why Dead Bodies Talk: An Introduction." In *Death, Dismemberment, and Memory*, 3. In this case, the present political need addressed by the Ipiña film was the commemoration of the bicentennial of the wars of independence, glorified in *Revolución*.

and nationalism over a game of chess.³⁷ One Afro-centric reviewer claims that Ipiña's movie highlights the allegedly "erased history" of Afro-Argentine troopers."³⁸

Over a decade after Representative Pepe's call to officially commemorate Afro-Argentine war heroes, finally, in late 2012, Argentine senator Roberto Gustavo Basualdo proposed legislation in the upper chamber to have May 2 set aside as the day for the Argentine military to commemorate its black soldiers. The proposed legislation sets out in its second article that the ceremonies of remembrance would take place annually at the "Plaza Falucho." Therefore, "Plaza Falucho" and the eponymous monument residing within it would serve as an official site of remembrance for the Argentine military and entire nation. It is significant, however, that unlike *Deputado* Pepe's speech, which invoked the living descendants of Afro-Argentine soldiers, in Senator Basualdo's proposed law, blacks are nostalgically remembered as largely vanished heroes of the

³⁷ The chess game, of course, symbolizes the ideologically-loaded exchange between the San Martín and black sargeant's characters. One can also speculate about an Afro-Argentine character whose last name means white. This 2011 movie has two separate titles, *San Martín—Cruce de los Andes* and *Revolución—Cruce de los Andes*. It was written and directed by Leandro Ipiña, who in 2008 also directed *San Martín—El combate de San Lorenzo*. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1576458/fullcredits?ref_=tt_cl_sm#cast.

³⁸ Afro-Europe International Blog, "Video: film 'Revolución' highlights erased history of black Argentine soldiers." <http://afroeuropa.blogspot.com/2012/09/video-film-revolucion-highlights-erased.html>. Interestingly, a Hollywood-style western starring 1960's matinee idol Robert Taylor as an Argentine army officer fighting Pampas Indians in the 1870s, *Savage Pampas* (1966), features a black soldier as part of Captain Martín's (Taylor's) platoon. In one scene with a great deal of historical verisimilitude, the Afro-Argentine soldier is depicted as a *payador*, playing Creole folk-music on his guitar as the gaucho soldiers dance with some peasant and mixed-race women. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0060942/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1. The movie was a low-budget remake of a 1945 or 1946 black-and-white Argentine epic *Pampas bárbara*, which was based on the novel of the same title by Homero Manzi and Petit de Murat. <http://www.tcm.turner.com/this-month/article/294345|294692/Savage-Pampas.html>. For more on Afro-Argentines in cinema, see Currie Thompson, "From the Margins to the Margins: The Representation of Blacks in Classic Argentine Cinema." *Post Script: Essays in Film and the Humanities* 29, 1 (Fall 2009): 2-13.

nation.³⁹ In some way, then, one can make the case that Colonel Juan Lucio Torres achieved his goal of having the historical memory of black Argentine soldiers celebrated as patriotic models by all his compatriots, present and future.

While Afro-Argentines today may not fully commemorate the memories of historical black military heroes, perhaps as a conscious political stance against the recent repressive and reactionary roles of the military, this does not suggest, however, that they suffer from a historical amnesia of their own heritage and sacrifices for their country. Afro-centric organizations in the River Plate are progressively seeking to become both the subjects and objects of their own social memories, which often run counter to the official national narratives of the past. As early as November 20, 2004, in the traditional black neighborhood of San Telmo in Buenos Aires, for instance, a festival of folkloric song, music, and dance was held to mark the “Day of Black Consciousness.” The event’s organizers explicitly appealed to historical memory and the black community’s struggles against slavery and lingering racism in Argentina. Ironically, one of the principal sponsors of the Afro-centric festival was the municipal government of the city of Buenos Aires. Contrary to the above observation by Colonel Torres, then, several event

³⁹ Senado de la Nación, Secretaría Parlamentaria, Dirección General de Publicaciones, “Proyecto de Ley (S-3616/12). Proyecto de ley disponiendo el homenaje del Ejército Argentino a los soldados de raza negra, por su contribución a la nación Argentina, el 2 de mayo de cada año.” Another Senate legislation project for late 2012 proposes to continue to commemorate November 2 as the “Day of the Fallen for the Fatherland” (“Día de los Muertos por la Patria”). In the legislation’s text, Senator Ada Iturrez de Cappellini invokes the memory of “Sargeant Juan Bautista Cabral, who heroically gave his life to defend General San Martín at the Battle of San Lorenzo (“Sargento Juan Bautista Cabral, quien dio su vida heroicamente por defender al General San Martín en la Batalla de san Lorenzo, en el año 1813”). Senado de la Nación, Secretaría Parlamentaria, Dirección General de Publicaciones, “Proyecto de Ley (S-1922/12). El Senado de la Nación DECLARA Su adhesión al ‘Día de los Muertos por la Patria,’ que se celebra, en nuestro país el 2 de noviembre de cada año.”

participants in fact made open references to “Falucho” and his monument in “Plaza Italia,” where past reunions of black civic groups, for example the Brazilian *capoeira* societies mentioned before, had taken place in the recent past. The celebrations concluded with a call to solidarity among all oppressed peoples and for “peace” and “liberty.”⁴⁰ As a way to further contribute to the debates about identity surrounding the bicentennial, moreover, between February 9 and 15, 2010, the “National Institute against Discrimination, Racism and Xenophobia” sponsored a series of public cultural events and lectures in downtown Buenos Aires. Afro groups from throughout South America participated in cultural performances and panel discussions in an attempt to mitigate the “invisibility of African History at the gates of the Bicentennial,” as per event transcripts.⁴¹

More officially, thanks to the efforts of Afro-Argentines and their supporters of all walks of life and races, on April 24, 2013, National Law No. 26.852 declared November 8 as the “Day of the Afro-Argentines and of Afro Culture.” Significantly, the law was passed to commemorate the historical memory of an Afro-Argentine heroine of independence, María Remedios del Valle, who fought against both the British and Spaniards, finally achieving the rank of sergeant major in the army after the wars of independence. She was also remembered as a “Madre de la Patria” (“Mother of the Fatherland”) for assisting Manuel Belgrano after his defeat at the Battle of Ayohúma (November 14, 1813). The text of the legislation provides a lengthy remembrance of

⁴⁰ “Día de la Conciencia Negra.” *San Telmo y sus alrededores*, no. 73 (Nov. 2004).

⁴¹ Mir Irie, “African Days in Argentina.” http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=294642374650.

María Remedios del Valle's long and heroic military career, pointing out that both a street and a public school in Buenos Aires city are currently named in her memory. Article Three of the legislation mandates that the country's public schools incorporate into their curricula at all levels "the commemoration of said day ["Day of the Afro-Argentines and of Afro Culture"] and the promotion of Afro culture." Article Four, in addition, commands the nation's Secretary of Culture to further promote public policies to "visibilize" and "support Afro culture in its different capacities."⁴² In accordance with this last article, then, the Secretary of Culture of the Nation has published an official website dedicated exclusively to "Afrodescendants," which includes a useful link for information on and references to realms of Afro-Argentine memory and Afro heritage sites in the country.⁴³ Hence, increasingly, Afro-Argentines are slowly once more receiving official recognition and remembrance from the government and its leaders. No longer just objects of official nostalgia only, however, Afro-Argentines are demanding inclusion in the nation and imaginary on their own terms.

Conclusion

Commemorating in 2012 the 202nd anniversary of Argentine independence, President Cristina Fernández recently reminded her compatriots of the heroism and black ancestry of both Juan Bautista Cabral and "Falucho." Reflecting on her recent state visit

⁴² I have in my archive a copy of the complete legislation as it appeared in the *Boletín Oficial* of May 22, 2013 (ID infojus LNS0005840). Summaries are available online. "Día Nacional de los/as Afroargentinos/as y de la Cultura Afro." Infojus. Sistema argentino de información jurídica. Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos, Presidencia de la Nación. <http://infojus.gov.ar/>.

⁴³ "Afrodescendientes." Secretaría de Cultura de la Nación. <http://cultura.gob.ar/acciones/afrodescendientes/>.

to Angola, President Fernández told her compatriots “El sargento Cabral, cuyo nombre lleva la Escuela de Suboficiales del Ejército Argentino, era hijo de una esclava negra, cosas celosamente ocultadas por la historiografía oficial, es que cómo iba a ser hijo de una negra el que salvó a San Martín, tiene que ser rubio y de ojos celestes, no puede ser negro.” In effect, President Fernández incorrectly (and sarcastically) claims that the official historiography ignores the memory of Cabral and his race, while she correctly observes that it was a black man, not a white one, who saved the life of Argentina’s foremost national hero. President Cristina Fernández in her May 2012 speech also invoked, as quoted in the above epigram, the historical memory of the martyrdom of “Falucho” at Callao.⁴⁴

In the 1990 movie *The Two Jakes*, Jack Nicholson’s character suggested “The past never goes away.” Indeed, the past is always present as memory. Memory, whether individual or collective, provides a sense of not only the past but also the present. As such, it defines both personal and social identities in space and time, here and now. Social remembrances do not simply exist in the past somewhere, no matter how much we as historians feel at home in historical time. Commemorations form the fabric of our

⁴⁴ Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, “Commemoración de la Revolución de Mayo en Bariloche: palabras de la presidenta de la nación.” Casada Rosada, Presidencia de la Nación. <http://www.casarosada.gov.ar/component/content/article/25882>. Contrast President Fernández’s speech with Carlos Saúl Menem’s opinion, who, during a 1996 diplomatic visit to the United States, responded to a press question that: “Black people do not exist in Argentina, Brazil has that problem.” ¿Hay negros en Argentina?” *BBC Mundo*, March 16, 2007. In fact, both the present and the past Argentine heads of state betray their own prejudices and ideologies in their attitudes toward Afro-Argentines. Fernández is wrong to say that Afro-Argentines are forgotten by the official historiography, while Menem is also incorrect to suggest that blacks in Argentina should be forgotten or are non-existent and somehow a problem. Taken together, presidents Fernández and Menem’s comments on black Argentines set out extreme positions, which this dissertation seeks to challenge and navigate between.

present as well. Consequently, scholars of memory should endeavor to trace social remembrances from the past into the present to fully understand how they have shaped group solidarities and identities over time. While complex, contested, and never linear in their narrative arch, documenting present memories of the past represents a vital task for the historian or other students of social memory.

Thus, this chapter has endeavored to update social commemorations of blackness in the Río de la Plata, bringing my dissertation's narrative closer to our own time. In doing so, I have attempted to demonstrate that historical remembrances of Afro-Platines have continued unabated throughout the second half of the past century until the present, protestation to the contrary by some scholars notwithstanding. These social commemorations have taken on different material or symbolic forms and have been generated by different sectors of Argentine and Uruguayan society over the last decades of the twentieth and the first decade or so of the present century. Afro-Platine heroes such as Cabral and "Falucho" have continued to receive commemorations well into this century from both official and civil society sectors. As was true for Argentina's first centennial in 1910, for its bicentennial, black Argentine heroes were once more honored in public ceremonies and in school books by the national government and its leaders. The patriotic and nostalgic mood precipitated by the bicentennial of independence in the River Plate culminated in national legislation to officially commemorate the sacrifices of black soldiers for the nation. However, it would be erroneous to believe that Afro-Platines have themselves been silent on the matter of their history and heritage. On the contrary, blacks in Argentina and Uruguay have appealed to the historical memory about "Ansina" and "Falucho" to demand full civil rights and end their social marginalization

in those countries. As such, Afro-descendants in the River Plate are no longer satisfied being the paternalistic objects of nostalgia and social commemoration; instead, they are actively striving for their own agency and subjectivity in determining how they are socially represented and remembered within and among their respective national “memory makers” and in realms of memory.

CONCLUSION

“Recordando a los afrorioplatenses”: Afro-Platines and Social Remembrances

“Look carefully at most Argentinian history books and you will find nothing on the presence and participation of Africans and their descendants in the formation of the nation.... Nothing except ‘forgetting’.” Lucía Dominga Molina and Mario Luis López, “Afro-Argentines: ‘Forgotten’ and ‘Disappeared’ – Yet Still Present.” In *African Roots/American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas*. Sheila S. Walker, ed. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 332.

Challenging regnant academic consensus in the field of Afro-Platine studies, my work establishes that Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans have not been forgotten by national elites. George Reid Andrews, the major authority on the history of Afro-Latin America, asserts that Afro-Argentines were systematically forgotten as part of a cultural strategy by especially members of the Generation of 1837 and later by some of the more liberal thinkers among the Generation of 1880 to “whiten” Argentina’s history and national identity. He opines that the “disappearance” of Afro-Argentines “from the pages

of Argentine history” was intended to cultivate “the myth of a white Argentina.”⁴⁵

Distinguished Argentine historian Marta Goldberg elaborates on what she perceives is the exclusion of blacks in Argentina from national history, characterizing it as “subconscious historical forgetting” and proof of the “frailty of Argentine historical memory” (“fragilidad de la memoria histórica argentina”).⁴⁶ One of Andrews’s former students, Alejandro Solomianski, in his study of Argentine negritude also concludes that Afro-Argentines are invisible in the twenty-first century and were totally forgotten throughout the twentieth.⁴⁷ However, attentive to at least some of the nuances of the historical process, Robert J. Cottrol has pointed out the paradox of Afro-Argentines in the nation’s cultural memory, simultaneously subjects of nineteenth-century racist ideology of

⁴⁵ George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 112. Along the same lines, Lea Geler asserts that “... the idea of the ‘disappearance’ of blacks can be considered part of the foundational myth of a white and European Argentine nation.” Lea Geler, *Andares negros, caminos blancos. Afroporteños, estado y nación: Argentina a fines del siglo XIX* (Rosario, Argentina: Prohistoria; TEIAA, 2010), 18. As early as 1947, Argentine intellectual José Luis Lanuza commented on the cultural forgetting of Afro-Argentines: “Pero nuestros negros casi no nos han dejado ni su recuerdo. Nuestra historia parece complacerse en olvidarlos, en evitarlos” (“But our blacks have barely left us even a memory of themselves. Our national history seems inclined to forget or evade them”). José Luis Lanuza, “El negro en la historia argentina.” *Revista de América* 1 (1947): 361.

⁴⁶ Marta B. Goldberg, “Nuestros negros: ¿desaparecidos o ignorados?” In *Lo mejor de Todo es Historia. 1. El sur del Nuevo Mundo*. Félix Luna, dir. (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2002), 142.

⁴⁷ Alejandro Solomianski, *Identidades secretas: la negritud argentina* (Rosario, Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 2003), 16. Solomianski suggests elsewhere that Afro-Argentine invisibility and historical “forgetting” constitute acts of “discursive genocide” on the part of national elites. See also his “Desmemorias y genocidios discursivos: cultura letrada afroargentina de fines del siglo XIX.” *PALARA* 7 (Fall 2003): 26-42. Argentine historical archeologist Daniel Schávelzon has also recently written about “la pérdida de la memoria” (“loss of memory”) about all things Afro in Argentina during the course of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Daniel Schávelzon, *Buenos Aires negra. Arqueología histórica de una ciudad silenciada* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2003), 29, 36-40.

nationhood aiming at their marginalization from the country's imaginary but also the objects of national interest in the twentieth century.⁴⁸

Andrews and even Cottrol are certainly correct in emphasizing the role of intellectual elites in constructing “whitened” discourses of race and nation in Argentina, as happened elsewhere in Latin America during this time, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁹ My dissertation nevertheless argues that blacks were also the objects of national nostalgia. The nostalgia took the form of commemoration of Afro-Argentine cultural and military contributions to the nation among different sectors of society long before the twentieth century, and beyond as well.

My dissertation, “¡Pobres negros!,” has thus traced the contingent subject of Afro-Platine historical commemoration or remembrances by cultural, social, and political elites, from the first half of the nineteenth century to the first few decades of twentieth, and in some cases beyond. The dissertation explains **why** at certain times Afro-Platines have been socially remembered and represented as cultural primitives and at others

⁴⁸ Robert J. Cottrol, “Beyond Invisibility: Afro-Argentines in Their Nation’s Culture and Memory.” *Latin American Research Review* 42, 1 (Feb. 2007): 139-56. See also Astrid Windus, “De parias a patriotas. Afroporteños, identidad y nación en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX.” *Memoria y Sociedad*, no. 15 (Nov. 2003): 207-17.

⁴⁹ For a challenge of the Andrews thesis, consult Lowell Gudmundson, “Black Into White in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America: Afro-American Assimilation in Argentina and Costa Rica.” *Slavery and Abolition* 5, 1 (May 1984): 309-29. Gudmundson contradicts Andrews, concluding that the assimilation of Afro-Argentines had been nearly completed long before the men of ’37 came into actual political power. If Gudmundson is correct, then the assimilation of Afro-Argentines would account for both their putative disappearance and the consequent nostalgia surrounding them as early as the middle of the 1800s. On the social construction of ideologies of race and nation in nineteenth-century Latin America, see Winthrop R. Wright, *Café con Leche: Race, Class, and National Image in Venezuela*, 1st ed. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1990); Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*, 2nd ed. (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1993); Peter Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1993).

recalled nostalgically as defenders of the nation and patriots.⁵⁰ On the one hand, for cultural nation-builders among the Generation of 1837, such as Esteban Echevería, José Mármol, and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, among others, blacks were generally represented as embodying their nation's social, political, and cultural backwardness or barbarism, and later remembered as giving their support to federalist strongmen, in particular Buenos Aires *caudillo* Juan Manuel de Rosas. On the other hand, during the fin de siècle, for the many Creole nationalists and conservatives among the later Generation of 1880, Afro-Platines were reimagined and nostalgically remembered as “hijos de la patria,” loyal sons of the fatherland, over against foreign immigrants and their alien cosmopolitanism and radical socio-political ideologies, particularly European anarchism. For these nationalist thinkers and artists, then, long forgotten (or, alternatively, even embraced) were the past associations of blacks with conservative or reactionary political forces that dominated the personal and social memories of the previous generation; rather, what they elected to remember individually and collectively as a social group in their writings and art were the historical memories of blacks as “criollos,” blending their legend and lore, as well as their song and music, for instance,

⁵⁰ I do not mean to suggest that the chronology here is absolute. There clearly were positive remembrances of Afro-Platines before the middle of the 1800s and even among the Generation of 1837 and negative representations of blacks in the River Plate among the Generation of 1880 and subsequent intellectuals. In this regard a chronology is merely a heuristic device. However, I have endeavored to document a clear shift in the tenor and a rise in the volume of commemorations of blackness in Argentina and Uruguay over the course of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries, from largely negative representations of Afro-Platines among early liberal nation builders to nostalgic remembrances by subsequent Creole nationalists by the late nineteenth century.

with that of other (white) Creoles to thus jointly create a truly national folkloric and musical heritage.

Just as important, however, other portions of this study have documented **how** Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans have been represented and remembered by “memory makers” in their respective countries over the course of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries. This work has documented the various ways blacks in the Río de la Plata have been depicted in different realms or sites of social memory as per Pierre Nora and other students of memory cited throughout the dissertation. Thus, for example, Afro-Platine heroes, notably “Ansina,” Juan Bautista Cabral, Lorenzo Barcala, and “Falucho,” were commemorated in music, art, verse, prose, school textbooks and patriotic curricula, symbolic iconography (e.g., stamps, postcards, and medals), and even monuments. Far from forgotten, then, by the late 1800s and early 1900s, on the eve of the region’s centennial celebrations and its attendant patriotism, blacks in the River Plate, Argentina especially, had their praise sung in learned and popular verse by both black and white Creole writers and intellectuals. Examples include Afro-Argentine singer-poet Gabino Ezeiza and the Creole national poet Rafael Obligado, whose ode “El negro Falucho” immortalized the black hero in the individual and collective memories of generations of Argentine schoolchildren. Afro-Platines were also the subject of nostalgic art, best represented in the explicitly wistful black paintings and drawings of early-twentieth-century Uruguayan illustrator and painter Pedro Figari.

Not to be overlooked, moreover, were the historical remembrances of blacks in Argentina and Uruguay by both folklorists like Dr. Pastor Servando Obligado and historians of the stature of Bartolomé Mitre, arguably the single most important Creole

“memory maker” in the River Plate of the nineteenth century. Thanks to their narrative commemorations in history books and treatises on lore and legend, blacks in Argentina were consequently reinserted into the national imaginary as both Creoles and devoted patriots, paragons of both nativism and self-sacrifice for the cause of national emancipation. Thereby, they served as examples of nationalist and traditionalist values and virtues for all Argentines precisely at a time in history when such ideals were very much needed and promoted by social and government elites, especially through public schools and the armed forces, two key sites of both social memory and national identity.

Not surprisingly, therefore, black Argentine and Uruguayan military heroes have been specially venerated in the national memories on both sides of the River Plate. In Uruguay, for instance, “Ansina” or Joaquín Lenzina (Antonio Ledesma?) was historically remembered by his compatriots in song, verse, prose, and national iconography in the first half of the 1900s as the faithful right-hand man of national hero José Gervasio Artigas, whom, along with other Afro-Uruguayans, he followed into exile in Paraguay in the early 1800s. In Argentina, furthermore, “sargento” Juan Bautista Cabral is commemorated annually for his immolation for his commander, José de San Martín, at the Battle of San Lorenzo in 1813. He even had the nation’s school for non-commissioned officers renamed in his honor in the early 1930s.

However, arguably the most celebrated and socially remembered Afro-Platine in the period between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was none other than Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho,” the hero of Callao, at least according to Bartolomé Mitre’s telling. Whether or not “Falucho” ever existed is ultimately unimportant for this dissertation. What is significant is that, beginning in the mid-1800s,

through the figure of Antonio Ruiz, Mitre “nationalized” the sacrifices for the *patria* of all Afro-Argentines. In fact, for Mitre and his contemporaries, “Falucho” was historically remembered as both a symbol of and the generic name for all black Argentine soldiers of independence.⁵¹ Thus, the monument for “Falucho,” inaugurated in 1897, originally placed, symbolically enough, across from the one for General San Martín, was, as several early dedicatory plaques indicated, a commemoration of all black Argentines who fought and died for their nation.

Although much of the specialized literature on Afro-Platines invokes concepts such as historical “amnesia” or “forgetting,” it does so uncritically, without making any reference to the ample scholarship in memory studies discussed in Chapter two, and uses these terms in a frankly colloquial manner.⁵² This evidences a certain theoretical myopia

⁵¹ Ernesto Quiroga Micheo, “Mitre tenía razón. La verdad sobre Falucho.” *Todo es Historia: Registra la Memoria Nacional* 30, 354 (Jan. 1997): 75. On the generic use of “Falucho” for black soldiers, see the story on military widow “Juana López de Méndez,” *La Nación*, June 4, 1910, 10. In the early 1960s, Fernando González Arrili remembered that “[c]ien, doscientos, mil *Faluchos* formaron en las filas de los ejércitos emancipadores” (“one hundred, two hundred, a thousand *Faluchos* served the armies of independence”). González Arrili, however, does signal out Antonio Ruiz, “who lives in the memory of Argentines” (“vive en el recuerdo de los argentinos”). Fernando González Arrili, “El coronel de ‘pelo matoso’ y nariz aplastada.” *La Prensa*, May 20, 1962, 2.

⁵² An exception here is the groundbreaking research on subalterns during the regime of Juan Manuel de Rosas in mid-1800’s Buenos Aires by Ricardo D. Salvatore, especially in his theoretically sophisticated monograph *Wandering Paysanos: State Order and Subaltern Experience in Buenos Aires during the Rosas Era* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003). If Andrews uses memory colloquially and Salvatore more critically, then Oscar Chamosa takes it as a given, without need to problematize the concept. For Chamosa, then, Afro-Argentines simply “preserve the memory of African ways, to please the ancestors,” without any further theoretical ado. Oscar Chamosa, “‘To Honor the Ashes of Their Fathers’: The Rise and Crisis of African Nations in the Post-Independence State of Buenos Aires, 1820-1860.” *The Americas* 59, 3 (Jan. 2003): 347-78, the quote appears on page 378. These well-regarded academics thus represent three distinct points in the development of the historiography of collective memory about Afro-Argentines. Andrews represents an early, largely un-theoretical stage, whereas Salvatore actually grapples with theories about social memory and its applications in the context of subaltern experience in nineteenth-century Argentina. For Chamosa, it seems that he takes for granted that

on the part of some scholars of the black experience in the River Plate (and the African Diaspora to the Americas more generally) and perhaps blinds them to the existence of many sites of collective or cultural memory on or about Afro-Platines, thereby solidifying or reinforcing in their individual and collective judgements the notion that blacks in the Río de la Plata are largely forgotten.⁵³ Before moving on, however, it is pertinent to remind the reader about the most important theoretical perspectives on social or collective memory adduced throughout my dissertation.

While this is a dissertation purportedly about social or collective memory, I have not belabored the point of overly determining or defining these concepts. A large and specialized compilation of academic titles, many of which are cited throughout this study and in the select bibliography, will suffice to establish the intellectual legitimacy of the field of social memory.⁵⁴ However, let me be clear that I do not hold that collective memory exists in any reified or Durkheimian manner, as something with an agency of its own or that resides independently of or above and beyond personal or individual recollections of the past. Societies or groups do not remember; individuals do. And, yet,

his readers will be both familiar with concepts about collective memory and will uncritically accept them.

⁵³ Rather than blame the exclusivist racial politics of a hegemonic state for the “whitewashing” or “forgetting” of blacks in Latin America in general, African Diaspora specialists themselves are often equally guilty of overlooking the black presence in the River Plate in particular. Examples abound. For instance, recently, Kendahl Radcliffe et al. look at black Diasporic intellectuals and their interconnections. Kendahl Radcliffe et al., eds., *Anywhere but Here: Black Intellectuals in the Atlantic World and Beyond* (Jackson, MS: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2015). Despite the fine work of scholars like Lea Geler on Afro-Argentine thinkers, no mention of them is made in the Radcliffe et al. anthology.

⁵⁴ For a highly dismissive work, however, consult Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, “Collective Memory—What is it?” *History and Memory* 8, 1 (Spring-Summer 1996): 30-50.

no individual is an island unto him/herself. Individuals are always constituted socially and embedded in social relationships of all kinds that make up their respective *habitus*. Articulating this very point, John R. Gillis intimates: "... 'memory work' is ... embedded in complex class, gender and power relations that determine what is remembered (or forgotten), by whom, and for what end."⁵⁵ The main insight of contemporary social memory, beginning with Maurice Halbwachs, is that personal memories are always socially framed. While societies themselves do not have memory or remember per se, they do nonetheless possess institutions such as libraries, museums, and archives that are specifically charged with and designed to preserve and transmit historical memories across time. Erika Apfelbaum astutely asserts that "... no society can develop without a ... collective memory."⁵⁶

Therefore, collective or social memories are embedded and embodied practices, performances, discourses, etc., through which groups or even entire communities manifest deeply held convictions about themselves and what they believe. In short, shared memories help define group identity at various levels of social organization and complexity. In addition, the cultural transmission of memory demands its articulation or representation, which can happen through both material and non-material means. These "figurations of memory," "regimes of memory," or "realms of memory" mobilize

⁵⁵ John R. Gillis, "Introduction. Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship." In John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989), 3.

⁵⁶ Erika Apfelbaum, "Halbwachs and the Social Properties of Memory." In *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, eds. (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 2010), 285.

complex spatial and/or social metaphors and are thus more than mere “storage space” for cultural representations. Tangible memory objects or artifacts like monuments and memorials anchor social remembrances, moreover. Since at least the end of the nineteenth century in the Atlantic world, monuments and other realms of social memory or icons of remembrance became essential features of the cultural landscape of late modernity. In this regard, the River Plate was no exception.

Generally speaking, and at the grave risk of over-simplifying a vastly heterogenous and interdisciplinary field, one can posit that three paradigms or analytical models have been predominant in the research on social or collective memory in the humanities and social sciences.⁵⁷ First, in the realm of sociology, Maurice Halbwachs’s approach to the “social framework” of collective memory and its transmission has influenced scholars across the social sciences, but especially social anthropologists and other sociologists. For Halbwachs and his successors in the “collective memory” paradigm a key concept is the social frames of memory or group memory. What these scholars in the human sciences focus on is how social conditions or experiences shape collective memory and allow for the developing and transmitting of mnemonic representations of the past that will solidify social cohesion in the present. Second, Paul Ricœur’s “work of memory” paradigm, which represents the philosophical or

⁵⁷ See Chapter two for a more in-depth and systematic survey. Other sources on collective or social memory are adduced throughout the text as well. A key point to reiterate is that the past is not there in memory but must be articulated to become memory. Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995), 3. Collective memory also involves public remembrance. Susan Crane, “Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum.” *History and Theory* 36, 4 (Dec. 1997): 47. Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1993), 60. These insights are essential guides for this dissertation.

psychoanalytical tradition, stresses the obliteration, overvaluing, or labors of memory and remembrance, inferring “good” and “bad” uses of memory, while opposing both the “abuses of memory” (e.g., blocked memory and forced memory) and “forgetting.” Moreover, for Ricoeur there is a “duty of memory” or duty to remember that corresponds to an explicitly “ethico-political” dimension, including the imperative of transmitting a meaning of the past to future generations. The third approach to social memory studies, this one in the tradition of history, is Pierre Nora’s realms or sites of memory paradigm, popularized in his monumental and influential *Realms of Memory* (1997) (*Les lieux de mémoire* [1984]). For Nora and his collaborators, this approach relates places, sites, or realms that social groups strongly identify with and around which especially national memory references or traditions develop, such as monuments or memorials. Nora and his contributors are especially interested in the way the (French) nation is engendered by nostalgic reflection; thus, memory objects such as monuments are simultaneously constructed symbolic and yet tangible elements of the nation’s memorial heritage.⁵⁸

This study has been especially influenced and aided by Maurice Halbwachs’s social frameworks of memory paradigm and Pierre Nora’s sites or realms of collective memory approach. The social makeup, backgrounds, and experiences of many of the writers and other Argentine and Uruguayan thinkers cited in this study demonstrably shaped their attitudes, both as individuals and collective groups or even generations,

⁵⁸ For a fuller treatment of each of these paradigms, and for the complete citations to these authors and their respective works on social or collective memory, see the corresponding notes in Chapter two. Georges Mink and Laure Neumayer, “Introduction.” In *History, Memory and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Memory Games*. Georges Mink and Laure Neumayer, eds. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), proffer a useful summary of social memory studies across the social-science disciplines.

toward and memories about blacks in the River Plate. Thus, the individual traumas experienced by members of the Generation of 1837 under the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas were, nonetheless, communally shared and remembered in their writings. For these early cultural nation-builders, Afro-Argentines were represented and remembered as henchmen for their archenemy, federalist strongman Rosas. Therefore, the elite social background of many of the writers and other figures documented in this dissertation explains their antipathy for lower class people, especially Afro-Argentines, or, alternatively, their patronizing and paternalistic concerns for and memories about them. The commemorations of blacks in the River Plate at the end of the nineteenth century, including or especially the “Falucho” monument, also correspond to Nora’s idea that sites or realms of memory are constructed and promoted by national elites precisely at times of social and political crises.⁵⁹

Indeed, if a historical memory or mythic tale can be combined with or connected to a real geographical site, not just a mnemonic realm, then the remembrance and credibility of the memory/myth are greatly increased. Halbwachs himself was aware of the importance of relating collective memory to a specified site or locale when he wrote about the “legendary topography” of ancient Jerusalem and its mnemonic significance for

⁵⁹ In addition to Nora’s multi-volume compilation, Gillis, ed., *Commemorations* is also useful to understand how monuments and commemorations serve the purpose of nation building. A particularly privileged material site of collective memory in the modern period has been the monument or memorial, especially the war memorial. Stefan Rinke intimates that a monument “is a continually visible interpretation of the past.” Stefan Rinke, “Pillars of the Republic: Early Monuments and the Politics of Memory in the Post-Colonial Americas.” *Iberoamericana* 1, 4 (Dec. 2001): 94-95. Also, Antoine Prost, “Monuments to the Dead.” In *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, vol. 2 (*Traditions*). Pierre Nora, dir. Arthur Goldhammer, trans. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1997), 307-30.

early Christianity.⁶⁰ In reality, a particular geographical location affords a distinct and enduring sense of continuity between past and present and between social memory (or myth) and community. According to Nachman Ben-Yehuda, being able to pinpoint the mythical or mnemonic to a specific geographical locale is one of the most powerful combinations achievable in the social construction of a myth or collective memory.⁶¹ The social construction of the myths of and social memories about both “sargento” Cabral and “Falucho” was facilitated and made more credible by their martyrdoms in specific and identifiable geographical locations (i.e., San Lorenzo and Callao, respectively). This nexus between historical sites and social memory strongly reinforced each other, as well as strengthening a sense of continuity between (their) past and (our) present. Furthermore, in each case, the social memory about black heroes related to and buttressed late-nineteenth-century elite goals of promoting group solidarity or national identity in Argentina and Uruguay, a historical period of intense social and political problems, transitions, and displacements in the River Plate.

The social or historical remembrance of Afro-Platines in the fin de siècle was a response to the perceived menace of foreign immigration and the attendant upheaval of traditional society and the need to foster national sentiment among the populace. In this period, then, blacks were reimagined and nostalgically remembered as loyal citizens and defenders of national honor as opposed to those foreign radicals or anti-patriots. Here,

⁶⁰ See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*. Lewis A. Coser, ed. (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 193-235.

⁶¹ Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *The Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 298.

the work of anthropologist Renato Rosaldo on the “mood of nostalgia” prevalent among elite sectors during times of social and cultural transitions is particularly relevant to an understanding of the Creole penchant for fond memories of blackness in the River Plate at the end of the 1800s and start of the 1900s.⁶² Elites as a group seemingly resorted in late modernity to nostalgia as a therapeutic means to deal with the angst precipitated by the dissolution of traditional social norms and patterns of life concomitant with the modernizing process itself. In the process, they often romanticized the traditional subaltern “Other” in their midst, who was said to be perpetually vanishing or already disappeared, yet another victim of social, economic, or political modernity and its discontents according to these elite sectors.⁶³ The theme of the permanently disappearing or vanishing Afro-descended “Other” in the Río de la Plata was a constant refrain or trope in the writings of mid- to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century cultural elites, whether liberal or conservative, pro-black or anti-black. However remembered, whether nostalgically or not, the disappearance of the black “Other,” especially in Argentina, was at the time a given for liberal and conservative elites alike, a social fact that allowed for or even encouraged nostalgic reflection about them. Conveniently enough, since the remembrances and reimaginings were ideologically selective, Afro-Platines could be inserted into the imagined community without sacrificing the broader narrative about the “whiteness” of the nation.

⁶² Renato Rosaldo, “Imperialist Nostalgia.” *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 107-22.

⁶³ According to Bhabha, “Otherness” is a white, colonialist (and post-colonialist) *episteme* designed to establish both racial and socioeconomic boundaries and the hegemony of “whiteness.” Homi Bhabha, “Remembering Fanon: A foreword.” In Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), xv.

In a way, and at the risk of striking an overly theoretical pose, perhaps one can even make a case that in the River Plate of the nineteenth-century fin de siècle and start of the twentieth, Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans represented a kind of (perpetually) “vanishing mediator.” That is, agents, historical or otherwise, often depicted in the conservative or reactionary imaginary and its cultural manifestations as heroes who sacrifice themselves for some greater, nobler end and then vanish or disappear. Philosophically, the “vanishing mediator” mediates between two opposing ideas or ideologies, or even points in time, and in effect stands momentarily for the transition between them. Once the tension between these opposites has been resolved or replaced somehow, then the mediator disappears, leaving behind a synthesis or concretion of the two opposed concepts or historical moments. In this sense, Afro-Platines can be regarded as mediators between two time periods in the region’s history, an imagined stable traditional (i.e., colonial) past, redolent with nostalgia, and an uncertain and tense present (i.e., nineteenth-century fin de siècle), with all its social, political, and economic problems blamed on foreigners and radicals. Thus, the Afro-Argentine symbolically stood between these two epochal extremes, for a moment bridging them, until such a time as the nation entered a new historical era in the 1930s, coinciding with the fascist rise to power and the gradual reduction in commemorations of blackness. These socio-political developments allowed for the “vanishing” (into the past) of blacks in Argentina by the 1930s, thereby leaving behind (until a recent renaissance) a few myths and increasingly limited collective memories about and commemorations of them.

Psychoanalytically, moreover, the “vanishing mediator” can be understood as serving to boost the ego needs of another. In this sense, blacks in the River Plate allowed for a reactionary nostalgia that served to bolster the national collective ego when it was in dire conditions at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries; Creole elites could selectively encounter, remember, and brag about how kind they were to their blacks and the reciprocal bonds of friendship that thus developed between masters and servants in such an idealized, immediate past. Consequently, Afro-Platines were more than willing to heroically sacrifice themselves for their Creole masters, dying in the latter’s many wars of the nineteenth century, thereby conveniently “vanishing” over the course of the last hundred years so whites could preserve both their own political freedoms and racist ideologies, while effectively marginalizing all subalterns (i.e., gauchos, blacks, Indians, Jews). The “vanishing mediator” represents in practice reactionary desires by elites to feel positive about and get a much-needed ego boost from their encounters and interactions with the “Other,” in this case Afro-Platines, as attested to by the overtly paternalistic memoirs of Sarmiento, Quesada, and others cited in this study.⁶⁴

Regardless, the claims of Andrews and others that blacks have been erased or totally forgotten in Argentina (and Uruguay) for strictly ideological reasons concerning

⁶⁴ I derive this admittedly under-developed, half-digested idea about the “vanishing mediator” from philosopher and psychoanalyst Slavoj Žižek, who himself adopted it from the speculations of Fredric Jameson (apropos Max Weber) and Alain Badiou. See, e.g., Slavoj Žižek, “From Proto-Reality to the Act.” <http://www.lacan.com/zizproto.htm>. Cf., Fredric Jameson, “The Vanishing Mediator: Narrative Structure in Max Weber.” *New German Critique*, no. 1 (Winter 1973): 52-89. Interestingly, even the black American magazine *Ebony* picked up on this theme of the disappeared Afro-Argentine in Era Bell Thompson’s “Argentina: Land of Vanishing Blacks.” *Ebony* 28, 12 (Oct. 1973): 74-85.

particular views on national identity are historically nevertheless overstated and, perhaps, even theoretically underexplained. For instance, note the irony of the following juxtaposed statements in Andrews's book on Afro-Argentines. Writing on the contributions of Afro-Argentines in the military, previously established to have been a key site of the memorialization of blackness in the River Plate, Andrews asseverates that participation in the making of the nation entitled blacks to equality as citizens, which, however, was obviously undesirable in a racist society like post-colonial Argentina. Within one sentence of stating this, however, he admits that few Argentine historians have failed to mention the importance of Afro-Argentine soldiers and their roles in the nation's military history.⁶⁵ Why, one may ask, would the racist historians of a racist state elect to remember the importance of Afro-Argentine soldiers at all, especially when such an acknowledgement would justify black demands for social, political, and economic equality with their white compatriots? This almost sounds like a case of special pleading.

As shown in this dissertation, white and black Creole writers referenced the memory of black Platine military services and sacrifices in their polemics against racial inequality during the late nineteenth century.⁶⁶ While one can make the argument that

⁶⁵ Andrews, *Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*, 114.

⁶⁶ For a study of the joint white and black Creole struggle for racial equality in Argentina at the end of the nineteenth century, see Luis Soler Cañas, "Pardos y morenos en el año 80...." *Revista del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas "Juan Manuel de Rosas,"* no. 23 (1963): 272-309. White and black journalists united over an act of overt discrimination in 1880 to demand justice for the black population of Buenos Aires. Prominent white editor Héctor F. Varela teamed with his friend, the distinguished Afro-Argentine journalist, Froilán P. Bello, to both censure this act of discrimination in their respective newspapers and press the issue of racial equality under the law. Repeatedly, the military sacrifices of Afro-Argentines were invoked in the sympathetic white and black presses alike.

Argentines at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century were hypocritical about race relations in their country, as the black press often did,⁶⁷ to claim that the sacrifices of blacks for the nation were forgotten or that racism was ignored is a bridge too far. In addition, I would contend that to overly insist on the forgetting of Afro-Platines can even unwittingly silence the memorializations of the region's own black communities, past and present.

In addition, the claim of Andrews and his acolytes that blacks in Argentina are largely excluded from national memory is also theoretically underexplained in my opinion. As almost all scholars of memory agree, forgetting and remembrance are reciprocal, i.e., one is impossible without the other. There can therefore be no true forgetting without a modicum of remembrance as well.⁶⁸ In effect, both individual and social memories are two sides of one coin; the obverse represents remembering, while the reverse is forgetting. Hence, one cannot really speak of a “discursive genocide” of Afro-Argentines absent discourses and memories about them to begin with, no matter how negative. As my dissertation has shown, Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans were the

⁶⁷ Thus, in a letter to the editors of the major black newspaper *La Broma* in 1881, the writer laments the hypocrisy of Argentines when it comes to matters of race and the disconnection between the law in theory and the every-day fact of racism. “Genaro,” “Discusión libre.” In *Tinta negra en el gris de ayer. Los afroporteños a través de sus periódicos entre 1873 y 1882*. Norberto Pablo Cirio, comp. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Teseo, 2009), 203. “Genaro” ironically asks: “... does the Constitution in pretice not uphold anything when it comes to the rights of the black, the pariah of South America?” (“... si en la práctica no se observa para nada la Constitución cuando se trata de los derecho del negro, del paria sud-americano?”).

⁶⁸ Renowned memory specialist Luisa Passerini affirms the reciprocity of remembrance and forgetting, stating that “[t]here is no ‘work of memory’ without a corresponding ‘work of forgetting’.” Quoted in Naomi Norquay, “Identity and Forgetting.” *The Oral History Review* 26, 1 (Winter-Spring 1999): 1. The “Frankfurt School’s” Theodor Adorno once observed that “every [act of] reification is [an act of] forgetting.” Quoted in Terdiman, *Present Past*, 13.

objects of considerable commemoration or social remembrances from at least the middle of the nineteenth century until well into the twentieth (and beyond) by different sectors of Platine society.

In fact, the roles of blacks in the defense of the River Plate have been recognized since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Recall that as early as 1807, after the final Creole repulsion of the British invaders of the River Plate, Afro-Argentine defenders of the city of Buenos Aires were commemorated in a poem by Argentine priest and poet Pantaleón Rivarola and feted during public celebrations. Some black slaves were even freed as a reward for their heroism and patriotism. Moreover, in 1836, the *Gaceta Mercantil* of Buenos Aires published a moving funeral ode to the memory of Afro-Argentine Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Macedonio Barbarín, one of the black heroes of the defense of Buenos Aires in 1807.⁶⁹ And what of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's remembrances and descriptions of the black Colonel Lorenzo Barcala, that paragon of manliness, Unitarian virtue, and even "civilization," in his 1845 national classic *Facundo*? Would it not have been more ideologically convenient for this quintessential nineteenth-century liberal and "racist" to either forget or at least ignore "the illustrious black man" and his many military accomplishments? Alternatively, Sarmiento could have chosen to lump Barcala in with the blacks depicted in the contemporary canonical fictions of fellow members of the Generation of 1837, especially José Mármol's *Amalia* and Esteban Echeverría's *El matadero*, among the most negative portrayals of Afro-

⁶⁹ The "Canción fúnebre a la sensible muerte del benemérito teniente coronel D. Manuel Barbarín" is quoted in full in Marcos de Estrada, *Argentinos de origen africano. 34 biografías* (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1979), 83-84.

Argentines of that day, which lingered in the corporate memory of anti-federalist liberals well into at least the late nineteenth century. Regardless of Sarmiento's no doubt "politically incorrect" racial sensibilities by modern standards, his ideology in this respect did not preclude remembering some blacks (including, for instance, the black Haitian heroes of independence) as civilized and enlightened fellow Jacobins or liberals. In fact, one can argue that even the negative or stereotypical characterizations of Afro-Argentines in these and other national classics do not necessarily constitute acts of forgetting at all on the part of these early cultural nation builders or subsequent thinkers. They deliberately set out to represent most Afro-Argentines, and thus have them immortalized, as cultural primitives, beings incapable and unworthy of integration into the nation.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, as Argentina's civil wars between federalists and centralists (Unitarians) were ending, the drive for national consolidation gained urgency among government leaders and intellectuals. Arguably the leading architect of the Argentine imagined community in this period was Bartolomé Mitre. Mitre benefitted the most politically from promoting his vision of the nation's history and establishing a pantheon or gallery of national heroes.⁷⁰ In Mitre's telling, his gallery of Argentine celebrities all shared his vision for a unified national state under the leadership of Buenos Aires, with a highly educated and liberal population composed of both natives and foreigners alike. He would promote this vision of Argentina, its heroes, and its populace in his official histories and discourses. Among those memorialized by

⁷⁰ Social memory should not be reduced to mere political ideology. However, it is naïve to believe that ideology does not affect the collective remembrances or commemorations of a given social group. In turn, collective memory can subsequently reinforce the pre-existing political or social beliefs of groups.

Mitre in the second half of the nineteenth century was a black hero of independence, Second Corporal Antonio Ruiz or “Falucho.” According to Mitre’s version of the story, “Falucho” heroically died defending the revolutionary flag rather than rendering honors to the Spanish colors after a rebellion at the fort of Callao in early 1824. This simple narrative facilitated the black hero’s incorporation into national mythology and memory by the end of the 1800s. Needless to say, that the father of the modern Argentine nation-state and its historiography would write and speak so often about “Falucho’s” heroism was an act of commemoration intended to be remembered down the years by his compatriots, culminating in the erection of a national monument in honor of the black hero of Callao in 1897. Thus, according to Lea Geler: “Más allá del monumento en sí, es de destacar que Mitre eligiera a un héroe negro como ejemplo del soldado raso... que muere por la patria” (“Beyond the monument itself, it is worth noting that Mitre chose a black hero as an example of the common soldier... who dies for his nation”).⁷¹

By the end of the nineteenth century and start of the twentieth, Afro-Argentines (as well as mixed-race gauchos) were reinvented, reimagined, and recollected by Creole nationalists of the Generation of 1880 and the following centennial generation as symbols of *argentinidad* or “Argentine-ness.” Whereas earlier nineteenth-century liberals like the Generation of 1837 generally represented blacks and gauchos as allied to the forces of social, political, and cultural backwardness, subsequent nationalists including Leopoldo Lugones, Ricardo Rojas, and Manuel Gálvez, among others, resurrected native subalterns

⁷¹ Lea Geler, “‘¡Pobres negros!’ Algunos apuntes sobre la desaparición de los negros argentinos.” In *Estado, región y poder local en América Latina, siglos XIX-XX. Algunas miradas sobre el estado, el poder y la participación política*. Pilar García Jordán, ed. (Barcelona: Publicaciones i Ediciones de la Univ. de Barcelona, 2006), 128.

(albeit not so much Indians) from their historically despised and socially marginal positions and exalted them, especially the gaucho, to the status of national icons, embodiments of the nation, paragons of patriotic virtue. The Argentine social and political elites no longer needed to fear the militancy of either the gaucho or the black, for them long vanished and at best remembered.

For the Argentine oligarchy, rulers, and military of the late 1800s, the new enemies of the state were the multitude of foreign immigrants, many of them central and eastern European Jews, who brought with them their own tongues, customs, religious beliefs, and, worse of all, often radical ideologies. For example, the anarchist attacks on the eve of Argentina's centennial in 1910, combined with labor militancy, both blamed on foreign agitators, only reinforced the ruling elite's xenophobia and consequent nostalgia for better, quieter days. In this milieu, then, blacks and gauchos, formerly internal enemies for many liberal leaders, were now esteemed by national elites as loyal and faithful, true Argentines as opposed to anti-patriot foreigners, the new external enemies of the state and its leaders. Thus, recall the paternalistic praise of Vicente Quesada in his memoirs for the superiority of the Afro-Argentine over against the "savage" African or Vicente Rossi's remembrances of the musical genius of Afro-Platines and affirmation of their many contributions to the region's musical heritage. Far from forgotten by conservatives and nationalists in the centennial years, blacks in the River Plate were socially remembered nostalgically as beloved (if inferior) members of the nation.⁷² In addition, the bourgeois Buenos-Aires weekly *Caras y Caretas* regularly

⁷² As already pointed out, Afro-Argentines often protested their inferior social status. In both poetry and journalistic prose, black intellectuals and writers denounced their treatment as

featured Afro-Argentines, often in clearly nostalgic or patronizing contexts, during the fin de siècle to encode for their Creole readers simultaneously social remembrances about blacks and their vanishing from the national life.⁷³

In neighboring Uruguay, blacks there have also been historically remembered as defenders of the nation from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. As already addressed, blacks loyal to national hero José Gervasio Artigas, among them the legendary “Ansina,” followed their leader into exile in Paraguay in 1820 and thus have been remembered ever since by patriotic “Orientals” as faithful servants of the nation. The “Immortal Thirty Three,” a number that included two or three Afro-Uruguayans, fought against the Brazilian Empire in the 1820s to reassert Uruguayan sovereignty, lost after the defeat of Artigas’s forces. The “Immortal Thirty Three” have been commemorated in various sites of memory in Uruguay throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Recall that even legendary Afro-Argentine poet and folksinger Gabino Ezeiza dedicated a poem to the “Immortal Thirty Three” at the end of the 1800s.⁷⁴ Like their racial brethren across the River Plate, moreover, blacks in the Banda Oriental or Uruguay have also

“strangers in their own country.” Quoted in Tomás A. Platero, comp., *Piedra libra para nuestros negros. La Broma y otros periódicos de la comunidad afroargentina (1873-1882)* (Buenos Aires: Inst. Histórico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2004), 11. They, too, invoked the historical memory of the sacrifices of their ancestors for the freedom of Argentina, and thereby demanded full juridical equality and civil rights as individual citizens and for their communities as well.

⁷³ Curiously, in an otherwise thorough chapter article, Alejandro Figero overlooks this dimension of the representations of Afro-Argentines in the pages of *Caras y Caretas* between 1900 and 1910. Alejandro Frigerio, “‘Sin otro delito que el color de su piel.’ Imágenes del ‘negro’ en la revista *Caras y Caretas* (1900-1910).” In *Cartografías afrolatinoamericanas. Perspectivas situadas para análisis transfronterizos*. Florencia Guzmán and Lea Geler, eds. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2013), 151-72.

⁷⁴ See also Gabino Ezeiza, “Saludo a Paysandú.” In *El cantar del payador: antología*. Beatriz Seibel, comp. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Sol, 1988), 41.

recorded their own historical memories of their services to the *patria* or nation. For instance, in a touching 1857 letter to the widow of former conservative (White party) President Manuel Oribe, signed by several “hombres de color que habían sido sus soldados” (“men of color who had served under him”), they lament the loss of a brave and staunch patriot and a “father,” “protector,” and “benevolent friend” to the black race in Uruguay. These black Uruguayan veterans go on to identify integrally with their nation, proclaiming that all true “Orientals” will forever guard in their hearts the living memories of their deceased leader and their joint accomplishments for Uruguay.⁷⁵

As Argentina approached its centennial in 1910, black national heroes had thus already been a part of the national imaginary and collective memory for several decades. Not surprisingly, then, Afro-Argentine heroes, especially Cabral and Ruiz, were incorporated into patriotic history textbooks and nationalist curricula of the kind first promoted by Sarmiento, the founder of the nation’s modern public education system, and later by, especially, Ricardo Rojas in his ultra-nationalist program for education reform *La restauración nacionalista* (1909). Among other ideas, Rojas’s plan for the patriotic renewal of public primary and secondary education in Argentina prescribed the pedagogical employment of monuments to national heroes as part of nationalist rituals and ceremonies for schoolchildren. These regular patriotic performances, occurring twice a year for both the May and July high national holidays, were highly ritualized, reiterative, and repetitive affairs, involving religious services, patriotic speeches, music,

⁷⁵ The missive is quoted in full in Jorge Pelfort, *150 años: abolición de la esclavitud en el Uruguay* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Plaza, 1996), 114. This tome is itself a commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the Banda Oriental.

and other nationalist displays, to ensure that students understood and remembered the national values and messages being inculcated. Scholars as diverse as Victor Turner, Erving Goffman, Jacques Derrida, and Paul Connerton have all emphasized the importance of ritual, performances, and repetitiveness as means of socially preserving and transmitting culture, including social memories.⁷⁶ In the Argentina of the centennial, then, nationalist thinkers like Ricardo Rojas understood the importance of and exploited reiterative patriotic ritual and performance as both social sites of memory for future generations and means of patriotic instruction. As seen above, the “Falucho” monument was a prime locus of just such patriotic celebrations in the 1910s and early 1920s.

Afro-Platine heroes like “Falucho” were also officially honored in other ways. For instance, a year before the publication of Rojas’s government-funded study, the provincial authorities of La Pampa, no doubt motivated by the same patriotic wave of euphoria surrounding the centennial, approved legislation for the founding of the small hamlet of “Falucho,” with the official motive: “Homenaje a Antonio Ruiz, que la historia lo recuerda como el ‘Negro Falucho’, mártir de la independencia sudamericana” (“To Honor Antonio Ruiz, historically remembered as the ‘Negro Falucho’, martyr of South-

⁷⁶ It would take a separate study to fully develop this line of thought. Any basic search in a social-science or humanities database will turn up countless books, anthologies, articles, and conference papers by and about these scholars, their ideas, and contributions to the field. Cultural anthropologist Victor Turner and sociologist Erving Goffman have both published extensively on performance and ritual and their roles in the sociogenesis of various phenomena, including nationalism. Postmodern philosopher and literary critic Jacques Derrida, moreover, has stressed the importance of repetition or “iterability,” a continual social process of “doing,” in performativity, as a ritualized production. In memory studies, anthropologist Paul Connerton has especially emphasized ritual and commemorative performances as the main ways societies effectively remember and pass on those reminiscences to future generations.

American independence”).⁷⁷ Less official but no less significant and interesting, “Falucho” also lent his name to social and sports clubs throughout Argentina. One of the oldest to commemorate the independence hero is the “Asociación Atlética Falucho,” founded in 1914, in the western province of Córdoba. This sports club, which has its own grounds and small soccer stadium, competes in the regional Department of Colón league, where it has won an impressive twenty seven local amateur titles.⁷⁸

To reiterate my principal research question: have blacks in the River Plate been forgotten? Most certainly at times they have. One need only recall former President Menem’s words about blacks not being an Argentine problem to catch a glimpse of the historical amnesia surrounding race in Argentina in some quarters of national society. However, to balance the record, one would also have to remember current president Cristina Fernández’s recent invocation of the historical memories of both Cabral and “Falucho” to her compatriots on a high national holiday no less to recognize that Afro-Argentines have also been remembered throughout the last one hundred plus years as champions of the nation. They have been commemorated by grateful national elites in

⁷⁷ FALUCHO—Departamento Realicó.

<http://www.lapampa.gov.ar/AsuntosMunicipales/municip/Faluchof.htm>. The municipality annually commemorates its anniversary and invokes the memory of black hero for whom the town is named. I found online an official provincial government press release with an item about the anniversary of the town in October 2000. There is also a small museum dedicated to the centennial in “Falucho.” <http://www.guiaenlapampa.com.ar/localidadeslapampa.php?id=99>. It would be interesting to see how the town’s own official sites of memory, especially the centennial museum, remember or forget “Falucho.”

⁷⁸ “Asociación Atlética Falucho.” <http://estadioscordobeses.blogspot.com/2009/11/aa-falucho.html>. Interestingly, as already discussed, “Falucho” has a long-standing association with soccer in the Argentine imagination. In addition to the previously-cited *Caras y Caretas* piece on early black Uruguayan soccer stars, recall that “foot-ball” games were also played in the small plaza bearing “Falucho’s” name in the 1910s. It is as if the nationalization of soccer and Afro-Platines ironically proceeded abreast.

countless official and un-official sites of memory. Moreover, of late, Afrodescended peoples in the region are increasingly becoming the agents of their own social memories about their heritages and respective contributions to the nations of the River Plate.

Rather than forgotten historically and/or historiographically, then, African Argentines and Uruguayans, especially after the mid-1800s, have instead been, as per the findings of Lowell Gudmundson, Francisco Morrone, and others, victims of integration or assimilation into national society, persistent problems with racism and discrimination notwithstanding. The never-ending discursive vanishing or disappearance of Afro-Platines, especially Afro-Argentines, recorded so often in the writings and nostalgic recollections of national elites throughout the course of the nineteenth century onwards, in reality attested to the combined demographic and social processes and pressures which favored the biological assimilation and acculturation of the black race in the River Plate. As a result of centuries of miscegenation and acculturation to dominant Creole society, blacks in the Río de la Plata were thought to have vanished with the passing of colonial society and the end to the civil wars. They were represented at times in different social sectors as either unfit for new national life or thought to have conveniently sacrificed themselves for the cause of Creole independence and subsequently national consolidation. Either way, blacks in the region were regarded as a vanishing or totally disappeared race by the late 1800s, notwithstanding social memories and other cultural evidence to the contrary. Afro-Platines themselves, furthermore, often evidenced the “double consciousness” of race and national identity common among blacks in the New World as described by W. E. B. Du Bois and others, thereby further contributing to their putative disappearance or at least integration. Accordingly, José Luis Lanuza wrote in

the middle of the twentieth century that blacks in Argentina “ended up dissolving [into national society] like a bit of cinnamon in a bowl of rice pudding” (“[a]cabaron por disolverse en ella como ... canela en el tazón de arroz con leche”).⁷⁹

To conclude, then, one need not belittle either the historic or the current plight of black peoples in the River Plate by appreciating the various ways, however nostalgic and even patronizing, in which they have been socially remembered by different socio-cultural agents over the course of the last century, and beyond. Recognizing and remembering black participation in the building of Argentina and Uruguay, as well as their many contributions to the respective cultural heritages of both nations, entails nothing less than an acknowledgment that Afro-Argentines and Afro-Uruguayans deserve full equality under the law with their white compatriots. No amount of official commemorations or social memorializations of Afro-Platines should justify forgetting that important truth. While George Reid Andrews and others are right to maintain the continued demographic presence of Afro-Platines, they are, however, incorrect to assert that blacks have been totally excluded from the national histories or removed from the collective memory of the republics of Argentina and Uruguay.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ José Luis Lanuza, *Morenada* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1946), 12.

⁸⁰ The original title of George Reid Andrews’s dissertation is telling, “Forgotten but Not Gone: The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900.” Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Wisconsin at Madison, 1978. I agree with Professor Andrews that the alleged disappearance of Afro-Argentines over the course of the nineteenth century reflects more the biases of a select group of cultural nation builders at the time than it does the actual demographic history of the black race. However, he overstates his case when he intimates a systematic elimination of blacks from national memory. Again, racist wishful thinking, imperilaist nostalgia, and even negative representations of Afro-Argentines by certain intellectuals do not sufficiently carry the burden of proving the black race’s systematic erasure from the historical memory of the entire populace of the country or its national

POSTSCRIPT

The Political Career of “Falucho” in the Near Present

“Esta es la misma bandera a la que se abrazó el negro Falucho antes de verla atada al carro del enemigo.... ¡Mírenla bien! Porque es la misma bandera por la que varios soldados llevan grabados en sus cuerpos las heridas recibidas peleando... contra el terrorismo apátrida que pretendía cambiarla por un trapo rojo.” Lieutenant Colonel Roberto Vega, General Güemes Cavalry Regiment, summoning the memory of “Falucho” to justify the Argentine Military’s counter-terrorism campaign, “Operativo Independencia,” during the mid- to late-1970s. *UPI International News Service Online* (Spanish edition), June 22, 2005.

institutions of memory. In addition, as Gudmundson establishes, the assimilation and acculturation of Afro-Argentines was well underway, if not completed, by the mid-1800s.

Even the dead have had long and active political careers. Katherine Verdery, for instance, has documented the political lives of the dead across the world from ancient times to the present. She has shown both the “political symbolism” of the bodies of the long dead and their historical or social mnemonic uses as well.⁸¹ Lyman L. Johnson and his contributors have also established that in colonial and post-colonial Latin America, martyrs, heroes, and other political figures have remained historically and ideologically relevant well after their deaths. Since colonial times in Latin America, governments and their political enemies have battled to direct or control the ideological symbolism associated with the revered dead, Johnson maintains. Indeed, after independence in the first half of the nineteenth century, the nations of Latin America typically turned to dead heroes like “Falucho” in times of crisis, and the very endurance of the martyr or national hero served as a model for peoples tested by social, political, or economic threats.⁸² Furthermore, John R. Gillis avers that one of the idiosyncracies of the national phase of historical remembrance or commemoration is that it consistently preferred the dead to the living.⁸³

⁸¹ Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1999). See also Maureen Carroll and Jane Rempel, eds., *Living through the Dead: Burial and commemoration in the Classical world* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011).

⁸² Lyman L. Johnson, “Why Dead Bodies Talk: An Introduction.” In *Death, Dismemberment, and Memory: Body Politics in Latin America*. Lyman L. Johnson, ed. (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2004), 5, 8-9, 18.

⁸³ John R. Gillis, “Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship.” In *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. John R. Gillis, ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), 11.

Among those honored dead who in the national era of both Europe and Latin America have endured in the memories of the living, even attaining a kind of cult status,⁸⁴ are soldiers. Military heroes, especially martyrs for the nation, have not only attained iconic status in the national imaginary, but, as a result, have also developed political careers long after their lives ended. At a symbolic level, at least, the fallen soldier became by his death a representative or embodiment of his nation and in his willing sacrifice resided the state's political beliefs (ideology), culture, and heritage.⁸⁵ Hence, when dead soldiers "talk" (i.e., have their names deployed) in the present, unsurprisingly, it is almost always about politics or the political.

At the end of Chapter twelve, for example, I quoted from Argentine President Cristina Fernandez's May 2012 independence-day speech in which she summoned the historical memory of both Juan Bautista Cabral and "Falucho" to buttress support for her multiculturalist agenda in particular and her administration more generally.⁸⁶ In fact, the return of democratic rule to Argentina in 1983 brought to the fore issues of collective memory and national reconciliation following military rule that continue to this day. A veritable memory struggle has broken out in Argentina in the intervening three-plus

⁸⁴ On the veneration of the cult to the dead soldier, see George L. Mosse's *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990). For Mosse, a soldier's death was a sacrifice for his nation; thus, the "cult of the fallen soldier" was transformed into the centerpiece of the civic religion or "religion of nationalism" of nation-states in Europe before and after the World Wars. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 7, 32, 104.

⁸⁵ Michael Sledge, *Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, Bury, and Honor Our Military Dead* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2005), 26. According to Sledge, how governments view the dead bodies of their fallen soldiers indicates how they in turn view their living citizens.

⁸⁶ "Commemoración de la Revolución de Mayo en Bariloche: palabras de la presidenta de la Nación." www.caserosada.gob.ar/component/content/article/25882.

decades about the uses and abuses of collective or social memory in light of the country's recent past and its enduring problems.⁸⁷ Not surprisingly, this conflict over the control of historical memory and the right to speak for the long dead has broken down along ideological lines between the far right and far left of the country's political spectrum. In particular, the conflict over social memory in contemporary Argentina has witnessed a clash, on the one hand, between sectors of civil society, represented by liberals and human-rights groups, and, on the other, the Argentine military and political conservatives. The ideological left and human-rights organizations seek to address military repression during the so-called "Dirty War" of the 1970s and not forget its many victims. The Argentine armed forces and their allies, in turn, insist on, however impractically, a "total" or "complete" memory of those times and not a selective remembrance of only state terrorism that ignores atrocities committed by Marxist guerrillas or that recall only the failures of the ill-fated Falklands/Malvinas War.⁸⁸ It is in this context that Antonio Ruiz or "Falucho" has been recently invoked and, long after his demise, plunged into contemporary political debates and memory struggles.

The opening epigram quoted above at length proffers but one recent, vivid example of the political career of "Falucho" in the near present. A bit more context,

⁸⁷ See, e.g., Hugo Vezzetti, "Conflictos de la memoria en la Argentina. Un estudio histórico de la memoria social." *Lucha armada en la Argentina. Historia, Debate, Documentos* 1, 1 (Dec.-Feb. 2004): 46-63; Francesca Lessa and Vincent Druliolle, eds., *The Memory of State Terrorism in the Southern Cone: Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁸⁸ Valentina Salvi has written (unsympathetically) on the Argentine military's institutionalization of historical memory or "memoria completa." Valentina Salvi, "La memoria institucional del Ejército Argentino sobre el pasado reciente (1999-2008)." *Militares e Política*, no. 8 (Jan.-June 2012): 39-51; idem., "Entre héroes y torturadores: subjetividad y memorias de oficiales retirados del ejército argentino sobre la represión." *TRAMAS* 38 (2012): 15-39.

however, is warranted. In the middle of 2005, several domestic and foreign internet news providers ran a brief story about an Argentine officer in the northwestern city of Salta who, against standing military orders and government decree, openly recalled memories of the army's role against anti-government revolutionaries in the mid-1970s. During Argentina's annual "Flag Day" celebrations in Salta, Lieutenant Colonel Roberto Vega (misidentified as Jorge Vega in the online news sources), a cavalry officer, explicitly summoned the memory of "Falucho's" immolation at Callao. He asked his comrades and compatriots gathered that day to look at the Argentine flag, the same flag "Falucho" died defending, and to remember the scars on the bodies of many other soldiers who defended the national colors during the "Operativo Independencia" of 1975-1977⁸⁹ against communist rebels, who wanted to exchange it for a "red rag." Lieutenant Colonel Vega's discourse violated government law against any attempts at justifying acts of state-sanctioned terrorism by the military during the "Dirty War." The left-wing Peronist government had then also recently enacted legislation terminating military immunities for war crimes and other human-rights violations committed throughout the 1970s, a political move which embittered both conservatives and the armed forces. Vega, nevertheless, insisted he was merely reminding his compatriots of all those, including the black hero of Callao, who had paid the ultimate price defending the Argentine flag against the nation's (foreign and domestic) enemies. However, both Lieutenant Colonel Vega and his

⁸⁹ On the thirtieth anniversary of the onset of this military operative, Argentine journalist Rosendo Fraga wrote a retrospective piece for *La Nacion*. Rosendo Fraga, "Memoria: sangre sobre el monte." *La Nacion* (online), Feb. 13, 2005. <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/679222-memoria-sangre-sobre-el-monte>. The very name of the operation was designed by the military to recall the historical memory of the struggle for independence from Spain in the early 1800s, thereby relating this operative to the battle for national liberation.

commanding officer were disciplined by the army high command for the former's willful attempt to justify, contra law, military repression during the "Dirty War."⁹⁰ That Vega brought up the memory of "Falucho" in his ideological rant attested to both the enduring significance of "Falucho" in some conservative nationalist circles and the always-contested nature of social memory, especially in times of political turmoil.

Defeat in the Falklands/Malvinas War of 1982 finally accomplished what 1970's Marxist radicals could not—namely, to bring down the ruling military junta of Argentina. Domestic and foreign opinion definitively turned against the generals, who lost the support of allies at home and abroad after their failed attempt to reclaim the islands. Meanwhile, Argentine civil society used the military defeat to galvanize internal opposition and demand an end to state-sanctioned terrorism and the return of democratic rule to the country. Unsurprisingly, the aftermath of the war and the downfall of the junta precipitated another memory struggle in contemporary Argentina. Should the war be remembered by the newly democratic Argentine state and if so how? How to recall the sacrifices of Argentine soldiers without endorsing the war or the previous ruling military junta? By the time of the Argentine bicentennial in 2010, nationalists and conservatives rallied public memory in support of the causes of retaking the islands and

⁹⁰ "Castigan a dos oficiales porque uno invocó el Operativo Independencia. Quince días de arresto para un teniente coronel, autor de la reivindicación." *La Gaceta* (online), June 24, 2005. <http://www.lagaceta.com.ar/vernota.asp?id nota=118474>. Also, "Primer signo de malestar en FF. AA. argentinas tras la anulación de indultos." *UPI International News Service Online* (Spanish edition), June 22, 2005. <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/InfoWeb?p product=A>. Jay Winter maintains that in war memory is always a contested terrain. Jay Winter, *Remembering the War: Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2006), 277.

honoring those who, like “Falucho” and Cabral, gave their lives defending national interests.

For example, Argentine writer and intellectual Carlos F. Brescacin published a brief treatise on the Falklands/Malvinas War in 2010 to remember the sacrifices of his compatriots and establish his country’s historical and legal claims over the islands. Brescacin summoned the memory of a brief uprising in August 1833 by Argentine peasants, led by Antonio Ribero, living on the Falklands/Malvinas. Ribero and his comrades, called gauchos by Brescacin, were characterized as criminals by the British administrators. In his document, however, Brescacin compared Ribero to “Falucho”: “fueron verdaderos patriotas” (“were true patriots”).⁹¹ In addition, in October 2010, Nicolás Kasanzew, the only Argentine journalist to cover the war first-hand, was interviewed by a conservative Argentine website about his personal memories of his frontline experiences. The interviewer had a clear nationalist political or ideological agenda, one apparently shared by Kasanzew. When asked whether he thought those who fought for the nation during the war would ever be properly remembered, Kasanzew responded by defending the Argentine military’s right to exist and be proud of its glorious past. Thus, journalist Nicolás Kasanzew opined: “Hoy a las Fuerzas Armadas no se les permite ni existir, es mala palabra todo lo que tiene que ver con ellas cuando en cualquier país normal existen y son respetadas. Así como nosotros tuvimos al Sargento Cabral, al Negro Falucho, ahora tenemos héroes caminando entre nosotros y mañana

⁹¹ Carlos F. Brescacin, “La verdad histórica sobre los derechos de soberanía argentina en las islas Malvinas. Contestación al documento ‘Getting it Right: the real history of the Falklands/Malvinas’.” http://www.malvinense.com.ar/smalvi/2013/Malvinas_verdad_historica.pdf. This document was first delivered in 2007 at a seminar in the London School of Economics.

serán los héroes que inspiren a las futuras generaciones.” Once more, the historical memory of both “Falucho” and Cabral was invoked in an explicitly ideological manner to promote a particular political position in the near present.⁹²

It would be an error, however, to assume only right-wing or reactionary sectors recalled the memory of “Falucho” (or Cabral) for political or ideological purposes in the recent past. Just as early in the past century, when liberals and socialists gathered around the “Falucho” monument to hear political speeches by their leaders, so, too, have progressive segments recently remembered the memory of the black hero of Callao to promote their causes and agendas. For example, on the left side of Argentina’s political spectrum, the historical memory of “Falucho” and the flag he died defending, as well as their current relationship to Argentine politics, was evidenced in a November 28, 2006 editorial by former liberal congresswomen and then president of the National Literacy Commission, Nélica Baigorria, in Buenos Aires’s *La Nación*. In her editorial, Baigorria wrote of her fond childhood and school memories of “Falucho”: “recuerdos atesorados durante los años felices de la niñez.” She also related that “Falucho” became a foundational Argentine myth and symbol of patriotism, “se transformó en la épica argentina, en el símbolo del amor a la patria.” But why remember just then “Falucho’s” immolation in defense of the nation? Because, according to her, Argentina’s frail

⁹² “El pueblo llevó a los militares a la guerra por las Malvinas.” *El Patriota Argentino*, Oct. 12, 2010. <http://patriotaargentino.blogspot.com/2010/10/el-pueblo-llevo-los-militares-la-guerra.html>. See also, Arturo C. Larrabure, *Un canto a la patria. A mi padre, coronel Argentino Valle Larrabure* (Buenos Aires: n.p., 2005), an overtly pro-militarist memorial to an Argentine officer involved in the conflicts of the 1970s. The author, son of said officer, invokes the memory of “Falucho” in relation to the Argentine military’s efforts to defend the nation against radicals in the 1970s. Larrabure, *Un canto a la patria*, 149.

democracy, after enduring decades of authoritarian rule, needed reminding that true patriotism involves liberty, justice, respect for rights, and political pluralism. These are all ideals worth recalling when invoking the memory of “Falucho,” concluded the former congresswoman.⁹³

Thus, “Falucho” and Cabral have had active political lives well after their respective deaths.⁹⁴ “Falucho” in particular continues to be the regular subject of editorials and other writings linking his memory to some kind of ideology or politics in the recent past.⁹⁵ Significantly, then, the historical remembrances of “Falucho” for ideological purposes continued into the bicentennial year and have been routinely employed by right and left in contemporary political and social debates in Argentina.

⁹³ Nélica Baigorria, “El palo y la bandera.” *La Nación*, Nov. 28, 2006. http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota_id=862670. Schoolchildren in Argentina continue to be reminded of “Falucho” and other heroes on patriotic holidays. On the “Day of the National Anthem” in May 2010, for instance, children at the local “Escuela Falucho” in Santa Fe province sang the national hymn and rendered honors to the memory of their institution’s namesake. “Se celebró el Día del Himno Nacional.” *El Litoral*, May 11, 2010. http://www.ellitoral.com/index.php/id_um/1878-se-celebro-el-dia-del-himno-nacional.

⁹⁴ In the case of “sargento” Cabral, there has recently been much political wrangling over the return of his remains to his native Corrientes province. See, for instance, “Podrían no avalar el traslado de los restos del Sargento Cabral a Saladas.” http://www.fmlaruta.com/noticias/ver_nota.php?id=19514. The dispute over Cabral’s mortal remains proves the old adage that all politics is ultimately local.

⁹⁵ See, e.g., Lisandro Peyran and Jorge Puga, “Falucho. Un héroe que no se traicionó.” *Diario de Cuyo*, June 13, 2007; Rogelio Alaniz, “Crónicas de la Historia. El negro Falucho.” *El Litoral*, Feb. 10, 2010. <http://www.ellitoral.com/index.php/diarios/2010/2/10/opinion/POI>. The online responses to Alaniz’s article make for some very interesting “virtual ethnography.”

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APPENDIX I

Map: Argentina and Uruguay



Source: George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 2.

Table: Trans-Atlantic African Slave Trade by Decade, 1662-1867

Decade ^a	Senegambia	Sierra Leone	Gold Coast	Bight of Benin	Bight of Biafra	West Central Africa	Southeast Africa	Total	Annual Exports
1662-1670	3,232		12,174	23,021	34,471	9,695	91	82,684	9,187
1671-1680	5,842		20,597	22,753	24,021	15,794	309	89,316	8,932
1681-1690	10,834		15,333	71,733	21,625	32,760	5,392	157,677	15,768
1691-1700	13,376		17,407	103,313	12,115	30,072	190	176,473	17,647
1701-1709	22,230	34,560	31,650	138,590	23,130	109,780	0	359,940	35,994
1710-1719	36,260	6,380	37,540	138,690	51,410	132,590	0	402,870	40,287
1720-1729	52,530	9,120	65,110	150,280	59,990	179,620	0	516,650	51,665
1730-1739	57,210	29,470	74,460	135,220	62,260	240,890	0	599,510	59,951
1740-1749	35,000	43,350	83,620	97,830	76,790	214,470	0	551,060	55,106
1750-1759	30,100	83,860	52,780	86,620	106,100	222,430	0	581,890	58,189
1760-1769	27,590	178,360	69,650	98,390	142,640	266,570	0	783,200	78,320
1770-1779	24,400	132,220	54,370	111,550	160,400	234,880	0	717,820	71,782
1780-1789	15,240	74,190	57,650	121,080	225,360	300,340	0	793,860	79,386
1790-1799	18,320	70,510	73,960	74,600	181,740	340,110	0	759,240	75,924
1800-1809	18,000	63,970	44,150	75,750	123,000	280,900	0	605,770	60,577
1811-1815	19,300	4,200		34,600	33,100	111,800	8,700	203,000	40,600
1816-1820	48,400	9,000		59,200	60,600	151,100	59,600	328,300	65,660
1821-1825	22,700	4,000		44,200	60,600	128,400	43,200	259,900	51,980
1826-1830	26,700	4,900		70,500	66,700	164,400	58,100	333,200	66,640
1831-1835	27,400	1,100		37,700	71,900	102,800	3,000	240,900	48,180
1836-1840	35,300	5,700		50,400	40,800	193,500	99,400	325,700	65,140
1841-1845	19,100	200		45,300	4,400	112,900	20,300	181,900	36,380
1846-1850	14,700	700		53,400	7,700	197,000	66,700	273,500	54,700
1851-1855	10,300	300		8,900	2,900	22,600	12,800	45,000	9,000
1856-1860	3,100	300		14,000	4,400	88,200	11,300	110,000	22,000
1861-1865	2,700	0		2,600	0	41,200	2,700	46,500	9,300
1866-1867	0	0		400	0	3,000	0	3,400	1,700
Total	599,864	756,390	710,451	1,870,620	1,658,152	3,927,801	391,782	9,529,260	46,035

Source: Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 208-09.

Table: Estimates of Slave Imports to Spanish America, including the River Plate, from the early Sixteenth to the early Nineteenth Centuries

Cuba	702,000
Puerto Rico	77,000
Mexico	200,00
Venezuela	121,000
Peru	95,000
La Plata (Argentina, Uruguay) and Bolivia	100,000
Chile	6,000
Subtotal:	1,301,000

Note: Based on New Calculations or those Found in the Historical Literature

Santo Domingo	30,000
Colombia, Panama, and Ecuador	200,000
Central America	21,000
Subtotal:	251,000

Note: Bases on Rough Estimates

Total: 1,552,000

Source: Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 46.

Figure: Origins and Names of African Nations in the River Plate, 1800-1900

West Africa:

Abayá
Hausa or Auzá
Bornó
Kalabari or Carabará
Goyo
Main
Maquaqua
Mina (Mina, Mají, Mina Nagó)
Moros
Sabalú
Ashanti or Santé
Tacuá
Yida

Central Africa:

Congo:
Augunga
Basundi
Cabinda or Cambundá
Congo
Loango
Lubolo
Lumboma
Luumbi
Mayombé
Momboma
Umbonia
Zeda
Zongo
Angola:
Angola
Benguela
Kasanje or Casanche

**Figure: Origins and Names of African Nations in the River Plate, 1800-1900
(continued)**

Ganguelá

Huombé
Lucango
Majumbi
Muñandá
Kibala or Quipará
Kisama or Quisamá
Umbala

East Africa:

Malawi or Malavé
Mancinga
Mauinga
Mozambique
Muchague
Mucherengue
Muñambani

Afro-Argentine and Afro-Brazilian:

Argentina Federal
Brasileños Bahianos
Nación Brasileira

Unknown Origins:

Bagungane
Hambuero
Manyolo
Villamoani

Sources: George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 233-34; Jorge E. Gallardo, *Etnias africanas en el Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos, 1989); Roberto Pacheco, "Invisible But Not Forgotten: The Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan Experience from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries," MA thesis, Florida International University, 2001, 262-63.

Table: Population of Buenos Aires by Race, 1778-1887

Year	Whites	Indians or Mestizos	Afro- Argentines	Unspe- cified	Total	Percent Afro- Argentine*
1778	16,023	1,104	7,236	0	24,363	29.7%
1806 ^a	15,078	347	6,650	3,329	25,404	30.1
1810 ^a	22,793	150	9,615	0	32,558	29.5
1822	40,616	1,115	13,685	0	55,416	24.7
1827 ^a	34,067	152	8,321	0	42,540	19.5
1836	42,445	—	14,906	5,684	63,035	26.0
1838 ^b	42,312	—	14,928	5,717	62,957	26.1
1887	425,370	—	8,005	0	433,375	1.8

Source: George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 66.

Illustration: D. de Plot, “Las Esclavas de Bues. Ays. [Buenos Aires] Demuestran ser Libres y Gratas a Su Noble Libertador” (1841)



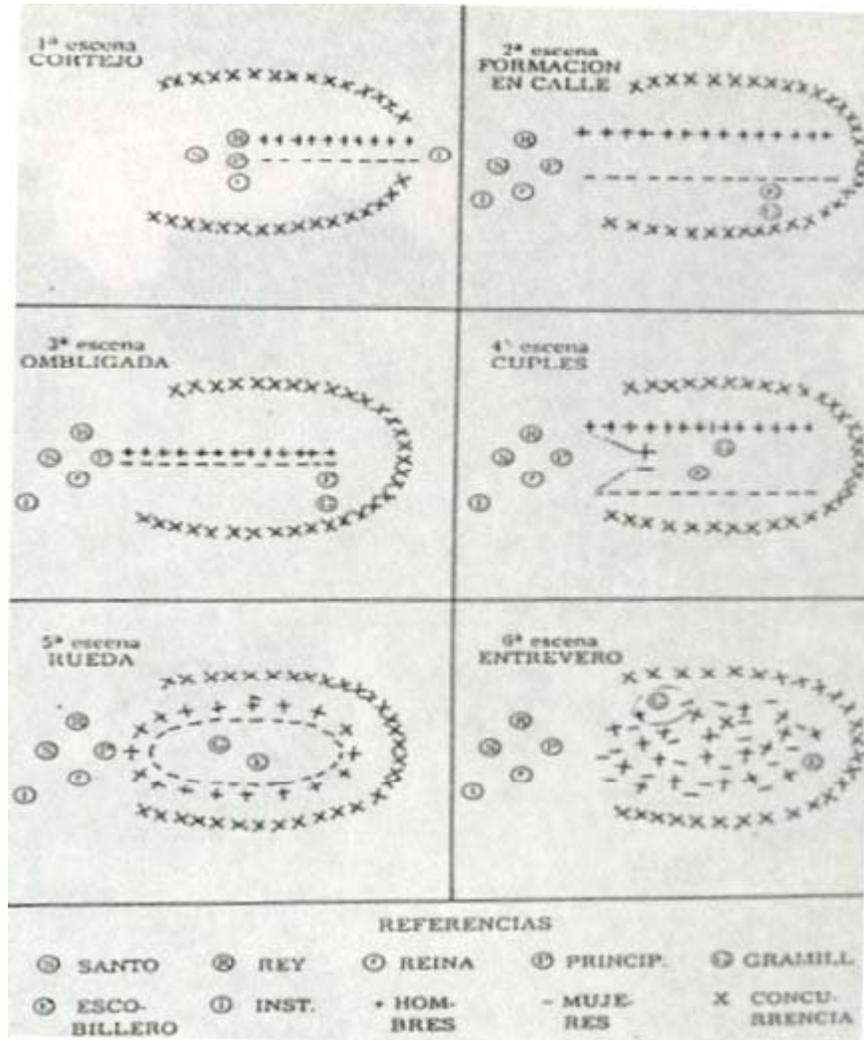
Source: <http://www.elortiba.org/losnegros.html>

Illustration: Martín L. Boneo, “Candombe federal en época de Rosas” (date unknown)



Source: <http://alejandrofrigerio.blogspot.com/2013/07/candombe-federal-epoca-de-rosas-segun.html>

Illustration: *Candombe* Choreography



Source: Alicia C. Quereilhac de Kussrow, *La fiesta de san Baltasar: presencia de la cultura africana en el Plata* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Culturales Argentinas, 1980), 111.

Illustration: Pedro Figari, “African (*candombe*) Nostalgia” (no date)



Source: http://www.allposters.com/-sp/African-Nostalgia-Candombe-Posters_i10252564_.htm

Table: Select Buenos Aires Military Units, by Race (1813-1860)

Unit	<u>Enlistees</u>			Total	% Black
	<i>Black</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Trigueño</i>		
Third Infantry Regiment (1813-17)	14	25	36	75	18.6%
Second Infantry Regiment (1813-15)	23	28	37	88	26.1%
Tenth Infantry Regiment (1814-18)	65	15	7	87	74.7%
Seventeenth Cavalry Regiment (1826-28)	34	60	40	134	25.4%
Buenos Aires Artillery Battalion (1824-28)	12	24	49	75	16.0%
First Infantry Battalion (1853-60)	200	224	264	688	29.1%
Second Infantry Battalion (1853-60)	43	97	80	220	19.5%
Third Infantry Battalion (1853-60)	56	91	60	207	27.1%

**Table: Select Buenos Aires Military Units, by Race (1813-1860)
(continued)**

Second Cavalry Regiment (1853-60)	12	26	26	64	18.8%
Fifth Regiment of Mounted Grenadiers (1853-60)	10	12	11	33	30.3%

Source: George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 120.

Illustration: Juan Manuel Blanes, “La Revista de Rancagua” (1872)



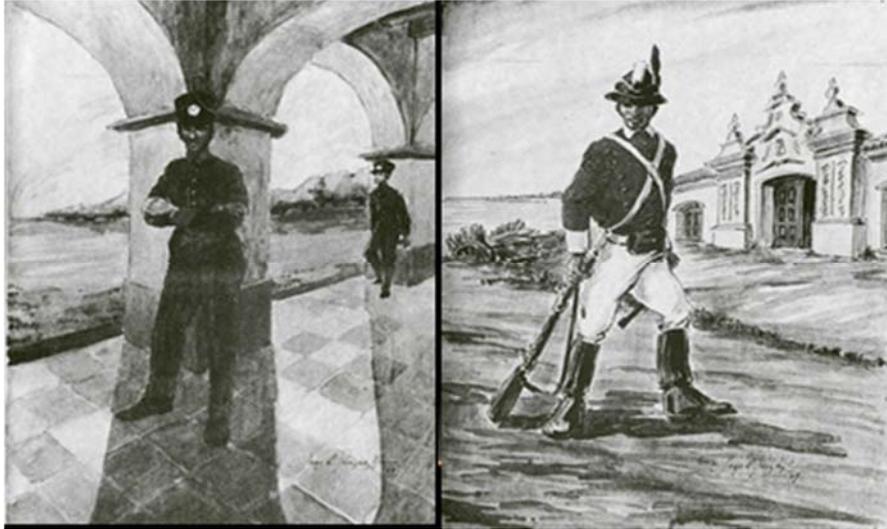
Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Revista_de_Rancagua_Blanes.JPG

Illustrations: Afro-Argentine Military Uniforms, 1800s



Source: Comando en Jeje del Ejército, *Reseña histórica y orgánica del Ejército Argentino. Uniformes de la patria* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar, 1972), n.p.

Illustrations: Afro-Argentine Military Uniforms, 1800s



Source: Comando en Jeje del Ejército, *Reseña histórica y orgánica del Ejército Argentino. Uniformes de la patria* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar, 1972), n.p.

Illustration: Uniform, Eighth Black Infantry—“Falucho’s” Regiment



Source: Comando en Jeje del Ejército, *Reseña histórica y orgánica del Ejército Argentino. Uniformes de la patria* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar, 1972), n.p.

Illustration: Legendary Black Argentine Infantryman, Second Corporal Anotnio Ruiz (a.k.a., “Falucho”), painting by Eleodoro Marengo



Source: <http://www.taringa.net/post/noticias/17987558/Soldados-afro-de-san-martin-lo-que-te-oculta-la-escuela.html>

Figure: Rafael Obligado, “El negro Falucho” (1891)

Voces de Tinta

2. El Negro Falucho

I
 Duerme el Callao. Ronco son
 Hace del mar la resaca,
 Y en la sombra se destaca
 Del Real Felipe el torreón.
 En él está de facción
 Porque alejarle quisieron
 Un negro de los que fueron
 Con San Martín, de los grandes
 Que en las pampas y en los Andes
 Batallaron y vencieron.

II
 Por la pequeña azotea
 Falucho, erguido y gentil,
 Echado al hombro el fusil,
 Lentamente se pasea;
 Piensa en la patria, en la aldea
 Donde dejó el hijo amado,
 Donde su sueño adorado
 Le aguarda triste y llorosa;
 Y en Buenos Aires, la hermosa,
 Que es su pasión de soldado.

III
 Llega del fuerte a su oído
 Rumor de voces no usadas,
 De bayonetas y espadas
 Agudo y áspero ruido;
 Un ¡viva España! seguido
 De un otro viva a Fernando,
 Y está Falucho dudando
 Si dan los gritos que escucha
 Sus compañeros de lucha,
 O si está loco o soñando.

IV
 Desde los Andes, el día,
 Que ciñe en rosas la frente,
 Abierta el ala luciente
 Hacia los mares caía,
 Cuando Falucho, que ansía
 Dar un viva a su manera,
 Como protesta altanera
 Contra menguadas traiciones,
 Izó nervioso, a tirones,
 La azul y blanca bandera.

V
 "¡Por mi cuenta te despliego,
 Dijo airado, y de esta suerte,
 Si a tus pies está la muerte,
 A tu sombra muera luego!"
 Nació el sol: besos de fuego
 Dióla en rayos de carmín,

VI
 No bien así desplegados
 Nuestros colores lucían,
 Por la escalera subían
 De tropel los sublevados.
 Ven a Falucho, y airados
 Hacia él se precipitan:
 "¡Baje ese trapo, le gritan,
 Y nuestra enseña enarbola!"...
 ¡Y es la bandera española
 La que los criollos agitan!

VII
 Dobló Falucho, entre tanto,
 La oscura faz sin sonrojos,
 Y ante aquel crimen, sus ojos
 Se humedecieron en llanto.
 Vencido al punto el quebranto,
 Con fiero arranque exclamó:
 "¡Enarbolar esa yo
 Cuando está aquella en su puesto!..."
 Y un juramento era el gesto
 Con que el negro dijo: "¡No!"

VIII
 Con un acento glacial
 En que la muerte predican:
 "Presenta el arma, le dicen,
 Al estandarte real."
 Rotos por la orden fatal
 De la obediencia los brazos,
 Alzó el fusil en sus brazos,
 Con un rugido de fiera,
 Y contra el asta-bandera
 La hizo de un golpe pedazos.

IX
 Ante la audacia insolente
 De esa acción inesperada,
 La infame turba excitada,
 Gritó: "¡Muera el insurgente!"
 Y asestados al valiente
 Cuatro fusiles brillaron:
 "¡Ríndete al Rey!" le intimaron,
 Mas como el negro exclamó:
 "¡Viva la patria, y no yo!"
 Los cuatro tiros sonaron.

X
 Uno, el más vil, corre y haja
 El estandarte sagrado,
 Que cayó sobre el soldado
 Como gloriosa mortaja.
 Alegres dianas la caja
 De los traidores batía,

Source: http://www2.mshs.univ-poitiers.fr/crla/contenidos/PORTAIL_AV/SITIO%20VdeTINTA/SITIO/016-falucho.html

Figure: Rafael Obligado, “El negro Falucho” (1891) (continued) and Musical Score

Rodó el mar desde el confín
Un instante estremecido,
Y en la torre quedó erguido
El negro de San Martín.

El Pacífico gemía
Melancólico y desierto,
Y en la bandera del muerto
Nuestro sol resplandecía.

RAFAEL OBLIGADO

Voz

Guitarra

♩. = 50

Duer-meel Ca-liao. Ron-co - són. Ha-coel mar en la re - sa ca.

Yen las on - das se des - ta - ca. Del Real Fe - li - peun to - reón.

Yen él es - tá de fac - ción. Por-quea-le-jur-le qui - sie-ron.

Un ne - gro de los que fue - ron con San Mar-tín. de los gran - des

Yen la Pam - pa yen los An - des Ba - ta - llaron y ven - cie - ron.

Pedro Luna (22), 15/05/1905, La Plata. Histórico patriótica, estilo -con guitarra. Cilindro 60, texto 9, 69-73.

Audio

Source: http://www2.mshs.univ-poitiers.fr/crla/contenidos/PORTAIL_AV/SITIO%20VdeTINTA/SITIO/016-falucho.html

Table: Argentine Military Officers by Race, 1800-1860

Rank	Indian	Black	White	Total
General	0	0	6	6
Colonel	0	2	16	18
Lieutenant Colonel	0	5	12	17
Major	1	5	7	13
Captain	1	13	10	24
Lieutenant	0	9	7	16
Sub- Lieutenant	2	5	3	10

Source: George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 136.

Illustrations: Legendary Black Argentine Officer, Colonel Lorenzo I. Barcala, “el caballero negro”



Sources: George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 128; José Canale, *El Coronel Don Lorenzo Barcala (contribución al estudio de la vida militar)* (Buenos Aires: “El Inca,” 1927), n.p.

Table: Net Immigration to Argentina, 1890-1914

<i>Year</i>	<i>Argentina</i>
1889	220,260
1890	30,375
1891	-29,835
1892	29,441
1893	35,626
1894	39,272
1895	44,169
1896	89,282
1897	47,686
1898	41,654
1899	48,842
1900	50,485
1901	45,700
1902	16,653
1903	37,895
1904	94,841
1905	138,850
1906	198,397
1907	119,861
1908	176,080
1909	140,640
1910	208,870
1911	109,581
1912	206,121
1913	172,628
1914	38,349
TOTALS	2,351,715

Source: Carl Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism: Argentina and Chile, 1890-1914* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1970), p. 35.

Illustrations: Anti-Immigrant Cartoons from *Caras y Caretas*, early 1900s



Caric y Caric, VI (January 10, 1901), p. 2

THE RESIDENCE LAW

Argentina (man): I'm here to get immigrants, but from now on, you'll have to give me selected ones only, because I don't want agitators, revolutionaries, strikers, Communists, socialists, anarchists
 Europe (woman): That's enough; I know what you want—an immigration composed purely of bankers and archbishops.



Caric y Caric, XI (December 1, 1901), p. 2

THE JEWISH SCHOOLS OF ENTRE RIOS

School Inspector (to student): How many letters are there in the Spanish alphabet?
 Teacher (noting that the student remains quiet): Ask him in Russian if you want him to answer you.

Source: Carl Solberg, *Immigration and Nationalism: Argentina and Chile, 1890-1914* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1970), pp. 112, 129.

Illustrations: Creole and Black Argentine Nationalists, Bartolomé Mitre, per sculptor Lucio Correa Morales, and *payador* Gabino Ezeiza



Sources: Martín S. Noel et al., *Correa Morales* (Buenos Aires: Publicaciones de la Academia de Bellas Artes, 1949), p. 102; *Caras y Caretas* 5, 204 (Aug. 30, 1902): n.p.

Illustrations: Sites of Creole Social Remembrances of Afro-Platines, Postal Stamps Commemorating Afro-Uruguayan Hero Joaquín Lenzina or “Ansina” (c. 1967), “sargento” Cabral (2013), and “Falucho” Monument (1910)



Sources: <http://www.shutterstock.com/pic-112621424/stock-photo-uruguay-circa-stamp-printed-by-uruguay-shows-ansina-portrait-by-medardo-latorre-circa.html>; Author's personal collection.

Illustrations: Sites of Creole Social Remembrances of Afro-Platines, Art Postcards, Cabral Monument, Corrientes; and “Falucho” Monument, Buenos Aires, early 1900s



Source: Author's personal collection.

Illustrations: Sites of Creole Social Remembrances of Afro-Platines, Commemorative Medals, “Falucho” (1897) and Lorenzo Barcala (1895)



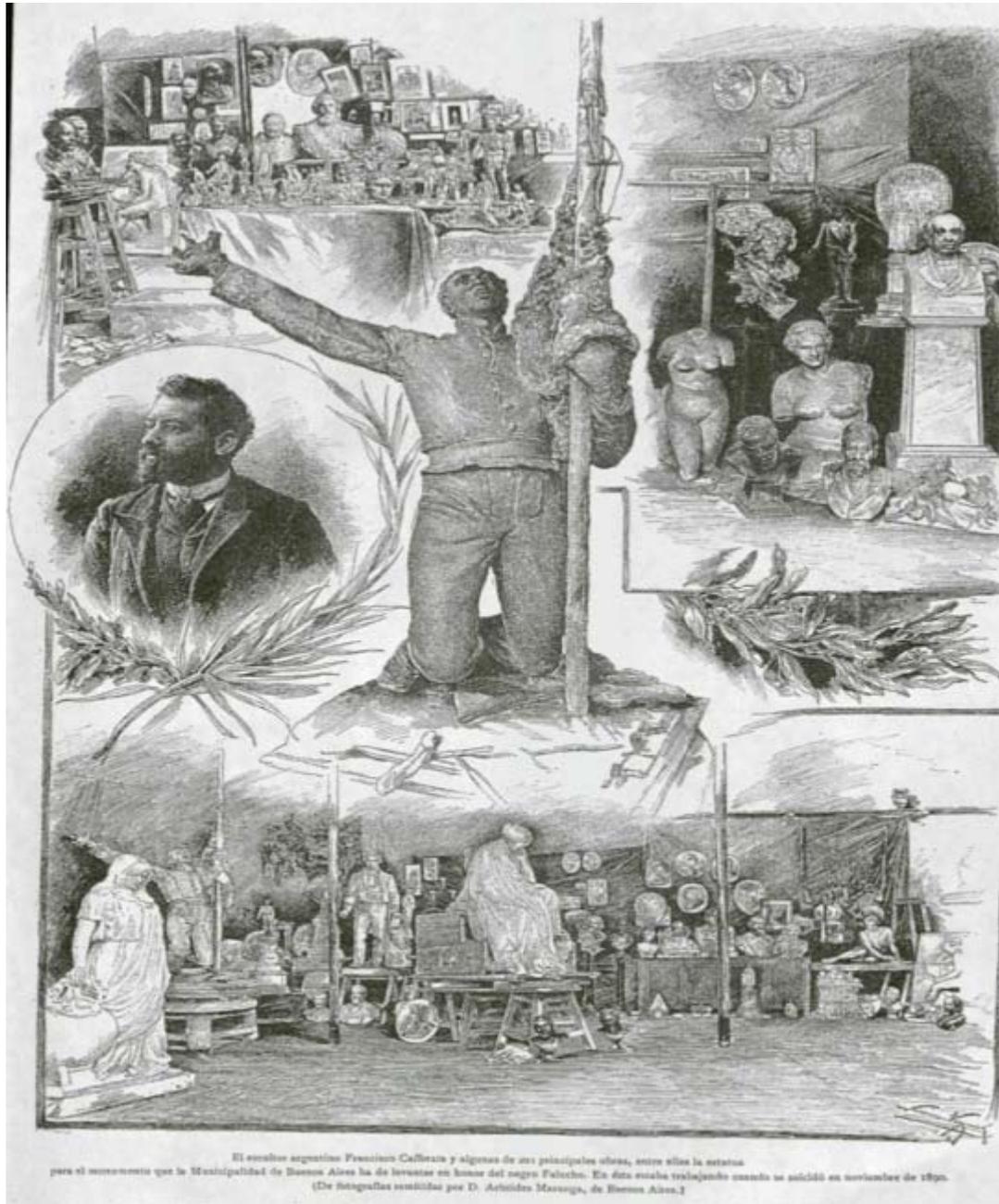
Sources: Author’s personal collection.

**Illustrations: Sites of Creole Social Remembrances of Afro-Platines,
Commemorative Medal, “Ansina” (1923)**



Source: Author’s personal collection.

Illustration: Obituary Notice of Sculptor Francisco Cafferata, with his Original Design for the “Falucho” Sculpture (top center)



Source: *La Ilustración Artística* (Barcelona) 10, 494 (June 15, 1891): 373.

**Illustration: One of the Last Photographs of Lucio Correa Morales, Sculptor of
“Falucho” Statue**



Source: Martín S. Noel et al., *Correa Morales* (Buenos Aires: Publicaciones de la Academia de Bellas Artes, 1949), p. 54.

Illustrations: Morales Model of the “Falucho” Statue and the “Falucho” Statue Model (top center) in the Artist’s Studio in Buenos Aires, late 1800s



Source: Martín S. Noel et al., *Correa Morales* (Buenos Aires: Publicaciones de la Academia de Bellas Artes, 1949), pp. 70, 136.

**Illustration: “Falucho” Monument (1897), Current Location,
Palermo, Buenos Aires**



Source: Photograph courtesy of Dr. Quinn Dauer.

Illustrations: “Falucho” Monument Dedicatory Plaques



Source: Photographs courtesy of Dr. Quinn Dauer.

Illustrations: “Falucho” Monument Dedicatory Plaques



Source: Photographs courtesy of Dr. Quinn Dauer.

Illustration: *Caras y Caretas* Article on the “Falucho” Monument’s First Relocation, 1910

La mudanza de Falucho



El monumento de Falucho, antes de la mudanza

— Falucho se ha mudado...

Se nos extraña. Ahora que los alquileres suben de una manera bárbara, es lógico suponer que el pobre y heroico negro Falucho no haya podido pagar el mes de julio. En consecuencia el Concejo Deliberante dictó una orden de desalojo, con amenaza de embargo en caso de resistencia.

El valiente negro, que en vida supo resistir el fuego de las balas, achicando de coque junto a San Martín, no pudo resistir las exigencias de un simple carro de mudanza...

La actitud municipal ha producido honda sensación entre los numerosos negros de la república, que, en su mayor parte, descienden de soldados que contribuyeron a nuestra independencia nacional, y que hoy ocupan importantes puestos en las oficinas de gobierno. De todos ellos, el que con más tesón ha defendido los derechos y la gloria de la

raza negra en la Argentina, es el señor Benedicto Ferrer, ex demandante de la intendencia, y principal iniciador del monumento a Barcoala.



El señor Benedicto Ferrer, ex demandante de la intendencia, y principal iniciador del monumento a Barcoala



Preparando el terreno para colocar la estatua, en la esquina de Guardia Vieja y Lombard



El monumento encajonado



Lo que resta del pedestal en la plaza San Martín
Fot. de CARAS Y CARETAS.



La manifestación estudiantil que protestó contra el traslado de Falucho

Source: "La mudanza de Falucho," *Caras y Caretas* 13, 619 (Aug. 13, 1910): n.p.

Illustration: Patriotic Festivities, “En la plaza Falucho”



Source: Anon., “En la plaza Falucho.” *Caras y Caretas* 14, 601 (June 3, 1911): n.p.

Illustration: Current “Plazoleta Falucho” in Palermo, Buenos Aires



Source: Photograph courtesy of Dr. Quinn Dauer.

**Illustration: Another “Falucho” Monument, Mechanized Eighth Infantry
Headquarters,
Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina**



Source: <http://armando-fernandez.blogspot.com/2010/04/en-el-regimiento-del-negro-falucho.html>.

Illustration: “Faluchos” of “Football”

MONTEVIDEO PINTORESCO

LOS FALUCHOS DEL FOOTBALL URUGUAYO



Isabelino Gradin, popularísimo entre los footballistas de ambas márgenes. Fue la referencia constitucional. En un gran acto público, el sondear Simon puso sobre su pecho una medalla de oro.

donde los dos simpáticos morenitos no aparecen. Se lucen siempre. Es frecuente verlos, como a los antiguos iconos, alzados por sobre las cabezas de la multitud.

Tenemos los mejores informes de ambos. No dan golpes ilícitos (vulgo «pechadas») ni a los rivales en el field, ni a sus directores en la tesorería. Son los dos morenos consagrados hasta ahora.

Pero «la afición» (como escriben los revistas taurinas) cifra grandes esperanzas en otros dos: Vilaza y González. Sea un estímulo más la inserción de sus efigies en un semanario igualmente popular que en Buenos Aires, en Montevideo.

Vilaza está inscripto en el «Club Misiones», que cuenta también con González entre sus afiliados. El ser poco importante esa asociación, no ha permitido que estos dos muchachos logren aun la celebridad que sonríe por sobre las cabelleras ebánicas de Delgado y de Gradin.

Montevideo

Una nota de color. De color subido. Pero amable, simpatísima. Notad como destaca en esta página la figura de Isabelino Gradin. En Buenos Aires es muy popular. Actuó en los grandes matches internacionales.

Hablemos, antes que nada, de la boga del deporte footballístico en el continente. Su éxito supera cuantos obtuvo en Inglaterra ese juego británico. En Londres, durante la estación propicia, se juegan ocho o diez partidos importantes por domingo.

Para reunir en torno a un field 15 mil almas hace falta que el partido sea culminante. En las dos capitales platinas, un encuentro de los llamados «internacionales», congregan cincuenta, sesenta y hasta setenta mil. Hemos dejado, pues, chiquitos a los ingleses. Máxime si se tiene en cuenta la densidad de Londres.

El football pasa a ser así un deporte esencialmente americano. Nosotros hacemos esta comprobación satisfechos. Muchos padres de familia, con angustia. La afición de los chicos al football ha hecho triplicar la producción de zapatos infantiles. Fomento de la industria.

— ¿Un negro? — se decía la gente con sorpresa, viendo aparecer en la gran cancha porteña a Gradin.

No es extraño. Al principio también a nosotros nos enojava. Luego admitimos esa inequívoca prueba de cohesión racial, de democracia. Gradin descolgó en el difícil juego de la patada. Le hicimos predilecto. Luego ídolo. Nos parecía, aunque fuéramos lo mismo, más admirable que Romano y Hienkens, ponemos por caso.

— ¡Isabelino!... ¡Isabelino!...

Un gladiador en la antigua y opulenta Roma de los Cesáres, no fué aclamado jamás por un público de tal modo entusiasta y fervoroso. Cópole a «Peñarol» la gloria de contar con este «paladín de bronce».

Había aparecido conjuntamente con Delgado en uno de los muchos cuadros o divisiones inferiores. Se les consideraba mascotas: seres distintos que le traían suerte al Club. No se apreció bien la influencia benéfica; pero, con gran sorpresa, vióse que eran dos jugadores de primera fuerza.

Y quedaron ascendidos, hasta llegar al sitio preeminente donde se encuentran.

No hay match internacional

FLORIDOR.



Delgado, que intervino también en los grandes matches internacionales. Se lo llama Delgado; a veces, como se dice Demóstenes o Shakespeare.



Vilaza, del Club Misiones, que destaca entre los jugadores que actúan en los cuadros de segunda línea. Es de gran resistencia, retraído al sol.



González, en quien la afición uruguaya quiere ver a un futuro ídolo de Gradin, el más famoso moreno footballista.

Source: “Floridor,” “Los Faluchos del Football Uruguayo,” *Caras y Caretas* 21, 1051 (Nov. 22, 1918): n.p.

APPENDIX II

Selective List of Useful Virtual Sites of Social Memory on Afro-Platines

- “Los abuelos de mi historia: los payadores negros”
http://losabuelosdemihistoria.blogspot.com/2009_08_23_archive.html
- “Afro-Argentines and the 2010 Census: A Path Toward Visibility”
http://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/UF/E0/04/55/53/00001/CASTILLO_F.pdf
- “El Afroargentino. La Voz de Nuestra Comunidad” info@diafar.org
- “Los afroargentinos: formas de comunalización, creación de identidades colectivas y resistencia cultural y política”
http://centrodesarrollohumano.org/pmb/opac_css/doc_num.php?explnum_id=1324
- “Afroargentinos hoy: invisibilización, identidad y movilización social”
<https://alfarcolectivo.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/libro-final.pdf>
- “Afrodescendientes y africanos en Argentino”
<http://www.revistahumanum.org/revista/afrodescendientes-y-africanos-en-argentina/>
- “El Anacleto: recopilación de canciones folclóricas latinoamericanas y el sentido popular de las misma” <http://elanacleto.blogspot.com/2011/03/el-sargento-cabral.html>
- “Ansina ¿un héroe afro-uruguayo?”
http://www.academia.edu/4238165/Ansina_un_h%C3%A9roe_afro-uruguayo
- “Aportes para el desarrollo humano en Argentina/2011. Afrodescendientes y africanos en Argentina”
http://www.afrodescendientes-undp.org/FCKeditor_files/File/PNUD_Afrosweb.pdf
- “Arquitectura para la esclavitud en Buenos Aires: una historia silenciada”
<http://www.iaa.fadu.uba.ar/publicaciones/critica/0130.pdf>
- “Batallas que hicieron historia: La Batalla de San Lorenzo”
<http://www.soldadosdigital.com/2011/174-febrero/174-pag-26-27.pdf>
- “Bicentenario de la defensa de Buenos Aires”
<http://www.1884editorial.com.ar/revista.pdf>
- “El corsito” http://www.rojas.uba.ar/contenidos/revistas/pdf_corsito/numero39.pdf
- “Derechos de la población afrodescendiente de América Latina”
http://www.afrodescendientes-undp.org/FCKeditor_files/File/DER_AFR0_PRESENTACION_Y_PRO.pdf
- “Ediciones *Todo es Historia* con afroargentinos”
http://www.todoeshistoria.com.ar/ediciones.php?action=buscar_palabra&palabra=negros

“Grupo de Estudios Afrolatinoamericanos” <https://geala.wordpress.com/>

“The Impossible Union of Blackness and Argentinidad”
http://wescholar.wesleyan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1769&context=etd_hon_theses

“La Marcha de San Lorenzo or St. Lawrence’s March” <http://www.abcc.org.ar/health-issues---our-hospital/la-marcha-de-san-lorenzo>

“Memorias en verso de Don Joaquín Lenzina (‘Ansina’) 1760-1860”
<https://chancharruas.wordpress.com/2010/03/28/memorias-en-verso-de-don-joaquin-lenzina-%E2%80%9Cansina%E2%80%9D-1760-1860/>

“Monumentos, conmemoraciones y polémicas sobre el pasado en Corrientes a fines del siglo XIX” http://www.scielo.org.ar/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1669-90412010000100010&lng=pt&nrm=iso

“Movimiento afrocultural”
<http://movimientoafrocultural.blogspot.com/2012/03/asamblea-nacional-de-afrodescendientes.html>

“El negro Falucho. Héroe de Argentina” <http://tumacovida.blogspot.com/2011/05/el-negro-falucho-heroe-de-argentina.html>

“El negro Falucho (¿realidad o leyenda?)”
<https://sites.google.com/site/gralsanmartin/cuarto-periodo-20-de-septiembre-de-1820---diciembre-de-1824/falucho-realidad-o-leyenda---los-batallones-de-negros>

“Los negros en el Río de la Plata” <http://www.elortiba.org/losnegros.html>

“Nuestro ejército existe: Regimiento de Infantería 1, Patricios”
<http://www.bajandolineas.com.ar/2011/11/nuestro-ejercito-existe-regimiento-de-infanteria-1-%E2%80%9Cpatricios%E2%80%9D/>

“Los olvidados de la revolución: el Río de la Plata y sus negros”
<http://nuevomundo.revues.org/58416>

“¿‘Otros’ argentinos? Afrodescendientes porteños y la construcción de la nación Argentina entre 1873 y 1882” (Part 1)
http://www.tdx.cat/bitstream/handle/10803/716/02.LNG_PARTE_I.pdf;jsessionid=29F2BAEF3F8F85A989C64098A240FD8F.tdx?sequence=2

“Las raíces africanas de la Argentina” <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1294981-las-raices-africanas-de-la-argentina>

“Sitios de memoria: la ruta del esclavo”

http://www.unesco.org.uy/ci/fileadmin/cultura/2010/Sitios_de_Memoria_en_La_Ruta_de_l_Esclavo.pdf

“Temas de patrimonio cultural 16: Buenos Aires negra, identidad y cultura”

http://estatico.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/cultura/cpphc/archivos/libros/temas_16.pdf

“Un héroe que no se traicionó”

http://www.diariodecuyo.com.ar/home/new_noticia.php?noticia_id=224472

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