

Tipo de documento: Working Paper N°3

ISSN: 0327-9588



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Fecha de publicación: 1993

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Salvatore, R. (1993). "*Yankee merchants in South America: narratives, identify, and social order, 1810-1870*". [Working Paper. Universidad Torcuato Di Tella]. Repositorio Digital Universidad Torcuato Di Tella.

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WORKING PAPER N° 3

**YANKEE MERCHANTS IN SOUTH AMERICA: NARRATIVES,
IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL ORDER, 1810-1870**

By Ricardo Salvatore

The American merchant is a type of this restless, adventurous, onward-going race and people. He sends his merchandise all over the earth; stocks every market; makes wants that he may supply them; covers the New Zealander with Southern cotton woven in Northern looms; builds blocks of stores in the Sandwich Islands; swaps with the Feejee cannibal; sends the whaleship among the icebergs of the poles, or to wander in solitary seas;... gives the ice of the northern winter to the torrid zone; piles up Fresh Pond on the banks of the Hoogly; gladdens the sunny savannahs of the dreamy South; and makes life tolerable in the bungalow of an Indian jungle. (Freeman Hunt, Worth and Wealth, 1856, p. 342.)

American merchants in nineteenth-century South America acted as universal mediators in the world of commodities. Their specific function provided the navigational, commercial, and financial links that connected South America to the expanding Atlantic economy. As travelers or residents, they occupied an enviable position from which to observe and reflect upon the young republics' social, political, and economic order. Conceivably, they could discuss with local administrators, military officers, merchants, and teachers the problems of casting these societies into molds of "progress and civilization." Their own experiences in questions of reform --free trade, prison discipline, management of asylums, poor relief, missionary societies, etc.-- might have helped to organize the chaotic social milieu of post-independence South America. Besides aiding the circulation of commodities, American merchants might have facilitated the dissemination of notions of discipline, order, and morality in the host societies.

Whether this was the case, is difficult to assess. Extant correspondence between foreign merchants and members of the South American elites relates mainly to business transactions and, obviously, most verbal communications remained off the transcript. We have to rely instead on narratives that foreign merchants addressed to their communities of origin. Among these narratives, travel accounts occupy a privileged position, for they contain detailed information and images about the host countries, their landscapes, peoples, and markets.

Often taken as documentary evidence of the countries they depict or as measures of the cultural gap between the writer and the host society, travel narratives have seldom been used to examine questions of mercantile identity or the transmission of disciplinary discourse. They should. Mercantile journals and travel narratives stemmed from the same ideological milieu, shared the same rethorical conventions, and were destined to the same market. When read in connection to prevailing discourses in mercantile communities, both narratives acquire new meanings. In fact, I shall argue, they promise to shed new light about the role of merchants in the "ordering" of South America.

The "narratives of trade" can help us identify merchants' contributions to contemporaneous discourses of order. A careful reading can reveal the use of constructs of social order (race, gender, class) for disciplinary projects as well as the connection between the cognitive and business components of merchants' activities abroad. The mapping of South America into the North American imagination involved the inscription of hierarchies and images through which the "new republics" could be apprehended and represented. Foreign travelers, among whom merchants were prominent, helped to build these hierarchies and images. If South America entered the cognitive space of literate North Americans as a territory of mixed races, laziness, backwardness, violence, and ignorance, it was through the circulation of their narratives.

The use of these constructs is less clear. Did they serve to stimulate more active commercial relations? Did they prepare American audiences for military adventures in the South? Did they justify the preservation of authoritarian governments in the "new republics"? None of the above. Trade narratives worked on a South-North direction. Through the mediation of market and mercantile associations, these narratives returned disciplinary messages back to the American "public." In this way, merchants' and travellers' experiences and perceptions in South America reinforced or altered North American conceptions on political, social, and economic organization. "Narratives of trade" provided a textual space where merchants searched for "solutions" to disciplinary problems of their own societies.

In this paper, I interpret writings of Northeastern travellers and traders to South America during the post-independence era. My objective is to see how these agents of merchant capital, departing from a society undergoing a fundamental institutional reform, perceived their southern neighbors. In the first section, I present the background which helps to explain Northeasterners' peculiar concerns and perceptions of Latin America. Next, I discuss the means through which the construction of a mercantile identity in the Northeast prefigured the nature of travel and business in the South. In the third section, I examine two types of narratives in which these perceptions were inscribed, noticing the limitations imposed by the different genres. In the last two sections, I focus on travellers' view of the Latin American landscapes, physical, social, and institutional, in an attempt to conceptualize the major articulations and constructs which ordered North American visions of South America.

Yankee Merchants in the Age of Reform

Northeastern travellers and merchants who visited South America after 1800 came from a social and intellectual environment impregnated by ideas of reform. Humanitarian sentiments, the rationalism of a growing commercial economy, the religious zeal of the Second Great Awakening, and republican fervor engendered new discourses about the social, political and moral order and new institutions to deal with the rising social problems. In the cities of the Northeast, the search for new markets in the Far East, in Africa, and in Latin America coincided with innovative efforts to help and control the poor, the delinquent, the mentally insane, and the abandoned child. Concurrently, conflictive relations with Indian nations led to an expansive campaign of conversion and conquest in both the American West and the Pacific aimed at integrating and "civilizing" frontier peoples. The "institutionalization" of social problems and the spiritual and military colonization of indigenous peoples drew a new disciplinary grid in the society and the language of the Northeast.

Northeastern elites experimented with institutions that promised the control of social problems through confinement and individual rehabilitation. Penitentiaries, mental hospitals,

houses of refuge, common schools redefined the treatment of society's ills by internalizing in criminals, patients, children and women the new norms of a capitalist society.¹

Institutionalization appeared as the solution to growing "social problems" in a variety of fields. In the field of crime control, the penitentiary pioneered the drive towards a rationalization in the means of punishment. Against the dangers created by an increasingly commercialized society the penitentiary presented a new model of disciplinary power; a more rational system of coercion that could fill up the gaps left by traditional institutions of social control --the family, the church, the county jail. Through the use of isolation, forced labor, routinization of every-day life, and constant surveillance, penitentiaries pledged to reform delinquents by internalizing in them rules of conduct and the work ethic. [Lewis, W.L., 1965; Rothman, D., 1971, chap. 4; Melossi and Pavarini, 1981; Glenn, M., 1984; Dunn, Th., 1987.]

The penitentiary, as an embodiment of the ideas of rehabilitation, confinement, and specialized treatment, furnished the model for an array of institutions dealing with social problems. Without doubt, it influenced the treatment of abandoned or delinquent youths and women. The same imperative to institutionalize and reform the weak and the dangerous in society led to the development of "houses of refuge" and "reform schools" between 1820 and 1850. [Moynahan and Stewart, 1980, pp. 44-5.]

¹ "Prior to the nineteenth century --writes Michael Katz-- institutions played a far smaller and much less significant social role: the mentally ill, by and large, lived with other members of the community or in an undifferentiated poorhouse; criminals remained for relatively brief periods in jails awaiting trial and punishment by fine, whipping, or execution; the poor were given outdoor relief or, if they were a nuisance, driven from the community. By the middle or third quarter of the nineteenth century all of this had changed. In place of the few, undifferentiated almshouses, jails, and schools there now existed in most cities, states and provinces a series of new inventions: mental hospitals, penitentiaries, reformatories, and public schools. Shapers of social policy had embodied in concrete form the notion that rehabilitation, therapy, medical treatment and education should take place within large, formal, and often residential institutions." [Katz, M., 1988, p. 96.]

Contemporaneously, the almshouse replaced outdoor relief in the treatment of the deserving poor. Beginning in the 1810s, legislatures began to enquire into the causes of poverty, devised procedures to distinguish between the "deserving" and the "undeserving poor," and allocated funds to the construction of work-oriented institutions. More specialized charitable institutions like children's aid societies and female charities followed. [Rothman, D., 1971, chap. 8; Heale, M.J., 1976; Clement, P., 1981.] Mental asylums mushroomed during 1840-1870, displacing jails and poor-houses in the treatment of the mentally insane. Insanity, like poverty or crime, became a curable disease. [Rothman, D., 1971; chaps. 6, 9.]

Parallel to penitentiaries, juvenile asylums, and women's charities grew the moral reform movement, an attempt to bring the morals of the working poor up to middle-class standards. Temperance societies spread throughout the nation with the fervor of a religious crusade. By the mid-1830s over 5,000 local groups had joined the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance. Signing pledges and interning alcoholics appeared as preferred solution for dealing with this moral ill. [Weinbaum, P., 1975; Cassedy, J.H., 1976; Dodd, J.S., 1978.] Reformers also targeted different leisure-time activities of the working class. The Sabbath movement, for example, concentrated on restricting popular entertainment and gambling. [Jable, J.Th., 1978.]

From the same grid of disciplinary ideas emerged the common school. Horace Mann, echoing upper-class fears about "Jacksonian mob rule," designed a system of articulated, age graded, and hierarchically structured schools destined to socialize children in ways that would ameliorate crime, increase national integration, and aid industrialization. Often free and compulsory, the common schools replaced Sunday and charity schools in the control and socialization of children. [Cremin, C., 1980; Spring, J., 1986; Karier, C., 1986.]

Products of the religious revival of the first decades of the century, missionary boards took over the problem of ordering the frontier of White society. Unsuccessful in their attempts to convert to Christianity various indigenous peoples of the Northeast Coast, missionary societies turned their attention toward the

external frontier. Beginning in 1810-11, the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions launched an ambitious project of "world evangelization" which soon extended to India, Hawaii, and China. The missionary movement, a response to the threat of "barbarism" from the American West, created innovative organizations to channel funds and labor into the construction of a Christian world. [Mathews, D., 1969; Elsbree, O.W., 1980.]

Whereas at the core of the commercial-industrial societies, the marginal --immoral women, abandoned children, the indigent, the mentally insane-- would be institutionalized and future citizens integrated through state-funded schools, at the fringes of White society integration was left in the hands of missionaries, military officers, and traders. In the cities, the discourse of reform transpired a dual concern: the confinement of those unfit for the world of work, and the creation of values of hard work, thrift, temperance, and religious piety. In the Indian frontier and the world at large, those unfit for "civilization" would be subject to military and spiritual conquest.

Born into respectability and wealth in a society dominated by these waves of reform, Northeastern merchants could not escape hearing, debating, and eventually participating in these movements. In fact, participation and involvement in "phylanthropic" activities was expected from any respected member of the elite. Motivated by conviction or by the need of social recognition, prominent merchants became directors, financiers, or promoters of a diversity of organizations devoted to penal reform, temperance, education, poor relief, and religious conversion.²

² Richard Vaux, wealthy financier and merchant of Philadelphia, led the efforts of the Society for Aleviating the Missery of Public Prisons to build a model penitentiary predicated on "solitary confinement." [Vaux, R, 1872.] New York merchant Stephen Allen gained social recognition by participating in an assortment of benevolent societies: the New York Hospital and Lunatic Asylum, the Public School Society, the House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents, the N.Y. Prison Discipline Society, among others. [Hunt, F., 1856, vol. 2.] Merchants supported the N.Y. Prison Association, an institution dedicated to the improvement of the condition and treatment of inmates --19 of the 46 managers of the association in 1845 were merchants; 12 were lawyers and the rest were physicians, editors, and teachers.

If the quest for social recognition moved some merchants into the terrain of social and moral reform, to expect the involvement of the majority of merchants in these movements would be unreasonable. More important is that merchants, as part of a growing reading public, came into contact with and helped to circulate public discourses about reform. Aided by new institutions that promoted debates and reading, merchants increasingly absorbed, assimilated, and interpreted messages about social and moral reform. These messages served later as referents for their perception of the new societies incorporated into the Atlantic economy.

Mercantile Identity, Knowledge, and Enterprise

After 1812, the expansion of commercial opportunities abroad motivated many young men to pursue business careers in the main cities of the Northeast. Lacking education and urbanity, the new arrivals, "country boys," raised anxieties among the established members of the mercantile community. Alcoholism, gambling, sexual promiscuity, and political adventurism in the city threatened to thwart the young men's promising careers. A growing body of literature, including books of manners, moral tracts, didactic novels, and magazine articles, articulated these anxieties, advising young men of the dangers and temptations of business and city life. [Horlick, A., 1975, chap. 6] Public lectures contributed to this enterprise by connecting mercantile audiences with the prevailing discourses on moral and social reform. Contemporaneously, mercantile libraries, atheneaeums, and young men's associations began to promote habits of reading, listening, and oratory that facilitated the diffusion of these ideas.

The creation of audiences and reading communities primarily composed of merchants and clerks was, to a large extent, the work of two Northeastern institutions: the mercantile library and the public lecture. Stimulated by the success of the lyceum movement prominent merchants began to organize specialized, private

[Heale, M.J., 1975.] In the temperance societies, physicians were prominent among the organizers but not among those financing the movement --donations usually came from merchants, lawyers, clergymen, and editors. The same could be said of the missionary movement.

libraries where their peers and clerks could read and socialize. [Story, R., 1975; Cayton, M., 1987, p. 605.] In the 1820s and 1830s, coinciding with the emergence of institutions for the confinement of the poor, the ill, and the deviant, the main commercial cities on the Atlantic coast --Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore-- established their own "mercantile library associations," a practice that later extended to other cities of the Mid-west. Charging a modicum fee, mercantile libraries were able to build impressive collections of materials tailored to merchants' needs. Books of reference and entertainment promised to improve merchants' character and knowledge of the world while the library's periodicals informed them of the latest market, shipping, and financial news. Reading in the "newsroom," a long-standing tradition among merchants could now be practiced in a more elegant, enlightened environment.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, public lecturing became an established and lucrative profession. [Scott, D., 1983.] For a fee, young professionals, college professors, moral philosophers, statesmen, and clergymen enlightened audiences on a multiplicity of topics of general interest --from astronomy to biology, from the Middle Ages to Iceland, from the mission of women to the origin of letters. Lyceums, lecture committees, and library associations competed to attract the best speakers, responding to the demands of a public avid for "useful knowledge." Businessmen's contributions usually supplied the initial funds. Each "lecture season," speakers traveled the circuits of town halls, lyceums, and mercantile libraries amassing substantial incomes. Reformers, phylanthropists, travellers, explorers, and literati found in the lecture circuits an attentive audience for their cruzades, adventures, campaigns, or poems. Mercantile library associations significantly contributed to the extension of this practice, providing mercantile character to lectures and audiences.

The influence of public lectures and mercantile libraries in shaping the identity of young merchants cannot be overemphasized. Immersed in a society of multiple signs and growing information, mercantile audiences expected lecturers to place their particular knowledge in a broad interpretive context. In this way, the public lecture aided the articulation of ideas of national identity,

social order, and morality. Mercantile libraries, by sponsoring lectures and by encouraging young merchants to read, provided their members with a sense of social distinctiveness and purpose. Intense reading, oratory skills, and a wider knowledge of the world separated a merchant from the mechanic and the farmer, bringing them closer to the world of wealth and culture.

Gathering "information respecting the general trade and commerce of the world," disseminating "useful and entertaining knowledge," and improving "the members in elocution and debate," constituted common objectives of mercantile libraries. [Boston M.L.A., 1839.] For this purpose, libraries assembled impressive collections of books and periodicals. Works on history, law, foreign languages, natural history, biography, geography, and religion helped merchants apprehend the known world from the comfort of the reading room. [Catalogue of Books, 1840.]

Information alone did not constitute the aim of these societies, committed as they were to stimulating the "intellectual exertion" and the "moral improvement" of their members. Leaders of these associations believed that reading, discussions, and lectures contributed to shape the character of young merchants, infusing in them values of acquisitiveness, manliness, and Christian charity.³ [M.L. of Philadelphia, 1867.] To strengthen their character merchants could resort to classic works, novels, and travel literature --very popular genres among the membership.⁴ Freeman Hunt, a leader in the mercantile community, encouraged young merchants to read biographies. [Horlick, A., 1975, p. 160.]

Mercantile libraries were also instrumental in delimiting a new field of specialized knowledge. As defined by these libraries, "mercantile knowledge" included the technical aspects of commercial activity, information about the social and political condition of

³ "Well directed reading and thought will assist to form close and accurate observations of life and character, and he will be best qualified for the business of the world, who has just conceptions of the duties of his position and the requisite ability for meeting them." [M.L. Phila, 1846]

⁴ Two thirds of the loans of the Mercantile Library of Philadelphia in 1858 were novel and travel books. [M.L. of Philadelphia, 1867.]

foreign countries, familiarity with the "habits and manners" of other peoples, and "all the facts and principles which govern the intercourse with nations and individuals."⁵ [M.L. of Philadelphia, 1867.] This type of knowledge was essential for the conduct of business abroad.

A review of the lectures sponsored by mercantile libraries shall give us an insight into the nature of mercantile identity. The 1839-1840 program of the Boston Mercantile Library included lectures on the atmosphere, on the moral influence of literature, on Schiller, chemistry, meteoric stones, Chaucer, music, and transcendentalism. It also promised speeches by Ralph W. Emerson on the philosophy of history, by Horace Mann on education, by B. Butler on the U.S. Constitution, and by Orville Dewey on moral philosophy. [M. L. Association, Boston, 1839.] On specific mercantile issues, it offered a presentation by C.F. Adams on the principles of credit. Besides promoting specialized knowledge, mercantile libraries connected merchants with the broader issues of nation, morality, and social organization.

Analysing the content of those lectures directly addressed to merchants, the role of useful knowledge and social reform as constitutive of mercantile identity becomes evident. Charles Edwards, in an address to the mercantile library of New York in 1839, presented the ideal merchant as a "good scholar" and a "healthy reader," a person who knew geography, arithmetic, linguistic, numismatic, law, mechanics, as well as the customs and prejudices of other countries. [Edwards, Ch., 1839.] The success of a merchant depended on knowledge.⁶ T.W. Higginson told a mercantile audience in 1853 that the career of commerce afforded opportunities for both intellectual and moral improvement. In

⁵ An 1804 mercantile dictionary included within the terrain of mercantile knowledge information about "the situation of exchange, the produce and the wants of different countries, the obstruction and facilities of a particular commerce." [Montefiore, J., 1804.]

⁶ To sell to Holland, the merchant had to know about canals, to sell to China he had to know about political despotism and corruption, to sell to Egypt information about the movement of the Nile river was crucial.

their travels merchants collected information about their trade and about other societies, an experience that furnished them with "habits of accurate perception, careful investigation, keen analysis, wise preparation, and prompt decision." [Higginson, T., 1853.] Like several other lecturers before and after, Rev. Betaine advised young merchants to pursue knowledge instead of the "miserable arithmetic of dollars and cents." Their leisure time should be profitably invested in studying; a complete merchant was one that geared his life toward the "spread of knowledge" and the "liberaties of philanthropy." [Betaine, G., 1839.] In fact, Betaine encouraged merchants to write literature. Almost identical advise came from Freeman Hunt's pen. The American merchant, as the mediator of the world of commodities, was nothing less than the bearer of civilization. Money, the apparent goal of mercantile activity, was only a veil --behind it stood food, shelter, education, art, science, and industry, in short, civilization! [Hunt, F., 1856, pp. 342 and 403-4.]

Social responsibility was equally central to mercantile identity. Making the audience aware of their social power and appealing to their intellectual curiosity and believes, reformers tried to involve merchants, as members of the "reforming and progressive class," in the social, political, and cultural contentions of the times. [Hillard, G., 1850.] Charles Summer, for example, encouraged merchants to join the anti-slave trade crusade. [Summer, Ch., 1855.] In 1845, Robert Winthrop assured young merchants that the measure of their "social wealth" would be proportional to their involvement in charities, education, moral reform, and religion. In fact, the inscription of merchants' names in the walls of hospitals, asylums, atheneiums, chapels, and colleges should be their greatest reward. [Winthrop, R., 1845.] Philanthropy now transformed into social responsibility constituted a class attitude. "Good books, well-spent evenings, grave deliberations, and able and eloquent discourses" would help to impart the sense of responsibility, enlightened views, liberal sentiments, and refined intelligence demanded by the times. [Corry, Th., 1845.]

The concern with the formation of a "moral character" as a requisite for business success and the wielding of social power

pervaded the lecturers' message. In addition to supplying the material demanded by producers and consumers, the mercantile community had to provide to its own intellectual needs. With the increasing importance of exchange as organizing principle of modern life, merchants needed to apply action and thought to the solution of mounting social problems. Buying, selling, watching the markets, and keeping accounts was no longer sufficient --merchants had to commit themselves to understanding society and for this purpose the accumulation of knowledge was essential. Reading played a central role, for reading could develop the senses, the attitudes, and the moral values needed to attend merchants' new social responsibilities.

Through public lectures, magazine articles, advice-books, or meetings at the mercantile libraries, young merchants received an ascribed identity which demarcated the limits of their future activities abroad. The acquisition of useful knowledge and the fulfillment of social responsibility defined "mercantile character" more appropriately than the mere pursuit of profit. As an observer, reporter, and ethnographer of the world around, the merchant had to prepare himself for the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. As a responsible member of the elite, he needed to concern himself with the problems of his home community, supporting liberal, religious, or humanitarian causes.

American merchants trading in South America took part of this advise to the letter. The pursuit of knowledge about foreign lands and peoples became an integral part of their trades. David Curtis De Forest, one of the first Americans to settle and trade in the Rio de la Plata, studied Spanish and Portuguese grammar, Spanish law, and Catholic practices and beliefs before entering in the South American trade.⁷ Daniel W. Coit, Connecticut merchant who

⁷ He prepared himself well for these commercial encounters. In 1800, he traveled to Liverpool with the purpose of acquiring "as much knowledge as possible of the manners, customs and, particularly, manufactures" of Britain. [Journal 1 (1800-1801), De Forest Family Papers] Before the voyage, he had studied Spanish and Portuguese vocabulary and grammar. In the return trip, the ship made a call at Rio. There, De Forest made inordinate efforts to learn the Catholic religion: he copied the regulations of a franciscan convent, recorded the meaning of

resided in Peru, Chile, and Mexico, alternated years of intense trading activities with years of travel, carrying everywhere his drawing materials and his notebook.⁸ As a product of a long, but interrupted, mercantile career, he accumulated little financial capital --his main assets were stories, sketches, and piles of letters of travel.

Moral and social reform, on the other hand, were more difficult to export. Isolation from the host communities and the temporary nature of their residence hindered attempts to spread the gospel of temperance, prison reform, and spiritual colonization

rituals, translated the Emperor's daily prayers, and even measured the number of times friars kissed the sacred habits. ["Commonplace Book" (1799-1800), De Forest Family Papers.] Before reaching Buenos Aires, he examined royal decrees in order to break through the Spanish trade monopoly. In this legislation he discovered that the Spaniards were ready to allow foreign merchants to purchase frutos del pais if they brought slaves, that North American vessels "in distress" could call on South American ports, and that a few porteños had started a legal commerce with the Spanish Caribbean. ["Notes on Commerce 1803-1807", De Forest Family Papers.] Very "useful knowledge" indeed.

⁸ Before embarking for Peru, merchant Daniel W. Coit had prepared himself sufficiently. He did five years of apprenticeship with Gilbert and Aspinwall, and then started business on his own account (purchasing bark in the New Jersey forests). In 1818 he moved to work in the counting-room of S.S. & G.G. Howland, of New York. In his spare time he studied French. After two years doing business in Peru, Guayaquil, and other Pacific ports, he sailed for Europe. He was satisfied. "I had gained mercantile knowledge of a foreign trade others would be desirous to possess." [Coit, D., 1908, p. 55.] Indeed, he soon was able to profit from his new knowledge. F. Huth and Co., of London, paid him \$3,500 for selecting a "South American cargo" and, a few months later, he had offers from two large commercial houses to agency in Peru. In 1822 returns to South America. From Buenos Aires he traveled overland to Valparaíso. Then he spent five years in Peru, in one of the most active periods of the South American trade. With these earnings he traveled through Europe, during 1829-31, carrying drawing materials and a "camera lucida" to capture "picturesque effects." Following his father's advise, he stockpiled information of the places he visits. After a large period away from commerce (managed a farm in Iowa), he takes an assignment in Mexico under contract for merchants Howland and Aspinwall. In the Aztec land, he hunts for colonial art and draws sketches.

among "the natives." Only in the textual space of travel accounts merchants found a fertile terrain to explore the tensions of their ambivalent identities, a place where business, ethnography, and moral reform could be deployed and compromised.

Business and Literary Narratives

The "narratives of trade" can be divided into two types: business and literary narratives. We shall call business narratives to those narratives that reflect more closely the specific activities of merchants. Commercial correspondence, account books, logbooks, and "price currents" transmit information concerning markets, commercial operations, and business perspectives that help merchants organize and make sense of the world of commodities. Through these sources researchers can grasp merchants' activities and connections and reconstruct the sinews of shipping, commerce and finance. Literary narratives --memoirs, journals, family correspondence, and travel accounts--, on the other hand, present the reader with personal encounters between merchantile agents and foreign landscapes and peoples. Like textual bridges between two cultures, these narratives provide images, metaphors, and reflections illuminating merchants' identity and its relationship with prevailing discourses in their society.

Because of greater flexibility in the genre they imitate (travel writing), these narratives contain articulations of race, gender, and class that transcends mercantile concerns. Whereas business narratives transmit information useful for organizing the "South American trade," literary narratives supply the ethnographies to understand the "new republics" and the spaces to reflect on American problems of social order and class identity. Business and literary narratives constitute distinct forms of expression of merchants' dual pursuit of knowledge --one conveys the specific knowledge of the trade, the other the knowledge of the world and of the self.

Business Narratives.

During the immediate post-independence, as American merchants tried to develop new markets in South America, information about supply, demand, and prices became a crucial ingredient of business success. Shippers and traders instructed their commercial agents, supercargoes, and captains to collect as much information as

possible while they completed the sale and shipment of cargoes. Log-books, commercial letters, journals, and "price currents" evince the scope and intensity of this information-gathering activity. Transmitting back to the centers of mercantile decision the pulse of the market constituted an important task of the early agents of merchant capital.

Through logbooks or commercial letters, ship-owners and merchants instructed captains and supercargoes how to proceed in their travels. Usually, recommendations concerning the collection of market information complemented the typical instructions about ports of call, agents abroad, commodities to sell and buy, and accounts to settle.⁹ Commercial agents and supercargoes gathered needed information from resident foreign merchants, fellow agents returning from other markets, local bureaucrats, and other travelers.¹⁰ Sketchy and inprecise, this information helped to compose a first picture of the local market.

Information-gathering took time and effort. It required frequent visits to different coastal times and even more frequent

⁹ In 1815, the owners of ship *Ophelia* instructed captain Samuel Hill to call on Valparaiso, purchase a cargo of copper, and depart as soon as possible to China in order to sail back home aided by the Monzon winds. If copper was unavailable in Chile, he had to go to Hawaii and take a cargo of sandalwood. In addition, Cap. Hill had "obtain such information in relation to further operations as will enable [him] to proceed with another voyage should it be desirable". [Samuel Hill, *Journal and Logbooks, Ophelia, 1815.*] Captain Lindsay of schooner *Eliza* bound to Bonavista, Brazil, received instructions to sell the cargo and invest in coffee and hides, and "to obtain all the information you can respecting the trade." [Corner & Son to Wm. Lindsay, Baltimore, September 6, 1833, Corner and Son Papers.]

¹⁰ American David De Forest consulted with French merchants travelling across the Cape Horn before he ventured into the markets of Montevideo and Buenos Aires. [Journal 1, 1800-1801, De Forest Family Papers.] Philip De Peyster found in the municipal officers an important source of information about Caracas' market for flour. [Philip De Peyster, *Dairy 1811-1813.*] Before disembarking at Montevideo, supercargo Henry Houghton asked resident merchant G.S. Morgan for current prices for American goods and for estimates of future prices for hides and horns. [H.A. Houghton to G.S. Morgan, Montevideo, Jan 3, 1832, Houghton Papers.]

letter-writing.¹¹ The changing nature of markets added frequency and urgency to the reporting. With the information collected, agents, supercargoes, and adventurers drew "demand schedules," simple lists of the commodities welcome by the inhabitants of the "young republics."¹² Other agents sent back to the United States careful estimates of market capacity. Ingeniously, William Johnson calculated the stock of tea in the city of Buenos Aires and the time it would take before new orders could be expected. [William G. Johnson Papers.] These estimates constituted attempts to bring predictability to a competitive and volatile market. An open port could not ensure foreign merchants that their wares would find purchasers. Markets had to be "measured." Agents also reported about commodity prices, the most powerful indicator of the vitality of a given market. Customarily, they annotated the prices commanded by "American domestics" and by local exportables, distinguishing when possible among different qualities. Prices in different countries helped merchants and shippers decide the best

¹¹ For E.F. Osborn, trading in the coasts of Peru and Chile, the existence of so many small and scattered markets made the task of gathering intelligence very laborious. [Camp Family Papers.] Wakeman, Dunn and Co. expected from their supercargo Cap. Howland to write them back from every port. New York, May 31, 1854, Dickinson Letterbooks.

¹² Captain S. Hill wrote one of such schedules when he reached Valparaiso in 1815: Chileans, he thought, would demand nankins, linens, pocket handkerchiefs, cotton and silk goods, teas, and gunpowder, commodities which could be purchased at Canton and exchanged against Chilean copper and silver. [Samuel Hill, Logbook-Journal (ship) Ophelia, 1815.] Under instructions of merchant T.H. Perkins, captains of vessels sent back to Boston evaluations of the market demand in Peru and Chile. Through these reports, Perkins was able to know that sugar and nankins were valued in Lima and that cocoa was unseleable. Captain Smith was very perceptive. Noticing local customers' attention to matters of color and design --they wore only Spanish fashions-- he recommended Perkins to make careful selection of fabrics. [T.H. Perkins' Letterbook, Macedonian Claims,] When Paul S. Forbes reached Rio Grande in Southern Brazil he was able to draw an "ideal cargo" adapted to the demands of local inhabitants --it included flour, cottons, sperm candles, soap, shoes, salt, hams, butter, cheese, and cod fish. [Forbes Collection.]

destinations for their vessels and estimate the risks involved in each shipment.

During the immediate post-independence information about political and military confrontations was essential for the conduct of commerce. To know in advance the likelihood of a disturbance or a military operation gave the merchant a clear edge over the competition. United States consuls customarily reported back to the Secretary of State about political and military affairs of their areas of influence but the limited diffusion of these reports forced merchants to rely on their own sources.¹³

With the consolidation of commercial relations between the United States and South America, the flow of commercial information became more frequent, reliable, and standardized. Merchants sent each other newspapers, mail packets multiplied, steamers offered regular, scheduled services, and "circulars" or "price currents" began to circulate more extensively. By the mid-century, established commercial houses in South America and the commercial press in the Northeast had supplanted the supercargo as the intelligence gatherer.

In manuscript form or in print, the "circulars" or "price currents" brought to each merchant's desk a summary view of the world of commodities. Maxwell Wright's monthly "circulars" -- issued by one of the largest coffee merchants in Rio de Janeiro-- became a reliable source of information for many American merchants. Under easy identifiable categories subscribers could find abridged information pertaining to recent sales and purchases in Rio --prices paid, and prospects for the near future.

¹³ Their agents at Valparaiso informed New York merchants Le Roy, Bayard, and Co. about the approaching Spanish armada and the probably effects on flour sales --fear of the fall of Lima, together with a bad harvest in Chile promised rising prices for flour. [Lynch, Hutz and Co. to Le Roy, Bayard and Co., Valparaiso, June 30, 1823, Bayard-Campbell-Pearsal Family Papers.] Three years later, E.F. Osborn expected the surrender of Spanish troops at Callao to bring some animation to a sluggish market. [Camp Family Papers.] Mercantile activities were also highly sensitive to European confrontations. D. De Forest could only re-establish his business at Buenos Aires after peace in Europe and the end of the British-American war re-opened oceanic shipping. [De Forest Family Papers.]

Statistics of imports and exports taken from the Brazilian customs added credibility to the report. A brief account of significant political events preceeded reports on commodities and statistical tables. Maxwell Wright was not alone in providing market information. Boston merchant William Appleton could expect to receive regularly two different price reports from Brazil, a monthly tobacco bulletin from Liverpool, the Baring Brother's "price current" from London, and several "market advices" from Canton, Manila, Maccao, and Batavia.¹⁴ Through "circulars" and "price currents" American merchants apprehended the world of commodities at a glance.¹⁵ At the other extreme of the trade circuit, they could "see" the condition of these markets in their constant fluctuation --whether markets turned "dull", "animated", or "stagnant". A four-page statistical report represented the diversity of South American peoples, wants, and tastes. Statistical and textual representations collapsed the complexities of the social, economic, and political life of the "new republics" into prices, quantities, and qualities of commodities. Market information contained already a process of abstraction of the highest degree: the construction of "South American markets" as spaces of economic activity divorced from questions of property, distribution, employment, or social justice.

Back in the United States, market information about South America entered a familiar terrain: "price currents," "shipping

¹⁴ Similarly, New York merchant Jacob Le Roy received "price currents" dated in Nantes, Dublin, Amsterdam, and London. Later in the century, more specialized commodity dealers began to issue their own circulars. Halsted Watrous from New York and Field, Anverse and Allen from Boston, leather and hide brokers, provided information about qualities, availability and prices to importers, wholesalers, and manufacturers in need of these raw materials. Prices of hides in Buenos Aires, Rio Grande, or Surat came this way to tanners in isolated communities in New York.

¹⁵ The attention merchants devoted to "price current" was minimal. "Anyone who has been in a merchant's counting house on the receipt of trade circulars or letter-sheet price-currents, has observed how comparatively little attention they receive, a glance at a price or two, and they are cast aside or strung upon a hook to accumulate dust with their predecessors." [Forsyth, D., 1964, p. 67.]

lists," commercial newspapers, and magazines.¹⁶ From terra incognita for many American merchants at the beginning of the century, South America became an area of known markets by 1830, its prices regularly reported in the commercial press.¹⁷ New York's "Comparative Price Current," for example, added extra columns to account for the prices in thirteen cities in South America and the West Indies. [Forsyth, D., 1964, p. 64.]

Between 1840 and 1860 ten commercial journals of broad coverage redefined the limits of the field of commercial information. Hunt's Merchant Magazine (1839-70), the first specialized magazine for the mercantile community, expanded the "field of commerce" to include banking, railroads, communications, mining, and navigation. The journal tried to involve merchants into the broader political community, running articles dealing with agriculture, textile factories, foreign policy, law, credit, morality, etc. [Forsyth, D., 1964, p. 82-86; Mott, F., 1957, vol. 1, 696-98] Originally limited to price, shipping, and real estate information, the term "commercial interest" denoted now broader spheres of economic activity, regional and national politics, and social reform. In Hunt's Merchants Magazine, representations of South American countries were concise, objective (statistical), and informative, showing no traces of the romantic "othering."

Literary Narratives

The genre of travel narratives, at least a century old in Europe, took root in the United States at the end of the eighteenth century, becoming a major attraction to authors, publishers, and public during the nineteenth century. By 1820 the popularity of

¹⁶ Price currents, popular since the eighteenth century, thrived after 1810. Newspapers for the mercantile community multiplied after the first appeared in New York in 1815. "Shipping lists" and "public sales reports" began to cater more specialized needs. After 1820, new price currents distributed by suscription incorporated longer and more complex lists of commodities and ships, as well as commentary on market conditions and occasional analysis of commercial problems.

¹⁷ Montefiore's Commercial Dictionary, published in 1804, did not present any entry for the cities of Montevideo, Valparaíso, or Rio Grande do Sul. [Montefiore, J., 1804.]

travel books was no longer in doubt.¹⁸ As the book market expanded ten times faster than population, "all kinds of books of travel, a large number of which were hasty collections of unedited letters or article serials, sold by the tens of thousands. Many ran into tens of reprints and were in constant demand for decades after their first publication..."¹⁹ As a consequence, authors developed a source of independent earnings which, complemented with fees for public lectures, provided enviable incomes.²⁰ [Metwalli, A., 1976, pp. 15-6; Zboray, R., 1989, pp. 181-200.]

By necessity travel narratives combined features of the reportage with those of imaginative fiction. [Tallmadge, J., 1979; Hunt, W.R, 1968.] As a documentary, the travel book provided a valuable source of information to businessmen, government officials, scientists, and readers in general. As fiction, the genre enticed readers to share the "adventures" of the authors in a journey that promised to produce images and emotions. Most travel books stemmed from travel journals or private correspondence. [Giltrow, J, 1979, pp. 275-79.] Re-writing journals was a creative moment in which authors added detail and meaning to prior experiences of travel. Naturally, the reading public --the market-- influenced significantly in this process.

¹⁸ Alexander Mackenzie's "Voyages from Montreal" had already gone through six editions and different versions of the 1806 Lewis and Clark expedition had produced 14 editions even before Biddle was able to present the "official" account. [Greenfield, B.R., 1985, p. 19.]

¹⁹ By the mid-nineteenth century, other variants of the genre developed --travelogues and tales for children-- generating even larger incomes for publishers and authors. Peter Parley's tales and histories, more than a hundred published between 1827 and 1860, sold seven million copies. [Haviland, V., 1950, p. 117.] The decline of the genre came with the last quarter of the century, when overseas tourism became so common that the travel narrative lost its original appeal and the journey became a metaphor for more literary discoveries. [Giltrow, J., 1985, p. 11; and Hunt, W.R., 1968.]

²⁰ At the beginning of the century Washington Irving received \$1,000 to \$2,000 for each manuscript delivered to the publisher. [Wilson, J.R., 1979, p. 89-90.]

Several conventions shaped travel narratives. Most authors presented their writings as truthful representations of experiences and observations that were original or unique. Authenticity and originality, however, did not make a travel narrative. Transmitting emotions was essential --a travel account that merely recorded dry information about markets, fauna, flora, and navigation could hardly sell in the market. The narrative needed also a doze of social, political, or moral commentary. To convey views of foreign lands, the writer had to appeal to the readers' complicity, based on the commonalities of their culture. As a result, the descriptions, often presented as authentic, contained a great deal of generalization and prejudice. [Giltrow, J., 1979, pp. 9-11; Greenfield, B.R., 1985, pp. 21-34.]

The genre privileged a particular form of perception: the "landscape." Travelers were conditioned to observe nature and society in a picturesque form. [Mulvey, Ch., 1983; Stafford, B., 1984.] This way of seeing explains the abundance of detailed descriptions of towns, countryside, and seashores in these narratives. But the travel narrative also provided spaces where authors could jump into extensive digressions about customs and manners, religion, social order, morality, and politics. It is precisely in these spaces where writers connected their visions of the host society with the problems at home. Travelers to the Western frontier used these moments to produce literary statements about the meaning of "America". American travelers to Europe searched for the traditions and nobility that their country lacked. [Greenfield, B., 1985, chaps. 1, 4; Metwalli, A., 1976.]

Travel narratives of South America shared some of these patterns and differed in others. Writers showed the same concern for the reading public and tried to frame their narratives within the conventions of the genre. On the other hand, the issues of adventure and national identity, so prominent in the narratives of the American West, did not have such importance. Instead, questions of race, social discipline, work habits, and religion permeated narrations of South America. Here, due to the more visible presence of cities and the state, travellers' landscapes alternated between the social and the physical, providing insights

into the young republics' working classes and their most excruciating problems of order.

A variety of authors wrote about their experiences in South America. Over the nineteenth century, sailors were probably the most numerous among published writers, followed by explorers, naturalists, journalists, clergymen and diplomats. [Smith, H., 1969.] Merchants seem to be in a minority. (Few could imitate Richard Cleaveland, Salem merchant who authored several popular travel books.) Actually, those who developed South America as a "market" for American commercial interests performed a variety of functions. Sailors often worked as supercargoes or agents of commercial houses in the Northeast. Diplomats complemented their income with commission business. And so did naturalists, clergymen, and soldiers --post independence South America was hardly the land for sustaining specialized occupations. Most travelers were potential traders.

Some of merchants' journals and dairies, prefiguring a reading public, tried to meet the conventions of the travel genre. David C. De Forest started his "Buenos Aires journal" (1809-1817) informing the "public" who he was, where he had been born, and providing some other details of his past. [De Forest Family Papers.] S. Curson in his manuscript "The customs and manners of the inhabitants of Buenos Aires" (1805) warned the reader about the possible "misrepresentations of facts" due to the nature of the recollections. [Curson Family Papers.] How do these two narratives differ from published travel accounts? Only in the latter's accomodation of the readers' demands. When J.M. Niles drafted his A View of South America and Mexico, he had in mind a "popular sketch or outline" destined to a public avid to know about the ex-Spanish colonies. [Niles, J., 1826.] Charles S. Stewart confided that from the original journal, more private in nature, he had selected themes according to what he thought would be more interesting to the public. [Steward, Ch., 1856.] His Brazil and La Plata was the response to the market success of his previous deliveries ("A residence at the Sandwich Islands," "Sketches of Great Britain and Ireland," and "Visit to the South Seas").

Other writers considered their journals a private space, destined for personal reflection and memory.²¹ Again, introspection and observation, not business, seemed to guide their journals. It was non-merchants (explorers, chaplains, navy officers) who took pains to remark the mercantile use of their writings. [For example, Orton, J., 1875.] To be sure, many merchants' journals did not present the form of a travel account. Some registered their impressions of South America in letters to their families. [Coit, D.W., 1908; Forbes, J.M., 1899; E.F. Osborn papers.] Others used autobiographies, memoranda books, or other sui-generis forms of recording.²²

Many merchants' journals never reached the printing press but any one of them could have, for they shared the visions, the language, and the motivations of travel writers. Whether conveyed through family letters, dairies, or memoranda books these texts belonged to the same discursive space as travel books. At the core of these narratives was an attempt to deal with the problematic identity of the writer in a foreign land and the issues of order and progress emerging from the comparison between host and home societies.

Journals and travel books depicted South American landscapes, societies, governments, and culture. Business narratives concentrated in describing markets. Had they wished to, travel writers could have connected the social and political fabric of the

²¹ Philip De Peyster, New York merchant in Venezuela, wrote a dairy "to serve as memo to jig the memory when occassion may require." [Philip De Peyster papers] Osgood Carney, Boston merchant trading in the Pacific coast of South America, addressed the journal to himself: "for my own justification, reference, improvement, satisfaction, pleasure, and whatever benefit may come or might derive from it... I write only for the private eye and not for the public ear." [Osgood Carney Papers.]

²² James Brooks wrote an sketchy auto-biography recording travels as well as important business and family decissions and called it "Private Memoranda." Ogood Carney's "Journal and Letterbook" (1831-34) was divided into three parts: one devoted to domestic concerns, a second to foreign news, and a third to "reflections." [Osgood Carney papers.] Paul Bentalou's journal was quite unusual: an account of his business dealings in the West Indies, North America, and Europe in narrative form! [Paul Bentalou papers.]

"new republics" with the "state of the markets". Few actually did. Bringing a set of prejudices formed out of social conflicts in their societies of origin, American merchants and travellers constructed "South America" as a land of curiosities, backwardness, dark races, ignorance, and violence. Although the existence of thriving commercial entrepots and modern disciplinary institutions provided some hope for the future of the "new republics", the images of South America were often the reverse image of the "civilization" and "progress found in the American Northeast.

Landscapes, Subjects, and Institutions

American travelers to South America, whether writing for their own or for future publication, respected the conventions of travel writing. Not only because doing so might bring pecuniary or social rewards in the future but also because their ability to observe, compare, and report had been shaped by the previous readings. Aware that readers expected accounts of beautiful and exotic landscapes, travelers were particularly attentive to the physical layout of cities, ports, valleys, prairies, and mountains. Detailed descriptions of landscapes preceded almost all social commentary or depictions of local customs and manners. Some, in order to help the reader visualize the narrative, accompanied their descriptions with sketches, watercolors, or engravings. [F. Ross Journal, 1813-14.] Carrying drawing equipment was not uncommon among travelers.

The search for the picturesque privileged views or sights that could be observed from a distance. From the ship, travelers captured the scenery of traditional ports of call, reporting about the sea shore, the skyline of the adjacent city, and the mountains. Once ashore, they guided the reader through a well-known routine of commercial streets, public buildings, churches, wealthy residences, and parks. Remarkably, their impressions of scenic views and points of interest in the city coincided almost to the letter. Amazement at the beauty of Rio de Janeiro's harbor, uneasiness about inconveniences at the shallow port of Buenos Aires, intrigue about hidden Valparaiso, and disappointment at the sight of Callao were common reactions.

If physical landscapes served to capture the romantic sensitivity of the reader, public institutions provided travelers

with a tangible record of the nation's degree of civilization. "The enumeration of the literary, scientific, and charitable institutions of Rio --wrote W. Wood-- speaks a higher character than prejudice is willing to accord this people, and exhibits a spirit of improvement equal probably with their means." [Wood, W., 1849, p. 34] In search for "civilization," travelers paid visits to museums, theaters, libraries, hospitals, and orphanages and commented upon the "progress" they observed.²³ Disciplinary institutions, prisons in particular, also attracted the interest of American observers.

Intermixed with the physical and institutional landscapes were impressionistic and often prejudiced "social landscapes" of South American subaltern subjects. Despite their sympathies for upper class subjects, American travelers made a conscious effort to record the most visible manifestations of the lives and work of the working poor. They observed Blacks carrying loads along the streets, women washing clothes near the shore or selling produce at the market, soldiers of mixed-races near public buildings or taverns, laborers in the port area or close to the church, and occasional Indian traders and carters. Far from empty spaces, the streets of Rio, Buenos Aires, Valparaíso and Lima were depicted as sites of bursting activity and animation. Impressed mostly by laborers' appearance, postures, and movements --and many times by conversations or songs they did not understand-- observers constructed generalizations about the habits, manners, and propensities of the lower classes.

Reports on the activities of workers in enclosed work-places were few and sketchy. Writers provided extensive descriptions about the form, contours, and texture of plantations, ranches, manufactures, and warehouses but little about the social relations organizing life and work --slave plantations being a notable

²³ A typical institutional tour in Rio included sights of the Casa da Misericórdia, the botanic gardens, the museum of natural history, and the opera house. [Colton, 1850, pp. 92-102.] At Buenos Aires travelers could not fail to notice the buildings of the house of representatives, the Casa de Justicia, the mercantile court, the armory, the ecclesiastical seminary, the public library, the custom house, and the jail. [Bishop, N., 1869, pp. 42-3]

exception. Narrations of special tasks performed by rural laborers abound: the slaughter of bulls, horse-breaking (taming of broncos), the salting of hides, activities whose description added strangeness to the land. On the other hand, writers avoided portraits of peasants and laborers in the more mundane task of farming. Located at a distance from scenes of work, travelers tried to spare the reader the unpleasanties of close-up looks into the realities of the countryside. As J. Orton acknowledged, the cultivated valleys of Ecuador lost their "sublimity" as soon as the viewer approached the huts of the peasants. [Orton, J., 1875, p. 46] In the same fashion, moving from coastal to interior landscapes in Chile brought into focus the tragic condition of "jornaleros," "guasos," peons, and "rotos." [Baxley, H.W., 1865; p. 389] Other times, maintaining a distance was simply a matter of personal safety and convenience.²⁴

When included, discussions about the treatment and condition of laborers transpired the opinions of landowners hosting the visitors. [Mörner, M., 1982] As a result, the tensions embedded in the social relations of production went unnoticed. Complicity with planters colored the depiction of slave-master relations. Brazilian planters applied little or no corporal punishment, slave diets were adequate, and treatment was generally humane. [Colton, W., 1850, p. 112; Dunn, B.S., 1866, p. 111; Codman, J., 1867, p. 85]

Almost absent from nineteenth-century accounts were conflicts between laborers and employers. The sensitivity of late colonial travelers towards slave and Indian rebellions was lost in the nineteenth century.²⁵ Now, banditry and other forms of crime provided the images of backwardness and peligrity needed to

²⁴ While riding on the roads of coastal Peru, W. Wood was advised to keep his distance from slave workers to avoid possible physical or verbal assault. [Wood, W., 1849, p. 113] Thomas Page, saw Argentine estancias from the deck of a comfortable steamer navigating along the Paraná river. When he arrived at Urquiza's estate, he transcribed what he heard from the distinguished landowner. [Page, Th., 1859, pp. 51-9 and 71-2]

²⁵ Jacob Ritter's autobiography describes terrifying encounters with Blacks and Mulattoes during St. Domingue's rebellion.

impress readers. [Monsiváis, C., 1987, p. 51.] Only in the confined space of the merchant vessel did travelers come into close contact with the workers' reactions against oppression. Often included as part of the journey are marginal narrations of mutinies, punishment for seamen's unruly behavior, or delays in departures caused by sailors' desertion. Travel writers showed sympathy for the plight of seamen, commenting sourly on the scarcity of rations, the abuses of captains, and arbitrary arrest by local port authorities. On the other hand, sailors' propensities for gambling and drinking and their constant resistance of ship discipline invited the condemnation of most authors. [De Forest Journal, 1801; Thatcher Magoun papers, 1852; Bayard, Campbell, Pearsall papers, 1822; Philip de Peyster dairy, 1812]

The activities of Latin Americans in the sphere of circulation were immediately visible to foreign observers, much more so than those in the sphere of production. Few travellers failed to report the existence and condition of market places in the "new republics." Perceived as enclaves of "civilization" in a sea of pre-capitalist forms of producing and interacting, market places also represented the most dynamic aspects of these societies. In them, the colorful nature of Latin American culture blended with the intense activity of capitalist enterprise to engender hopeful and appealing images to the American reader --streets covered in both sides with artisans' and merchants' shops in Rio de Janeiro, the order and cleanliness of Lima's produce market, or the variety of tropical fruits at Guayaquil. [Wood, W., 1849, p. 24; Baxley, H., 1865, p. 140; Orton, J., 1875, p. 32; Price, R., 1877, p. 27] Outside the market-place images of poverty, filth, and indolence reappear. Markets served to highlight the difference between the native and the foreign. The sobriety and comfort of Exchange buildings --both symbols of progress and of the dominance of foreigners in international trade-- contrasted with the colorful produce markets operated by "natives," "cholo" women, or "lower class" peddlers. W. Wood's impression of the exchange room at Valparaiso could apply to several port-cities of South America: "In the readingroom of the Exchange, or in the appartments of the

club house, one might imagine himself in an English town." [Wood, W., 1849, p. 41]

Travellers' accounts contained an assortment of overlapping "landscapes": the physical and the social, the sites of production and the sites of exchange, the institutions of 'culture' and those of social discipline --all connected by the geographico-chronological flow of the personal journey. Merchant-travelers described not only the picturesque and the "sublime" but also the market, the producers, and the state. In the city-ports and, to a lesser extent, in the countryside scenes of work dominated the narration of the social. The romantic posture could not efface the need to account for production, commerce, and civilization -- defining categories of the mercantile identity in American culture.

By themselves, these portraits --the narratives' "descriptive moment"-- appeared as unconnected curiosities, strange encounters, or worthy adventures --a reality dissected into layers or pictorial fields. Only in connection with the class, gender, and racial identity of the observers, their meaning becomes clear. If the romantic posture gave travelers a particular perspective on things --the distant gaze, the search for the picturesque, the viewer's detachment-- the interest of foreign observers was guided by their positions in relation to the host societies.

Race and gender structured travelers' visions of South Americans. Americans visiting Rio de Janeiro could not fail to see Black women and men at work. "Oarsmen as Black as night" impressed L. Schaeffer as soon as he arrived to the port. [Schaeffer, L., 1860, p. 13.] "The streets are swarm with Blacks," wrote Joel Poinsett in 1810. [Joel Poinsett Papers] "Negroes by wholesale with pails on their heads," registered sailor Henry Lee in his journal. [Lee Family Papers] Black soldiers guarding the emperor's palace, Black porters carrying coffee bags or water casks, Black women washing clothes and, occasionally, slave chain-gangs performing public works completed the picture of a city wholly dependent on African labor. The impression that all visible work was done by slaves was shared by many travelers. [Roberts, E., 1837, p. 21; Wood, W., 1849, p. 25-6.] No doubt, color provided a way of apprehending the social landscape of the city. Movement and

noise characterized most portraits of Blacks. Oarsmen were rowing and singing at unison, coffee porters were "trotting along with a sonorous grunt," washer women were shouting in a confusion of African tongues. [Colton, W., p. 89; Roberts, E., 1837, p. 21] In fact, the water fountain where women washers met men porters appeared as a Babel tower --a confusing and animated picture to strangers.²⁶

Two circumstances led travellers to include women in their narratives. First, when the sight of women resulted in a transmittable aesthetical experience. Baxley's eyes, tired of looking at guasos, inquilinos, and gañanes travel on the roads of Chile, relaxed at the sight of "three fair young señoritas" of the higher ranks pass by. [Baxley, H., 1865, p. 280.] Like another landscape, the sight of women of "fair skin" frequently elicited a moment of contemplation and verbose writing. Beauty, an accepted norm for representing women, was, obviously, an standard that varied with the observer.²⁷ Secondly, travelers reported women who performed unusual tasks or occupied improper spaces. Explaining why lower class women dominated the produce markets,

²⁶ "The harbor was alive with lighters and boats of every description, and the mole was crowded to its outmost capacity with the people of every nation, age, sex, and color, all jabbering, talking, and yelling in many different languages making it another Babel." [Cushing, W., 1857, p. 245.] "A greater confusion of tongues could not have been heard at the dispersion of the builders at Babel" commented E. Roberts [Roberts, E., 1837, p. 21.]

²⁷ Merchant-traveler D. W. Coit found Montevideo's women not very appealing: "I really do not think there are a dozen very good-looking women in all Montevideo, and not half of that number would be called pretty to us. A very handsome person there is not." [Coit, D., 1908, p. 76.] By contrast, sailor S.W. Cushing found the "chiné women" of Montevideo very attractive: "The females specially are most of them beautiful; their forms rather below the middle size, with a clear brunete complexion, finely turned limbs, and flashing black eyes, into which the cool-blooded Anglo-Saxon can hardly look without danger of captivation." [Cushing, S., 1857, p. 254.] Indian women in Buenos Aires did not measured up to Bishop's expectations; they were "very masculine in appearance." The peasant women of Chile, according to Colton were healthy and animated, but not pretty. [Bishop, N., 1869, pp. 131, 134-5; Colton, W., 1850, p. 199]

breast-fed their children in public, rode horses, smoke cigars, or sustained a different standard of cleanliness appeared consistent with the reader's demand for strangeness. To the surprise of the writer, women could outride men in a horse race. [Cushing, S., 1857, p. 256.] Women's uncontrolled vocabulary also impressed American male travelers. Young ladies in Guayaquil used "language that would be shocking to North American ears." [Coit, D., 1908, p. 50.]

Contacts between American travellers and indigenous peoples were unfrequent after the post-independence, as most travelers did not venture into the interior and unacculturated Indian traders ceased to come into major cities.²⁸ Generalizations about native Americans, on the hand, abounded. James Orton, for example, based on his observations of twenty Indian carriers he hired, was ready to conclude about the "typical nature" of the "South American native": they were "simple," "inoffensive," "peaceable," "submissive," their "poverty of thought" and shyness produced by centuries of Spanish oppression. [Orton, J., 1875, p. 469.] Reports of particular tribal groups, emphasized the strange and atypical. Cap. Ebenezer Nye, for example, reported about the state of nudity, the grooming practices, and the non-existence of property among Maracaibo Indians. [Brig. Cicero, Journal 1827.] David De Forest annotated in his journal two main observations about the natives of Patagonia: they ate horse flesh and "appeared to be as lazy as possible." [Journal # 1, 1800-1801, De Forest Family Papers.] Later, B. Bourne, who was captured by natives of Patagonia, described them as "dark giants," "treacherous," and "greedy." [Bourne, B., 1853, pp. 34-6.] Conveying a sense of strangeness and curiosity with the tone of scientific evidence, one

²⁸ In 1811, Joel Poinsett saw native "pampas" trading in Buenos Aires. "Some Indians with their straight hair, greasy, swarthy faces, and a rug rolled round them were moving through the crowd, the men staring about them, the women, astride on their horses dragging after them another horse loaded with rugs and skins." When in the pampas they depended on hunting and on the meat of their cattle, robbing eventually carabans or carts. [Joel Poinset Papers]

of the salient characteristics of the genre, was at its best when applied to native South Americans.

Outside of the categories of Blacks, Indians and Women, lie an assortment of poor inhabitants whose only common trait was to be racially mixed. Travelers found this circumstance of particular interest to their readers. "Nothing puzzles the stranger here so much as the singular mixture of races," wrote Rev. Colton in 1849. [Colton, W., 1850, p. 242] Many times referred to as "the natives", these group included people in all runs of life: the beggar, the sailor, the soldier, the carter, the Argentine "gaucho," the Chilean "roto," the Paraguayan peasant; every non-elite person visible to the foreign visitor. To them referred most of the generalizations travellers recorded about the South American social and political order.

Cap. Cleaveland's reaction after observing the common people of Valparaíso in 1802 was typical: "The native inhabitants are generally amiable, hospitable, indolent, and ignorant." [Cleaveland, R., 1855, p. 175.] E.F. Osborn, who did not speak Spanish and much less Quechua, described the inhabitants of Tacna as "very simple and inoffensive people and very fond of strangers." [Lima, Jan 27, 1826. E.F. Osborn papers.] S.W. Cushing, whose experience in Uruguay included a ride in the countryside, a few days' arrest in the city jail, and forced service in the local navy, characterized the "natives" as indolent, unable to save beyond their present needs, and passionate about dancing and gambling. [Cushing, S., 1857, p. 247.] The Chilean lower class appeared remarkably similar to L. Schaeffer: though lacking in morals, they were hospitable, polite, and fond of music and dancing. Playing guitar had facilitated the author's communication with Chileans, for he knew no Spanish.²⁹ [Schaeffer, L., 1860, p. 22.] Philippe De Peyster, who had endured an earthquake and a revolution in Caracas, offered a more sympathetic view. "The lower order of these people are very civil and inoffensive, you very seldom hear of assassination or theft." [Joel Poinsett Papers.] J. Niles' account of the mixed races of Paraguay portrayed them as

²⁹ Schaeffer wrote in his dairy: "as I am about as conversant with the Spanish language as with the Chinese, the incessant gabbling of the crowd was of course unintelligible."

"industrious, peaceful, taciturn, superstitious, and obedient."
[Niles, J., 1826, p. 189.]

Generalizations based on casual encounters and inability to communicate with the other seem the only common elements of these characterizations. On a closer look, however, one distinguishes a few organizing dualities guiding the choice of adjectives. References to violence/passivity, honesty/deceit, laziness/industriousness, cleanliness/uncleanliness, and civilization/barbarism are present in any of these descriptions. Probing the violent or peaceful nature of the inhabitants provided a guide to understanding South American politics. The blood-thirsty inhabitant of Buenos Aires and Montevideo anticipated anarchical governments while the peaceful nature of the Chilean folk was in accordance with the country's stability. The issue of trust was also important to the American observer; many were puzzled by behavior of gauchos, a combination of deceit, superstition, and hospitality. [Bishop, N., 1869, p. 96.] Idleness was more evenly spread. From the Brazilian Northeast to the port of Callao the lower classes showed a preference for leisure that contrasted with the Anglo-Saxon race.³⁰ Lack of cleanliness was another important attribute generally ascribed to the South American poor.³¹ The contrast between city and countryside, between contact with foreigners and isolation, provided another

³⁰ Daniel Kidder, American missionary in Northeastern Brazil, concluded about the lower order: "The men will seldom work while they have anything on hand to support life." [Daniel Kidder's Journal, 1839.] Cap. Cyrus Hurd's opinion of the Bahia's poor is typical: "the people about here do not pretend to work in the least --not even to cultivate a small garden which, if properly attended to, would produce every vegetable luxury in the world." [Dart, M., 1964, p. 67.] "When we went ashore -- recalled H.W. Baxley at Callao-- a large number of loafers of the darker tints, both sexes, all degrees of impoverishment, were seen lounging about." [Baxley, S., 1865, p. 73.]

³¹ "To a North American eye --wrote the same author-- negligence, disorder, and dirt prevail, whether from want of servants, where most persons in Callao look like such, or from indifference and laziness, I know not, but certainly brooms, brushes, and dusters are at a discount."... "The lower classes, who form the great body of the community, are regardless of cleanliness and modesty." [Baxley, H., 1865, p. 75.]

standard to measure the lower classes. Paraguayan peasants or Argentine "gauchos" suffered from the same degree of isolation, ignorance, and backwardness.³²

The laboring classes appeared fragmented before the eyes of foreign observers as considerations of race and gender altered their perceptions. But the same strangement towards poor women, Indians, Blacks, and the "lower sorts" indicated the writer's assumed class position. To the foreign observer, all of "them" represented obstacles in the march towards progress; their superstitious religiosity, their festive lifestyle, their contempt for work, their ignorance, and their vices contrasted with the immense potential offered by free trade and republican government to independent South America.

As representatives of democracy, civilization, and commerce, travelers stood on the other side of the laboring classes. The presumed objectivity and occupational specialization of travelers (many of them presented their writings as sailors, diplomats, merchants, chaplains, etc.) did nothing to reduce their strong sympathies for the local ruling class. In part, travelers' insights into South American societies came from conversations with local hacendados, political leaders, foreign merchants, and diplomats. In fact, being in a position to observe was itself a class privilege. As Charles Nordhoff explains in his narrative, common sailors were at a disadvantage in relation to merchants, diplomats, or pleasure travelers. Sailors' lack of "ability to observe and compare" rendered their narratives less interesting to

³² Much earlier than Sarmiento, John Niles depicted the inhabitants of the Buenos Aires countryside as "a population living in solitude, scattered over an immense waste, without the means of education, and without enjoying any social intercourse"... "What intelligence is found, is in the cities, and more in the maritime ones than those in the interior, owing to their intercourse with foreigners." [Niles, J., 1826, p. 188-89.] The same duality later became popularized in Peter Parley's Tales About South America, a reading book for school children. Buenos Aires was "a fine city" comparable to Boston while the countryside was inhabited by "ignorant shepherds" given to plunder, gambling, and knife fights. [Parley, P., 1832, p. 142-49.]

the reader.³³ Not surprisingly, when confronted with American seamen (some sailors were Blacks or Irish), travellers showed a mixture of understanding and contempt, a symptom of the ambiguous place of these "others" in their narratives.

Visions of South American subaltern subjects reveal the workings of gender, racial, and class categories. Invariably, travelers distinguished four different categories among the working poor: Blacks, Indians, Women, and Natives; the latter, a residual category combining the notions of racially-mixed and laboring poor. Each category seemed to relate to a particular discursive space. The sight of women working conjured up associations of beauty, propriety, cleanliness, and gender roles. The sight of Blacks -- whether free or slave-- prompted writers to deal with slavery and race relations. The presence of Indians usually accompanied discussions of Spanish cruelty and Catholic religion. Racially mixed workers, or "the natives," contributed images and reflections on work, drinking habits, criminal propensities, and politics. Through the "social landscapes" writers hinted at images of the ideal society and polity, relying on an implicit ordering familiar to the reader.

Apparently disconnected portraits of subaltern subjects presented a center and a margin. Despite their obvious contributions to social production, women and indigenous peoples remained outside of travelers' discussion about work habits, savings, and working-class attitudes towards progress. Blacks, necessarily associated with the sphere of work, shunned away from explorations about government and political participation. On the questions of political order and of economic progress, the racially-mixed peasantries and urban laborers stood at the center.

³³ "The sailor sees nothing of the world really worth observing." He had neither the time, nor the money, nor the inclination to explore the interior or to describe the "customs and manners" of local inhabitants. More importantly, a sailor was not prepared to "gaze." His limited cultivation prevented him from noticing things that an educated traveler would surely notice: production and habits, botanical species, commerce, and general indicators of progress and civilization. A sailor on shore "finds he has not the powers of observation, the knowledge of other phases of life, with which to compare that which he is now witnessing." [Norhoff, Ch., 1856, p. 232-3]

It was their "propensities" which defined the viability of republican government or of modern economic institutions.

South to North: the Question of Social Order

Beyond the ordering of readers' visions of South America, travel narratives served as vehicles for the construction and transmission of ideas of order and identity. Tying landscapes of different level, time, and location were excursions or digressions in which writers reflected about institutions of social order or about the causes of economic and political progress. To the unwarranted associations or propensities ascribed to South American subjects, followed reflections about democracy, slavery, racial relations, work attitudes, or gender roles related to contemporary debates in the United States. Each portrait contained references contrasting the authors ideal communities in the North with the politically immature, racially mixed, socially chaotic, and genderly confusing communities of the South.

Newly formed republican governments presented a rare opportunity to dwell on the issues of democracy, race, and markets. The fall of the Spanish empire had left two important questions to be decided by experience: the parallel construction of market societies and democratic institutions, and the viability of republican government in racially mixed societies. Travelers in the pre-independence period had noticed the crucial role of the church in keeping under control the poor castas.³⁴ After the revolution, as republican government and free trade came to replace the church as organizer of social life, travelers recorded the progress of these two institutions. Those who witnessed the period of revolutionary effervescence tended to encourage the modernizing tendencies of the new republics, praising even minor achievements

³⁴ Samuel Curson, who visited Rio de la Plata before the revolution, reported extensively about the institution he believed to be responsible for maintaining social order: the Church. "Catholic religion --he wrote-- is in South America the bond of society." By impressing a sense of moral obligation upon the poor, the church compensated for the ignorance of the masses. As a result, the city of Buenos Aires could boast a long period without popular tumults or insurrections. Samuel Curson, "The City of Buenos Aires," and "The Customs and Manners of the Inhabitants of Buenos Aires", Curson Family Papers.

in education, religious toleration, and agriculture. Market expansion and enlightened government seemed to reinforce each other. To John Niles, for example, the political incorporation of Colombia's mixed race population held the promise of unlimited commercial opportunities.³⁵ But soon, optimism gave way to disillusion. John M. Forbes, who found the United Provinces intoxicated with commercial and political liberty, expressed his concern that political freedom might prove illusory in a land without experience in self-government. [Letterbook 1829-35, Forbes Collection.]

The inexperience of the "young republics" became a persistent theme in travel narratives. It helped to explain the failure of some nations to sustain democratic rule and the imperfections of republican institutions in others. By the mid-century, it was common to measure the progress of South American government in terms of a continuum ranging from anarchy to order (synonymous to despotism and liberty). In this scale, Brazil and Chile received the highest ratings. "A spirit of freedom is gradually working its way in the hearts of the Brazilians..." --commented W. Colton in 1850. [Colton, W., 1850, p. 118.] "With a constitution modelled upon that of the United States, a liberal tariff, no standing army, tolerated religions, and a good population, the republic of Chile is happy and prosperous" --wrote W. Wood in 1849.³⁶ [Wood, W., 1849, p. 42.] By contrast, the other South American republics became "proverbial for anarchy and political instability." The River Plate republics were portrayed as "smouldering volcanoes" ready at any moment "to vomit forth anarchy and bloodshed." [Dunn, B., 1866, p. 248] The same applied to Peru and Bolivia.

³⁵ "The Indians, the mestizos, Cholos, and all the mixed races, comprising the principal part of the population, have been kept in so degraded a condition, that they did not consume any portion of foreign goods. These classes, being raised to the dignity of free citizens, and protected in their rights and the products of their industry, will all become consumers of foreign goods." [Niles, J., 1826, p. 146]

³⁶ Rev. Colton found that, despite ecclesiastical and landowners' control of the voting system, Chilean democracy was progressing in the right direction. [Colton, W., 1850, p. 217.] The same concept found in "Chile", 1854.

As the confidence on enlightened rulers diminished over time, the viability of democratic government came to depend, almost exclusively, on the nature of the lower classes. Uncontrolled miscegenation and the unruly propensities of the "natives" presented American readers with "explantations" of the delay of South American republics in learning the democratic path. Whereas to European aristocratic visitors, South America represented a finished example of the folly of universal suffrage, to American travelers the "new republics" were the place of experimentation with racial mixture and republican government. [Price, 1877, pp. 186-93] For some, this experimentation was fraught with difficulties. H.W. Baxley, for instance, associated the decline of Peru's political institutions and morality to its peculiar racial mixture. The degradation resulting from the mixture of Blacks, Indians, and Spaniards led to an unmanageable polity.³⁷ For others, less inclined to racist explanations, the violent tendencies of the "lower sorts" stood as an obstacle in the road to democracy and progress.

To those visiting Brasil, slavery furnished an important site for reflecting on questions of social order and race. The ex-Portuguese colony came to represent a scape valve for American slavery as well as an experimental ground for de-segregation. While U.S. minister James W. Webb proposed the transportation of American ex-slaves to Northeastern Brazil, Ballard S. Dunn advised Southerners to join colonization programs in Southern Brazil and leave behind the calamities of the civil war.³⁸ The benevolent

³⁷ According to Baxley, the "Negro compound" were "destined to be disturbers of the public peace, tools of military tyranny, thieves, murderers, vagabonds, blots on the body politic." [Baxley, H.W., 1865, p. 386.]

³⁸ James W. Webb Papers..... To Southerner contemplating emigration after the civil war, Brazil brought nostalgic evocation of a patriarchal past together with the promise of a new beginning. The beauty and peacefulness of Werneck's fazenda in Cachoeira reminded B.S. Dunn "almost painfully, of the palmy days of my own native Virginia, now gone, I fear, nevermore to return." [Dunn, B., 1866, p. 111] Like Brazil and, earlier, Central America, Venezuela turned for a while into a heaven for ex-slave owners. Dr. H.M. Price, through a series of articles in the St. Louis Times, advised ex-slave owners to migrate to the

nature of master-slave relations in Brazil served as the basis for a criticism of North American racism, while the presence of Blacks in all the steps of the occupational hierarchy provided ammunition in favor of racial disgregation.³⁹ Naturally, those committed to the preservation of the peculiar institution saw things differently. Brazil constituted an example of a society which had failed to keep an strict separation between the races. The disorder and chaos of the Brazilian bureaucracy --the customs house, the post office-- resulted from excessive miscegenation. Planters experimenting with racial equality or with salaried labor were only inviting a recrudescence of murder, robbery, and laziness. [Codman, J., 1867, pp. 75-77, 103-4.]

The question of order in the new republics was, to a certain extent, a police matter. Contrasting accounts of crime and police control provided an assessment to Americans of risks to property and persons. D.C. De Forest, surprised at the discovery tht not crime had been committed during the celebration of the Prince Regent's birthday (1809), concluded: "the police of Rio must be good." [De Forest Family Papers] Buenos Aires stood at the opposite extreme: "assassination was common and bodies were exposed every morning before the Cabildo in order to be recognized by their friends or to collect from charity a small fund to defray the expenses of their burrial." [Joel Poinsett Papers]

Implicit in travelers' descriptions of South American prisons was a concern with the effectiveness and viability of modern institutions in reforming criminals. Apalling conditions at the prison of Calabouço near Rio stood as a symbol of Brazil's social backwardness in the midst of its integration into the world of commerce. [Henry Pierce Papers] The penitentiary of Lima, modelled on the Auburn system, represented an exemplar of modern methods of punishment. The old facility at Casas Matas, by contrast, housed

Venezuelan Guayana, a place of rich soil, excellent government, and cheap and docile labor. The Emigrants' Vademecum (San Francisco, 1940 reprint of the 1868 ed.).

³⁹ "It is for us Americans to preach up humanity, freedom, and equality, and then turn up our blessed noses if an African takes a seat at the same table on board a steamboat." [Colton, W., 1850, p. 113] See also Roberts, E., 1837, p. 21.

"dismal, dirty, undisciplined, and pestiferous" inmates. [Baxley, H., 1865, pp. 79 and 234-5] Chile's southern penal colony struck B.F. Bourne as most uncivilized: the inmates had revolted against their wardens, burned governor and priest alive, and danced over their ashes. [Bourne, B., 1853, pp. 199-202] At Montevideo, jails overcrowded with mix-race prisoners covered with "rags, filth, and vermin" showed both the ravages of civil war and the insensitivity of rulers. [Cushing, 1857, p. 265] Buenos Aires jails merited similar disapproving remarks. [Bishop, N., 1869, pp. 42-3]

The concern with issues of discipline and punishment were also explicit in travelers' accounts of sailors' lives. In his trip from Boston to Patagonia in 1800-1801, David C. De Forest was appalled to discover the absolute power captains had over the sailors --he was forced to abandon the ship after months of constant verbal abuse and threats from the captain. [Journal # 1, 1800-1801, De Forest Family Papers] Philip De Peyster, on his return voyage from Venezuela witnessed a mutiny on board caused by scarce rations --the captain had used forced fasting as a means for disciplining seamen. [Philip De Peyster's Dairy, 1811-1813] Rev. Colton watched the flogging of a sailor on board of U.S. frigate "Congress" in 1845. Although he condemned the procedure as "opposed to the spirit of the age," he sympathised with the captain's dilemma: until "sailors could be brought thoroughly under moral influences," corporal punishment could not be dispensed with. [Colton, W., 1850, p. 22-3] Modern means of disciplining had yet to reach the ship, the main conveyor of commerce and progress.

Explicit discussions of domestic management were rare. H.W. Baxley's account is one of these cases. The author could understand the "indecenty, inmodesty, and immorality" of lower class women in Lima --after all, they had to support themselves while their husbands had been forcefully recruited into the army. He was severe, instead, with Creole heads of households. Mens' "dissipation, debauchery, and unconquerable passion for gambling" led them to abandone women at home during hours that should naturally be devoted to the "joys of home." Not surprisingly, women became indifferent to their household duties and devoted only to dress and ostentation. [Baxley, H.W., 1865, pp. 147-8] More frequently, travelers expressed their surprise or dislike for poor

women's transgression of gender codes without engaging in full discussions about the appropriateness of well managed households.

North American travel narratives, whether written by merchants or other upper class observers, carried with them an implicit ordering of South America's nations and subjects. Politically, South American nations found their place in a continuum ranging from anarchy to democratic order. In this ordering, Brazil and Chile received the highest rankings while the Platine republics and Peru were considered places of anarchy and violence. Socially, South American nations presented less differences: whether in Peru, in Chile, or in Brazil, mixed-race peasants and urban labores exhibit a remarkably common traits of laziness, untidy appearance, lack of respect for law and property, and violent behavior. Personal appearance, work, and crime served to organize travelers' visions of the South American working poor. The myths of racial equality in Brazil --a myth that reinforced the notion of benevolent slave relations-- combined nicely with the picture of a racially mixed population in societies where slavery was less prevalent --a melting-pot highlighting the disorderly and politically dangerous nature of these societies. Both constructs underscore the need to inscribe South American landscapes into discernible racial codes. A gender ordering can be clearly detected in these narratives. North American notions of beauty, language, activities, and sexual behavior considered "proper" to the "gentle sex" informed many textual encounters with South American women. Women of the lower classes constantly overstepped the observers' boundaries of tolerance and taste, uttering bad language, performing men's jobs, or simply being ugly.

This four-tiered ordering of South American societies produced an array of new myths that facilitated the encoding of the diversity described in travel narratives. For the North American reader, the myths of racial equality and benevolent slavery alleviated the tension between the abhorred peculiar institution and the evident progress of the Brazilian empire. Similarly, presenting miscegenation as an obstacle to the consolidation of democratic political regimes, fears of Jacksonian mob rule in the North (associated with immigration and the emergence of labor agitation) could be more easily encoded and apprehended. The myth

of the "young republics" strengthened the reader's belief in the unicity and superiority of American democracy while emphasizing the dangers of extending the franchise. The picture of societies overridden by bandits and dependent on the labor of uncooperative and lazy workers spoke to the need to institutionalize social control --the production of industriousness, honesty, and non-violent behavior could no longer be left to family and church. The apparent dangers of women who did not respect "their place" in the order of things was probably appealing for American male readers increasingly concerned for the transformation of gender roles in their own societies ("mill girls," female societies).

Apparently an outpouring of elite culture and enterprise from the American Northeast into "young republics" of South America, the constructs of travel literature actually worked in a South-North direction. Contrasting the new republics with the United States formed a common thread of many travel narratives. By simply evoking landscapes, institutions, and peoples in the fatherland, authors could make the strange apprehensible. L. Schaeffer compared the emperor's chapel in Rio to the Boston Exchange. Bishop contrasted the jail of Buenos Aires to American reformatories. [Schaeffer, L., 1860, p. 14; Bishop, N., 1869, pp. 42-3] Henry Lee used the same device to transmit the reader the peculiarity of a Brazilian city. "Rio is a strange place to a New Englander; instead of sunny streets, you find narrow, shaded streets, no sidewalk; instead of Irishmen carters you find ten negroes half-naked to one white; instead of carriages delivering goods you find slaves with packages on their heads... Then the number of soldiers in the street and in public buildings is a novelty to one of us." [Lee Family Papers.] Curiously, Irishmen served also as referent for H.W. Baxley when he reported a child's burrial in Peru. "It is said that these celebrations are always characterized by mingled sadness, cheerfulness, personal respect, good will, never by the wrangling violence and brutality which so frequently attend the Irish wake." [Baxley, H.W., 1865, p. 82.]

In the reflective moments of travel narratives, South America appeared as an inexhaustible mine of parallels and contrasts. More explicitly these reflections addressed the readers' anxieties and concerns with issues like democracy, slavery, the work ethic, and

crime control in America. Other questions are alluded to but not fully developed: intemperance, abandoned children, the treatment of the mentally insane. From travelers' descriptions of prisons, orphanages, and hospitals we can extrapolate a preference for institutional forms of social control but in the text they appear as mere measurements of the young republics' degree of "civilization." More conspicuous is the lack of a discourse about the "Indian question," that is, whether to assimilate, push back, or exterminate indigenous peoples. One might speculate that travelers had difficulties in identifying the subject in its pure racial and cultural form and were forced to deal instead with the problem of miscegenation.⁴⁰

Conclusion

Some scholars have shown the value and limitations of travel accounts when used as sources of history. [Jones, T., 1949; Gardiner, C.H., 1951; Mörner, M., 1982.] Others have presented these narratives as producers of myths and, as such, as textual pioneers of neo-colonial expansion. [Franco, J. 1979; Dugast, A., 1982; Monsiváis, C., 1984; Pratt, M., 1985 and 1988.] My objective has been different: to examine the role of travel narratives in the transmission of visions of order. I have tried to show that the constructs found in many travel books served to inform and organize North American discussions about social order.⁴¹

It was in the mercantile communities of the Northeast where audiences and readers, if not the writers themselves, gave meaning to travelers' recollections of their South American experience. There, the construction of South America as a territory of mixed races, laziness, backwardness, violence, and ignorance, more than a mechanism of "othering" aimed at colonizing Latin America (commercially or otherwise), worked to clarify problems of class formation and identity. Entertaining, informative, and

⁴⁰ Unwilling to venture far from port-cities and known overland routes, travelers' encounters with native Americans were few. For many, they constituted a distant source of danger, in the backwoods of Venezuela or in the Argentine pampas. Gone were the days of direct commerce with native tribes.

⁴¹ For a similar attempt concerning Britain see Hefferman, W., 1973.

opinionated, travel narratives of South America played an important role in the understanding of power relations in the Northeast.

Within the text, as descriptions gave way to reflections, the contrast between the two Americans became evident. Intermixed with colorful descriptions of the Brazilian Northeast or of the Argentine pampas, were discussions about slavery, science, prison discipline, male control, or racial superiority. Preoccupations and concerns prevalent in the United States --the search for new means of disciplining, the concern with educating future citizens, the spiritual colonization of indigenous peoples, the solution to the problem of slavery-- reappeared in travellers' narratives deployed on a different landscape; the Amazon basin, the Chilean valleys, the prison of Rio, or the market of Guayaquil. South America became a textual space for the reflection of North American problems.

A land of racial mixture, religious intolerance, political inexperience, and pre-industrial work habits, appeared as an ideal reference point to contrast the achievements and possibilities of the United States. South American landscapes showed American "public opinion" the dangers of racial equality and miscegenation, the problematic incorporation of the "lower sorts" into political life, the strangeness of a world without clearly defined gender norms, and the civilizing effect of markets and institutions of reform.

The commercial colonization on South America, on the other hand, required only a mapping of peoples' tastes and productions, frequent market information, adequate credit and insurance, and reliable mail and shipping services. For this purpose, travel narratives were inappropriate; circulars, price currents, business correspondence, and mercantile newspapers could better provide for merchants' specific needs. In these sources, the construction of South America as a collection of volatile but profitable markets reflected the universal operation of market discipline as well as the insecurity of property in an area ridden with social and political antagonism. As new-comers in the South-American market place, American merchants accepted the rules of the market -- opening and closing agencies and commercial ventures according with market opportunities. Merchants' reports about the political order

in South America, rather than justifications for territorial occupation, showed them the risks associated with commercial ventures.⁴² These reports, though valuable for business, added little to what merchants already knew: that political stability facilitated market expansion, and that enlightened governments usually supported free trade.

The contribution of merchants to these double mapping of South America cannot be overemphasized. Through their business reports and correspondence, Northeastern merchants mapped the incorporation of South American into the world market. Measuring the boundaries and absorption of the markets and feeding price information to the centers of mercantile decision in the Northeast, they contributed to the expansion of "mercantile knowledge" about South America -- a way of recording and reproducing information about the circulation of commodities that abstracted the "social" from the discourse of normal business activity.

Through their private journals and correspondence, Yankee merchants contributed to the collective enterprise of rendering South America apprehensible to the American reading public. They described physical, institutional, and social landscapes in terms that reinforced their own identities as males, Whites, and upwardly mobile and supplied the images and metaphors that would render South American understandable, even to school children. In this alternative mapping, South America landscapes served as fertile terrain for articulating ideas of race, class, gender with different projects of order and discipline.

American travelers' contributions to the construction of discourses on South America varied in intent. Pro-slavery writers tried to find a heaven for the further expansion of the peculiar institution as well as political and social justifications for its existence. Jacksonian democrats tried to follow and encourage the progress of the new countries towards stable republican

⁴² Except for Mexico, the discourse of merchants and travelers concerning "anarchy" do not seem to have encouraged military colonization --in fact, the language of manifest destiny appears more frequently in texts of displaced Southerners, scientific explorers, or naval and military officers.

governments. Missionaries monitored the religious, sexual, and drinking propensities of the South American poor in order to validate the universal claims of their activities. Despite their diversity, most organized their reflections using the same organizing dualities, the same classifications, and the same peculiar way of observing the South American landscapes.

These articulations entered different discursive spaces of the United States. Following the circuits of atheneums, town halls, and libraries, incorporated in the text of public lecturers, in the pages of the commercial papers, or in the popular travel books, these images and metaphors must have altered the way literate Americans conceived problems of political, social, and economic order. Some of these images made their way into the curricula of American common schools. Peter Parley's Tales of South America became compulsory reading for school children.

An issue left unexamined is the role of merchants as conveyors of disciplinary messages from North to South --the question of whether merchants of the "South American trade" engaged themselves in influencing the host societies in the direction of reform -- whether they combatted temperance and leisure, promoted the construction of penitentiaries, asylums, and work-houses, convinced creole leaders of the merits of common education, or gave advise about the methods of integrating and conquering indigenous peoples.

The narratives of trade do not provide us with sufficient evidence to deny or validate this hypothesis. What they show is that foreign observers were particularly perceptive about these issues, recording the progress of the "young republics" in matters of education, prison reform, temperance, and Indian policy. But these perceptions served to reflect upon the other social space, the United States. From North to South the communication of ideas and images of social order proved more problematic. Yankee merchants, born into the business world in an age of reform, tried to reproduce the institutional setting of the Northeast in Latin America --there is evidence of some small temperance societies and Sunday schools in Bahia, Buenos Aires, and Valparaíso. But the limited extension and isolation of their communities, the transient nature of their business, and the peculiarities of the "young

republics" politics made their efforts ineffectual. The birth of modern disciplinary institutions --the penitentiary, the house of refuge, the common school-- came by the hand of local reformers who had traveled to the centers of "civilization" --Paz Soldán, Queiros, Sarmiento, to name a few. Reforms were introduced at a time in which "institutionalization" was already in decline in the United States. Similarly, South American military officers, politicians, and intellectuals --influenced by European racial theories and American military strategy-- devised the solutions to the "Indian question," solutions that differed significantly from the spiritual conquest sponsored by American missionary societies.