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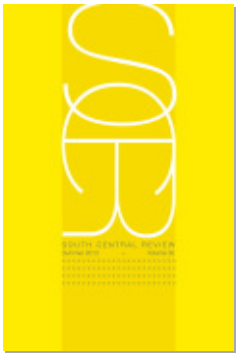

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South Central Review, Volume 30, Number 2, Summer 2013, pp. 112-135 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/scr.2013.0021*

Decadence as a Progressive Force in Select Prose of Julián del Casal and Amado Nervo

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> For one may doubt, first, whether there are any opposites at all, and second, whether these popular valuations and opposite values on which the metaphysicians put their seal, are not perhaps merely foreground estimates, only provisional perspectives, perhaps even from some nook, perhaps from below, frog perspectives, as it were, to borrow an expression painters use.
>
> —Friedrich Nietzsche (Germany 1844–1900)[1]

> Progress and development are ideals not lightly to be rejected, but they lose all meaning if man only arrives at his new state as a fragment of himself, having left his essential hinterland behind him in the shadow of the unconscious, in a state of primitivity or, indeed, barbarism.
>
> —Carl Gustav Jung (Switzerland 1875–1961)[2]

> El pudor irrazonado y la malicia son hermanos.
> (Unreasoned modesty and malice go hand in hand.)
>
> —Amado Nervo (Mexico 1870–1919)[3]

In 1984, Jorge Olivares stated that "el decadentismo (una de las notables preferencias que plasman el ecléctico Modernismo hispanoamericano) no ha recibido de la crítica la atención que se merece." (decadentism [one of the prominent tendencies expressed in the eclectic Hispanic *modernista* movement] has not received the critical attention that it deserves.)[4] This statement remains accurate a quarter of a century later; while there are hundreds of studies on Italian, French, and Anglo literary decadence, only a handful of studies exist on the functions of decadentism in Latin America, and most of these date from the 1980s and 1990s.[5] The second half of this century has seen the appearance of intriguing works on eroticism, racial politics, art, and ethics in *modernista* writing.[6] Yet there is still work to be done to correct the assumption that the *decadentista* writers of the movement merely imitated their European predecessors, and that their work was detached from Latin America's intellectual and social history.[7]

© South Central Review 30.2 (Summer 2013): 112–135.

This study aims to put one function of decadence into clearer focus by reading it in the context of nationalist discourses of the ideal citizen. In the texts under consideration, decadence is a necessary element of modern progress because it is a catalyst to creativity and libido, which I define in the Jungian sense of drive. Citing examples from select prose of the quintessentially decadent writers Julián del Casal (Cuba 1863–93) and Amado Nervo (Mexico 1870–1919), we find that these writers and others of this literary current redefine the ideal citizen in terms of what it means to be moral and virtuous. In the examples we will examine we find the following techniques: 1) inverting or deconstructing the dichotomous imagery and thought that link *decadentismo* with barbarism, infirmity, neurosis, and immorality, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie with progress, health, and morality, on the other;[8] 2) portraying the decadent character as a well-rounded individual who thrives by cultivating the arts and by embracing primal, sensual desires; 3) conversely, depicting the bourgeois character as an unhealthy, fragmented individual owing to his or her blind adherence to external social codes regarding marriage, family, and career. While these strategies are specifically tied to Latin American counter-discourses, the work of Nietzsche and Jung, contemporaries of the writers in this study, facilitates our interpretation of these connections. Nietzsche's questioning of the categories of good and evil speaks to *modernista* writers' deconstruction of moral binaries in their fiction.[9] Jung's theory of *coniuncio* (the union of the male and female, or conscious and subconscious parts of the mind) is a useful theoretical tool to interpret Casal's and Nervo's messages: that mental health, individuation, and wholeness can only be achieved by balancing conscious awareness with knowledge of the *reino interior* (the interior realm, or inner psychic world of desires, dreams, and creativity).[10] Nietzsche and Jung communicate an important preoccupation that *decadentista* writers shared: that political, medical, and religious discourses touting a strict ascetic moral code were incompatible with the complex psychological realities of the modern individual. Embodying the essence of modernity, Casal and Nervo reject dichotomous values in order to open up new scopes of thought that would serve the psychological and spiritual needs of the modern citizen. For these thinkers, wholeness and health not only acknowledge, but *require* experiences of decadent excess. Their fiction posits decadence as a way of bringing healthy and productive creativity to modern man's existence.[11]

This study will offer a sketch of Nietzsche's ideas regarding decadence and morality as well as an overview of Jung's concept of *coniuncio*, which is most applicable to Nervo's reading of the role of art and literature in

society and on the formation of the individual as a complete person. We will consider discourses of the ideal citizen in Latin America, to then explore how the writers in question urge the reader to consider the civic benefits of embracing eroticism, excess, and individualism—elements that were considered anathema for imagining the new nation.

1. Salubrious Decadence

Decadence is a slippery term with a wide array of meanings. We find definitions of decadence that stem from philosophy, psychoanalysis, medicine, and literature. The term's instability may be juxtaposed to more stable ideologies with clearer parameters, such as naturalism, positivism, or Christianity.[12] Even while critics over the decades have discredited the vehemently anti-decadent studies such as those of Max Nordau (Hungary 1849–1923; *Degeneration* 1892), positivist efforts to denigrate decadentism as a moral and spiritual perversion have, to some degree, prevailed.[13] Olivares reminds us, however, that while the label "decadent" was applied to morally unsavory literature to discredit it, the writers themselves embraced the term. Théophile Gautier, Olivares notes, viewed decadence as a mark of cultural progress, the "fruto de una civilización madura, [que] expresa ideas nuevas en formas y vocablos nuevos." (result of a mature civilization that expresses new ideas in new forms and terms.)[14]

European studies scholar Charles Bernheimer's 2002 work is useful for its focus on Nietzsche's thought on decadence as a cleansing force. Nietzsche's ideas were well known to Latin American intellectuals by the 1890s,[15] including the idea that decadence was a necessary part of a healthy existence: "Décadence itself is nothing to be fought: it is absolutely necessary and belongs to every age and to every people."[16] In this reading, a degree of decadence allows a release or cleansing of potentially harmful impulses so that the organism may maintain its balance, much as psychoanalysis provided a catharsis for socially unacceptable behaviors and desires at the turn of the century. *Decadentista* texts share Nietzsche's valorization of the ambiguity and complexity of human behavior. In his seminal work *Beyond Good and Evil* he questions the simplistic, dichotomous system of bourgeois moral values:

> For all the value that the true, the truthful, the selfless may deserve, it would still be possible that a higher and more fundamental value for life might have to be ascribed to deception, selfishness, and lust. It might even be possible that what con-

> stitutes the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things—maybe even one with them in essence.[17]

Nietzsche's ideas regarding the interrelatedness of impulses that were generally considered incompatible (such as selflessness, indulgence, deception, and truth) become clearer if we consider these concepts in light of his theory of the Apollonian and Dionysian impulses in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1871).

In *Birth* Nietzsche underlines the key role of what he calls the Dionysian tendency, the dark side of human nature—the presence of which can be felt in the chorus of Greek tragedy. He associates the Apollonian urge with various phenomena related to clarity, reason, restraint, and the contemplation of a distinct form set off by boundaries—characteristics of Hellenic culture. The Dionysian, on the other hand, appears as the suppressed Greek urge that thrived in pre-Hellenic barbaric cultures that ritualistically partook in violent and extreme orgiastic festivals, such as the Babylonian Sacaea, a five-day ritual in which revelers engage in social reversals similar to those found in Carnaval.[18] For Nietzsche, the creative process depends on these oppositional forces: "the continuous development of art is bound up with the *Apollonian* and *Dionysian* duality—just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations."[19] Congruent with the projects put forth in *modernista* texts, Nietzsche assigns a productive function to the Dionysian, a mode squelched by Socrates' glorification of reason, and modern society's reliance on Christianity and Science to explain the meaning of existence with moral and positivist certitudes:

> Is pessimism *necessarily* a sign of decline, decay, degeneration, weary and weak instincts[. . .]? Is there a pessimism of *strength*? An intellectual predilection for the hard, gruesome, evil, problematic aspect of existence, prompted by well-being, by overflowing health, by the *fullness* of existence? [. . .] Might not [. . .] Socratism be a sign of decline, of weariness, of infection, of the anarchical dissolution of the instincts?[20]

While *decadentistas* explored the multifaceted nature of modern man, policy makers, pragmatists, positivists, and religious forces of the budding Latin American nations would not easily accept that "good and revered things" could be "tied to [. . .] these wicked, seemingly opposite things."

Decadentista discourses were in dialogue and tension with homogeneous nationalist discourses that sought to form a moral and healthy society. The prescribed model for the ideal citizen stifled and excluded segments of the intellectual elite. *Modernista* writers redefined progress and good citizenship in their narratives in a way that offered excess, materialism, and self-indulgence as liberating, invigorating forces. The fictional decadent character, then, ultimately represents a more "whole" view of the modern citizen, to use Jung's term, in his or her occasional excesses and indulgences; he or she offers a new notion of sanity and health.

2. Discourses of the Ideal Citizen, or Anti-Decadent Discourses

The turn of the century was a liminal period in Latin America, ripe for breaking with old expectations and establishing new ideals. Spain's power had dissolved in the New World in the early 1800s and the Church's role as the primary moralizing entity gave way to new voices whose messages and imagery aimed to calibrate the moral compass of the national consciousness.[21] The process of political and cultural change was ongoing throughout the nineteenth century and carried into the twentieth. As contemporary scholars of nation and print cultures Benedict Anderson and Angel Rama have shown, policy makers took full advantage of the array of media outlets to forge an image of the ideal citizen.[22] Often these discourses appeared as re-hashed versions of religious ones that touted self-sacrifice, obedience, and chastity. Positivists envisioned the ideal citizen as an individual full of vigor, virile qualities, good health, and a moderate lifestyle, so as to drive the nation toward progress. Often too these texts juxtapose the notion of the desirable citizen to the undesirable one, who was sensual, effeminate or insufficiently masculine, a dilettante, self-involved, or frivolous—in short, a decadent.

I will present a few examples of discourses that aimed to influence values by shaping citizens' reading habits. The literary column "Cartas literarias" (Literary Letters) in *El Movimiento: Revista de Novedades, Industria y Literatura* (The Movement: Journal of News, Industry, and Literature; Medellín 1893) provided an overview of trends in international literature. In the following entry, Colombian writer, diplomat, and physician Eduardo Zuleta (1864–1937) enters into a discussion of the moral function of literature, in which he echoes popular opinions against *decadentismo*. Concerned about the pessimism of decadent texts, Zuleta questions their salubriousness and recommends a more ascetic way of living:

> Y cómo se puede amar una vida llena de tantas amarguras [. . .] Muchas veces nos quejamos de que el mundo es engañoso y vano; mas no por eso lo dejamos fácilmente; [. . .] *los apetitos sensuales nos señorean demasiado*—Mas los que perfectamente desprecian al mundo y trabajan para servir a Dios en santa vigilancia, saben que está prometida *la divina dulzura á quien de veras* se renunciare á sí mismo y ven más claro cuán gravemente yerra el mundo [. . .] el hombre carnal [no] conoce la libertad del hombre espiritual.
>
> (And how can one love a life full of so much bitterness [. . .] Often we complain that the world is vain and deceptive; yet this is not reason enough to abandon it so readily; [. . .] sensual appetites dominate us too much—But those who spurn the world and work to serve God in a saintly and careful way, know that divine serenity is promised to whoever truly lets go of the self and sees clearly to what degree the world errs [. . .] the man concerned with carnal desires does not experience the freedom that the spiritual man enjoys.)[23]

Zuleta's reference to the pessimism of certain texts points to the *mal de siglo* (malady of the century), that nebulous neurosis suffered by artists and poets that was believed to hamper national progress. The discourse is based on moral binaries: Zuleta juxtaposes serving God to serving one's appetites, as he contrasts "el hombre carnal" to "el hombre espiritual." Zuleta's moral judgments of literature censure the very elements central to *decadentismo*: material beauty, sensual pleasures, and focusing on personal (rather than nationalist or religious) topics.

Similar in content, although different in its scientific tone, the *Revista Positiva* (The Positivist Review; Mexico 1901–14) featured an article by the Mexican writer Francisco Medina in March of 1903 titled "El modernismo literario, ¿procede del positivismo?" (Literary Modernismo: Does it Derive from Positivism?) The author cites the physician and philosopher Gabino Barreda (1818–1881), father of Mexican positivism and disciple of its originator Auguste Comte (France 1798–1857), on the primary goal of literature: "La misión del poeta y del artista debe [. . .] guiar forzosamente hacia delante. Si ellos evocan recuerdos del pasado, debe ser siempre para mejorar el porvenir y no para aconsejar el retroceso." (The mission of the poet and the artist should [. . .] be, necessarily, to guide one forward. If they evoke certain moments from the past, it should always be to improve the future and not to prescribe decline).[24] Medina then proceeds to critique the foreword to *Prosas profanas* by the

illustrious writer Rubén Darío (Nicaragua 1867–1919), "el primero de los *modernistas* (the foremost *modernista* writer)."[25] He takes particular issue with Darío's praise of Indigenous culture (which Mexican positivism viewed as backward), aristocracy, and his disdain for the present in favor of antiquity. Medina also wishes to strip *modernismo* of its heralded title of the first literary movement of Latin America:

> Los modernistas no son precursores, esto es axiomático; ellos no buscan la verdad ni guían á los hombres á ningún fin; antes bien se sustraen á los anhelos de los hombres y se encierran casi siempre en su *yo*; Darío, Lugones, Tablada, Dávalos, Nervo, etc., han sido y son poetas que yo llamo *personalistas*, es decir, poetas que escriben y pulimentan la frase para expresar lo que ellos piensan é imaginan y no lo que sienten é imaginan los hombres de la vida contemporánea.
>
> (The modernists are not precursors, this is axiomatic; they do not search for truth nor do they guide men toward any goal; rather they remain distant from the wishes of their fellow men and they enclose themselves within the *self*; Darío, Lugones, Tablada, Dávalos, Nervo, etc. have been and are poets that I call *personalist*, that is, poets who write and refine the sentence in order to express what they think and imagine and not what the men of contemporary life feel and imagine.)[26]

Medina's ruffled response to *decadentismo* in 1903 may have been rooted in the fear that the *modernista* imagination, from which the first literary movement of Latin America sprung, was taking hold of its reading public, leading it astray from the positivist ideals of an industrious and virile citizenship. Casal's and Nervo's texts expose the challenges of "los hombres de la vida contemporánea" (men of today): the fear of losing their individuality, the stifling confines of traditional family life, and the repression of sexuality. These writers posit that when the modern individual suppresses his or her needs in order to conform to social norms, the subsequent anguish negatively impacts productivity and national progress.

Discourses of national unity also narrowly defined the Latin American citizen, implicitly excluding unconventional modes of being. Liberal intellectuals seeking to unify the racially diverse continent employed a rhetoric of cohesion to persuade more conservative factions that racial integration could strengthen the continent. Essays by the Cuban freedom fighter José Martí (1853–1895; "Nuestra América" 1891)[27] and the Puerto

Rican intellectual Eugenio Maria de Hostos (1839–1903; "El cholo" 1870)[28] are examples of this tactic. The rhetorical thrust of these texts focused on shared cultural elements such as language, religion, colonial heritage, pro-democratic ideals, and national pride to create a pan-Latin American identity that erased individual differences and sought to provide a hopeful outlook in regard to productively incorporating all citizens into the future vision of the nation.

The book-length essay *Ariel* (1900) by José Enrique Rodó (Uruguay 1872–1917) is one of the most widely read constructions of Latin American identity from the early twentieth century.[29] *Modernista* but not *decadentista*, *Ariel* is best known as an eloquent critique of U.S. influence on Latin American culture in the wake of the Spanish-American War. Through the lessons of the fictional Próspero, the wise mentor whose discourse occupies most of the text, Rodó conveys the importance of moral formation for the rough and varied populations of Latin America. By defining virtue for its readers, *Ariel* articulates the ruling class's desire to unify the continent by envisioning Latin America as a homogeneous totality with a common past and shared ideals.

Rodó draws upon historical and familiar dichotomies, such as the racially loaded dichotomy of "civilization" *versus* "barbarism," which recalls the discourse of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (Argentina 1811–1888) in his 1845 essay *Facundo*.[30] Rodó voices the ruling class fear that the immorality of the masses will cause widespread social degeneration: "La multitud será un instrumento de barbarie o de civilización según carezca o no del coeficiente de una alta dirección moral." (The multitude will be a tool of barbarism or civilization to the degree that it possesses or lacks the coefficient of high moral direction.)[31] Gerard Aching points out that Próspero leaves the chore of molding the moral character of the masses to strong leadership in government;[32] Rodó's words underline that only those who are "morally superior" (according to Próspero's definition) may aspire to superior positions: "En todos [los ciudadanos] hay un derecho idéntico para aspirar a las superioridades morales que deben dar razón y fundamento a las superioridades efectivas; pero sólo a los que han alcanzado realmente la posesión de las primeras debe ser concedido el premio de las últimas." (Among all citizens there is an identical right to aspire to the moral superiority that must provide a rationale and a basis for actual superiority. But only those who truly possess the former will ever be granted the reward of the latter.)[33] Like the liberator of the Americas Simón Bolívar (Venezuela 1783–1830) in his famous epistolary essay of 1815[34] and Sarmiento in 1845, Rodó expresses concern about the impending process of democratization. He

emphasizes that it can only function when all of society achieves a state of honorary nobility through morality and virtue:

> Racionalmente concebida, la democracia admite siempre un imprescindible elemento aristocrático, que consiste en establecer la superioridad de los mejores, asegurándola sobre el consentimiento libre de los asociados. Ella consagra, como las aristocracias, la distinción de calidad; pero la resuelve a favor de las calidades realmente superiores,—las de la virtud, el carácter, el espíritu—, y sin pretender inmovilizarlas en clases constituidas aparte de las otras, que mantengan a su favor el privilegio execrable de la casta [. . .]
>
> (Rationally conceived, democracy always includes an indispensable element of aristocracy, a means of establishing the superiority of the finest, achieved through free consent. A democracy, like an aristocracy, will recognize the distinction of quality; but it will favor truly superior qualities—those of virtue, character, and mind—and will not attempt to immobilize them in a class system that maintains the execrable privilege of caste.) [35]

Ariel encouraged Latin America's youth to dream a utopian society of its own making and to avoid the materialist approach of the United States; however its homogenizing discourses of the ideal citizen was an exclusionary gesture in the sense that those who did not fit within these definitions could not become the superior beings favored within this notion of democratic society.

Rodó takes issue with *decadentismo* explicitly in his essay. Discussing good taste in the arts, he positions virtue in opposition to the sensual, erotic, and introspective elements so prominent in *decadentista* texts. Próspero prescribes "felicidad candorosa" (innocent happiness) and "ingenua alegría de vivir" (an ingenuous *joie de vivre*) while he condemns "la decrepitud de los mundanos" (the decadence of the worldly).[36] He discourages the youth of America from dampening its spirit by reading literature featuring "[personajes] enervados de voluntad y de corazón en quienes se reflejan tan desconsoladores manifestaciones de espíritu de nuestro tiempo como la del protagonista de *À rebours* [Joris Karl Huysmans 1891] o la de Robert Gresleu de *Le disciple* [Paul Bourget 1889]" (such enervated, spiritless persons as the protagonist of J. K. Huysmans' *A rebours* [1891] or Robert Greslous in Paul Bourget's *Le disciple* [1889], who reflect the depressing manifestations of the spirit of our time).[37] Próspero recommends a spiritual, idealistic life in which

the intellect dominates instinctual urges: "Los hombres y los pueblos trabajan [. . .] bajo la inspiración de las ideas, como los irracionales bajo la influencia de los instintos" (Men and nations [. . .] work under the inspiration of ideas, while irrational beings react to the stimulus of the instincts.)[38] The *decadentista*'s explorations of sensual stimulation, the intense impulses of anger or sexual desire, and his or her descent into the ennui of modern existence must not prevail in Rodó's ideal citizen.[39] We may read the tension between discourses of the ideal citizen and *decadentismo* as the product of a process at the turn of the nineteenth century in which notions of the national self were emerging. The pleasure-seeking characters of the *modernista* writers Enrique Gómez Carrillo (Guatemala 1873–1927), José Asunción Silva (Colombia 1865–96), Casal, Nervo, and others were explorations of diversity, studies of human desire and of subconscious urges. The fictional characters of *decadentista* writers provided models of alternative modes of being in an era seemingly obsessed with squelching drives—ones that the writers I will study portray as natural and beneficial.

3. Reconfiguring notions of the bourgeois ideal: Julián del Casal

The quintessentially decadent writer Casal revises many of the dichotomies cited at the beginning of this essay in ways that redefine citizenship, productivity, and morality.[40] Some of these reconfigurations are obvious and present new sets of stark opposites that align immorality with the bourgeoisie. For example, in the 1890 poetic prose piece "La cámara doble," (The Dual Chamber) he describes two contrasting rooms—one horrifying, the other pleasant.[41] Characters that represent spasms, fears, nightmares, and neuroses would first seem to characterize the artist's *mal del siglo*, however, in Casal's narrative these are the entities that inhabit the bourgeois space.[42] Casal blames middle class values for causing these neuroses. Conversely, peace, tranquility, and beauty (Rodó's ideals) are associated with the *modernista* side of the double room. We find that Casal disrupts a common dichotomy by linking mental illness with the bourgeoisie and harmonious balance with the artist. In this way, Casal makes a statement about the arbitrary nature of the ways that dominant discourses define mental health, beauty and virtue.

While "La cámara doble" draws a stark separation between *modernista* and bourgeois spaces, Casal depicts the artist's struggle to reach a state of belonging in his 1893 short story "La última illusion" (The Last Illusion).

The story focuses on the existential crisis of the narrator's friend, Arsenio, who contemplates the infertility of his existence. Arsenio employs two comparisons to express his views—life as a battlefield and life as a garden. Here the "yo" compares integrating himself into society with war:

> Interesarme por la vida equivaldría para mí a entrar en un campo de batalla, afiliarme a un ejército desconocido, ceñirme los bélicos arreos y, con las armas en la mano, combatir por extraño ideal, sin ambicionar los lauros de la victoria, ni temer las afrentas de la derrota. ¿Habría situación más enervante, más desastrosa y más desesperada?
>
> (For me, to become invested in life would be equivalent to entering a battlefield, joining a foreign army, clinging to the accoutrements of war, and with arms in hand, fighting for a strange ideal, without striving for the laurels of victory, nor fearing the affront of defeat. Can one imagine anything more exasperating, more disastrous, and more hopeless?)[43]

Arsenio expresses his crisis in terms of fighting for a cause in which he does not believe. If we read the war metaphor as a reference to the imminent Cuban War of Independence (1895), then Cuban nationalism is the "strange ideal," and the *yo* feels he is alienated from the values associated with this ideal. Casal then generalizes Arsenio's isolation to a broader spectrum of society when he repeats several times the notion that "hay muchos que se encuentran en el mismo caso" (there are many who find them selves in the same situation.)[44]

It is noteworthy that Casal does not depict his decadent character as a self-isolating being, disdainfully looking down upon society from his ivory tower. Casal's artist is not contemptuous but rather sorrowful; he yearns to be integrated into society. This yearning comes through in his metaphor of the garden. Arsenio compares himself to a seed that would prefer to flourish in fertile earth, but which lies sterile in a hostile environment. The metaphor of fertility is noteworthy as growth depends on a union of elements coming together in a mutually engaging manner. "La última ilusión" may be read in light of assertions like that of the aforementioned positivist writer Medina, that *modernistas* were a small, self-centered element of society: "ninguno se acerca á ser *humano*, á ser heraldo ante la civilización, de las dudas, triunfos, problemas, etc., que preocupan al medio y al tiempo que les rodea." (none come close to being *human*, to being a herald for civilized society, of the doubts, triumphs, problems, etc., associated with the environment and times in which they

live.)[45] Casal's political pose, to borrow Silvia Molloy's term, is one that positions the artist with the many, pointing out that certain ideals of citizenship isolate segments of society and prevent national unity.[46] Growth is impossible when marginalized individuals are untended seeds in the social garden: "Ni la tierra los fecunda, ni alimentan a los pájaros. Allí se pudren, día por día, bajo el influjo del viento, de la lluvia y del sol. Eso mismo sucede a algunos hombres." (The earth does not fertilize them, nor do they nourish the birds. There they rot, day after day, under the force of the wind, the rain, and the sun. That same thing happens to some men).[47] Arsenio is an individual, but he is not the eccentric genius who prefers to dwell in the azure haze of his own creativity. On the contrary, he gazes at his society as an outsider, wishing to enter, but not finding a place for himself in the exclusionary discourses of the nation. Further, given Cuba's economic dependence on agriculture, the garden metaphor hints at the possibility of a lush, lucrative future, should society choose to nourish and tend to those who cannot or who do not choose to conform to social norms.

In other prose selections, Casal takes apart essential components of bourgeois wholeness to present a provocative, ironic, and critical slant. The eerie story "Una madre" (A Mother; 1890), under the heading of fictions called "Cuentos amargos" (Bitter Tales) is the story of a widow who loves her only son excessively. Going beyond the solicitous maternal love depicted in Romanticism, the intensity of this mother's attachment hints at an incestuous desire. In this scene the mother awaits her son's return at the end of the workday:

> apenas lo divisa, entre nubes de polvo, a través del follaje de los árboles del camino, su cuerpo se reanima, sus pupilas se encienden, sus mejillas se colorean y una sonrisa de gozo recorre el arco de sus labios empalidecidos.
> Apenas entra el hijo, se arroja en sus brazos. Temerosa de que le haya sucedido algo, le palpa los miembros fatigados, como si buscase el sitio en que le han herido; le clava los ojos en el rostro para arrancarle el secreto de su demora; y lo estrecha contra su seno tembloroso [. . .]
>
> (As soon as she glimpses him emerging from the clouds of dust, through the foliage of the trees along the road, her body is revived, her pupils burn with light, her cheeks become flushed and a smile of delight plays upon the arc of her pale lips.
> As soon as her son comes in, she throws herself into his arms. Fearful that something might have happened to him, she palpates

> his fatigued limbs, as if she were looking for the place in which he had been injured; she intently fixes her eyes on his face to wrench from him the hidden reason for his delay, and she holds him tightly to her trembling bosom.)[48]

This morbose attachment intensifies as the story progresses. When the mother discovers that her son is in love but will not marry because he does not earn enough money to support three people, she taints her wine with poison, raises her glass, and drinking to her own death, declares between sobs "¡Ya te puedes casar!" (Now you may marry!)[49] The story expresses several levels of dialogue with nationalist discourses on motherhood. The most apparent is a grotesque caricature of the *angel del hogar*—a pervasive Marian ideal of womanhood based on self-sacrifice, omnipresent throughout Latin America in the 1800s.[50] Whereas this national ideal includes a self-abnegating mother who raises children who will reproduce good citizens in turn, Casal's fictional mother carries out her son's symbolic castration; her suicide, the ultimate sacrifice, will haunt her son's future conjugal life like a specter that lies between him and his beloved. Casal parodies notions of maternal virtue, so poignant during the era, by hinting that its unnatural excess squelches the passion of the national romance, hence the future health of the nation.[51]

Casal's *Historias amargas* (Bitter Stories; 1890) is a collection of three short stories of bourgeois moral slippage. All contain messages that distort the idealized family values of the nineteenth century and beyond. "El primer pesar" (The First Sorrow) destabilizes notions of bourgeois morality. The protagonist is the decadent figure Armando Morel "de una familia de raza fina, nerviosa y degenerada." (from a family of refined, nervous, and degenerate lineage).[52] Morel falls in love with a beautiful young woman from a well-regarded bourgeois family. However, during the carnival festivities when roles are reversed, the would-be womanizer finds his proper young lady "vestida de Salambó," (dressed like Salammbo) leaning over "para alcanzar con sus dientes pequeños, perlados y puntiagudos, un racimo de uvas que, como un ramillete de perlas verdes, temblaba en la boca desdentada de un viejo banquero que la acompañaba" (to reach with her small, pearly, and sharp teeth, a cluster of grapes, which, like a mound of green pearls, quivered in the toothless mouth of the elderly baker who accompanied her).[53] Here Morel, the effeminate decadent of flowing blond hair, is the steadfast lover who must confront the erotic excess of his beloved society girl and her escort. The story inverts notions of bourgeois virtue and decadent transgression, thereby revealing them to be artificial constructs whose values morph according to the writer's perspective.

Casal's critique of the insalubriousness of heteronormative family values appears again in his short prose piece, "La casa del poeta" (The Poet's House). Upon discovering that a poet friend whom he had not seen in several years has died, the "yo" goes to pay his respects to his friend's widow. The narrator, who identifies with a bohemian lifestyle, exudes health and productivity; we see him walking briskly, "Deseoso de hacer ejercicio [. . .] experimentando el bienestar que produce [. . .] la terminación de las labores cotidianas." (Desirous of some exercise [. . .] experiencing the wellbeing that comes from the end of the day's work).[54] While the storyteller walks to his destination, he recalls his friend's success and sudden, mysterious silence. He reminisces about: "[su] carácter enigmático, sus aventuras amorosas, sus gustos aristocráticos, sus proyectos literarios, su matrimonio realizado en pocos días, sus triunfos artísticos y, más que nada, la inercia inexplicable en que cayó después de haber alcanzado esos triunfos." ([his] enigmatic character, his amorous flings, his aristocratic taste, his literary projects, his quickly arranged marriage, his artistic victories, and, more than anything, the inexplicable inertia that came over him after having accomplished these victories).[55] When he arrives at the poet's house he realizes what extinguished his friend's creative fire. The dwelling is a dirty, damp hovel and his wife a slovenly dullard, "una gallina humana" (a hen in human form).[56] In this vignette Casal attacks late nineteenth-century ideals that link national progress with married life. In "La casa del poeta," heteronormativity extinguishes not only the poet's creative fire, but also, the story suggests, the man himself. The theme that married life stifles creativity and is a living limbo is repeated in many other *modernista* works, such as Enrique Gómez Carrillo's "La cabellera de Cleopatra" (Cleopatra's Mane, from *Almas y cerebros* 1898) and José Asunción Silva's *De sobremesa* (1925). Casal's story suggests, as in Nietzsche's reading of the Dionysian, that the liberation of the instincts is productive and invigorating.

4. Notions of Wholeness and Individuality: Nervo

While Casal's work strips away the mask of ideal bourgeois propriety in a way that privileges the Dionysian force of human nature, Amado Nervo's texts speak more directly to the artist's psychological need to be a whole individual, through his or her exploration of libido. Representations of integrity *versus* fragmentation are significant in their historical context; the rhetoric against decadents included portraying them as mentally fragmented neurotics, whose neuroses were caused by

egotism, substance abuse, and sexual perversions, and whose influence was harmful to the health and productivity of the nation. Nervo's work aims to disprove this notion; he believes that an inward focus, including an exploration of unconscious drives, is essential not only for a healthy psyche but for cultural production. We see a parallel notion of wholeness and mental health in the work of Jung; the Swiss psychoanalytic theorist traces the roots of *coniuncio*, the union of opposites to form the whole, back to hermetic philosophy and Gnosticism.[57] For Jung, and, similarly, for Nervo, wholeness is the product of the union of or balance between the conscious and the unconscious drives.[58] Part of the process of unlocking the unconscious is getting in touch with libido, which Jung interprets as drive in a more general sense than the Freudian, exclusively sexual, libido.

Nervo's essay "La libertad del arte literario" (The Freedom of the Art of Literature; reprinted 1921; original date not available) critiques the asceticism of his contemporary readership. In this essay Nervo takes on the critics of French Naturalist and decadent writers. The context of his commentary is an international conference against pornography (meaning, in this case, any nudity or sexuality in art or literature) being held in Paris:

> En este Congreso, como era de preverse, mucha gente, animada de las mejores intenciones, pero de un celo excesivo, condenó algunas obras que, a pesar de su crudeza, son trabajos de arte, merecedores de toda consideración y respecto [. . .] Mr. Remy de Gourmont, en términos excelentes, trató este asunto en días pasados [. . .] mostrando que lo que se llama pornografía no es en suma otra cosa que la libre expresión del sentimiento sexual.
>
> Este sentimiento, quiérase o no, y aunque se le oculte bajo una capa de hipocresía, está en la base de todo. [. . .] Sin él no hay pensamiento, ni poesía, ni novela, ni filosofía, ni artes humanas.
>
> (In this conference, as one could foresee, many people, fueled by good intentions but with excessive fervor, condemned some works that, despite their lewdness, are works of art deserving full consideration and respect. Mr. Remy de Gourmont, employing excellent arguments, treated this topic in days past [. . .] showing that what is called pornography is in sum nothing more than the free expression of sexual feeling.
>
> This feeling, whether one accepts it or not, and even if it is hidden behind a layer of hypocrisy, is at the root of everything [. . .] Without it there is no thought, nor poetry, nor novel, nor philosophy, nor human art forms.) [59]

The attitude Nervo critiques above was similar to the pseudo-scientific trend in literary criticism carried out by the often-cited Hungarian positivist Max Nordau (1849–1923).[60] Nordau employed medical discourse to condemn the work of acclaimed novelists and poets whom he determined to be degenerates and neurotics owing to the content or style of their work. Nervo turns such discourses back upon themselves: "Hay falsos pudores que conviene suprimir desde la infancia, pensando que el hábito tranquilo de contemplar desnudeces valdrá siempre más que el seudo casto propósito de no mirarlas. El pudor irrazonado y la malicia son hermanos." (There is false modesty that is in our best interest to abolish from infancy, considering that the calm practice of viewing nudity will surely be more worthwhile than the pseudo-pure attempt to avoid viewing it at all. Unreasoned chastity and malice go hand in hand.)[61] In Nervo's argument the excessive and false "pudor" is what fractures the individual and brings on feverish, unhealthy desires, while the individual who accepts sexual honesty in art reaps the benefits of a healthy and undiminished view of the self. Significantly, Nervo goes further in his defense of sexuality, as he envisions it as the font of all cultural production, from philosophy to the fine arts.

Of the vast prose of Nervo, several pieces speak with eloquent humor to the individuality of the artist and his or her place in the nation. It should be noted that Nervo differs from Casal in that he was a Mexican statesman and perhaps for this reason he focused on nationhood more than his Cuban cohort. His discourses, like those of Casal, confound mainstream notions of wholeness and fragmentation to advocate individuality. One of these is a short vignette "El patriotismo de Tello Téllez." (The Patriotism of Tello Téllez).[62] The narration opens with a dialogue between Tello and a friend of his: "Tú eres muy patriota—me dijo en cierta ocasión mi amigo. Y había en su voz un metal de ironía piadosa." ("You are very patriotic," my friend said to me one time. And there was tone of compassionate irony in his voice.)[63] In response, Tello defends his patriotism, echoing with humor ideas we have seen in the essays of Hostos, Martí, and Rodó: a pan-Hispanic vision ("Deseo que desaparezcan las fronteras [. . .]" [I wish that the borders would disappear]), support for the integration of diverse racial groups ("No hay razas superiores ni inferiores [. . .] esas son puerilidades de sociólogos rubios y megalómanos [. . .]" [There are no such things as superior or inferior races [. . .] those are childish notions of blond and megalomaniac sociologists]), and caution toward excessively looking toward foreign models ("Se puede hablar el ingés o el francés sin acento y ser un pobre diablo [One can speak English or French without an accent and still be a poor devil])."[64] However, what

he adds is an emphasis on individualism and even egotism.[65] He affirms: "Yo quiero que México sea grande, por altruismo y por egoísmo; por él y por mí. ¿No ves que cuanto más grande sea México, más grande seré yo?" (I want Mexico to be great, for altruistic reasons and for selfish reasons; for itself and for me. Don't you see that the greater Mexico is, the greater I will be?)[66] While this humorous passage could be read as a critique of people who are patriotic in a self-serving way, it may also comment upon the general natural human tendency to look out for oneself and to serve one's own needs. Amid the humor in these words is a philosophical thought borne out in another of Nervo's articles from the collection of articles *Los balcones* (The Balconies), "La gotita de agua que no quería perder su 'individualidad'" (The Droplet of Water that Did not Want to Lose its Individuality).

"La gotita" is an allegory for the *modernista* writer. This vignette tells of the life and death of a drop of water clinging to the petal of a rose, a symbol for the *modernista* cult of beauty. The drop is born at midnight when the plants are watered and struggles to maintain its form as the sun burns down throughout the day. The droplet, like the *modernista* writer, is diaphanous, passionate, clings to the silky and delicate object, and must fight for its unique existence, lest it be vaporized into the atmosphere, losing its "individualidad." As the day wears to an end, so does the integrity of the droplet:

> Tengo miedo, ¡ay!, tengo miedo. Siento que empiezo a evaporarme [. . .] ¡Oh sol, no me beses, por Dios! Tus besos hacen un espantoso daño. Me penetran toda, me abrasan, me disgregan [. . .] Yo no quiero deshacerme, no quiero volatilizarme [. . .] ¡NO QUIERO PERDER MI INDIVIDUALIDAD!
>
> (I am afraid, ay!, I am afraid. I feel that I am beginning to evaporate [. . .] Oh, sun, do not kiss me, by God! Your kisses do terrible harm. They penetrate me, they burn me, they disintegrate me [. . .] I do not want to dissolve, I do not want to disappear [. . .] I DO NOT WANT TO LOSE MY INDIVIDUALITY!)[67]

At this point, the drop of water becomes "parte de la atmósfera húmeda," (part of the humid atmosphere) an indistinguishable mass that absorbs the autonomy of the self. The rebellious drop of water reminds one of Baudelaire's definition of decadence, as it is expressed by Paul Bourget in his *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (Essays on Contemporary Psychology): "Si l'énergie des cellules devient indépendant, les organismes qui composent l'organisme total cessent pareillement de

subordonner leur énergie à l'énergie totale, et l'anarchie qui s'établit constitue la décadence de l'ensemble" (If the energy of cells becomes independent, the smaller organisms that make up the whole organism stop, similarly, subordinating their energy to the whole energy, and the anarchy that is established forms the decadence of the whole).[68] Yet, rather than individuality representing fragmentation of a (false) homogenous social whole, in Nervo's narrative "'individuation' [denotes] the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'in-dividual,' that is, a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole.'"[69] Nervo participates in redefining the notion of a whole citizen by rallying for the individual who wishes to maintain his or her uniqueness, who resists efforts to define participation in the social contract through a single notion of family, acceptable literature, art, and virtue.

5. Conclusions

Latin American *modernista* writers were preoccupied with the imposition of mainstream ideals of virtue and citizenship. Hence *decadentista* works from the 1890s to the early 1900s often aimed to broaden readers' perspectives regarding morality as well as notions of mental and physical health. *Decadentista* prose allowed readers to envision alternative modes of personhood in the midst of national discourses offering narrow definitions of morality whose objective was to achieve homogeneity and national progress. Casal and Nervo recognized and challenged this agenda, which was voiced in Rodó's *Ariel* and repeated in the governmental policies, literary reviews of *modernismo*, and positivist discourses. While at times *modernista* prose fully contradicted national ideology, these writers also sought, as a means of negotiation, to reconfigure the symbolic chess pieces in the game of social politics. Rewriting the images of bourgeois and decadent morality was a way to participate in the process of constructing the nation by depicting moral diversity in their fiction. *Modernistas* sought to complicate notions of morality by suggesting that the excesses of decadence were healthy and productive. At the same time, they questioned the virtues of absolute chastity and sheltering oneself from human sexuality, as Nervo's aforementioned essay "La libertad del arte literario" succinctly states.

To conclude, I refer to the central figure of the *modernista* tendency, Rubén Darío. It is significant that Darío called his writing: "El movimiento de libertad que me tocó iniciar" (the movement of freedom that it was up to me to begin) in the preface to *Cantos de vida y esperanza*

(Songs of Life and Hope; 1905).[70] Artistically, ideologically, and socially, *modernismo* is a gesture of freedom. Drawing on the ideas of Federico de Onís, Thomas Ward characterizes *modernismo* as an anarchical, critical, and innovative historical moment, a "conjunto de corrientes literarias, económicas, filosóficas y sociales que estuvieron en boga durante el penúltimo fin de siglo." (a set of literary economic, philosophical, and social tendencies that were in fashion during the penultimate turn of the century).[71] *Modernista* writers drew upon a diverse pool of ideas to push the boundaries of socially acceptable modes of being and open up definitions of morality. While further study may reveal to what degree *modernistas* were successful in this campaign, it is important to recognize that their themes and imagery were in dialogue and negotiation with restrictive discourses that sought to define preferences regarding literature, art, and lifestyle.

NOTES

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), 10.

2. Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R.F.C. Hull, ed. Sir Herbert Read (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 174.

3. Amado Nervo, "La libertad del arte literario," in *Obras completas*, ed. Alfonso Reyes, vol. 22 (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1921), 315. All translations of works cited in Spanish are my own.

4. Jorge Olivares, *La novela decadente en Venezuela* (Caracas: Editorial Armitano, 1984), 9.

5. At the time of writing, the MLA database listed fewer than a dozen articles having to do with *decadence* and *modernismo*. The studies listed were: Sumner M. Greenfield, "El impacto del ideario noventayochista sobre los modernistas: Darío, Valle Inclán, y la España decadente de Enrique Larreta," in *Estudios en honor a Ricardo Gullón*, ed. Luis T. González del Valle and Darío Villanueva (Lincoln, NE: Society of Spanish and Spanish American Studies, 1984), 155–71; Gwen Kirkpatrick, "Delmira Agustini y el 'reino interior' de Rodó y Darío," in *¿Qué es el modernismo? Nueva encuesta, nuevas ideas*, ed. Richard A. Cardwell and Bernard McGuirk (Boulder, CO: Society for Spanish and Spanish American Studies, 1993), 259–306; Lily Litvak, "La idea de la decadencia en la crítica antimodernista en España (1888–1910)," *Hispanic Review* 45.4 (1977): 397–412; Oscar Montero, "Translating Decadence: Julián del Casal's Reading of Huysmans and Moreau," *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 26.3 (1992): 369–89; and two studies by Gabriela Mora: "Decadencia y vampirismo en el modernismo hispanoamericano: Un cuento de Clemente Palma," *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 23.46 (1997): 191–98; and "Modernismo decadentista: Confidencias de Psiquis de Manuel Díaz Rodríguez," *Revista Iberoamericana* 68.178–79 (1997): 263–74. The most recent of these articles were written in 1997. There are a handful of single-authored books and compilations on decadence; see works by David Jiménez, ed., *Fin de siglo: Decadencia y modernidad: ensayos sobre el modernismo en Colombia* (Botogá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1994); Jorge Olivares, *La novela decadente en Venezuela* (Caracas: Editorial Armitano,

1984); Gabriela Mora, *Clemente Palma: El modernismo en su versión decadente y gótica* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2000); and Nelly Bauzá Echeverría, *Las novelas decadentistas de Enrique Gómez* (Carrillo. Madrid: Pliegos, 1999).

6. Please see the recent studies *On the Dark Side of the Archive: Nation and Literature at the Turn of the Century in Latin America* by Juan Carlos González-Espitia (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2009); Jorge Camacho, "Contra el peligro: José Martí, la crítica modernista y la justificación de las políticas liberals en el siglo XIX," *Modern Language Notes* 124.2 (2009): 424–437; Ignacio Ruiz Pérez, "Contra-escrituras: Delmira Agustini, Alfonsina Storni, y la subversion del modernismo," *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 61.2 (2008): 183–196; Tina Escaja, "Delmira Agustina, ultimación de un proyecto decadente: El Batllismo," *Hispania* 89.3 (2006): 501–508; José Andújar Almansa, "*La vida inquieta* de Manuel Reina," *Hispanic Review* 77.3 (2009): 311–338; and Carla Giadudrone, "Nuevos sujetos en el espacio urbano de la escritura modernista rioplatense," *Hispania* 91.2 (2008): 310–319.

7. The foundational work of scholars such as Gerard Aching, *The Politics of Spanish American Modernismo: By Exquisite Design* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Aníbal González, *La novela modernista latinoamericana* (The Latin American *modernista* Movement; Madrid: Gredos, 2000); Cathy Jrade, *Modernismo, Modernity and the Development of Spanish American Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Alejandro Mejías-López, *The Inverted Conquest: The Myth of Modernity and the Transatlantic Onset of Modernism* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009); Ivan Schulman, *El proyecto inconcluso: la vigencia del modernismo* (The Inconclusive Project: The Validity of *modernismo*; Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2002); and Benigno Trigo, *Subjects of Crisis: Race and Gender as Disease in Latin America* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), among others, has allowed us to explore the complex political and spiritual spaces opened up by the *modernista* pen, thus roundly disproving early critics' evaluations of *modernismo* as a *preciosista* or philosophically and politically empty movement. The decadent aspects of *modernismo* continue to be seen as a vaguely subversive tendency characterized by sensualism and anti-nationalism. Olivares's work is one of the few that provides a more in-depth analysis of decadence. He provides a balanced and useful catalog of the European sources of decadence and aptly recognizes its "reto a las normas establecidas y [. . .] el deseo de de ir *à rebours*" (challenge to the established norms and […] the desire to go against the grain; *La novela decadente en Venezuela* [The Decadent Novel in Venezuela], 15). Olivares further characterizes decadent literature as a counter-cultural movement:

> Contra las normas literarias vigentes, especialmente el Naturalismo, emerge, a consecuencia de una profunda crisis espiritual, política y social, una sensibilidad que aporta a la literature nuevas preocupaciones, como el culto a lo artificial y la proliferación de emociones raras y refinadas. Esto acontece no sólo con miras a violentar la mentalidad burguesa, sino principalmente como una alternativa a las vicisitudes de la vida contemporánea.
>
> (Owing to a profound spiritual, political, and social crisis, and against the relevant literary tendencies, especially Naturalism, a sensibility emerges that opens up new areas of inquiry, like the cult of artificiality and the proliferation of strange and refined emotions. This occurs not only out of an interest in disrupting the bourgeois mentality, but principally as an alternative to the vicissitudes of modern life.) 15

Cathy Jrade's succinct definition of *modernista* decadence is exemplary, and it is also in line with European definitions of decadence: "self-indulgence, excess, the embrace of

artificiality, and a consistent emphasis on both materialism and materiality" (*Modernismo, Modernity and the Development of Spanish American Literature*, 55). Jrade's work uncovers rich layers of philosophical and spiritual meaning in *decadentista* poetry. Yet, more work is needed to not only define, but to analyze the various functions of decadence itself in the context of Latin American politics and intellectual life.

8. Miguel Gomes's insightful article "Encrucijadas de la economía simbólica en la obra de Julián del Casal," *Hispanic Review* 79.2 (2011): 235–259, analyzes the complex function of dichotomies, such as medicine and infirmity, as a way for the modern artist to participate productively in the economic marketplace (239).

9. As Thomas Ward points out in "Los posibles caminos de Nietzsche en el modernismo," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 50.2 (2002): 489–515, Nietzsche's influence on late nineteenth-century Latin American and Spanish writers was strong despite the late translation of the German philosopher's works into Spanish. Ward points out that Nietzsche's ideas appear in French from 1874 and translations appear steadily from 1880–1920. Modernista writers also could have familiarized themselves with Nietzsche's ideas through the publications of the Italian writer Gabriel D'Annunzio (499).

10. I choose these two thinkers because their work embodies late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century preoccupations in regard to knowledge, science, and religion. Nietzsche denies the viability of opposites such as truth/falsehood, good/evil, illness/health. Jung, from a medical and religious standpoint, offers his theory of *coniunctio*, which prescribes a balance between the knowledge of one's conscious and unconscious desires and energies; his work on myth and archetypes theorized the religious impulse. Jung posits that mental *wholeness* must include knowledge of one's "essential hinterland," and this undertaking often includes demystifying taboo urges. He goes so far as to say that ignoring these unexplored areas of the psyche result in a return to "barbarism."

11. Jrade, in *Modernismo, Modernity and the Development of Spanish American Literature*, recognizes the *modernista* fascination with the impulses of the subconscious when she compares Julián del Casal with Freud: "By exploring the dark forces of our inner life, both psychoanalyst and poet renounce the limited view of knowledge established within the materialistic and positivistic epistemological frameworks of the nineteenth century" (51). Her work astutely acknowledges that *modernista* politics include a range of writers beyond José Enrique Rodó and José Martí: "The 'politics' of *modernista* writing grows out of its assertion that it holds the key to a profound understanding of realities overlooked or ignored by the ever increasing emphasis upon pragmatism, materialism, and 'progress'" (15).

12. Charles Bernheimer, *Decadent Subjects: The Idea of Decadence in Art, Literature, Philosophy, and the Culture of the Fin de Siècle in Europe*, ed. T. Jefferson Kline and Naomi Schor (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 5–7.

13. Olivares, *La novela decadente en Venezuela*, 14.

14. Gautier in Ibid.

15. Ward, "Los posibles caminos de Nietzsche," 495–96.

16. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Will to Power,* quoted in Bernheimer, *Decadent Subjects*, 9.

17. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 10.

18. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), 36.

19. Ibid., 33.

20. Ibid., 17–18.

21. The historian Tulio Halperín Donghi in *The Contemporary History of Latin America*, trans. and ed. John Charles Chasteen (London: Duke University Press, 1993), describes this shift in moralizing force: "[. . .] Catholicism had lost its unquestionable official sanction that had characterized its place in Latin American society for centuries. The breach in religious unity among the ruling classes opened the way for new expressions of ambiguity and defiance from below" (127). Disunity among Catholic and secular ruling powers was not always the norm. For example, the Regeneration Movement from 1886–99 in Colombia featured an official return of Catholic conservatism in government. It established "a constitutional and civil-law form" of "the aged authoritarian formulation, Catholic and intolerant" (Marco Palacios, *Estado y clases sociales en Colombia* [Bogotá: Procultura, 1986], 129–30). By enforcing tenets of Catholicism, the Regeneration was one way to ensure the voting masses would act in the interest of a ruling class whose values it shared. The work of the decadent *modernista* writer José Asunción Silva (Colombia 1865–1896) can be read in dialogue with the moralizing discourses of the Catholic Regeneration regime.

22. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983); and Angel Rama, *La ciudad letrada* (Hanover, NH: Ediciones del norte, 1984).

23. Eduardo Zuleta, "Cartas literarias," in *El Movimiento: Revista de Novedades, Industria y Literatura* (Medellín, Colombia), April 25, 1893: 2.

24. Gabino Barreda in Francisco Medina, "El modernismo literario, ¿procede del positivismo?" *Revista Positiva* (Literary modernismo: Does it Derive from Positivism?; Positivist Review; Mexico City), March 26, 1903: 156.

25. The following passage further reveals Medina's critiques of *modernista* literature:

> ¿Cómo puede venir, pues, esta poesía que evoca el pasado no por lo que tuvo de bueno […], sino por lo que tuvo de raro y exquisito, cómo puede venir de las ideas que proclaman que la poesía debe ser precursora, que debe guiar de la mano á un mejoramiento siempre en evolución?
>
> ¿Cómo puede venir esta poesía que desprecia el medio en que nace, detesta la vida de que disfrutan sus padres, olvida las tendencias que nos impulsan y reniega de la ciencia, de una filosofía que estudia ese medio, trata de mejorar esa vida, acoge esas tendencias para mejorarlas, armonizándolas, y que lleva por sola divisa la ciencia misma?
>
> (How can, then, this poetry that evokes the past, not for what good it had to offer, but for its rare and exquisite qualities, develop from ideas that proclaim that poetry should be on the leading edge and should take one by the hand to guide [the reader] toward constantly evolving betterment?
>
> How can this poetry, which despises the environment in which it was born, detests the life that its parents enjoyed, forgets the tendencies that motivate us and protests science, develop from a philosophy that studies this environment, embraces those tendencies to improve them, reconciling them and taking as its only currency science itself?) 157

26. Ibid., 157.

27. José Martí, *Nuestra América*, introduction, Pedro Henríquez Ureña (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1980).

28. Eugenio María de Hostos, *Obras completas* (San Juan: Editorial del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1988).

29. José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel*, ed. Belén Castro (Madrid: Cátedra, 2007). See Aching's *The Politics of Spanish American Modernismo* for a discussion of intertextuality in *Ariel*.

30. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo*, ed. Jorge Luis Borges (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 1974 [1845]).

31. Rodó, *Ariel*, 180. English: Rodó, *Ariel*, Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. (Austin: U of Texas P, 1993) 60.

32. Aching, *The Politics of Spanish American Modernismo*, 91.

33. Rodó, *Ariel*, 188. Trans. Sayers Peden, 66.

34. Simón Bolívar, "General Bolívar's Letter to a Friend, on the Subject of South-American Independence," in *La carta de Jamaica redescubierta*, ed. Francisco Cuevas Cancino (Mexico City: El Colegio de Mexico, 1975), 83–117.

35. Rodó, *Ariel*, 189–90. Trans. Sayers Peden, 67.

36. Ibid., 146. Trans. Sayers Peden, 33.

37. Ibid., 147. Trans. Sayers Peden, 37.

38. Ibid., 226. Trans. Sayers Peden, 98.

39. Ibid., 227.

40. See Miguel Gomes's article "Encrucijadas de la economía simbólica en la obra de Julián del Casal."

41. "La cámara doble" (1890) does not appear in either of the two main collections of Casal's prose, which are three volumes of *Prosas* published by the Cuban Consejo Nacional de Cultura, and Marshal Nunn's 1949 *Selected Prose of Julián del Casal* (University of Alabama Press). All of the selections from *Prosas* originally appeared in the Cuban magazine *La habana elegante*.

42. Julián del Casal, "La cámara doble," in *Antología crítica de la prosa modernista Hispanoamericana*, ed. José Olivio Jiménez and Antonio R. de la Campa (New York: Elisio Torres and Sons, 1976), 328.

43. Julián del Casal, "La última ilusión," in *Julián del Casal: Prosas*, vol. 1 (Havana: Consejo Nacional de Cultura, 1963), 231.

44. Ibid., 230.

45. Medina, "El modernismo literario," 157.

46. Sylvia Molloy, "Too Wilde for Comfort," *Social Text* 31–32 (1992): 187–201.

47. Casal, "La última ilusión," 231.

48. Casal, "Cuentos amargos: una madre," in *Prosas*, vol. 1, 205.

49. Ibid., 207.

50. Nancy LaGreca, *Rewriting Womanhood: Feminism, Subjectivity, and the Angel of the House in the Latin American Novel, 1887–1903* (College Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 5–12.

51. I use the term *national romance* as it is employed in Doris Sommer's seminal work *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

52. Julián del Casal, *Historias amargas*, in *Prosas*, vol. 1, 211.

53. Ibid., 213. Flaubert's *Salammbô* (1862) was an historical novel of war, lust, eroticism, and violence set in 3rd century BCE Carthage. The title character is a seductive priestess who sleeps with her father's enemy.

54. Ibid., 214.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., 215.

57. Jung, *The Archetypes*, 174–77.

58. Ibid., 175. Jung further links conscious/unconscious to gender: the conscious is male in a man, female in a woman, and, conversely, unconscious is feminine in a man and masculine in a woman. Jung explains that the gendered elements arose from the original manifestation of *coniuncio* as a fertility ritual, but that now these elements are symbolic (176).

59. Amado Nervo, "La libertad del arte literario," in *Obras completas*, ed. Alfonso Reyes, vol. 22 (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1921), 310–14.

60. Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993 [1892]).

61. Ibid., 315.

62. Amado Nervo, "El patriotismo de Tello Téllez," in *Obras completas: Las ideas de Tello Téllez*, ed. Alfonso Reyes, vol. 19 (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1921). This story is part of a collection of articles that originally appeared in the *Revista de América* sometime before 1915, after which the author left them to Claudio Santos González, a Spanish intellectual and editor associated with the Parisian press Garnier. I was not able to locate the original date of publication.

63. Nervo, "El patriotismo de Tello Téllez," 91.

64. Ibid., 95–96.

65. Ibid., 96.

66. Ibid.

67. Amado Nervo, "La gota de agua que no quería perder su 'individualidad'," in *Obras completas*, ed. Alfonso Reyes, vol. 16 (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1920), 156.

68. Paul Bourget *Essais de psychologie contemporaine*, vol. 2 (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1924), 20.

69. Jung, *The Archetypes*, 275.

70. Rubén Darío, "Cantos de vida y esperanza," in *Antología crítica de la poesía modernista hispanoamericana*, ed. José Olivio Jiménez (Madrid: Hiperión, 1992), 204.

71. Ward, "Los posibles caminos de Nietzsche en el modernismo," 492.