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Centenary Subjects: Race, Reason, & Rupture in the Americas by Shawn McDaniel, Vanderbilt University Press, 2021. 282 pages.

Centenary Subjects: Race, Reason, and Rupture in the Americas offers the first detailed study, either in Spanish or in English, of the wide-ranging ideological influence of the early twentieth-century Uruguayan thinker José Enrique Rodó and his book-length essay *Ariel* (1900). A major author of the *modernista* movement, Rodó has become one of *modernismo's* more dated figures, with his penchant for Gladstone collars, three-piece suits, and bow ties, and the ornate prose of *Ariel*. Yet this mild-mannered scholar and congressman from the Southern Cone's smallest country was frequently hailed as a "kind conductor of young spirits" (cit. McDaniel 11) by students from all parts of South America advocating for radical changes in Latin American society and its educational systems. The symbolic figures of Ariel, his adversary Caliban, and the wise old wizard Prospero, borrowed by Rodó from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, became potent emblems in the debates about national identity that consumed Latin American political and intellectual life during the first centenary of the region's independence. *Centenary Subjects* shows just how much the ideas and issues raised by Rodó and those he inspired still echo in the current debates about race, intersectionality, freedom, and community in both North and South America.

Surveying the field of Latin American intellectuals from the 1920s through the 1950s who were influenced by *arielismo* (or who critiqued it) Prof. McDaniel delves into the details of important essays of sociocultural interpretation by authors ranging from Carlos Arturo Torres, Manuel Ugarte, and Antonio Caso to José María Vargas Vila and Carlos Vaz Ferreira, and concludes with a brilliant chapter on the surprising contemporary recuperations and rewritings of Rodó's legacy in various Latin American social movements of different ideological stripes, from the Cuban Revolution and the Zapatistas in Chiapas, through the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela and the Chilean Student Movement.

Another notable contribution is this book's tracing of the ambivalent impact of turn-of-the-nineteenth century racist ideologies in the sociocultural interpretations penned by Rodó's followers as well as critics. Appropriately, Prof. McDaniel wastes no time in bringing this subject to the fore in the book's first chapter, "Euronologies: Racial Simulations in the *Arielista* Archive." Tracing the attempts by disciples of Rodó such as the Peruvian Ventura García Calderón to concoct a concept of Pan-Latin whiteness that would join Latin America with one of its preferred cultural models, France, while distinguishing it from Anglophone North America and the United States' aggressively neocolonial posture towards the region, McDaniel concludes that:

[T]he centenary was also a racial project that recentered Europeanness. Paying close attention to the personal and collective investments in transatlantic processes of

proximity, simulation, and disavowal evidences a will to whiteness rife with insecurities from subjects whose own white identities were perceived as less than or suspect. In order to stack the deck in their favor, *arielista* intellectuals marketed their respective associations with chimerical racial purity as antithetical to global blackness. Therefore, so-called white Latin American countries are really an extension of France since they are not like Haiti. Sicilians are Argentines because they are so different from Africans. Where would whiteness be without such comparative, not to mention convenient, stipulations? Dissecting such pursuits of the "Latin ideal"—which meant navigating being, seeming, believing, and desiring in conjunction with the politics of imperialism, nationalism, and immigration—brings into focus the hemispheric distortions and transoceanic reconfigurations of white supremacist ideologies and imaginaries in the *arielista* archive. (75-76)

Along with issues of race, Prof. McDaniel examines how the force of *Ariel's* spiritualizing view of culture, aided by its trenchant denunciation of US aggression in the hemisphere, turned it into an inevitable reference even in works by anarchist-leaning intellectuals that were highly critical of Rodó such as the Colombian Vargas Vila and the Cuban Fernando Lles y Berdayes. These authors' "pedagogies of dissent," notes McDaniel, "tend to get either overlooked, or worse, subsumed by the very moralizing *arielismo* they reject... [A] nother feature of *arielismo's* reach as a critical construct is that it metabolizes transgressive counter-proposals...as consonant with *Ariel's* constructive vision and soothing ethics" (135).

In its fourth and last chapter, *Centenary Subjects* describes and explains the rise of what may be called *neoarielismo*, showing how despite *Ariel's* "divisive class implications, paternalistic vision of democracy, its neglect of ethnic and gender diversity, not to mention its grandiose aesthetic" (171), Rodó's book continued to incite debate and emulation almost equally throughout the twentieth century in works by such varied authors as the Peruvians José Carlos Mariátegui and Luis Alberto Sánchez, the Bolivian Fernando Díez de Medina, and the Cuban Roberto Fernández Retamar. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, echoes of *arielismo's* anti-imperialism, exaltation of youth, and calls for educational reform have been discerned in varied manifestations, such as the so-called "Pink Tide" of socialist heads of state elected in Latin America during that period; the "armed *arielismo*" of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional in Chiapas, Mexico, and in the Chilean Student Movement from 2006-2012, whose leaders "took issue with the specialized logics of capitalism and utilitarianism—the very critiques Rodó outlined over a century before," denouncing "neoliberal education policies regarding access and affordability" (180-182). Protestors in that movement created placards that read "Neoarielistxs Indignadxs (Outraged Neo-Arielists)," bringing "a sense of actuality in

the form of gender and queer inclusivity to what may otherwise be an anachronistic formula" (181-182).

Centenary Subjects fleshes out accounts of the development of political and social thought in Latin America over the twentieth century by tracing the continuing relevance of a current of autochthonous sociocultural analysis rooted in the work of Rodó. It succeeds admirably in uncovering the Rodó-inspired continuities that exist among seemingly disparate liberal, nationalist, Marxist, and even postmodern interpretations of Latin American political development and of the region's place in the world.

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