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Fernando Degiovanni

THE INVENTION OF THE CLASSICS: NATIONALISM, PHILOLOGY AND CULTURAL POLITICS IN ARGENTINA

By the end of 1915, two inexpensive book series devoted to the diffusion of colonial and nineteenth-century texts flooded the shelves of Argentine bookstores. Their deliberately resonant and all-encompassing names – *La Biblioteca Argentina* (The Argentine Library) and *La Cultura Argentina* (Argentine Culture) – were unmistakable signs of their nationalist character and aims. Developed respectively by Ricardo Rojas and José Ingenieros, two of the most important intellectuals of Centennial Argentina, the nearly simultaneous launch of both series also underscored the editors' enduring competition to promote their contrasting versions of the nation's political and cultural past. The timing of the series' appearance, three years after the approval of the Sáenz Peña law of secret, universal and mandatory suffrage, and one year before the country's first clean presidential election, was not a coincidence. Conceived in the first decade of the twentieth century, in the context of escalating ideological tensions generated by the massive arrival of immigrants to the country, the series' sudden and simultaneous release around the middle of the century's second decade reflected the emergence of a new political and social reality: the right to free political participation won by popular, anti-hegemonic groups after long struggles against the constraints imposed by a single-party political system, the corruption of suffrage, and the intimidating pressures exerted by the old ruling sectors.¹

Through their massively disseminated retrospective series of national classics, Rojas and Ingenieros attempted to present alternative ideological options to an electorate who could cast their vote freely for the first time. Working in a period of profound political and social transformations, the editors' shared purpose was to impose not only what they believed to be the 'true' version of the Argentine cultural tradition, but also the political ideology that legitimately represented it. In the context of recurring polemics over issues of nationalist education that had permeated diverse areas of public life since the end of the nineteenth century,² *La Biblioteca Argentina* and *La Cultura Argentina* became participants in a powerful and enduring battle over the uses of the country's past and the meaning of 'Argentine-ness'. These retrospective collections of national authors would allow for numerous out-of-print and forgotten works, as well as some recent texts, to be utilized as vehicles for orienting and directing Argentina's cultural and political future.

Representing two conflicting nationalist projects, *La Biblioteca Argentina* and *La*

Cultura Argentina became important mediators in the construction of the nation's cultural imaginary. The series' synchronic confrontation made clear the importance given by their editors in the battles for the imposition and expansion of symbolic capital at the beginning of the twentieth century. As agents of patrimonial, *dirigiste* and vulgarizing cultural politics, the first national series expected to generate a specific consensus on the past and the future, through the preservation, legitimization and diffusion of a collection of authors and texts.³ Indeed, the efforts of Rojas and Ingenieros to make their series available to an extended social body were guided by the principle that, according to Ernest Gellner (1983: 1–7), defines all nationalisms: the search for congruence between political unity and cultural unity.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, leftist groups had been increasingly perceived by some members of the intellectual elite as the most significant front of opposition to their struggle to define and impose a national tradition. The electoral growth of socialism (which by 1914 boasted representatives and senators in the National Congress), the resounding strikes promoted by anarchist forces, and the powerful cultural and educational intervention campaigns developed by both groups at the beginning of the twentieth century had all become recurrent preoccupations for the traditional leading sectors.⁴ The political and social activity of socialist and anarchist groups was simultaneously perceived as both a threat to the historical values defended by the learned elite, and a debilitating influence on the historical ideals of the nation.

In his 1909 report on education, *La restauración nacionalista* (Nationalist Restoration), Rojas explicitly formulated the terms of this confrontation with the so-called 'internationalist' sectors, and suggested a number of measures to tackle the problem. These proposals included the formation of a cultural front that would combat opposing political tendencies and help 'Argentinize' the country's growing immigrant population. Among the decisive reforms that Rojas recommended to displace and to undermine the Left's growing influence over the popular sectors was mandatory instruction of nationalist values (as they were understood by the 'old' ruling sectors) in state-run schools. According to his plan, the massive distribution of Argentine authors and books was the only way to offer the public an alternative to the inexpensive editions of works by leftist thinkers and novelists, a field that at the time was dominated by foreign production. In Rojas's words:

Plebeian literature and egoistic philosophy have, in these times, damaged the notion of patriotism. Both have disguised their regressions towards the most obscure of instincts under a mantle of philanthropy. The ignoble venom, *diffused profusely in cheap books by greedy publishers*, has corrupted ignorant mobs and impressionable adolescents. And it has been one of the democratic aberrations of our time and country that works of the most dangerous philosophy *circulate in economical volumes that are more accessible [to the public] than national books or schoolchildren's manuals*. Therefore, it has become necessary to proclaim once again the assertion of old romantic ideals, and state that in the present-day conditions of our lives, this unpatriotic strategy encourages the substitution of a concrete human group for an abstract humanity that nobody would know how to serve. (Rojas, 1909: 38–9, emphasis added)

In an article published in 1911 to explain the purpose of his series, *La Biblioteca*

Argentina, to José María Ramos Mejía, President of the National Council of Education, Rojas further expanded his diagnosis and proposal for reversing the situation: 'To print books in costly conditions would be to deprive them of the popular, democratic, and economic character they should have, and withdraw them from the literature of workers, students, and teachers – the regular clientele of the other inexpensive libraries, those sad anthologies ... of negative philosophy, of fragmentary science, of heinous literature' (Rojas, 1911: 109–10, emphasis added). Recognizing that printed materials played a central role in the process of nation-building, Rojas emphasized that publishing the national classics was one of the most effective ways to shape a generalized cultural imaginary that would be capable of putting a stop to the destabilizing tactics of the Left. Indeed, he understood that his retrospective series of Argentine authors was a key tool in the formation of the nation's citizenry: conveniently prefaced and selected, the texts of Argentina's literary and political past could serve as strategic elements to legitimize a non-leftist political and cultural identity.

Rojas's proposal immediately gained widespread support from members of the intellectual elite. However, his plan of uniting a heterogeneous society behind the ideas of a single 'national tradition' was inevitably forced to confront the reality that the supposed 'line of symbolic continuity', which had guided the country's history and was capable of directing its future, did not chart the same path for everyone.⁵ The launch of Ingenieros's *La Cultura Argentina* in July 1915, six months before Rojas was able to finalize his long-awaited collection, was the clearest demonstration of the rising conflicts of interpretation of the nation's historical development among the nation's leading intellectuals. In his retrospective series, Ingenieros attempted to confront Rojas's anti-leftist proposal by promoting a contrasting version of Argentina's past in which Jacobin and socialist ideologies played a central role. In a few months, both intellectuals became involved in an accelerated race to win the allegiance of the country's growing reading public. By December 1915 (the date on which Rojas finally managed to release the first volume of *La Biblioteca Argentina*), Ingenieros had already published 22 titles, with a previously unprecedented printing run: 3000–5000 copies per title, a record figure in Argentina's publishing history.⁶

The immediate success of Ingenieros's series, and his self-proclamation as having been the first in the country to conceive a similar cultural enterprise (Ingenieros, 1915–16: 90–2), challenged Rojas's role as creator and founder of Centennial Argentina's most important programme to produce a national canon. Rojas's response was prompt. In a fierce letter to Argentina's most important newspaper of the time, *La Nación*, besides rightfully claiming to be the first intellectual to have conceived and planned a series of classics in the country, Rojas denied the critical value of *La Cultura Argentina*'s edition, and by doing so, de-authorized it as a viable text for the interpretation of the country's culture. In order to dispute Ingenieros's version of Argentine political and cultural history, and thus grant himself exclusive rights over the interpretation of the past, Rojas relied on a relatively young academic discipline. This discipline was modern philology, and in particular, one of its branches: textual criticism. Using critical concepts developed during the nineteenth century in Europe to edit national classics, Rojas pointed out in his article that Ingenieros's publications lacked legitimacy as reliable sources for interpreting the country's foundational documents. For Rojas, the preparation of authorized editions

was a key step in the normalization and imposition of texts that would be worthy of study. According to Rojas's critique, Ingenieros's editions were conceived and prepared outside the methods of the philological discipline, which, at the time, represented the only guaranteed access to the correct and objective interpretation of texts. For Rojas, there was an inextricable connection between a pristine text and a legitimate text, between original and origin, between origin and truth. After reviewing Ingenieros's volumes, Rojas asserted, 'the opinion I have formed about them is so unfavorable that I believe that for the sake of the decency of the *true Argentine culture*, it is now more necessary than ever to republish the masters in duly expurgated and prefaced editions' (Rojas, 1915a, emphasis added).

In Rojas's case, philology would be used to authorize his readings of historical documents and make him a privileged interpreter of the nation's origins. Furthermore, it would also help Rojas to undermine the alternative readings of the national tradition already popularized on a massive scale by *La Cultura Argentina*. In his letter to *La Nación*, Rojas made it clear that the publication of a series of national texts required something more than the straightforward ranking and dissemination of writers and texts: it also entailed the guarantee of their institutionalization by means of specific disciplines and critical methodologies. Upheld as the critical paradigm of Rojas's cultural project, philology was a political weapon Rojas could use against Ingenieros's nationalism and the cultural enterprise he had developed. Thus, in the face of Ingenieros's overwhelming influence, critical knowledge represented for Rojas the crucial element that would permit him to draw the dividing line between authorized and 'profane' interpreters, between 'legitimate' and 'bastard' texts, between textual memory and forgetting.

This article argues that as the history of Rojas and Ingenieros's series demonstrates, the emergence of the national classics generated a dispute over interpretive power that not only involved opposing criteria of selection of authors and texts, but also the use of specific knowledges to authorize their reading and analysis. In other words, as canon-forming projects, *La Biblioteca Argentina* and *La Cultura Argentina* raised the question not only of which authors and books to read, but also how and where to read them. According to its defenders, philology's concepts, methods and critical operations provided scientific arguments to reveal the ultimate and definitive meanings of the nation's patrimonial texts. In the Argentine case, furthermore, the contemporary political context gave to philology a supplementary dimension. Claimed as a legitimizing discourse at the same time that the country was facing an uncertain political future due to the establishment of a new suffrage law, it played a crucial role in the process of nation-building. In this sense, the examination of the function of early critical discourses in the constitution of a national tradition is a crucial step for understanding the complex network of arguments and operations that connected the practices of critical and ideological legitimization in Argentine cultural history.

Philology and nationalism: the origin of a debate

In the nineteenth century, modern philology emerged as a discipline capable of both guaranteeing a text's placement in the canon, and authorizing the material basis of its

further interpretation. An examination of the discipline's history in Europe reveals its profound connection to the process of nation-building. Gumbrecht (1986) and Cerquiglini (1999) have demonstrated that philology's emergence in Germany after the battle of Jena (1806), and its institutionalization in France after Sedan (1870), were closely related to the development of a form of patriotism that relied on erudition as a weapon of war. The military defeat of each country at the hands of the other resulted in the academic expansion of the study of national history and literature, and in the obsessive search for the foundational ideas of the nation in the country's oldest documents. The way that the *Chanson de Roland* became canonical provides a clear example of the workings of this new cultural politics: seldom considered in a 'political context' before the French–Prussian War, the *Chanson* quickly became part of the nation's patrimony as a result of the critical work of the father of French philology, Gaston Paris. Paris's demand that the French recognize themselves as 'the children of those who died in Roncesvalles' while the Germans were approaching the French capital represented the starting point of an entire cultural reconfiguration in which the epic became an important tool for rebuilding the nation after a period of rapid decline (Hollier, 1989: 11).

For Gaston Paris, philology was a discipline capable of establishing the exact form and meaning of the nation's genealogical texts, and consecrating them as patrimonial elements of a perdurable and legitimate identity. By studying the primitive documents of a language, the philologist should be able to re-establish that which appears to have been lost in the dense proliferation of the past: the author's scrupulous intent, the text's original form, and the nation's immaculate and distant origins. Indeed, knowing the operations through which it was possible to choose among the texts' variants, establishing the ancient documents and reaching a text's original form and meaning became, for the textual critic, synonymous with possessing the truth about and authority over the national tradition. By emphasizing the analogous relationship between pure text and pure origin, and notions of authenticity and authorial intent, nineteenth-century philology made the immutable materiality of the text the trustworthy basis of its commentary (Cerquiglini, 1999: 1–2). As a science capable of converting texts into monuments, the discipline became a decisive factor in the construction of an authorized nationalist canon.

Debates over the methods and objectives of textual criticism first arrived in Argentina around 1890. At this time, the discussions among specialists were focused on one crucial question: how to edit the nation's foundational texts and, in this way, reveal the country's 'true' political and cultural origins. Paul Groussac's long and hostile review of Norberto Piñero's edition of Mariano Moreno's *Escritos* for the *Biblioteca del Ateneo* (Atheneum Library) (1896) marked the beginning of the ensuing complex relationship between philology, cultural capital and political alternatives in Argentina.⁷ In his review, Groussac accused Piñero – a lawyer by profession – of compromising the accepted interpretation of the nation's past by publishing the texts of Argentina's hero of the emancipation without knowing the procedures for carrying out such a project. For Groussac, the 'literary inexperience, the mistaken historical concept or the ignorance of the discipline's inherent methods' of this 'esteemed aficionado' (Groussac, 1896: 121–2), had led Piñero to include in *Escritos* a document that completely altered the longstanding image of Moreno in liberal historiography. The text in question was a 'Plan ... de las operaciones que el nuevo

gobierno ... debe poner en práctica hasta consolidar ... nuestra libertad e independencia' (Plan of operations ... that the new government ... must put into practice to consolidate ... our freedom and independence). This document, found some time before in the *Archivo de Indias* in Seville,⁸ recommended, among other things, the use of slander, perjury, bribery, scheming, deceit and espionage as means of securing the triumph of the revolution. Defending what he considers to be the slander of a national hero, Groussac pointed out in his article that only the lack of appropriate training for analyzing Moreno's ideas and style could explain Piñero's edition.

For Groussac, the association of Moreno with Jacobinism was an act of genealogical profanation that demanded immediate reparation. Only the use of philological methods would reveal the truth, wipe the stain of radicalism from Moreno's *oeuvre*, and clean the lineage of the nation's revolutionary father. In this case, philology was expected to assume the historical function that Cerquiglini (1999: 49) attributes to it: that of being a 'bourgeois, paternalistic, and hygienist system of thought about the family' that 'cherishes filiation, tracks down adulterers, and is afraid of contamination'. Indeed, Groussac believed that philology had a clear nationalist dimension; as he stated in his review, 'literary methods ... are a direct part of the [historical] process, and they are closely related to the development and discipline of the Argentine spirit' (Groussac, 1896: 122). In this particular context, Groussac's idea suggested that critical tools were expected to fulfil the specific task of liberating the national tradition from any radical genealogy.⁹ In his ensuing two-year long debate with Piñero, Groussac demanded a re-reading of Moreno's work on different textual grounds,¹⁰ and by doing so, established the precedents for future debates on the authorship of the 'Plan'.

The immediate failure of the series in which Piñero's edition was published, and the fundamentally erudite nature of the polemical debate that followed it, meant that the polemic did not resonate with the general public in the way Rojas and Ingenieros's would. However, the emblematic character of the author selected to open the series, and the questionable presentation of his writings, was enough to generate an erudite controversy over literary professionalization and the functions of criticism, the consequences of which would be felt many years later in Argentina's political and cultural history.

Indeed, in 1915, nearly 20 years after Groussac and Piñero's debate, Rojas once again underlined philology's potential to defend the Argentine tradition from the intervention of new 'profane' editors. On this occasion, Rojas attempted to de-authorize the texts of Ingenieros's successful series by claiming that Ingenieros had published *La Cultura Argentina's* editions without following necessary philological procedures. In his article, 'Historia de una biblioteca' (History of a Library), Rojas emphasized that Ingenieros's series lacked two key elements: adequate introductions in which the reader could find historical and critical interpretations of the works, and critically established texts. In Rojas's words, the introductions to *La Cultura Argentina* were mostly 'dissertations detached from the book or the author, discourses composed for other occasions', and the texts' historical and literary information was glaringly erroneous. Furthermore, Ingenieros's editions were 'full of printing errata, principally of dates and names' (Rojas, 1915a). Detailing these flaws, and deploying an argumentative strategy in which he linked specialized knowledge, truth and the need for a moral restoration of the nation, Rojas concluded that it was incumbent

upon him to publish an alternative collection, in order to thus reverse the negative consequences of Ingenieros's sloppy collection on the interpretation of the country's national tradition. According to Rojas's review, Ingenieros was situated on the opposite side of those who, like him, aspired to the construction of '*the real Argentine culture ... on the fruits of silent, specialized, and sincere labour*'. Ingenieros, Rojas concluded, 'for being himself a doctor, *has always studied other completely different matters: criminology, hysteria, rheumatism...*' (ibid., emphasis added). These aspects of Rojas's critique reflected the emerging tensions in the interior of the Argentine intellectual field, at a time when the possession of specialized cultural capital became a crucial component part of legitimizing critical interventions.

The politics of editing: democracy and contesting ideologies

The struggles to consecrate a particular version of the nation's past began for Rojas and Ingenieros at the exact place where Groussac and Piñero had left off: the debate over the authenticity of Moreno's 'Plan', and the author's Jacobinism. However, by 1915, the year that both series were launched, the political situation in the country had changed dramatically: the growing influence of the Left, along with the imminence of the first presidential elections since the Sáenz Peña law, gave an additional colour to the dispute. Disregarding philology's importance in the process of establishing the nation's texts, Ingenieros decided to give his series a radical profile by insisting on Moreno's Jacobinism as one of the nation's foundational ideas. This was a blatant rejection of Groussac's observations. Indeed, in *La Cultura Argentina* Ingenieros did not hesitate to reprint, *without any variation whatsoever*, the highly disputed Ateneo edition, including the 'Plan' and Piñero's introduction. Adopting a confrontational tone, Ingenieros asserted in his introductory note to the volume that Piñero's edition not only comprised 'that which is essential and that which is characteristic about the eminent revolutionary' but also represented 'the only *serious work* carried out to gather and publish them'. Furthermore, in his biographical note, he reaffirmed that, as the 'Plan' demonstrated, due to Moreno's action the Junta of 1810 had embraced the revolutionary and progressive character of French radical thought. This influence was so obvious for Ingenieros that only those intellectuals who were interested in creating an accommodating image of Moreno could deny the Jacobinism implicit in the foundational ideas of 'Argentine-ness'. As Ingenieros later asserted in *La evolución de las ideas argentinas*, in his opinion, calling Moreno 'a Jacobin [represented] his most legitimate title of glory from the point of view of the Revolution'. For him, the adjective represented the 'highest praise' for the revolutionary leader. Responding to those critics who saw in philology undeniable disciplinary authority over textual filiations and the establishment of 'true' meanings, Ingenieros pointed out that, although the 'Plan's' inauthenticity might be proved sometime in the future, it would be impossible to deny its value as a 'faithful reflection of the *morenista* spirit'. In a concluding statement on the value of philology and its authority over the meanings of the past, Ingenieros (1957: 119–23) wrote, 'Given that the "Plan" has been attributed to Moreno himself and this attribution

negated with good reason', the matter was, for him, 'as important for historical criticism as it is incidental for those who examine the spirit of that time'.

Rojas's *Biblioteca Argentina* appeared just in time to contest Ingenieros's interpretation of Moreno and the revolution. In his edition of Moreno's writings, Rojas explicitly acknowledged the imminent presidential elections, emphasizing the necessity of supporting a 'democratic ideal' located outside any radicalized ideology. This proposal required the publication of 'faithful' editions, printed with the declared objective that the 'unprepared reader' could 'attribute to each author or to the author's ideas the meaning that corresponds to them in the country and in the historical context in which they were written', which Rojas (1915b: 13, 17) also referred to as the text's 'origins' and 'primitive tendency'. In his prologue to Moreno's *Escritos*, Rojas maintained that the series he had initiated with the book attempted to promote the appropriate political and cultural tradition on which Argentina's new electoral democracy needed to assert itself. In fact, Rojas compared his own work of cultural organization in Centennial Argentina with that carried out by Moreno during the May Revolution, suggesting that his series represented the continuation and resuscitation of an interrupted cultural project. According to this logic, if Centennial Argentina represented another 'foundational' moment in the country's history, then Rojas himself was the new Moreno. 'The attitude of Mariano Moreno', Rojas (1915c: 23) wrote, 'reveals to us that he had apostolic feelings about democracy, but that he knew it was unfeasible without the diffusion of culture, which can illuminate popular reason and make suffrage not a mere exterior act, but rather the conscious deliberation of each citizen'.¹¹

Modern philology clearly allowed Rojas to reveal to the public Moreno's 'true' and original ideas. However, a closer look at Rojas's argument for the necessity of publishing the nation's texts in accordance with proper critical norms reveals that it was, essentially, a mere declaration of principles. In fact, a careful analysis of Rojas's editions demonstrates that his editorial practice actually disregarded the discipline's rigorous methodology. His arguments in favour of the philological method were tied more to a strategic justification of his positions on the past, by means of presumably 'scientific' arguments, than to the employment of specific critical operations. In any case, an examination of Rojas's editions shows that his critical practice was limited to simple strategies of selection, organization and presentation of the texts. Conventional operations of textual criticism such as comparison of extant manuscripts, analysis of variants and investigation of sources were totally foreign to his edition of Moreno's texts.

The publication of the initial volume of his collection, Mariano Moreno's *Doctrina democrática*, proved to be a clear example of the biased way in which Rojas used the discipline to legitimize his own position on the nation's cultural and political tradition. Rojas's decision to bestow the title of *Doctrina democrática* on the first volume of his series, and publish the anthology shortly before the first clean presidential election, exemplifies the strategic place that philological discourse occupied in his cultural project and reveals the opportunistic and strongly interpretive character of his publication. Moreover, his failure to present direct and pertinent evidence from Moreno's writings to defend such a title, and the hasty self-justification of his selection that he sketched in the introduction, makes his critical competence and objectivity questionable. In an effort to pre-empt the objections of critics and

detractors, Rojas quickly moved forward in the introduction to reinforce his claim that by opting for the title of *Doctrina democrática* he intended to do nothing more than embody the spirit of Moreno's ideas about 'justice and liberty' (1915c: 17). He maintained that his editorial decision, at first glance, could be seen as a 'bibliographic abuse' (1915c: 14) but was not so in reality, for two important reasons. First, contrary to all indications, he asserted that the designation was no less 'authentic' than the generic titles used by Manuel Moreno and Piñero in their nineteenth-century editions of *Escritos* (Writings), and *Arengas* (Harangues), respectively.¹² Second, he added that such a designation could easily be defended, given that it expressed 'the theme that gives unity to his [Moreno's] pages and lasting glory to the ideas of their titanic author'. Nevertheless, as he evinced in his defensive explanation, Rojas was aware that, within the framework of a strict philological methodology, 'theme' and 'glory' were not critical categories that could be used in the process of labelling works of diverse genres and periods, especially when it was possible for the editor to use a less compromising title, such as 'Selected Writings', or 'Selected Works'.

Rojas's questionable procedures as an editor are also noticeable in a second controversial case that conspicuously exhibits the biased criteria and editorial procedures he employed for both anthologizing and organizing Moreno's texts. His edition of the author's writings not only omitted, as expected, the controversial 'Plan', without discussing in detail the basis of his decision, but also arranged Moreno's legal documents, journalistic articles and political essays along the lines of a homogeneous and linear narrative that was reinforced by the internal organization of the volume itself. Thus, Rojas grouped together a number of works that Moreno wrote for different occasions and readers, such as 'Representación de los hacendados', journal articles from the *Gazeta* and 'Miras del Congreso', according to an 'evolutionary' sequence whose ideological and historical coherence he attempted to convey by introducing them as 'parts' (or, as he alternatively called them, 'opuscles') of a supposedly larger, more organic book. This manoeuvre allowed Rojas finally to underscore his thesis that all of Moreno's texts were expressions of a sole and recurring theme: the democratic ideal. According to Rojas:

I have selected, thus, [his] three most important opuscles; therefore, this volume is not called *Writings* of Mariano Moreno, but rather *Doctrina democrática* of Mariano Moreno, because in it the author expounds a critique of colonial society (Book I [*Representación de los hacendados*]), then he topples it with his revolutionary advocacy (Book II [texts from the *Gazeta*]), and finally he provides the basis for reconstituting it (Book III [*Las miras del Congreso*]), in accordance with the ideal of democratic freedom. (Rojas, 1915c: 13; emphasis added)

As his explanation demonstrates, Rojas attempted to put into practice an interpretive operation that not only removed the texts from their specific historical inscription but also linked them to a concept of democracy that he grounded in general republican and liberal claims. Attempting to present the texts' meanings as self-evident, he finally concluded that nobody, after reading these 'opuscles', would be able to 'deny Moreno's faith in the forces of the land and free labour that he expounds in the first [book], nor the necessity of republican austerity that he advocates constantly in the second, nor the urgency of organizing an independent government for the normal

exercise of sovereignty of all the peoples who had submitted themselves to the revolution' (Rojas, 1915c: 17–18).

This interpretation of Moreno's thought is substantially distinct from that presented and disseminated by Ingenieros some months before. Two points of divergence deserve mention here. In the first place, by eliminating the 'Plan' from his edition, Rojas avoided the task of addressing the complex philological question of the text's authorship, which would have required him to put into practice precise and difficult analytical operations. Second, he managed to leave aside the problem of connecting the Argentine revolutionary leader to a compromising and oft-rejected ideology. Instead, through a form of explanation that he promised not to include in future introductions, but which seemed necessary to him in the first volume of the series, Rojas strategically insisted on clarifying the sources of Moreno's work. In order to highlight the author's distance from Jacobinism, he maintained that he did not want to 'conclude these preliminary pages without attracting the attention of those readers who were novices in this type of study, about the *classical background* that one notices in the philosophical and literary culture of Mariano Moreno' (Rojas, 1915c: 22; emphasis added). In this regard, he underlined the influence exerted over Moreno by the 'Greco-Roman tradition' and the ideas of Jovellanos, Adam Smith and Spanish economists, as well as by the works of Rousseau and the French encyclopaedists, all authors he could read in Chuquisaca (*ibid.*: 22–3). As a result, Rojas was able to reposition Moreno as the founder of Argentine democracy without connecting him to any radical thinker. Thus, by functioning as an instrument of pre-electoral political and cultural education, the initial volume of *La Biblioteca Argentina* encouraged the reader to conclude that the nation's founding tradition was completely separate from the ideological tenets of extremist politics.

However, the struggle to detach the origins of the Argentine tradition from 'leftist' ideologies did not end with the discussion of Moreno's text. A similar problematic reappeared with the publication of Esteban Echeverría's *Dogma socialista* (Socialist Dogma). In this case, continuing a discussion begun decades ago, the debate focused on the contested meaning of the term 'socialist' and its multiple interpretations and appropriations. Once again, Ingenieros's edition served as the detonator of the counteroffensive Rojas presented in the second volume of his series. Under the title of *Dogma socialista – Plan económico – Filosofía social* (Socialist Dogma – Economic Plan – Social Philosophy), Ingenieros had published in *La Cultura Argentina* a compilation of works in which Echeverría was depicted as a historian, publicist and sociologist who reaffirmed the humanitarian, scientific and revolutionary character of the Argentine tradition. Making yet another effort to link French leftist thought to the formation of the Argentine political and cultural tradition, Ingenieros attempted to reveal the connection between Echeverría's work and the writings of the socialist philosopher and publicist, Pierre Leroux. In addition, Ingenieros insisted in his introductory note that *Dogma*, published in 1846, was a product of the ideological climate that had unleashed the French revolution of 1848. Ingenieros underscored this interpretation with his conveniently prefaced, sequenced and hierarchically organized edition of Echeverría's essays that supposedly allowed the reader to clearly identify the author's socialist ideas.

For instance, in order to underline the preponderance of socialism over any other ideological influence in Echeverría's early works, Ingenieros restricted himself to

asserting in his introductory note to the edition that Echeverría in '1837 ... wrote his famous *Dogma socialista*, inspired by the Saint-Simonian doctrines continued in France by Pierre Leroux'. This statement misled the reader in two different ways. On the one hand, it withheld the fact that the work published by Echeverría on that date was, in fact, entitled *Código o Creencia*, and that only in 1846 had it come to be part of *Dogma socialista*. On the other hand, Ingenieros's brief introduction also omitted the fact that the 1837 text had actually been primarily informed by different doctrines, mainly those of several European revolutionary groups (Young Europe, for example), and the ideas of Lammenais.¹³ But, as Ingenieros had warned in relation to the philological question of the 'Plan's' authorship, he was not interested in basing his interpretation of the past in a rigorous chronology, textual accuracy, or a detailed investigation and commentary of sources.

Instead, guided by the sole aim of highlighting Echeverría's socialist tendencies, he did not hesitate to publish the original version of *Dogma* with three additional economic and political articles by Echeverría, one of which even predated *Dogma*. For him, three texts – 'Sentido filosófico de la Revolución de Febrero en Francia' (Philosophical Significance of the French February Revolution) (1848), the second 'Lectura del Salón Literario' (Reading at the Salón Literario) (1837), and 'Contribución territorial' (Tax Contributions on Land) (1848?) – were essential 'commentaries' to the *Dogma*, and clearly help understand its socialist significance. With 'Sentido filosófico' Ingenieros wanted to demonstrate Echeverría's support for a line of revolutionary thought that had first emerged in the scattered references to Leroux present in *Dogma*; the remaining two articles helped to underscore the notion that Echeverría favoured agrarian socialism through the implementation of tax reforms (Ingenieros, 1957: V, 97–104). With this particular editorial arrangement, Ingenieros attempted to present *Dogma* as an intermediate document in a textual 'chain' that was initiated with the primitive *Código* of 1837 and had culminated with the article about the Revolution of 1848. In this way, Ingenieros suggested that socialism was a constantly – albeit gradually – developing component in Echeverría's thought. Ingenieros's introduction to Echeverría's writings shows the way in which he carefully orchestrated the wording of his presentation in order to construct a coherent, perfectly tripartite, retrospective ideological narrative about the author. In Ingenieros's own words:

Dogma has its *historical commentary* in the 'Ojeada Retrospectiva' [Retrospective Glance] that predates the 1846 reprinting [although in fact, the 'Ojeada' is not a commentary of *Dogma*, but rather of *Código*], its *economic commentary* in the reading known as 'Plan Económico' effected in 1837 in the Salón Literario of Buenos Aires [in other words, the supposed commentary chronologically preceded the aforementioned text], and its *philosophical/social commentary* in the second part of the study of the French February Revolution (1848), which is included in this edition under the generic title of 'Filosofía social'. (ibid., emphasis added)

The publication of Rojas's edition of *Dogma* just a few months after the appearance of Ingenieros's version explicitly professed to discredit his rival's interpretation by joining it to a line of readings that denied the influence of European socialism in

Echeverría's text. In fact, by the year 1915, the battle over the meaning of the controversial term in Echeverría's work already had a long history, and Ingenieros (1957: V, 91–2) had expressly proposed to challenge it. Alberdi had refuted Echeverría's socialism in the note that appeared in Valparaíso (1851) on the occasion of the author's death, Menéndez Pelayo (1948: 378) had questioned these leanings in the *Antología de la poesía hispano-americana* (1893–95), and Adolfo Saldías (1907: 5) had done the same in his edition of *Dogma* in 1907. By insisting on textual criticism's scientific authority, Rojas attempted to consolidate this interpretation. In his introduction, he stated that his edition of *Dogma* aimed to 'correct' the 'doctrinaire mistake' of 'those who, without having read the book, might have confused Echeverría's socialism, prior to 1846, with current socialism, post-1848, if one considers the latter in its primitive romantic form, or in the scientific and political forms that followed the tragic European uprising of 1848' (Rojas, 1915b: 12–13).

However, in order to prove his point and discredit Ingenieros's interpretation, Rojas once again found himself far from heeding the authorized philological operations through which he attempted to seal his truth. A bitter critic of Ingenieros's series, Rojas nevertheless did not hesitate to use the same editorial strategies brought to bear by his publishing competitor, especially the calculated inclusion of supposed 'commentaries' on particular works. Rojas's edition of *Dogma* is another example of how Rojas used philology as a legitimizing critical discourse – rather than a strict and complex methodology – that could be cited opportunistically to validate his own interpretations and hypotheses. In truth, strict adherence to the rules of the critical method would technically have made it impossible for Rojas to be able to reproduce *Dogma* with the 'additions' he wanted to include, given that he had access to the text's first edition (which was corrected and published by Echeverría himself in his lifetime), and there were no simultaneous or posterior testimonies that he could use to authorize additions or revisions. Nevertheless, once again Rojas managed to justify his 'expanded' edition on the basis of his own principle – that is, the unmistakable thematic connection between the supplementary texts and the original – along with a curious speculation about Echeverría's motives and intentions. Rojas maintained that by publishing the work with his own additions, he was actually doing 'the same thing that the author would have done', if he had had the opportunity to reprint his own work (Rojas, 1915b: 16), in spite of the fact that there was no evidence whatsoever to support this assumption.

In order to suggest that in Echeverría's work the word 'socialist' only meant 'social creed', and that his ideas 'did not postulate any workers' problem of an international nature, nor any reform of capital or labour' (Rojas, 1915b: 17), Rojas deliberately excluded the author's article about the revolution of 1848. In its place, he added 'Cartas al Archivo Americano' (Letters to *Archivo Americano*), which in 1847 Echeverría had addressed to Pedro de Angelis, Rosas's man of letters, in order to defend himself from the criticisms posed against his work, and respond to the accusations of Saint-Simonianism. But this was not all; indeed, in the preparation of his edition, Rojas went even further: aiming to present Echeverría's letters as an essential component of the book, he, like Ingenieros, once again organized the author's materials in a tripartite 'narrative' format that, by means of subtitles nonexistent in the original text, created the impression of an organic, uniform, seamless whole. As a result, the 'Ojeada retrospectiva', which was written *after*

Código, appeared under the invented title of 'Antecedentes del *Dogma*' (Antecedents to *Dogma*), the primitive *Código* appeared under the denomination 'Exposición de *Dogma*' (Exposition of *Dogma*), and the extraneous *Cartas al Archivo* appeared as 'Defensa del *Dogma*' (Defence of *Dogma*). After thus placing on the same level various texts from different sources and with distinct contents, Rojas justified his careful suturing operation in the following terms:

These three opuscles comprise, in my opinion, the ideas of *Dogma*, such as Echeverría saw them in three distinct moments of the nation's history, in three different situations of his own life, and in three distinct attitudes of his impassioned spirit. In 1837 he wrote *Palabras simbólicas* (Part II) ...and at a time when ... he believed it was possible to, vis-à-vis the nascent tyranny, part with the Unitarians and the federalists, and return to the pure and liberal traditions of the Emancipation. In 1846 he wrote *Ojeada retrospectiva* (Part I), at a time when the dispersed youth had taken refuge in neighbouring nations, inspired in large part by the ideals of which this book was an initiator.... Finally, in 1847 he wrote *Cartas al Archivo* (Part III), in order to defend in *Dogma* the dreams for which they had abandoned their nation and their homes. (Rojas, 1915b: 14–15, emphasis added)

In this explanation, Rojas demonstrated that he had no interest other than that of presenting Echeverría's text on neutral ground, without succumbing to any kind of 'seditious intention', which in his terms meant nothing other than 'socialist' intention. Facing the prospect of Argentina's political future, and the possible transformation that the new electoral legislation might bring to the country's diverse social body, Rojas insisted on reading Echeverría from a perspective that precluded all possible connections to collectivism or internationalism. Consequently, in the prologue to *Dogma*, Rojas asserted 'His "socialism" raises itself against the "individualism" of the despots or "oligarchy" of the intransigent parties that ... stained the republic with blood' (Rojas, 1915b: 17–18). He also added that in the book, 'internationalism is not addressed, but rather brotherhood, in the sense of Christian humanism. Nor is collective possession of land addressed, but rather the moral community of all the inhabitants within the same national solidarity' (ibid.: 18).

Rojas also took care to avoid mentioning Echeverría's rejection of universal suffrage in *Palabras simbólicas*, an idea that would have contradicted the electoral reality post-1912. Instead, he insisted that *Dogma* was meant to offer a political alternative to all Argentines, since it was not written to support one specific political ideology. After refuting any possible relationship between democracy and leftist ideologies, he merely added that as an authentic 'national book', *Dogma* should 'serve as patrimony' to all citizens: [A]ll will find here a potent yeast of Argentine-ness, capable of uniting everyone under the progressive ideals of democracy' (Rojas, 1915b: 19). Thus, Rojas's interpretation attempted to free *Dogma* from any compromising associations; above all, he committed himself to promoting his presumably objective edition as ideologically neutral and all-inclusive.

The uses of philology

The ways in which Ingenieros and Rojas arranged Moreno's and Echeverría's texts demonstrate that both editors pursued the same ideological and editorial objective: to canonize and disseminate alternative versions of the past by means of biased editions. By linking Moreno and Echeverría to a specific group of materials, they helped develop and establish what Foucault (1977: 123) characterized as an 'author-function': 'A name can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others. A name also establishes different forms of relationships among texts ... [T]he fact that a number of texts were attached to a single name implies that relationships of homogeneity, filiation and reciprocal explanation, authentication, or of common utilization were established among them.' In their simultaneous publications of the national classics, Rojas and Ingenieros repeatedly intended to establish and disseminate homogenous discursive units. But in fact, despite the editors' attempts to avoid internal dissonance in their deliberately arranged volumes, their series' concurrent publications ultimately created the hermeneutical conflict they had desperately tried to prevent. At a time of political and cultural confrontation between traditional forces and the new minority and anti-hegemonic groups, Moreno and Echeverría were paradoxically presented to the reading public as homogeneous and invariable subjects of discourse, yet representatives of alternative and apparently irreconcilable ideological positions. In fact, the editors' attempts to highlight the coherence of Moreno's and Echeverría's texts were concerned more with their own intellectual projects and the battles over nationalism during the Centennial than with the past and the foundational authors' contradictory works.

Nevertheless, Rojas and Ingenieros's competition to establish homogeneous versions of Moreno and Echeverría and to monopolize the definition of an Argentine cultural tradition in the face of an uncertain future was not limited to the presentation of two narratives of opposing origin. Institutional factors also became a strategic issue in the success of both cultural projects. Rojas, for instance, saw in modern philology a crucial tool to validate the legitimacy of his ideological articulation of Moreno's and Echeverría's texts. Challenged to counteract what had been an unprecedented publishing success in Argentine cultural history, he invoked the discourse of textual criticism to defend his authority as interpreter of the Argentine past. However, Rojas's editions show that the criteria he used to present his series' texts actually contradicted philology's authorized practices. As we have seen, a thorough reading of Rojas's editions of Moreno and Echeverría demonstrates that he actually resorted to textual criticism more as an argumentative strategy to defend his ideological tenets than as a specialized method of textual analysis. Nevertheless, in spite of his unsatisfied demands, Rojas recognized that the establishment of a canon required more than the mere procedure of selecting and mass-disseminating authors and their works. He clearly understood that in an age of growing critical professionalization and specialization of knowledge, interpretive power also depended on the mediation of critical theories and institutional factors.

Ingenieros, by contrast, opted for an intellectual model that was located outside the emerging cultural field's rules of operation: he relied exclusively on the dynamics of the ever-growing reading market for his series' public establishment and success. The foundation of Ingenieros's cultural project was an effective interventionist

strategy through which he attempted to 'disseminate at negligible prices and in thousands of copies, the national book'. He chose to limit himself to 'reproducing the old editions that I obtained, *without stopping to critically purge them, in order not to lose time*' (quoted in Quesada, 1925: 443; emphasis added). This strategy would have two important consequences for his cultural enterprise. On one hand, *La Cultura Argentina* had a visibly larger social impact than that of *La Biblioteca Argentina*. On the other hand, Ingenieros's series suffered from the critical disapproval of an increasingly professionalized lettered community that rejected *La Cultura Argentina*'s critical 'illegitimacy'. In spite of the fact that Ingenieros's series managed to quintuple the number of titles published by *La Biblioteca Argentina*, its notorious influence over the shaping of the national imaginary suffered a fierce blow, as, in the hands of Rojas, philological discourse gradually permeated broader intellectual spaces. In 1923, Rojas created the Institute of Philology at the University of Buenos Aires, consequently securing, on an institutional level, the discipline that had legitimized his own interpretations of the past.¹⁴ Furthermore, the early death of Ingenieros and the growing influence of right-wing ideologies by the mid-1920s represented an irreversible setback for the survival of radical and socialist narratives of the nation's origins.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the opportunism of Rojas's editorial and ideological operation did not pass unperceived by all. Indeed, a solitary voice managed to speak out for the last time. Despite its clear anti-Jacobin and pro-philological position, Rojas's edition of Moreno's writings was severely criticized by none other than the person who, more than 20 years before, had inaugurated the debate over Moreno's texts: Paul Groussac himself. In 1924, collecting his articles in *Crítica literaria*, he added a brief 'Post scriptum' to his bitter polemic with Piñero. In it, he questioned precisely the title chosen by Rojas, accusing him of being 'an assiduous exponent of the flowery style', for not having preferred the 'simpler' title of *Escritos* (Writings) for Moreno's texts. Furthermore, Groussac pointed out with his usual, lapidary style that Moreno's texts contained 'nothing about 'doctrines', or 'democracy', since in his essays he 'only once employed the adjective ['democratic'], in reference to Switzerland'. For all these reasons, Groussac (1980: 287) asserted that Rojas's edition lacked any value, and that 'far from improving on its predecessors, [it was] without a doubt the worst of them all'. His obvious taste for harshness, exaggeration and emphasis notwithstanding, Groussac's conclusion still managed to reveal the primary implication of Rojas's textual politics: the use of philology as a strategic discipline for legitimizing a specific version of the country's origins in a threatening political present. Although Groussac never attempted to prepare an edition of Moreno's works, and never excused the 'profane' Piñero for his edition, he nevertheless never lost sight of the goals of Rojas the 'specialist': to grant himself the right to interpret Argentina's past, and by doing so, to authorize a politics of textual memory and forgetting.

Notes

- 1 Halperín Donghi, 1999: 15–272. Unless otherwise noticed, all translations are mine.
- 2 For a history of these debates, see Bertoni, 2001.
- 3 On paradigms, agents and modes of organization of cultural policies, see García

- Canclini, 1987: 13–61; Brunner, 1988: 261–313; Teixeira Coelho, 1997: 293–300.
- 4 For a more detailed account of the Argentine Left's political and cultural activities, see Solberg, 1970; Gallo and Cortés Conde, 1987; Barrancos, 1990, 1991; Gutiérrez and Romero, 1995.
 - 5 Ricardo Rojas, *La restauración nacionalista: informe sobre educación* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Justicia e Instrucción Pública, 1909) 38–9. Emphasis mine.
 - 6 Rojas, 'Antología Argentina', *El monitor de la educación común* 466 (1911) 109–10. Emphasis added.
 - 7 On the concept of tradition, see Williams, 1977, and Hobsbawm, 1983.
 - 8 See José Ingenieros, 'Historia de una biblioteca,' in Ingenieros, 1961–62: 293; also Quesada, 1925: 445; Bagú, 1936: 160. José L. Trenti Rocamora has informed me that his analysis of the printing systems used for Rojas's series suggest that its print run was not larger than 1000 copies.
 - 9 Some years later, in 1903, C. Morel inaugurated the first philology course in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at the University of Buenos Aires. See Morel, 1906: 505–30.
 - 10 For a history of the discovery and publication of this text, see Moreno, 1965: 7–17; Davire de Musri, 1988; and Caparrós, 1999.
 - 11 For more on Groussac's opposition to leftist ideologies, see 'La educación por el folletín', *La Biblioteca* 18 (1897): 324.
 - 12 Groussac's review generated a counter-reply from Piñero – *Los escritos de Moreno y la crítica del señor Groussac* (Buenos Aires: Felix Lajouane, 1897), which, at the time, provoked another intervention by Groussac – 'Escritos de Mariano Moreno (second article)', *La Biblioteca* 7 (1898): 268–318. In spite of his aggressive critique of Piñero, Groussac had to admit here that perhaps the 'Plan' was the work of 'one of Moreno's "terrible" and "impassioned" followers' (p. 308), 'designer of the *Sociedad Patriótica* and a regular customer at Mallco's café' (p. 312). The insulting tone of this second article by Groussac, director of *La Biblioteca*, provoked ministerial censure, since the magazine was sponsored by the state. Groussac responded by deciding to suspend his publication of the journal. See 'La desaparición de *La Biblioteca*', *La Biblioteca* 8 (1898): 244–8.
 - 13 It should be noted that, among other revolutionary initiatives, Moreno wrote the introduction to a partial translation of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. In his prologue, Rojas stated: 'It is known that Moreno, in reprinting that book and writing its introduction, attempted to begin a series of analogous publications, with the objective of serving democratic culture.... That which Moreno accomplished for the citizens of Geneva, I will do for the citizens of Buenos Aires. His work thus inaugurates our enterprise, lending to my modest attitude the prestige of its example and glory.' *Doctrina*: 20–2.
 - 14 The original edition is Mariano Moreno, *Colección de arengas en el foro y escritos del doctor don Mariano Moreno* (London: Pickburn, 1836), of which only Volume I appeared. See Moreno, 1896.
 - 15 In contrast with his introductory note to the volume of 'La Cultura Argentina', Ingenieros (1957) recognized these facts in *La evolución de las ideas argentinas*, V: 74–106.
 - 16 On the creation of the Institute of Philology at the University of Buenos Aires, see *Boletín del Instituto de Filología* 1–2 (1926): 71–95, which reproduces the speeches of the dean, Ricardo Rojas, and its first director, Américo Castro.

- 17 For a detailed analysis of the growing influence of the Right in Argentina's history since the mid-1920s, see Halperín Donghi, 1999: 205–72.

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