

Varela and Barcia conclude that *coartación* amounted to little more than “false manumission,” because relatively few *coartados* obtained their full legal freedom (146). This is an inescapable conclusion, given the overwhelming evidence that slave owners, *síndicos*, and notaries exploited *coartados* and ignored the rights conferred by their *coartado* status. But this conclusion prompts a deeper question: given its starkly exploitative nature, why did enslaved people pursue *coartación* at all? Because *coartación* clearly was not forced on enslaved people, readers are left wondering what *coartados* imagined was possible when they put a down payment on freedom. One possible answer, gleaned from examples in the book, is that enslaved people were acutely aware of *coartación*’s logic and used the process to achieve other kinds of freedoms, protections, privileges, and customary rights (79, 83-4, 149). By focusing more on these strategies and even incorporating the scholarship on conditional freedom in other parts of Latin America, the authors could have deepened their analysis of why enslaved people initiated a process that paradoxically placed freedom further out of reach.

As the first full-length study of *coartación*, this is an exhaustively researched, insightful contribution to the history of manumission. It challenges many assumptions and misconceptions about *coartación* in Cuba, broadens our understanding of legal freedom’s wrenching conditionality, and reminds us that the paths to manumission were rarely linear.

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CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LATIN AMERICA

Republics of Knowledge: Nations of the Future in Latin America. By Nicola Miller. Princeton University Press, 2020. Pp. 304. \$39.95 cloth.
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Nicola Miller offers an insightful, well-researched, and engaging addition to the body of literature on the emergence of nations and the republican tradition in Latin America. Miller argues that the creation of new nations and national identities is a project of generating and disseminating new knowledge. This project entails the building of communities (“republics”) and institutions that support this enterprise.

The book focuses on South American nations, particularly Argentina, Chile and Peru, although it speaks more broadly to trends in Latin America. The book features ten thematic chapters organized in two parts. The first part focuses on institutions and

repertoires or landscapes of knowledge—libraries, book markets, teacher education, and others. The gist of this part is what made the canon of legitimate knowledge in the new Hispanic American nations. The second part focuses on discipline-based case studies featuring the inner dynamics of generating and transferring new knowledge. Although both parts are insightful and coherent, I found the second part more engaging, as it focuses on the specific transferring and production of different types of knowledge. Chapters range from the debates around linguistic norms, the production of national cartographies, the production and reception of political economy discourses, the formation of teacher cadres, and the development of a vernacular engineering profession and its impact on large infrastructure modernization. Each chapter is deployed over the long nineteenth century. The thematic organization implicitly suggests that behind the production of knowledge there were burgeoning communities and institutions that carved a space of autonomy from broader political, economic and social processes, rather than being their product.

I see Miller's book as a valuable contribution in the tradition of classics such as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) and Doris Sommers's *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1993), which pinpoint the production of culture and an idea of community as the hallmarks of an intentional project of nation-making. Within this tradition, Miller shifts attention to the creation of communities that generate new knowledge that brings the new nations into a choir of admired peers, a global concert of nations, serving as a form of legitimation. Readers may benefit from comparing this book with its contemporary *Republics of the New World: The Revolutionary Political Experiment in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* by Hilda Sabato, which stems from a historiographical tradition that highlights the experimentation involved in the new political ideas of citizenship and popular sovereignty. Both books provide a sympathetic view of the post-Independence era as a new political order with its own logic and rules, rather than a period of instability, improvisation, and failed states.

Miller presents a story of progress in the establishment of libraries, book markets, and educational institutions, and the expansion of literacy in the population. The author hints at the limitations of this progress as well (perhaps more clearly in the case study of the role of local engineers in large infrastructure projects). Yet, the reader is left without much sense of how this progress was distributed across regions and social groups, or how it compared to progress in other regions in the world. Readers are rightfully reminded of how Latin American intellectuals sought to position their countries in the concert of civilized nations, but they are left without an understanding of why literacy, education, and patent creation lagged behind the levels reached in European countries or other European-settler countries.

Particularly of interest is that Latin American countries feature deep regional, ethnic, and gender gaps in educational attainment—gaps that did not disappear with the deployment

of mass educational systems and integration in the global economy. The lack of attention to the inequities of knowledge production and transfer brings further focus to the question of whether indigenous people, plebeians, and women participated in the fields of knowledge production. Intersections of race, class, and gender make an appearance in the subject of education (Chapter 10), but readers are left without much insight as to their impact beyond the circles of the elites and the “lettered city.” These limitations constitute a lost opportunity to engage in a broader transdisciplinary dialogue, but they do not diminish the contribution of the book in placing the construction of knowledge communities at the center of the nation-making that took place in nineteenth-century Latin America.

I recommend the book for instructional use in a graduate seminar. As a well-researched, well-written, comprehensive, and original argument, it will inspire budding scholars and serve as a model for writing. It requires acquaintance with Latin American history, which makes it less viable as a whole-book assignment for an undergraduate course, but the chapters on languages and geography may be particularly appealing and relatively simple to couple with more introductory readings.

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NINETEENTH-CENTURY DISCOURSES ON ANDEAN INDIGENEITY

Inventing Indigenism: Francisco Laso's Image of Modern Peru. By Natalia Majluf. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021. Pp. 245. Abbreviations. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$50.00 cloth.
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Natalia Majluf's book brought to mind a conversation I once had with the late art historian David Craven (1943–2012), who recommended that instead of *indigenismo*, it would be more prudent to speak of *indigenismos*, diverse movements that varied depending on regional histories and local politics. Majluf's study is a welcome and much-needed addition to a body of literature on the subject, which has tended to privilege Mexico. Her use of Francisco Laso's iconic painting *Inhabitant of the Cordilleras of Peru* (1855) as a point of departure for the exploration of multiple discourses on Andean indigeneity in nineteenth-century Peru is an inspired strategic move. It reveals an artist who understood his world and the processes at work as Peru struggled to define itself.

Majluf begins by noting how indigeneity was employed to signify national identity at a time when creoles were in power. She adds that the blame for indigenous oppression was placed on the colonial period and the Spanish, exonerating the creoles who were