Thomas Genova. *Imperial Educación: Race and Republican Motherhood in the Nineteenth Century Americas.* University of Virginia Press, 2021. 326 pp.

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Thomas Genova's meticulous monograph is a careful study of the entangled national-racial histories of Argentina, Cuba, and the United States as analyzed through the racialized construction of the republican teacher-mother. Genova argues that the teacher-mother was deployed as a bastion of bourgeois-republican values, entrusted with the civic, moral, and spiritual development of each nation's future citizens. Following the American Civil War and the wars of independence in Latin America, racial anxieties regarding whether and how to incorporate Black, indigenous, and mixed-race subjects into the new political order fueled the growing importance of republican teacher-mothers in the nascent public education systems. Both literal and symbolic, teacher-mothers were responsible for more than mere instruction of appropriate subject matters; they were also invested in nurturing their students' characters such that the students could, under their tutelage, emerge as mature and responsible citizens equal to the task of leading their respective nations into a modernizing future.

Fundamental to Genova's argument is the polysemic nature of the word "educación." In English, "education" is an incomplete cognate that does not capture the expansive quality and civilizing connotations of the process of educación, which, in Spanish, and historically throughout the Americas, has "been recognized as a form of institutionalized child-rearing, a technology for manufacturing national citizens out of colonial subjects" (2). Genova deploys the term in its full polysemic capacity, referring to "both normal instruction (the Platonic leading of the mind out of darkness through the bringing out of hidden truth) and the raising of children (the leading of youth into maturity)" (2). His expansive scope grants his study the benefit of a sweeping historiography paired with careful close-readings of the foundational fictions of Latin America, which he analyzes from within the framework established by Doris Sommer in her essential monograph *Foundational Fictions*. Building on Sommer, who affirms that "nation-building projects invested private passions with public purpose" (Sommer 7), Genova's monograph combines literary and political history, studying literary mothers who teach and historical teachers who mother.

Excluding the introduction, the book is divided into five chapters. The first, "Republican Motherhood and Citizen Education," studies how the literature of family allegory and foundational romance during the nineteenth century constructed the republican mother as implicitly white and, moreover, how this figure was mobilized against women of color to denounce their perceived inadequacy in the tasks of birthing the new political order and raising the future citizenry. Rather than expanding democracy to be inclusive of racialized subjects, public educación, as was the case in Argentina, was deployed to curtail the influence of mixed-race mothers on the nation's youth. Genova argues that public education and the republican mother were therefore strategies to "contain the excesses of democracy" (43). Genova continues and expands his argument in the second chapter, "Mothers, Moors, Mohicans, and Mulattas in Mansilla's *Miranda,*" in which he analyzes the effect of James Fenimore Cooper's novel *The Last of the Mohicans* on the "whitening policies" of mid nineteenth-century Argentina. Cooper's novel, a national family allegory in which the death of the characters of color is the condition of possibility for the white couple's founding of America, is reappropriated and contested by Argentine writer Eduarda Mansilla de García, whose novel *Lucía Miranda* prominently features a racially hybrid national mother. By vindicating Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic traditions in the form of a racially ambiguous "morisca" character, Mansilla's novel "question[s] the civilization/barbarism binary," and "offers an elite challenge to northern-inspired readings of Argentina's racial realities, one that is simultaneously anti-imperial and neocolonial" (49). Genova continues his analysis of the Argentine nation-building project in the third chapter of his book, "Una Maestra Norteamericana in the 'South.'" The chapter studies how Argentine president and intellectual Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, collaborated with Mary Mann, a New Englander, to recruit white women teaching in the former Confederate states of the U.S. and import them to Argentina, where they would advance Sarmiento's vision of a republican-bourgeois public educación. Through an against-the-grain reading of the memoir of Jennie Howard, one of the American teachers in Argentina, Genova offers a narrative of imperial inversion: the self-elected North American teacher-mother of the Argentine nation "does not colonize the Southern Hemisphere for northern Anglo civilization but, instead, finds her own northern narrative colonized by the counterdiscourse put forth by her racialized southern children" (112). Genova observes a similar resistance to North American hegemony in Cuba, and the remaining chapters of his monograph study the island's fraught imperial history and educational reform. In chapter four, "Foundational Frustrations in Cirilo Villaverde, Mary Mann, and Martín Morúa Delgado," the author explores how "three stories of interracial relationships set against the interimperial backdrop of the 1898 Spanish-Cuban-American War . . . complicate the

racialized allegory of republican motherhood" in a turn-of-the-century Cuba struggling for independence (122). The fertility of the national teacher-mother is at the core of Genova's analysis here: he posits that each foundational couple's inability to reproduce, or the illegitimacy of their procreation, allegorizes the island nation's struggle to reconcile its racially heterogeneous population and its slavocratic past. He extends this analysis in the fifth and final chapter, "'La Dignidad de la Mujer Cubana': Racialized Gender Allegory and the *Intervención Americana*." Genova's project here reaches its apogee as he recommences his discussion of the North American teachers in Argentina, who, upon their return to the U.S., taught the pedagogical skills they developed and implemented in South America to visiting Cuban women enrolled in U.S. norming schools, skills the Cuban women then integrated into the curriculum of the island. By situating the changing role of the racialized Cuban woman in the hemispheric context of U.S. cultural imperialism, this chapter triangulates the distinct national histories of each region and reveals the entangled construction of the republican teacher-mother.

While Genova's argument is consistently detailed and careful, his discussion of the role of North American intervention in Cuba and the "transnationalization of the Cuban family allegory" (174), could benefit by examining the political cartoons of the time period which, in tandem with Genova's literary analysis of the three foundational novels, illustrate Cuba's portrayal as "a passive female on the way to motherhood" in U.S. newspapers and political discourse. Such an analysis could bolster Genova's argument that "Latin American territory became discursively feminized as a result of penetration by a U.S. military represented in hypermasculine terms," (206) and furthermore, offer a counterexample of Cuban discursive resistance by studying the depiction of Uncle Sam in the island's print media.

Genova's *Imperial Educación* offers a wonderful opportunity to delve into the rich, entangled history of countries whose study is often partitioned by academic discipline. Genova's monograph is a worthwhile read for scholars interested in Spanish American literature and history, as well as gender studies, critical race theory, hemispheric studies, and comparative literature.