

**Free Pages and Other  
Essays:  
Anarchist Musings**

*Manuel González Prada*

**OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS**

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**FREE PAGES AND  
OTHER ESSAYS**

*Anarchist Musings*

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OTHER ESSAYS  
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Manuel González Prada

*Translated from the Spanish by*  
FREDERICK H. FORNOFF

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND CHRONOLOGY  
BY DAVID SOBREVILLA

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*Series Editors'*  
*General Introduction*

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**T**he Library of Latin America series makes available in translation major nineteenth-century authors whose work has been neglected in the English-speaking world. The titles for the translations from the Spanish and Portuguese were suggested by an editorial committee that included Jean Franco (general editor responsible for works in Spanish), Richard Graham (series editor responsible for works in Portuguese), Tulio Halperín Donghi (at the University of California, Berkeley), Iván Jaksic (at the University of Notre Dame), Naomi Lindstrom (at the University of Texas at Austin), Francine Masiello (at the University of California, Berkeley), and Eduardo Lozano of the Library at the University of Pittsburgh. The late Antonio Cornejo Polar of the University of California, Berkeley, was also one of the founding members of the committee. The translations have been funded thanks to the generosity of the Lampadia Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

During the period of national formation between 1810 and into the early years of the twentieth century, the new nations of Latin America fashioned their identities, drew up constitutions, engaged in bitter struggles over territory, and debated questions of education, government, ethnicity, and culture. This was a unique period unlike the process of nation formation in Europe and one which should be more familiar than it is to students of comparative politics, history, and literature.

The image of the nation was envisioned by the lettered classes—a minority in countries in which indigenous, mestizo, black, or mulatto peasants and slaves predominated—although there were also alternative nationalisms at the grassroots level. The cultural elite were well educated in European thought and letters, but as statesmen, journalists, poets, and academics, they confronted the problem of the racial and linguistic heterogeneity of the continent and the difficulties of integrating the population into a modern nation-state. Some of the writers whose works will be translated in the Library of Latin America series played leading roles in politics. Fray Servando Teresa de Mier, a friar who translated Rousseau's *The Social Contract* and was one of the most colorful characters of the independence period, was faced with imprisonment and expulsion from Mexico for his heterodox beliefs; on his return, after independence, he was elected to the congress. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, exiled from his native Argentina under the presidency of Rosas, wrote *Facundo: Civilización y barbarie*, a stinging denunciation of that government. He returned after Rosas' overthrow and was elected president in 1868. Andrés Bello was born in Venezuela, lived in London where he published poetry during the independence period, settled in Chile where he founded the University, wrote his grammar of the Spanish language, and drew up the country's legal code.

These post-independence intelligentsia were not simply dreaming castles in the air, but vitally contributed to the founding of nations and the shaping of culture. The advantage of hindsight may make us aware of problems they themselves did not foresee, but this should not affect our assessment of their truly astonishing energies and achievements. It is still surprising that the writing of Andrés Bello, who contributed fundamental works to so many different fields, has never been translated into English. Although there is a recent translation of Sarmiento's celebrated *Facundo*, there is no translation of his memoirs, *Recuerdos de provincia* (*Provincial Recollections*). The predominance of memoirs in the Library of Latin America series is no accident—many of these offer entertaining insights into a vast and complex continent.

Nor have we neglected the novel. The series includes new translations of the outstanding Brazilian writer Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis's work, including *Dom Casmurro* and *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*. There is no reason why other novels and writers who are not so well known outside Latin America—the Peruvian novelist Clor-

inda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido*, Nataniel Aguirre's *Juan de la Rosa*, José de Alencar's *Iracema*, Juana Manuela Gorriti's short stories—should not be read with as much interest as the political novels of Anthony Trollope.

A series on nineteenth-century Latin America cannot, however, be limited to literary genres such as the novel, the poem, and the short story. The literature of independent Latin America was eclectic and strongly influenced by the periodical press newly liberated from scrutiny by colonial authorities and the Inquisition. Newspapers were miscellanies of fiction, essays, poems, and translations from all manner of European writing. The novels written on the eve of Mexican Independence by José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi included disquisitions on secular education and law, and denunciations of the evils of gaming and idleness. Other works, such as a well-known poem by Andrés Bello, "Ode to Tropical Agriculture," and novels such as *Amalia* by José Marmol and the Bolivian Nataniel Aguirre's *Juan de la Rosa*, were openly partisan. By the end of the century, sophisticated scholars were beginning to address the history of their countries, as did Joao Capistrano de Abreu in his *Capitulos de historia colonial*.

It is often in memoirs such as those by Fray Servando Teresa de Mier or Sarmiento that we find the descriptions of everyday life that in Europe were incorporated into the realist novel. Latin American literature at this time was seen largely as a pedagogical tool, a "light" alternative to speeches, sermons, and philosophical tracts—though, in fact, especially in the early part of the century, even the readership for novels was quite small because of the high rate of illiteracy. Nevertheless, the vigorous orally transmitted culture of the gaucho and the urban underclasses became the linguistic repertoire of some of the most interesting nineteenth-century writers—most notably José Hernández, author of the "gauchesque" poem "Martin Fierro," which enjoyed an unparalleled popularity. But for many writers the task was not to appropriate popular language but to civilize, and their literary works were strongly influenced by the high style of political oratory.

The editorial committee has not attempted to limit its selection to the better-known writers such as Machado de Assis; it has also selected many works that have never appeared in translation or writers whose work has not been translated recently. The series now makes these works available to the English-speaking public.

Because of the preferences of funding organizations, the series initially focuses on writing from Brazil, the Southern Cone, the Andean region, and Mexico. Each of our editions will have an introduction that places the work in its appropriate context and includes explanatory notes.

We owe special thanks to the late Robert Glynn of the Lampadia Foundation, whose initiative gave the project a jump start, and to Richard Ekman of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which also generously supported the project. We also thank the Rockefeller Foundation for funding the 1996 symposium "Culture and Nation in Iberoamerica," organized by the editorial board of the Library of Latin America. We received substantial institutional support and personal encouragement from the Institute of Latin American Studies of the University of Texas at Austin. The support of Edward Barry of Oxford University Press has been crucial, as has the advice and help of Ellen Chodosh of Oxford University Press. The first volumes of the series were published after the untimely death, on July 3, 1997, of Maria C. Bulle, who, as an associate of the Lampadia Foundation, supported the idea from its beginning.

—*Jean Franco*

—*Richard Graham*

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## *Criteria for This Edition*

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**T**he only books in prose that Prada published during his lifetime were *Páginas libres* [Free pages] (1894) and *Horas de lucha* [Times of struggle] (1908). The rest were organized by his son Alfredo González Prada and Luis Alberto Sánchez on the basis of articles that don Manuel published in newspapers and magazines and those he left unpublished. The dates that appear at the end of the articles are in general supplied by Alfredo González Prada or Luis Alberto Sánchez.

The translations of this English-language edition are based on the edition of the *Obras of González Prada* published in three tomes and seven volumes by Luis Alberto Sánchez. The first four of these volumes are dedicated to his prose writing. The notes, either by Alfredo González Prada (A.G.P.) or Luis Alberto Sánchez (L.A.S.), are also from this edition. Only when it has seemed necessary has the editor or the translator supplied an additional note. I wish to thank the Instituto Luis Alberto Sánchez in Lima for permission to reproduce many of the helpful notes taken from the *Obras* in this selection.

The texts included in this volume were selected with the intention of offering a thorough panorama of the thought of González Prada, bearing in mind that readers will come primarily from the English-speaking academic world. For this reason, although approximately half of this volume consists of a large number of essays referring to Peruvian

problems (which is inevitable for an author like González Prada), the other half consists of texts on the subject of anarchy from a more general perspective. Finally, we have included a few texts by Prada on philosophical, literary, and linguistic problems.

The order adopted for presenting the texts is derived from González Prada's books: (1) those he published during his lifetime (*Páginas libres* and *Horas de lucha*), (2) a couple of essays from *Nuevas páginas libres* [New free pages] chosen for their thematic relevance, (3) a text from *El tonel de Diógenes* [Diogenes' cask], most likely written between 1896 and 1898, (4) a good number of articles written for anarchist pamphlets in Peru, and (5) some of the texts that González Prada wrote toward the end of his life, which he could not publish because there was no place to publish them. They appeared after his death with the title *Bajo el oprobio* [Under opprobrium].

Since this presentation does not allow the reader to form a very clear idea of the González-Pradian vision of reality, we suggest adopting the following order for reading the texts in order to organize more clearly the main lines of thought of our author:

I. Peruvian problems

A. Analysis of Peruvian problems and the possibilities of the Peruvian situation: "Our Mother" [Spain's legacy], "The Rotten Core," "Catholic Education," "Peru and Chile," "Our Judges," "Caporalismo," "Our Indians," "Vijil," "Grau"

B. González Prada's Proposals

1. Radical-positivist proposals: "Lecture at the Atheneum in Lima," "Speech at the Olympus Theater," "Speech at the Politeama Theater," "Propaganda and Attack"
2. Radical-anarchist proposals: "The Parties and the National Union," "Tyrannicide," "The Good Revolution"

II. Anarchy

A. Social problems

"The Intellectual and the Worker," "Authority," "The State," "The Sword," "The Soldier's Rebellion," "Anti-Politicians," "The Police," "The Two Nations"

B. Anarchy: Proposals

"Anarchy," "The Responsibility of the Anarchist," "The

Individual," "Force," "Revolution," "Strikes," "The Paris Commune," "The Universal Holiday," "The Beginning," "The First of May, 1907," "The First of May, 1908 [two versions]," "Socialism and Anarchy"

III. Philosophical, literary, and linguistic problems

"Death and Life," "A Moment of Philosophy," "Renan," "Poetry," "Notes on Language"

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*Biographical Note on  
Manuel González Prada*

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**M**anuel González Prada was born in Lima in 1844. He came from an aristocratic family. He resided in Chile from 1855 to 1856. In 1857 his father enrolled him in the Santo Toribio Seminary in Lima. Two years later Prada left to enter the San Carlos College, where he studied sciences and law. When his father died in 1863, he left school and began to write. Between 1871 and 1879 he went to live on the Tútume farm in Mala valley to read, translate, and farm. He returned to Lima to participate in the War of the Pacific. When Lima fell in 1881, he went into seclusion in his house for three years. Then he emerged as a literary leader, married in 1887, and became a political leader, founding the National Union Party (May 1891). Shortly thereafter he left for Europe (Paris, Barcelona, and Madrid) and returned to Peru in 1898. He broke with his party in 1902, moving toward anarchy after 1904. In 1912 he was named director of the National Library, but a coup d'état caused him to resign. When democracy was restored, he was reappointed to the post (1916). He died in Lima in 1918.

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## *Chronology of Manuel González Prada*

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- 1844 *January 5:* Born as the third child of Francisco González de Prada y Marrón y Lombera and Josefa Alvarez de Ulloa y Rodríguez de la Rosa
- 1851 Attends the Ferreyros sisters' elementary school
- 1852 Francisco González de Prada y Marrón y Lombera is minister to Echenique and ambassador to Bolivia
- 1855 After Castilla's victory over Echenique, Prada y Marrón y Lombera travels to Chile with his family and sets up house in Valparaíso. Manuel attends the Colegio Inglés (English High School), where he takes classes in English and German
- 1856 Late in the year, the family returns to Lima
- 1857 Francisco González de Prada y Marrón y Lombera enrolls his son Manuel (thirteen years old) in the Santo Toribio Seminary (where the future president of the Republic, Nicolás de Piérola, and the future bishop, Agustín Obín y Charún, are also studying)
- 1857–1858 Francisco González de Prada y Marrón y Lombera, mayor of Lima and (after 1858) dean of the College of Law in Lima

- 1859 Manuel González Prada leaves the seminary and enrolls in San Carlos College
- 1862 He begins his study of law
- 1863 He studies sciences (specializing in chemistry)
- 1863 His father dies; he leaves school and announces that he intends to study engineering in Belgium, but he encounters opposition from his mother
- 1867 *September 18*: He publishes his first poem in *El Comercio*
- 1868 *August*: An earthquake levels the south of Peru. He travels to Arequipa and to Cerro de Pasco. He writes his theatrical works “Love and Poverty” and “The Aunt and the Niece” (both lost)
- 1871 The Bolivian writer José Domingo Cortés publishes *Parnaso peruano*, an anthology in which he includes some compositions by Prada and an autobiographical note in which the author eliminates the honorific *de* from his name  
He is a founding member of the Círculo Literario. He participates in the Arts and Letters section  
*September 16*: He begins to collaborate in the first issue of *El Correo del Perú* [Mail from Peru]  
He goes into seclusion on the Tútume farm in the Mala valley, where he devotes himself to reading, translating, and farming
- 1873 He publishes some Indian ballads in *El correo del Perú*
- 1877 *August 20*: Birth of Mercedes González Prada y Calvet, illegitimate daughter of González Prada and Veronica Calvet  
Child is reared by her maternal grandmother, Carolina Bolívar de Porras
- 1879 *January 15*: Prologue to the book by the poet V. Mérida (Aureliano Villarán), *Cuartos de hora*  
*December 26*: Obligatory military service decreed by Piérola  
González Prada enlists
- 1880 *December*: Quartered in the Second Division on San Francisco hill. Prada is named garrison commander on El Pino hill

- 1881 *January 13*: Battle of San Juan  
*January 15*: Battle of Miraflores  
Prada goes into seclusion in his house
- 1882 *October 20*: Treaty of Ancón ending the War of the Pacific
- 1882 *October*: The Chileans leave Lima
- 1883 *August 27*: Cáceres attacks Lima  
*September 11*: Prada considers joining the “revolution” with Cáceres, but finally does not
- 1884 Text on “Grau”  
Text on “Victor Hugo”  
The Club Literario changes its name to the Ateneo de Lima [Atheneum of Lima]  
*December 25*: Letter from Palma to Prada, enclosing his translations of Heine
- 1885 *January 30*: Lecture at the Athenaeum of Lima at the inauguration of the section on “Literature and Fine Arts”  
*August*: He publishes his study “Fragments of Lucifer” in the *Revista social* under the pseudonym “Justino Franco”  
*October*: Luis A. Márquez founds the Círculo Literario and invites González Prada to be a member, which he accepts (at the time he was second vice president of the Club Literario)  
He is elected vice president of the Círculo Literario as well
- 1886 *April 16*: Approval of the statutes of the Ateneo de Lima  
Prada is named librarian  
*Midyear*: Death of Josefa Alvarez de Ulloa, González Prada’s mother  
*September 11*: He marries Adriana de Verneuil  
*September 26*: He is elected president of the Círculo Literario  
*September 27*: Speech in the Palace of Fine Arts
- 1887 *April*: Death of Luis A. Márquez  
Speech at the funeral of Luis A. Márquez  
*July 29*: Speech at the Politeama Theater  
*October 30*: Speech at the Olympus Theater  
*November 10*: Rebuttal article, “The Propaganda of Defa-

- mation,” appears in *El trabajo*  
*November 13*: “The Propaganda of Defamation,” by R. Palma (who does not sign it), appears in *El Comercio*  
*November 15*: Correction by Prada in *El Comercio*  
*November 19*: Attack by Nicolás Augusto González against Palma in *El Comercio*  
*December 4*: Editorial in *El Comercio* putting an end to the polemic  
“Propaganda and Attack,” an article in *La luz eléctrica*  
Death of Cristina González Prada de Verneuil, daughter of GP (Prada wants to commit suicide)
- 1888 *January 18*: Cristina González de Prada de Ulloa dies  
“Peru and Chile”
- 1889 “The French Revolution”  
“Notes on Language”  
“Freedom to Write”
- 1890 *February 9*: His son Manuel is born  
*February 19*: Manuel dies  
“The 15th of July”  
“Death and Life”
- 1891 Visit to Cañete to see Cerro Alegre, the estate of Francisco González de Prada de Ulloa  
*May 16*: The platform of the Unión Nacional [the National Union Party] is published in *Integridad*  
Proposal by the administration of Morales Bermúdez for a senatorship (rejected)  
*May*: He embarks for France  
*June*: He rents an apartment at Number 47, rue de Lourmel, in the district of Grenelle  
*October 16*: Julio Alfredo is born  
He attends courses by Renán (semiweekly) and Louis Ménard  
He meets Gastón de Costa, former communist and former secretary of Raoul Rigault
- 1892 *October 2*: Renán dies; González Prada attends his funeral  
“Secular Education”

- 1894 *Midyear*: First edition of *Páginas libres*
- 1895 *March*: Piérola's coup against Cáceres; several members of the Unión Nacional change parties
- 1896 *Early*: He attends the funeral of Verlaine  
They leave for the south of France, following this itinerary: Orleans, Blois, Tours, Poitiers, Angulême, Burdeos, Biarritz  
They decide to go to Barcelona first, since there is an epidemic of smallpox in Madrid. Itinerary: Bayona, Pau, Lourdes, Tolosa, Carcasonne, Narbonne, Perpignan, and Port Bou  
*December*: They arrive in Barcelona
- 1897 Because of the detour, their mail from Lima does not reach them for two months, so they decide not to travel to Italy  
He meets Odón de Buen, professor at the University of Barcelona who is affiliated with the republicans  
*February*: De Buen takes Prada to a republican assembly in Reus. Prada spends his time looking for refrains to the Virgin, to Jesus, to the saints, etc.  
Adopts the pseudonym "Luis Miguel," which he subsequently uses to sign in *Germinal* and *The Pariahs*  
*June*: They leave for Madrid, following this itinerary: Zaragoza, Calatayud, Guadalajara, and then Madrid  
They take an apartment on La Montera Street  
Through a relative of Odón de Buen, Fernando Lozano, Prada meets Francisco Pi y Margall, with whom he visits the Royal Spanish Academy  
According to Luis A. Sánchez, he met Campoamor and Menéndez Pelayo in the Fernando de Fe bookstore  
*August*: Assassination of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo by Miguel Angiolillo. Prada approves of the act  
He visits the Escorial  
*December*: They set out on their return journey, traveling first to Burdeos
- 1898 *January 6*: They celebrate Manuel's birthday in Burdeos  
*March 28*: Departure from Burdeos for Lima  
*May*: Arrival in Lima

- August 21:* Speech in Matavilela: “The Parties and the National Union”
- August 28:* Piérola succeeds in preventing Prada from giving the speech, “Free Thought in Action”
- 1899 *January:* Prada founds the newspaper *Germinal*, which is shut down by a legal maneuver by Piérola  
*August:* He founds the newspaper *El Independiente*  
 López de Romaña lets Prada know through his brother Francisco that he will pay whatever he asks if he will refrain from criticizing him. Prada rejects the proposition  
 Prada continues to publish in *La idea libre* and *El Comercio*  
*September:* He opposes the merger between the National Union and the Pierolists
- 1900 *March:* He stops attending meetings of the National Union
- 1901 Adriana and Alfredo print a hundred copies of *Minúsculas* [Lowercase] on a port card printer at home
- 1902 *May 3:* Confrontation between the journalists of *La idea libre* and *El Comercio*. As a result, Luis Pazos Varela is killed. Criminal charges are brought against Glicerio Tassara. Prada defends Tassara  
*April 11:* He breaks with the National Union over its merger with the Pierolists. He feels that the coordinating committee of the National Union is accommodating the Pierolists, whereas they should be blocked
- 1903 He takes part in conversations in the name of the National Union with the Pierolists and the Liberal Party. He refuses to continue participating when the liberals withdraw the candidacy of Augusto Durán, which results in the candidacy of Colonel Seminario
- 1904 He begins to collaborate with anarchist publications such as *Los parias* [The pariahs]  
 He writes “Our Indians”
- 1905 He delivers the speech “The Intellectual and the Worker” before the Union of Bakery Workers
- 1906 He publishes in *Los parias* the Indian ballad, “Song of the Indian Girl”

- 1908 He publishes *Horas de lucha* [Times of struggle]  
President Augusto B. Leguía offers him the directorship of  
Guadalupe High School and subsequently that of the School  
of Fine Arts, both of which he rejects
- 1909 He publishes *Presbiterianas* [Presbyterians] anonymously
- 1911 He publishes *Exóticas* [Exotics]
- 1912 *March 6*: He is appointed director of the National Library  
*April 30*: Prada's report on the library  
*October 25*: Palma, *Notes on the Library of Lima*
- 1913 *July 14*: Memoir as director of the library
- 1914 *February 15*: Prada resigns as director of the National Library  
in protest over Benavides's coup d'état  
*May 23*: Benavides's administration refuses to accept Prada's  
resignation, firing him instead  
Prada publishes the first and only issue of *La lucha*, which  
is banned
- 1915 *February 1*: The new president, José Pardo y Barreda, reap-  
points Prada to the position of director of the National  
Library  
Second edition of *Páginas libres* (with the original spelling  
altered) prepared in Madrid by Rufino Blanco-Fombana,  
who writes the prologue
- 1916–1918 Interviews with Prada
- 1917 *July*: He publishes his memoir as director of the National  
Library
- 1918 *July 22*: He dies of heart failure

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## *Introduction*

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### *The Radical Thought of González Prada*

In 1918, when he died, don Manuel González Prada was famous in Peru and very well known in Spanish America. In the last two years of his life he was interviewed by some of the best young Peruvian writers and journalists—José Carlos Mariátegui, Abraham Valdelomar, César Vallejo, Félix del Valle, and others.<sup>1</sup> Among his foreign admirers he counted writers of the stature of Miguel de Unamuno in Spain and Rufino Blanco-Fombona in Venezuela. This despite the fact that at the time he had published only two books in prose and three books of poetry.<sup>2</sup> He had written many articles and poems that appeared in newspapers, a poetry anthology in Peru, and journals. Beyond this, he was a man who was celebrated, criticized, and even vehemently attacked in Peru. Among those who wrote about him (either praise or criticism) were José de la Riva Agüero (1905), Ventura García Calderón (1910, 1914), and V. A. Belaunde (1917). In 1895 a priest writing under the pseudonym of F. B. González published *Páginas razonables*, a refutation of *Páginas libres*; several newspapers had been shut down for daring to publish articles by him, and during the regime of Colonel Oscar R. Benavides (who came to power in a military takeover) Prada had nowhere to publish. Rumor has it that many copies of *Páginas libres* were burned along with the effigy of the author when they reached Arequipa (the book had been printed in Paris).

We now know much more about the vicissitudes of Prada's life—thanks to *Don Manuel*, Luis A. Sánchez's fictionalized biography (1930), *Mi Manuel*, by his widow, Adriana de Verneuil (1947), and the portrait of the González Prada family, also written by Sánchez (1977); about his work—thanks to studies like the one by Hugo García Salvatecci, *El pensamiento de González Prada*.<sup>3</sup> We now have access to his complete texts—thanks to the admirable publication of his manuscripts by his son, Alfredo González-Prada, and the edition by Luis A. Sánchez of all the *Obras* of González Prada (in seven volumes that appeared between 1985 and 1989).<sup>4</sup> A study and anthology titled *El anarquismo en América Latina*, edited by the scholar Angel J. Cappelletti, gives Prada a preeminent position within this movement.<sup>5</sup>

Not all the secrets of his biography have been resolved for us; on the contrary, part of its trajectory is still shrouded in confusion. Contrary to what authors such as Sánchez and García Salvatecci have claimed—that Prada was a radical almost from the beginning of his career—it has recently been argued to some effect that for a period of fifteen years (between 1873 and 1888) he was allied with the intellectuals of the Civilist Party.<sup>6</sup> Almost eighty years after his death Prada continues to arouse irritation and polemics. In a text published as recently as 1997 it is argued that the greater part of his critique of religion was “crude” and never rose above the level of insult and defamation and was meant only to scandalize and offend his contemporaries, that his vision of the Indian was stereotyped, and that his position on the problem of the national tradition was essentially nihilistic and destructive.<sup>7</sup> And in another text, also from 1997, it is argued that the author was an apologist for violence (i.e., a defender of fanaticism), that he employed a sarcastic or mocking tone that betrayed a certain insensitivity, and that he used specious and alarmist rhetoric to justify individual action.<sup>8</sup> Even though today we know considerably more about the life of Prada than we did earlier, we are still in the dark concerning certain aspects. Despite the years that have passed since his death, his work continues to arouse anger and opposition, as it did when he lived. Prada endures as an author about whom there is still much to investigate and who continues to foster debate.

This volume is a collection of the essays of González Prada, not his poetry. We can divide the evolution of his thought (modifying slightly a proposal by García Salvatecci)<sup>9</sup> into four major periods: (1) the for-

mative years (1844–1879), (2) the radical-positivist period (1879–1891), (3) the European years (1891–1898), and (4) the radical-anarchist period (1898–1918).

Following Prada's formative years, the central characteristic of his ideas is his radicalism. Radical ideas do not appear at the end of the nineteenth century in Peru as an absolute novelty, but rather have their origin in the radicalism already existing at midcentury. At that time radicalism developed as the third of the major political options (there were also a few minor options that were less important) that emerged following independence. The first of these was *conservative thought*, the second *liberal*, and the third *radical*. Radicalism was introduced into Peru by the Chilean Francisco Bilbao (1823–1865), a man who had lived in Lima from 1851 to 1855, with an intermediate residence in Guayaquil from 1852 to 1853. It was taken up by Enrique Alvarado (1835 or 1837 to 1856) and further developed by Mariano Amézaga (1834–1882).<sup>10</sup> Radicalism has been viewed both negatively and positively: negatively for its anticlericalism, its anti-Spanish attitude, and its denunciation of the moral and economic problems of Peru; positively for being an extreme left option opposing the bourgeoisie, capitalism, and nascent imperialism and favoring a broad-based egalitarianism.

The following section is organized in terms of the four stages through which González Prada's thought passed.

### *The First Period (1844–1879)* *The Formative Years*

José Manuel de los Reyes González de Prada y Alvarez de Ulloa, or more simply, Manuel González Prada—as he came to be known—or even more simply, Manuel G. Prada—as he signed his name—was born in Lima on January 5, 1844. His family was aristocratic: his father, Francisco González de Prada y Marrón y Lombera, was a lawyer and conservative politician, and his mother, doña Josefa Alvarez de Ulloa y Rodríguez de la Rosa, an Arequipa matron. Manuel was the third of four children.

Prada began school in Lima in 1851 and four years later moved with his family to Chile. As his father had been minister of state under President Echenique, he feared reprisals from the victorious revolution of General Ramón Castilla, who led the uprising against Echenique.

The González Prada family set up house in Valparaíso, and there Manuel attended the English High School, making good progress in English and German. At the end of 1856 the family returned to Lima, and don Francisco became so close to Castilla that he ended up serving as mayor of Lima from 1857 to 1858. He was also named dean of the College of Lawyers during those same years.

In 1857 don Francisco enrolled his son Manuel in the Seminary of Santo Toribio, which he quietly abandoned two years later to enroll in the liberal San Carlos School. During those years he developed an anticlerical spirit as a reaction against the excessive religiosity (or worse, the sanctimoniousness) of his family. There, he studied sciences (especially chemistry) and law—this at his father's behest. He may have read certain positivist writers at San Carlos.

In 1863, don Francisco died and Manuel left the school. Apparently he intended to travel to Belgium to study engineering, but he ran into opposition from his mother. At this time he began to cultivate his literary aptitude, translating and writing. In 1867 he published his first *letrilla*—a humorous poem—in the newspaper *El Comercio*.

In 1868 he traveled to Arequipa and then to Cerro de Pasco. During this period he must have written two theatrical pieces, which have been lost. In 1871 he was included in the anthology *Parnaso peruano* (Peruvian Parnassus) and decided to go into seclusion at Tútume, the family farm in the valley of Mala—south of Lima—to read, translate, write, and farm. During those years he translated Goethe, Uhland, Heine, and Lessing from German, and Victor Hugo, Dumas, and Mérimée from French, experimenting with poetic forms that were hardly known in Spanish and trying to introduce the ballad genre.

He continued to make trips to Lima and on those trips he met and began a relationship with Verónica Calvet y Bolívar, resulting in the birth of their daughter, Mercedes, on August 20, 1877. He never acknowledged her, though, and apparently never saw her. His trips to Lima also allowed him to stay in touch with the literary scene. In 1873 he helped found the Club Literario, which brought together the most renowned literary figures of the moment, among whom Ricardo Palma, author of the “traditions,” was the most distinguished.

*The Second Period (1879–1891)*  
*The Radical-Positivist Years*

*The Transformation of Prada: From Literary Leader to  
Political Leader*

Prada returned to Lima to take part in the War of the Pacific, which was declared in 1879, and fought in the battles of San Juan and Miraflores in January 1881. When the capital fell, he went into seclusion in his house for three years because he did not want to run into a single Chilean on the streets.

A year after peace with Chile was decreed in 1883 in the Treaty of Ancón, Prada considered joining the guerrilla forces of General Cáceres, who had led the uprising against General Iglesias, head of government, but in the end he decided against it.

In 1886 the *Círculo Literario*, a group of young writers, was formed, and Prada was invited to participate in it. He accepted and was elected vice president. At the time he was also second vice president of the *Club Literario* (which had in the meantime changed its name to the *Ateneo de Lima*, or *Athenaeum of Lima*), indicating his wide support. Prada gave a speech at the *Athenaeum* that was a kind of manifesto for the young writers of the *Círculo Literario*. This situation became even clearer when they elected him president the following year. During this period his mother died and Prada married Adriana de Verneuil, a young Frenchwoman who was living with his family in Lima.

The year 1888 was of key importance in Manuel's life. Successive speeches—one in the *Politeama Theater* condemning the course of the history of the republic, in which he pronounced his famous distich ("Old men to the grave, and young men to the task at hand!"), another at the *Olympus Theater* in which he attacked Palma and the members of the *Athenaeum*, and the articles "Propaganda and Attack" and "Peru and Chile"—transformed him from a literary leader into a political leader. His first daughter died during the same year, and a year later his son, both soon after birth.

The Literary Circle was the origin of the National Union Party, whose political program was published in May 1891. According to Prada it ought to have been a "radical party" and named that, but the timidity of its followers caused its character to be blurred under the other name.

To the surprise of the young members of the National Union, Manuel left for Europe that same month.<sup>11</sup> The articles that he had been writing during this period were revised and published in Paris in 1894 under the title *Páginas libres*.

### *The Radical-Positivist Thought of González Prada*

Because *Páginas libres* consists of texts reworked after Prada's trip to Europe, we are compelled to be very cautious in evaluating them as being illustrative of the thinking of don Manuel between 1879 and 1891, since they may very well have been rewritten under influences or experiences subsequent to this period. The very title—Free Pages—indicates the clear intention of the author to place them at least in proximity to the later, anarchist stage of Prada's thought. Next we will examine the following aspects of the intellectual posture of the author: (1) his literary proposals, (2) his role as a writer and an intellectual committed to action, (3) reality and the problems of Peru, (4) his radical-positivist proposals, (5) his attitude toward death, and (6) his orthographic reform.

#### THE LITERARY PROPOSALS

As already noted, Prada began as a leader of the Literary Circle. He made his literary proposals in his lecture at the Athenaeum of Lima (1886).<sup>12</sup> Initially the speech had been intended to focus on Heinrich Heine, but it ended up treating other topics as well. It took up the problem of imitation in literature and, more concretely, in Peruvian literature, in which imitators are imitated (e.g., imitations of Bécquer, who imitated Heine). It examined the virtues of Heine's poetry and recommended assimilating objectivism from German poetry. It criticized those who try to pass as Germanists or Germanizers, when in reality they are only Teutomaniacs, like Palma.<sup>13</sup> He declared war on the kind of improvisation found in newspapers, as well as archaism and purism. He expressed surprise that Peru had achieved political emancipation but had not sought stylistic independence from Spain, especially since Spain was a country so dependent in literary matters. And, finally, he proposed several grand ideals for Peruvian literature of the moment: to learn science, to seek inspiration in classical Greek literature, and to come to terms with neologism, foreignism, and provin-

cialism that rejuvenate and enrich the language, and to work for tomorrow. He insisted on the necessity of working and studying and on the right of the country to expect something from its citizens. He ended the speech with an expression of confidence in the existence of talented persons in Peru and a recommendation that in the aftermath of the war with Chile it was necessary to forget the horrible nightmare of blood and to undertake reconstruction from the ruins. The speech was a kind of literary manifesto for the young writers of the *Círculo Literario* against the consecrated authors of the *Club Literario*.<sup>14</sup>

In "Speech in the Palace of Art" (September 27, 1887) Prada claims that it is only from the young that one can expect forthright freedom in the expression of ideas and a democratic elevation in style; a literature that is afraid to proceed from the deductions of positivist science is little more than archaeological restoration; art is on a par with religion and science, even surpassing them in certain respects; and the *Círculo Literario* is destined to become the "radical party of our literature."

#### THE WRITER'S ROLE AND COMMITMENT TO ACTION

González Prada alludes to the writer's commitment in "Speech at the Olympus Theater" (October 30, 1888). He is aware that the *Círculo Literario* is destined "to become a nucleus for militant political action." As for the group's program, he asks rhetorically how strong they are, who should guide them, and what kind of resistance they will confront. He notes that it will be impossible to measure their strength with precision, because they will grow day by day in their war against everything that smacks of "regression in Science, in Art, and in Literature." They should seek orientation from no national or Spanish writers but should seek out the most stimulating sources from France (Fourier and Comte), and especially Germany (Hegel and Schopenhauer) and England (Darwin and Spencer). Prada thinks that there will be little resistance: in Peru there is no educated clergy, no bourgeoisie as in Europe, nor any reactionary parties, but only a malevolent, secular clergy and a mendacious and deceitful religious press.

Three things that the members of the *Círculo Literario* should not forget are the honesty of the writer, truth in style, and in truth ideas. Language has become prostituted in contemporary Peru. "Truth in style and language is as important as truth in substance" (*Obras*, 1:71). As for truth in ideas, it belongs to positivist science today, while theology and

metaphysics have a monopoly on falsehood: “the diagnosis of Peruvian literature can be summed up in one phrase: congestion of words, anemia in ideas” (*Obras*, 1:166). It is time for the reign of truth to begin in literature, time to break the infamous pact of speaking softly.

González Prada appears even more radical in his 1888 “Propaganda and Attack” (*Obras*, 1:163–177), in which he characterizes the writer as an antithesis of the politician and a forerunner of the figure of the anarchist intellectual:

A difficult job awaits the writer who hopes to counter the influence of the corrupt politician: his work must consist of propaganda and attack. It may be that this is not the time for trying collective action, but for solitary, individual effort; perhaps we don’t need the book so much as the pamphlet, the newspaper, the broadside. But whether we act individually or collectively, the most fiery propaganda is of little value unless it goes hand in hand with a determined assault on politics and politicians. (*Obras*, 1:171).

The reason for this is that politics, particularly Peruvian politics, has always been the art of governing men the way you run a machine or control a herd of sheep; politicians behave like a syndicate of people sick with ambition. Politics has corrupted everything. “We shook off the tutelage of the viceroys only to vegetate under the tyranny of military strongmen, so our true form of government is caporalism” (*Obras*, 1:172). If politics is in fact the evil, the writer has to take an active part in it so as to “discredit it, dissolve it, and destroy it” (*Obras*, 1:175).

#### REALITY AND THE PROBLEMS OF PERU

Narciso Aréstegui initiated indigenist prose in Peru in 1848 with his novel *Father Horan*, and Juan Bustamante Dueñas claimed in 1867 that it wasn’t those living on the coastal plain but the Indians who basically constituted the republic.<sup>15</sup> But it was González Prada’s reaffirmation of that fact in 1888 in “Speech at the Politeama Theater,”<sup>16</sup> which impressed on Peruvian consciousness that the real Peru consists fundamentally of Indians, not *criollos* (*Obras*, 1:89). In that speech he expressed his outrage that the tyrannical brutalizing of the Indian is carried out by the justice of the peace, the governor, and the priest. The Indian is, according to Prada, the basic reality of Peru as well as one of its essential problems. “If we make the Indian a slave, what

country will he defend?" (*Obras*, 1:88). In many of his poems published prior to 1888 as *Baladas peruanas*,<sup>17</sup> Prada had already addressed the problem of injustices committed against the natives.

The main problem of Peru is that we're dealing with an organism so sick that "wherever we poke our finger, pus comes out" (*Obras*, 1:171). This crisis explains the defeat in the war with Chile, and not the other way around. To what must we attribute our moral crisis? To a multiplicity of mutually reinforcing causes: the degenerate, shabby descendants that the Spanish nobility left us as a legacy and the swarm of soldiers and clerks bequeathed to us by independence (*Obras*, 1:88). The fact that after we emancipated ourselves, our universities continued teaching theology and metaphysics without accepting positivist science (*Obras*, 1:89). The sealing off of our decrepit institutions, preventing enlightened foreigners from reinvigorating them as happened in Chile (*Obras*, 1:97). The pernicious system of looking to the government and the capital for our only direction (*Obras*, 1:100). The fact that we have no genuine parties of ideas—liberals, conservatives, not even reactionaries—and that we lack national unity (*Obras*, 1:88). The fact that politics among us has been practiced as a game of vested interests and improvisations (*Obras*, 1:17ff.). The presence of a legion of improvised measures in all spheres of our national life (*Obras*, 1:87). The fact that the Church has preached respect and resignation, which have acted on us like narcotics to discourage action (*Obras*, 1:166ff.).

These were circumstances that brought about the defeat in the war with Chile, which has left us not only dazed and discouraged but, more than that, intimidated, shrunken in spirit, and resigned to the defeat, all of which makes us incapable of reacting. Hence, at the national and international level as well, we are afflicted with an enormous sense of servility (*Obras*, 1:170). If we go on like this, being what we were and what we are, Chile will conquer us again tomorrow and forever (*Obras*, 1:95).

#### THE RADICAL-POSITIVIST PROPOSALS

If what affects Peru is a moral crisis, the only possible way to restore health is to regenerate the diseased body. "The strength of nations comes from themselves, it comes from their moral elevation" (*Obras*, 1:95). To attain such regeneration, writers especially must show people the horror of such debasement so as to awaken them and move them

to act (*Obras*, 1:176). Because our education has been dominated by theology and metaphysics, we should make the “grand effort to secularize life” (*Obras*, 1:120)—an enterprise that Virgil embarked on long ago—and to cultivate positivist science (*Obras*, 1:90). To fulfill this task we must refuse to put our hope in the older generation and turn to the young: “Old men to the grave, and young men to the task at hand!” (*Obras*, 1:90). We have to renounce any expectation that the solution will come from the government or the capital: we must do away with centralism (*Obras*, 1:100). And, of course, we have to regard politics as evil and politicians as the true enemy (*Obras*, 1:175). Finally, we must never forget the injury and damage that Chile has inflicted on us, waiting our turn quietly and patiently and preparing our vengeance (*Obras*, 1:106).

Contrary to the widely accepted notion that Prada evinced great negativity against the past, the present, and the future of Peru, in *Pájaros libres* this is not so. In this book he thoroughly vindicates men such as Vigil, Grau, and Bolognesi as paradigmatic figures; he argues that Peru has very impressive material (*Obras*, 1:90) as well as spiritual (*Obras*, 1:91) potential, and that if indeed the history of many of Peru’s governments can be summed up in three words—“imbecility in action”—it is also true that “the entire life of the [Peruvian] people can be characterized by three different words: “versatility in motion” (*Obras*, 1:91). The proposal that don Manuel makes is to accept almost any government “with the greatest number of individual rights and the least possible administrative action” (*Obras*, 1:175). National regeneration demands coherence among the guarantees established in the Constitution and their implementation: “the republican structure will continue to be a gratuitous phrase in a stillborn Constitution as long as the lowest Peruvian lacks freedom to express his ideas or is prevented from enjoying the right to confront those in power and censure them for their acts of extortion, their violations of law, and their injustices” (*Obras*, 1:162). The government must guarantee freedom for all and especially for the most helpless (*Obras*, 1:89). The degree of development of Peruvian society should be measured not by the wealth of a few and the distinction of a few others, but by the general well-being and the intellectual level of the masses (*Obras*, 1:172). To break with the injurious traditions of the past, Prada views revolution as the ideal path (*Obras*, 1:270), which to him means a violent step to emancipate humanity from religion (*Obras*, 1:275–276).

The political platform of the National Union published in the newspaper *Integridad* (May 16, 1891) includes a number of Prada's demands: the state should maintain the same centralized form as before but should gradually move toward federalism and decentralization, making ever more real the obligations of the executive and legislative power (I–III). The tax system should be reformed, giving preference to indirect taxes (VI), raising the social condition of the worker (VII), and returning lands taken from indigenous communities (VIII). The army should be brought closer to the nation (X). Freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, the right to vote, freedom to hold meetings, and freedom of association should be guaranteed (IX).

These proposals did not really go beyond those of Francisco Bilbao, who in his pamphlet *Gobierno de la libertad* (1855) proposed far more radical principles, such as a government without a representative system but based instead on committees. Prada's program was far more moderate and attainable, although it too was in the radical line.

#### HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD DEATH

What coherent attitude should we adopt in life toward death, given our anticlerical position? According to González Prada, we should not delude ourselves about some imagined transcendence, and we should accept “the universe in all its beauty but also in its implacable reality”—in which death figures as a natural event.

We didn't ask for existence, but by living, we accept life. Let's accept it then without monopolizing it or wanting to eternalize it for our exclusive benefit; we laugh and make love on our parents' tombs; our children will laugh and make love on ours. (“Death and Life,” in *Páginas libres* [*Obras*, 1:287])

#### THE ORTHOGRAPHIC REFORM OF GONZÁLEZ PRADA

In “Lecture at the Athenaeum of Lima” (1886), González Prada defended an orthographic reform and put it into practice in the first Paris edition of *Páginas libres*. According to Julio Díaz Falconi, who has studied the subject (1960), don Manuel's reform was a response to the Hispanic ideal of orthographic simplicity. He tied his reform to two postulates: (1) phonetic, which allowed him to write the way he pronounced (*estraño, trasporte, i, hoi, pájinas*), and (2) euphonic, which led

him to exploit to the maximum the aesthetic values of Spanish orthography, reestablishing the apostrophe and contractions. In the Gonzalo-Pradian system, orthographic unity prevails because it does not eliminate vanished Spanish sounds (z, ll, v) to the advantage of others that were thought to be more genuinely Spanish American (s, y, b). Prada's reform was neither radical nor violent because it preserved both what was correct and what was common, the learned and the popular, the general and the local. It was linked to the Chilean reformist movement, especially that of Bello, and cannot be regarded as a mere act of anti-academic insubordination (*Obras*, 1:36–37).

### *Third Period (1891–1898)* *The European Years*

#### *Residence in Europe and the Return to Lima*

Prada lived in Paris from the middle of 1891 to the beginning of 1896. His son Alfredo was born on October 16. In Paris he was able to visit libraries, attend the College de France twice a week to hear Ernst Renan, whom he greatly admired, and audit classes of the positivist philosopher Louis Ménard.

Later the González Prada–de Verneuil family traveled to the south of France and from there to Barcelona, arriving there in December 1896. There Manuel met the republican Odón de Buen, who took him to the university and to a republican assembly in Reus.

The Pradas arrived in Madrid in 1897 sometime after the middle of the year. There Manuel met Pi y Margall, with whom he visited the Royal Spanish Academy, and he established contact through letters with Unamuno.

Toward the middle of December, they traveled to Burdeos, setting sail from there to Lima on March 28, 1898.

#### *Influences on González Prada through Personal Contacts and Readings in France and Spain*

The French authors of his time who exerted the greatest influence on González Prada were connected with positivism, a movement to which he himself had belonged in an earlier period. They reinforced the earlier

irreligious attitudes of our author, leading him to an extreme position. Among these authors, the most important and most admired by Prada was Joseph-Ernst Renán, whose lectures on the history of the Israeli people he was able to attend twice a week.<sup>18</sup>

Prada wrote four pieces on Renán: “Renán” (1893),<sup>19</sup> “El entierro de Renán [Renan’s funeral]” (1899),<sup>20</sup> “Junto a Renán [In the company of Renán]” (1903, 1912),<sup>21</sup> and “Renán” (n.d.).<sup>22</sup>

Another author from the circle of French positivism who made a great impression on Prada was Jean-Marie Guyau. Guyau wrote—among other things—*Esquisse d’une morale sans obligation ni sanction* (1885), *L’irreligion de l’avenir* (1887), and *L’art au point de vue sociologique* (1889). The first two of these are praised without restraint by González Prada, who remarks that compared with them, the writings of Renán seem old-fashioned and reactionary.<sup>23</sup> He cites the third in connection with an appraisal by Guyau on the novel as a genre, which González Prada thinks could be extended to poetry.<sup>24</sup> Elsewhere he defends Guyau (and Comte) against what he regards as unwarranted attacks by Valera.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, I would like to add that according to V. A. Belaunde, it was the French positivist philosopher Louis Ménard who was responsible for the paganism in *Pájinas libres* and *Exóticas*.<sup>26</sup>

A French writer for whom González Prada felt great admiration—an admiration that surfaced in an article he wrote on the occasion of the writer’s death in 1885, prior to his trip to Paris—was Victor Hugo.<sup>27</sup> He also makes numerous references to Voltaire,<sup>28</sup> whom he regarded as Victor Hugo’s seventeenth-century equivalent. He felt that he had the advantage of having written at the risk of his freedom and his life and the disadvantage of sacrificing everything for the sake of making a good joke and of exposing his adversaries’ weaknesses.<sup>29</sup>

Among the French anarchists, González Prada mentions only, and rarely, P.-J. Proudhon,<sup>30</sup> E. Reclus,<sup>31</sup> Jean Grave,<sup>32</sup> and S. Faure.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, he wrote an article focusing on Luisa Michel.<sup>34</sup> Of all these authors it is only Proudhon who seems to have had an important influence on his ideas.<sup>35</sup>

In France, Prada must have read the Russian anarchists Bakunin and Kropotkin, whom he also quotes on several occasions.<sup>36</sup> The Peruvian writer must have been drawn to Bakunin for his antireligious, antitartist, and violentist tendencies. According to Angel J. Cappelletti,

Prada's debt to Kropotkin must have been even greater: several paragraphs from his 1905 speech, "The Intellectual and the Worker," were probably little more than glosses on *La conquista del pan* [Winning one's bread]; and I would suggest that he must have borrowed some of Kropotkin's ideas on mutual aid in developing his own general notion of evolution.<sup>37</sup>

As for the German socialists, Hugo García Salvatecci claims that González Prada wrote his essay "The Individual"<sup>38</sup> under the influence of the German anarchist Max Stirner, which is quite likely. Prada must have read *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1845) in France.<sup>39</sup> Although no references to Marx by name occur in Prada's work, there seems to be an indirect reference (in 3:302), and there is a reference to the Marxist socialists (3:244)—at any rate the distinction that our author makes between anarchy and "depressing" socialism (as he calls it) shows that he knew his work.<sup>40</sup> One social democrat to whom he refers on two occasions<sup>41</sup> is Karl Liebknecht (1871–1919).<sup>42</sup>

In Spain our author had a relationship with republicans such as Odón de Buen (whom he mentions in a text from *Anarchy*<sup>43</sup> quoting one of his texts from 1905, indicating that he followed his development) and with Francisco Pi y Margall, a distinguished figure throughout the Iberian Peninsula because he had been president of the legislative chambers.

Another politician and publicist for the Spanish Republic who attracted Prada's attention and about whom he wrote an essay was José Nakens. In 1906 Nakens was accused of hiding the terrorist Mateo Morral, who tried to assassinate Alfonso XIII and his fiancée, Victoria Eugenia, on their wedding day and was condemned to a nine-year prison term, though he was given a pardon in 1908. Prada's 1907 article details the international pressure in favor of freeing Nakens and the paradox that in one of his newspapers, *El motín*, Nakens had spoken out against anarchist terrorist acts.<sup>44</sup>

With regard to the Spanish anarchists, González Prada wrote a piece on Fermín Salvochea (or Salvoechea) on the occasion of his death on September 28, 1907,<sup>45</sup> recalling his life and actions. He also mentions the Italian terrorist Miguel Angiolillo<sup>46</sup> and Mateo Morral, as already noted.

Among Spanish writers, González Prada fixed his attention on Valera, Castelar, and Núñez de Arce, dedicating an article to each of them.<sup>47</sup> He has reservations about the three,<sup>48</sup> though he acknowledges