

**“BORN OF THE SAME OF WOMB, DIFFERENT IN ORIGIN AND BLOOD”:  
THE MAKING OF LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP: 1750-1850  
(PROVISIONAL TITLE)**

Francisco A. Ortega, PhD  
8/19/2010

I. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The European 19<sup>th</sup> century has been described as modeling the birth and progress of the modern nation state, the language of politics and economics, social design and cultural modernity. It was from this original matrix, the story goes, that the model was disseminated throughout the world. From that premise, historicizing the emergence of Latin American states during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century adds little if any value to the self-contained narrative of modernity. However, recent historical inquiry and post-colonial criticism have argued that such story is nothing but a self-sustaining illusion which must be subjected to review and criticism.

In this manuscript I look at the emergence of the Latin American republics during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not as a case of mimetic or derivative modernity, but as co-producers of a modernity that decisively incorporated, from the beginning, a colonial dimension within its own domain. By exploring the emergence and appropriation of political liberalism, particularly as it helped define the experiential content and significance of citizenship outside of Europe, I engage such discussion at the point where Europe unfolds as a civilizing mission and informs the attributes of modern citizenship.

This monograph examines several spheres of cultural and political negotiation in Latin America between 1750 and 1850, as the region moves from a colonial regime to a post-colonial order, from absolutist monarchies to –for the most part-- liberal republics or, at least, constitutional monarchies (Brazil, Spain and Portugal). During the second half of this period they constituted intense venues of debate and creativity, as the new American states made strenuous efforts to build the material and intellectual basis of the new republics. In all of these efforts, it is easy to detect both the impulse to draw from the immediate past and a vehement desire to break with it. In all cases, political and intellectual agents were keenly aware of American

particularity, a situation which demanded creative solutions which, nonetheless, would only be formulated within the premises of the shared language of European modernity. The manuscript explores these negotiations in the spheres of education, historiography, cartography, morality, visual and literary imaginings, spheres within which one encounters powerful independent projects and ambitious institutional efforts.

The manuscript focuses on northwest South America (Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela), though I often draw on sources and case studies from other regions of the Iberian world, including Spain and Portugal, as participants of a broad nineteenth century political community. Furthermore, any comprehension of these developments must locate them within the context the Atlantic revolutions --and not just as derivative participants. The focus on the region that made up the Great Colombia (1821-1830) is justified on several grounds. To begin with, the region provides an understudied scenario --when compared with other Latin American regions such as Mexico, Peru, Buenos Aires or even Brazil—and presents interesting differences of its own. Thus, a focus on the Great Colombia enriches our understanding of the modern Iberian experience and contributes to a better understanding of the regional engagement with 19<sup>th</sup> century European culture and politics and the institutional challenges it faced. On the other, the existence of an alternative supra-national political project to our current day nation states –the Great Colombia—offers a welcomed pause from nationalistic and teleological bicentennial narratives and provides an insight into other circuits of communication, sources of legitimation and horizons of political aspiration.

#### CHAPTER LAY OUT

##### 1. INTRODUCTION: ON AMERICAN *MESTIZAJE* AND ORIGINALITY

- ❖ Francisco José de Caldas, “On the influence of climate upon the population” (1809)
- ❖ Antonio Nariño, *Bagatela* (Trinkets; 1811-1812)

- ❖ Simón Bolívar, Jamaica Letter (1815), Address at the Congress of Angostura (1819)
- ❖ Simón Rodríguez, *American Societies* (1828; 1832; 1840)

## 2. ON THE MAKING OF THE PEOPLE: Education and Republican Virtues

- ❖ Spanish Bourbon school reforms: Jovellanos, Campomanes (1770-1808)
- ❖ Simón Bolívar, *Address to the Congress of Angostura* (1819)
- ❖ Francisco de Paula Santander and Lancasterianism (1821-1837)
- ❖ Simón Rodríguez, "On Popular Education" -

## 3. ON THE STUDYING AND WRITING OF HISTORY

- ❖ José Manuel Restrepo, *History of the Revolution of the Republic of Colombia* (1828)
- ❖ Creation of National Museum of Great Colombia (1823)
- ❖ Andrés Bello, *Essays on history* (1823-1848)
- ❖ Juan García del Río, *Colombian Meditations* (1829)

## 4. ON THE MAKING OF SPACE

- ❖ Von Humboldt, *Le voyage aux régions équinoxiales du Nouveau Continent* (1807)
- ❖ Francisco José de Caldas, "The State of Geography in the Viceroyalty and with relation to the Economy and Commerce" (1807)
- ❖ José Manuel Restrepo, *Atlas* (1830)
- ❖ Agustín Codazzi, Corographic Commission (1845-59)

## 5. CONCLUSION: ON SPLIT IDENTITY

- ❖ Cesare Ripa, *America (Iconologia 1603)*
- ❖ Pedro José Figueroa, "Portrait of Bolívar and America" (1819)
- ❖ José Joaquín Olmedo, "Victory of Junín" (1825)
- ❖ Henry Price, Carmelo Fernández: *Watercolors*, Corographic Commission
- ❖ Manuel Ancízar, *Alpha's Peregrination* (1850), Corographic Commission

## II. SUMMARY, CHAPTER BY CHAPTER

### 1. Introduction: Dissimilarity, *Mestizaje* and Originality

In this chapter, I explore 19<sup>th</sup> century meanings of racial difference and American originality and the search for modes of addressing such racial and cultural difference outside the language of negation. The chapter begins by examining the semantic fields of colony and constitution in order to identify the axis around which debates on the political and social nature of Spanish American provinces were carried out. If the emergence of a new transatlantic conception of colony redefined the place of the American provinces within the Spanish monarchy during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the question of their "constitution" or lack of it—that is whether they were political communities participating in the Monarchy or, alternatively, colonial possessions administered by the Crown—informed local reactions to the political crisis of 1809.

These debates took place against the idea of American singularity, a perception which was not always exhilarating. Astronomer and geographer Francisco José de Caldas noted in despair "What sorrow fate awaits an American! After so much work, if he is on to something new, the most he can say is that it is not in his books."<sup>1</sup> This keen

---

<sup>1</sup> - Translation of "¡Qué suerte tan triste la de un americano! Después de muchos trabajos, si llega a encontrar alguna cosa nueva, lo más que puede decir es: no está en mis libros." *Obras completas de Francisco José de Caldas* (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1966), p. 158.

sense of difference both fueled the drive for independence and forestalled it; it constituted a source of tension with Spanish Europeans while at the same time it remained a central feature of post independence republican challenges.

Many were the aspects highlighted as presenting a striking difference with Europe, but one in particular, the cultural, social and racial heterogeneity of American societies, was remarked upon with constant anxiety. In Simón Bolívar's own words "All [Americans are] born of the womb of the same mother, our fathers, different in origin and in blood, are foreigners, and all of them differ visibly in their epidermis; this dissimilarity carries an obligation of atonement of the greatest significance". Such racial and cultural diversity renders it "impossible to determine with complete precision to which human family we belong."<sup>2</sup> Americans are a "species midway between the legitimate proprietors of this country and the Spanish usurpers."<sup>3</sup> It is a fact, which according to Bolívar, placed Americans in a "most extraordinary and involved situation."

Originality was thus generally felt as a challenge, a difficulty that had to be overcome. That is why Bolívar proposed mestizaje, racial mixing, as an appropriate form of achieving social cohesion. "The blood of our citizens is various; let us mix it to unify it."<sup>4</sup> Such social engineering, which would fulfill the political revolution's mandate of social and moral equality, required an "infinitely steady hand and an infinitely delicate touch." But there were also those who saw in the existence of American diversity a historical opportunity. For Simón Rodríguez, for instance, the meaning of republicanism was significantly transformed and enriched by it and republicanism itself had a unique historical opportunity in these new American societies.

---

<sup>2</sup> - "Address to the Angostura Congress" (1819). Translated by Janet Burke and Ted Humphrey and reproduced in *Nineteenth Century Nation Building and the Latin American Intellectual Tradition. A Reader* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> - "Jamaica Letter" (1815). Reproduced in *Simón Bolívar* (Paris: UNESCO, 1983), p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> - "Address to the Angostura Congress," p.17.

## 2. The Making of the People:

The Creole elite quickly understood that one of the main challenges of the new Spanish American republics would be the absence of an educated citizenry that could animate civic and political life. The problem was even more pronounced as the new governments embraced the principle of popular sovereignty, the republican institutional framework and a formal definition of freedom. The result of such a deficit was the development of a strong mandate to educate the public, indeed, to “create” the very people that could give life to the new republics.

In many ways, this mandate echoed the period before the monarchical crisis of 1808, as Iberian reformers sought to create a public educational system and American reformers continually denounced the lack of opportunities and institutions in the colonies. However, as the new nations moved to build republican institutions the problem became all the more acute. In this chapter I examine various pedagogical reform projects and efforts, such as those promoted by Iberian and American critics such as Jovellanos (“Informe sobre la Ley Agraria” 1795; and “Memoria sobre la educación pública” 1801), José Miguel Sanz (“Informe sobre instrucción pública o memoria de educación” 1800) and Francisco José de Caldas (“Sobre la educación” and “Escuelas Patriotas” 1808-9). Later I will examine Bolívar’s “Address to the Congress of Angostura” (1819), the understanding and adoption of Joseph Lancaster’s method of mutual learning, his visit to Caracas in 1824 and the adoption by Gran Colombia’s Vice-president Francisco de Paula Santander of the Lancasterian system. The chapter finishes by discussing Simón Rodríguez’ critique of Lancasterianism and his own reflection of primary schools as the appropriate scenario to lay the foundations for the republic by forming citizens and, thus, properly creating a people.

## 3. On the Modes of Studying and Writing History

In this chapter I examine the construction of historical narratives about the Spanish American revolutions and the debates on the appropriate methods for writing the history of American societies. The question that interests me here are how do

changes during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the concept and practice of history contribute or hamper the creation of national histories? Conversely, how are these changes influenced by the widening of the globe, both as the American republics seek to enter the concourse of nations and as large parts of the globe come under the sway of European colonialism. On a narrative level, I will look at the question of "originality" or "singularity" in the Americas and the narrative topics selected in post-independence histories to signify "Americanness"?

In 1848 Venezuelan polymath Andrés Bello wrote two pieces on history, "Modes of Studying History" and "Modes of Writing History," which in many ways continued themes he had already rehearsed during the 1820s. These essays were destined for the benefit of young scholars who were showing enthusiasm for the topic of American history, precisely when the initial republican enthusiasm that had infused early republican life was waning. In them Bello stated the need to distinguish between "two kinds of philosophy of history. One of them is simply the science of humanity in general, the science of moral and social laws, independent of local and temporal influences, and as necessary manifestations of man's intimate nature. The other is ... a concrete science, which deduces from the facts of a race, a people, or a period, the peculiar spirit of that race, people or period..."<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, Americans could and should learn European history, but they should bear in mind that they can not tell their history like Europeans; the lessons and examples provided by European history were important, but an uncritical acceptance of these narratives would lead to see "what there is not, and cannot yet exist."<sup>6</sup> Bello's admonition clearly lays bare the connection of writing and studying history with the construction of a viable future.

In addition to discussing the work of historians and philosophers such as José Manuel Restrepo, Andrés Bello and Juan García del Río, I also examine the organization and creation of the national Museum of Colombia in 1823. The Museum

---

<sup>5</sup> - Originally published as "Modo de estudiar la historia", in *El Araucano* (February 4, 1848). Translated and included as "The Craft of History" in *Selected Writings of Andres Bello*. Edited by Iván Jaksic and translated by Frances Lopez-Morillas (Oxford University Press US, 1998), p. 175.

<sup>6</sup> - Bello, "The Craft of History," p. 63.

welcomed the natural history collection gathered by José Celestino Mutis and cared for his disciples, to which private donations were added.

#### 4. On the Making of Space

The construction of accurate spatial representations became an urgent task for the new republics. Geography was not just a scientific endeavor; it was fundamentally political and it asserted the rights of the national State to represent and administer the territories that fell within its mandate. As with education and history, post-colonial geographical endeavors continued the early efforts of José Celestino Mutis and the Botanical Expedition (1783-1816). Such early efforts, promoted by the Crown but undertaken by young Creoles, had the effect of promoting patriotic appropriation of local American spaces.

The chapter will begin with the efforts by Francisco José de Caldas in the *Semanario de Nueva Granada* (1808-1810) to explain what political geography is and expound its importance. Later, I will examine the first comprehensive effort to build an atlas (1830) by José Manuel Restrepo, which was a supplement to his *Historia de la revolución* (1828). Finally, I will dwell on the work of Giovanni Battista Agostino Codazzi, Italian soldier, adventurer and geographer who arrived in Venezuela in 1816, after Napoleon's defeat. After meeting Bolívar, he mapped the area of the Maracaibo Lake and the borders between Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador. The new government named him Colonel and ordered the creation of an *Atlas of Venezuela*, a task that gave him international fame (in Paris Codazzi was awarded in 1842 the *Legion of Honor* by the King of France, on behalf of the French Academy of Science).

In the meantime, Codazzi adopted Venezuelan citizenship from president José Antonio Páez and became Governor of Barinas, southwest of Caracas. During his appointment he combined official and military duties with new geographical tasks. In the 1840s Codazzi promoted the creation of Colonia Tovar, a small German settlement in the Venezuelan central mountains. After Páez was toppled by a military

insurrection, Codazzi went to Colombia, where he continued his geographic and mapping activity with military duties for the Colombian government and undertook the direction of the newly appointed cartographic Commission (1845-1859). Codazzi died of malaria in February 1859 at the small town of Espíritu Santo, current day Codazzi, in the Colombian mountains, while he was mapping the area.

#### 5. Conclusion: On Split Identity

In 1819 as Simón Bolívar defeated the Spanish Army in the decisive battle of Boyaca (1819) and entered Bogotá victoriously, José Figueroa, professional painter who had been commissioned by royalist authorities to paint a portrait of Ferdinand VII, was asked by the new authorities to paint an allegorical painting of Bolivar to welcome him and honor Liberty. Figueroa had portrayed Ferdinand standing next to a female Indian. Drawn after the manner of Cesare Ripa's allegorical emblem *America* 1593, the female Indian was holding a bow with her left hand, sumptuously adorned with jewels and crowned with a feathered hat. Allegedly, Figueroa deleted the King's image and instead painted a hurried Bolívar over, before presenting the portrait to the hero as a symbol of his most devoted admiration. Remarkably, the painting quickly became an allegory of new republican patriotism.

The quick and easy substitution of one figure for another and the continuation of a late 15<sup>th</sup> century iconographic tradition suggests Independence did not alter the grammar of visual imaginations. Such will be the starting point for this final chapter which will dwell on this Bolivar image as a recurring motif of a split identity throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century Latin American intellectual and cultural history.