

## MONEY, CULTURE, AND ENTERPRISE IN JOSÉ ENRIQUE RODÓ

During 1999 the government of Uruguay set out to encourage a number of academic events, both at home and abroad, to commemorate the centenary of the publication of Rodó's *Ariel* (1900), probably the country's most internationally influential literary work. One of these events was a round-table discussion at the Sorbonne in November of that year. I was there, together with other Uruguayan academics working in Europe, and in the audience there were representatives from the Uruguayan Embassy and from the Uruguayan community living in Paris. The round table coincided with a visit to Paris of some Uruguayan officials, including the Governor of the Central Bank, an eminent economist. He was not at the Sorbonne meeting that evening, but during breakfast the next morning we exchanged views on the author and he said that Rodó's idealistic philosophy had left the negative legacy of a certain disdain for economic progress in the country. In his view, Rodó had been bad for Uruguayan business. The present article was written in part as a response to this economist, as well as a complement to the established view of Rodó as a man detached from worldly affairs, in terms of both politics and money.<sup>1</sup>

The material comes from the Rodó Archive housed at the Biblioteca Nacional in Montevideo, and consists mostly of correspondence. The Archive is large, only partly catalogued, and there is no local expertise on it, so it cannot be stated with certainty that other relevant items do not exist; nevertheless, sufficient data were found to justify the present report. I shall deal with the following potential enterprises, rather summarily with the first and the last and in more detail with the middle ones: (1) 'Amambay' (1897); (2) 'El Uruguay en su centenario' (1910); (3) 'La campaña del Uruguay' (1911); (4) The English translation of *Motivos de Proteo* (1915–16). (5) 'Rapid-

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<sup>1</sup> For some recent critics taking this line of interpretation, see Gerard Aching, *The Politics of Spanish American 'Modernismo': By Exquisite Design* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), and D. A. Brading, *Marmoreal Olympus: José Enrique Rodó and Spanish American Nationalism* (Cambridge: Centre for Latin American Studies, 1998). For an alternative view of Rodó's political stance, see Gustavo San Román, 'Political Tact in José Enrique Rodó's *Ariel*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 36 (2000), 279–95, and 'Rodó in the United Kingdom; or, The Power of an Eloquent Summary', in *This America We Dream Of: Essays on Rodó and 'Ariel' One Hundred Years On*, ed. by Gustavo San Román (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2001), pp. 92–115 (Spanish version: *Rodó en Inglaterra: la influencia de un pensador uruguayo en un ministro socialista británico* (Montevideo: Amigos de la Biblioteca Nacional, 2002)).

Fortune' (no date). All of these projects were unsuccessful, but two other related ones, concerning encyclopedias, where Rodó acted as academic editor rather than as business manager, did achieve fruition. There is no room here for a proper treatment of the latter, but they will again be mentioned briefly.

There is at least one other piece of very early involvement in entrepreneurship by Rodó, according to a letter sent to him on 19 April 1885, when he was thirteen years old. It comes from his friend Baldomero J. Correa, and concerns a project to create a newspaper. Rodó had already been writing his own home-made newspapers for some time; the first one, entitled 'El Plata', begins on 2 February 1881, when he was only nine years old (having been born on 15 July 1871). Later he was involved in editing some of his school's newspapers, including *Los Primeros Albores*, a short-lived printed affair which could pass for a professional organ of the time. In the letter from Correa there is an explicit reference to making money, albeit stated in jest. Correa refers to some cuttings from another paper which he had left for Rodó the night before, as Rodó was indisposed in bed: 'un pedazo de diario, donde te daba a conocer la manera como debíamos de hacer nuestro periódico'. Correa thinks they should use a press, and 'alguna litografía y tipografía'. He says he has 'material para más de 6 meses', and proposes they should have a person to deliver the papers: 'es necesario uno que reparta los periódicos en las casas de familia y especialmente donde halla [*sic*] muchachas y niñas'. At the end of the letter he touches on the financial side, jokingly, but showing that the possibility is not far from his mind and, we can assume, also Rodó's: '¡Qué de plata vamos a ganar! [. . .] las ganas.'

This, like Rodó's other newspapers, is clearly a project based on the spread of culture, and one of his biographers has already pointed out how in this early journalistic work there are seeds of some of the writer's better-known ideas about the improvement of the youth of Latin America.<sup>2</sup> But the next project, first on the list provided above, is more clearly inspired by financial gain alone.

#### *Project 1: 'Amambay' (1897)*

The information about this venture comes from a single source, a handwritten contract by Rodó dated 18 September 1897, when the author was twenty-six years old.<sup>3</sup> The document defines a partnership between two people, Rodó as 'socio capitalista' and a José Cabal as 'socio industrial'. The firm is to be

<sup>2</sup> Eugenio Petit Muñoz, *Infancia y juventud de José E. Rodó* (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 1974), pp. 112–13 and *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> The document's location is Armario 4, box 3-A-4.

called 'José Cabal y Cía', its business being the importation of 'yerba mate', tea and coffee, which will be marketed under the name 'Amambay', the same as the province in Paraguay famous for the cultivation of *Ilex paraguensis*, the tea used for drinking *mate*. Rodó is to invest 'quinientos pesos oro', and the profits are to be divided in the following proportion: 'tercera parte para el socio capitalista y dos terceras para el socio industrial'. The contract is for four years in the first instance, and there are provisions in case of death or disagreement between the parties. This document is interesting for at least two reasons. The first is that it shows Rodó's willingness to engage in a business enterprise as a capital investor. He would not be involved in the actual running of the firm, and would thus not be relinquishing his basic interests in intellectual work. The year 1897 is the time of the penultimate civil war in the history of Uruguay, when the Blancos rose against an uncompromising Colorado government which had reduced their share of power. The rebellion started in early March, and in a letter later that month to his friend and confidant Juan Francisco Piquet, Rodó speaks of the detrimental effects the war is having on cultural activity. Nevertheless, his commitment to 'la noble vida del pensamiento y del trabajo intelectual' persists: he continued to edit, with three of his friends, the *Revista Nacional de Literatura y Ciencias Sociales*, which had started in 1895 (the last issue appeared in late November of 1897), and he would publish *Rubén Darío* and *Ariel* in the next three years.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the date of the Amambay contract coincides exactly with the signing of the peace treaty. The second point of interest in this document is that it provides evidence that Rodó was in a sufficiently comfortable financial situation to be able to make such an investment. Although Emir Rodríguez Monegal mentions 'las dificultades económicas [. . .] invencibles' as one of the reasons for the demise of the *Revista*, this is not a factor in the account given by the early biographer of Rodó and one of the co-editors of the journal, Víctor Pérez Petit.<sup>5</sup> We know that the family finances suffered a dip after Rodó's father died in 1886, but also that some relief was provided by a small inheritance from his relatives in Cataluña.<sup>6</sup> In any case, his ability to make a considerable outlay must be taken as a sign that his situation was certainly not desperate. Neither of these factors—interest and ability to invest in a business unrelated to culture—obtains in the three enterprises to be discussed next.

The period covered by the correspondence related to the main projects is 1910 to 1916, or the last half a dozen years before Rodó's much-awaited trip

<sup>4</sup> Emir Rodríguez Monegal, 'Introducción general' to his edition of Rodó's *Obras completas*, 2nd edn (Madrid: Aguilar, 1967), pp. 17–139 (pp. 26–28).

<sup>5</sup> Rodríguez Monegal, 'Introducción general', p. 26; Víctor Pérez Petit, *Rodó: su vida, su obra* (Montevideo: Imprenta Latina, 1918), p. 108.

<sup>6</sup> Petit Muñoz, pp. 164–65.

to Europe, which eventually materialized on 14 July 1916 when he was given a job as correspondent for the Buenos Aires weekly *Caras y Caretas* (the last venture, 'Rapid-Fortune', is undated, but is likely to be of the same period). Rodó's journey took him to Portugal, Spain, and Italy, where he was to die, in a hotel in Palermo, nine and a half months later on 1 May 1917. This is a time when Rodó's achievements and fame had reached their peak. He had become internationally recognized and highly respected after his *Ariel* echoed throughout the Spanish-speaking world and spawned a movement of self-confidence and idealism identified as *arielismo*. Rodó's most ambitious work, *Motivos de Proteo*, on which he had been working since the publication of *Ariel*, had just come out (1909) and was also generating much admiration. He was now working on the collection *El mirador de Próspero* (1913), which gathered and revised previously published material and some new essays.

During this period he also acted, with some reluctance, as a deputy in the Uruguayan parliament. He had served one term from 1902 to 1905, when he resigned to devote himself to *Motivos*. In 1908 he was elected to parliament again, for a term lasting until 1911, and he continued in post for a further and final term until 1914. This is the time when his conflict with President José Batlle y Ordóñez, the progressive modernizer of Uruguay, reached its peak (Rodó joined the ranks of those who rejected Batlle's ideas for a Swiss-style collegiate executive). More importantly for our purposes, this was also a period of financial instability for Rodó, who was in the hands of creditors. Two of his biographers provide the background. His close friend Víctor Pérez Petit tells of a visit when Rodó came to consult him about a particularly assertive creditor, and quotes Rodó's succinct words: 'Es una historia vieja —me dijo— salí de garantía y debo pagar por otro.'<sup>7</sup> Roberto Ibáñez, the organizer of the Rodó Archive, provides more details when he cites a moving entry from one of Rodó's diaries: 'Hoy, tres de mayo de 1906 a la una y media de la tarde, en la Biblioteca del Ateneo, donde estudio y trabajo; hoy, día y hora aciagos, con sensación de angustia que no me cabe en el pecho.'<sup>8</sup> Ibáñez says that the trigger of this crisis is debt, whose effects were to last a decade and so cover the period of the main correspondence that interests us here:

Se origina en una aventura económica. [. . .] Rodó, hombre de buena fe y hasta de inerte ingenuidad, fue engañado y estafado por tres sujetos a quienes había conocido en el ámbito palustre de la política menor. [. . .] el escritor se arriesgó en unas operaciones bursátiles, tentado por la posibilidad de recobrar lo que uno de aquellos sujetos le adeudaba y *con la esperanza, también, de asegurarse una situación*

<sup>7</sup> Pérez Petit, p. 305.

<sup>8</sup> Roberto Ibáñez, 'El ciclo de Proteo', *Cuadernos de Marcha*, 1 (May 1967), pp. 7–52 (p. 16).

*que le permitiera atenerse exclusivamente a su obra. Inexperto y confiado, perdió cuanto poseía; e hipotecó su porvenir, por añadidura, por dos lustros. [ . . . ] Y en plena celebridad, padeció una crisis que le dismantelaba expectativas y sueños y que los demás no parecían sospechar siquiera. Durante diez años, pues, resignándose a vivir del periodismo y la política abandonada hacía poco, debió aplicarse a redimir obligaciones que la usura convertía en el tonel de las Danaides.* (p.15, emphasis added)

In brief, during the period that concerns us Rodó was at his peak in terms of intellectual achievement and respect nationally and internationally, but also in a trough as regards his personal finances, having to make ends meet through his parliamentary and journalistic work. Both these aspects—intellectual respect and financial penury—have a bearing on the material under discussion.

*Project 2: 'El Uruguay en su centenario' (March–May 1910)*

There are signs in Rodó's correspondence of several potential ventures of a sort that combines culture and money. Some of these involve Rodó as a protagonist or main partner; others show him as providing his name to support already existing projects. We shall be concerned here mainly with the former, starting with two that include Juan Antonio Zubillaga (1870–1957), a long-standing friend of Rodó. Zubillaga was a prolific journalist, critic, writer, and sometime Director of the National Library (as Rodó himself was, for two months in 1900), and became co-editor of the first volume of the official edition of the complete works of Rodó (1945). At the time that concerns us Zubillaga was living in Buenos Aires, displeased with the political environment of Uruguay. He shared with Rodó a strong dislike for the collegiate policies of José Batlle y Ordóñez, who was in office from 1903 to 1907 and from 1911 to 1915 and who remained strongly influential during the interregnum presided over by his sympathizer Claudio Williman. Zubillaga invited Rodó to participate in two of his projects.

The first seems to have been rather ephemeral: a review and/or a newspaper dealing with cultural aspects of the River Plate, based in Buenos Aires. There is only one letter from Zubillaga, dated 19 March 1910, on this subject. The venture failed because a printing press could not be found in Buenos Aires with the appropriate technology to produce the quality publication they desired and to do so before the centenary celebrations of the independence of the River Plate republics due on 25 May 1910 (a very tight timetable to our modern eyes, and also perhaps a sign of Zubillaga's penchant for unrealistic or overambitious goals, of which we shall see more). In this letter Zubillaga also introduces a further project, namely a general book on Uruguay.

Two other people were involved in this new venture, one as potential partner

and regular correspondent, and the other as a figure in the background who acted as the spanner in the works planned by the other three. The former is H. Clifford Walton, a British or possibly American citizen, who was the Buenos Aires representative of the Sociedad Internacional de Editores. This was the local name of the International Publishing Society, a British firm which started with a branch in Buenos Aires and later had offices in the United States and throughout Latin America; the founder of this publishing house was W. M. Jackson, who was to give his name to a later reincarnation of the firm. Walton toyed with the idea of leaving the Society for a while, and eventually went independent. He was replaced by C. S. Howell first and then, when Howell went to Rio de Janeiro to run the branch there, by Laureano Tuero; both of them corresponded later with Rodó about other projects. The second figure is Carlos Máximo Maeso (1855–1912), a Uruguayan journalist and newspaper editor, who was the author of several works celebrating the achievements of Uruguay, including the bilingual volume *El Uruguay a través de un siglo/L'Uruguay à travers un siècle*, which was to shatter the hopes of Rodó and his partners for their own project.<sup>9</sup>

The correspondence on this project is the fullest in the Archive in this area of cultural entrepreneurship, and encompasses the period immediately after the failed review, namely March to May 1910. The letters were exchanged between Zubillaga and Walton in Buenos Aires and Rodó in Montevideo. Much of the correspondence is devoted to the issue of seeking government backing in the form of a commitment to buy a set number of copies, and to discussing what to do about the threat of Maeso's book, which was being prepared for publication at the same time. Zubillaga introduces the venture in the same letter in which he reports on the failure of their planned magazine:

un proyecto, una gran empresa. Vd., yo, y él [i.e. Walton] constituiríamos una sociedad para publicar una obra, en un gran volumen de 600 páginas, con el más rico papel de obra conocido, ilustrado con los más ricos grabados, encuadernado con el lujo con que lo hace la empresa editora de la cual él es gerente, y análoga, en todo, a las que tienen hechas en los principales países de todos los continentes con la autorización y el concurso de los respectivos gobiernos.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The full title of this lavishly illustrated book is *El Uruguay a través de un siglo/L'Uruguay à travers un siècle: la jornada civilizadora realizada en la República Oriental del Uruguay y el brillante porvenir de esta nación americana* (Montevideo: Tipografía y Librería Moderna, 1910). Maeso had already published the following works dedicated to the same subject: *Glorias uruguayas: colección de los más importantes acontecimientos que contiene la historia de la República Oriental del Uruguay* (Montevideo: Ibarra, [n.d.]); *El Oriental: descripción general de la República Oriental del Uruguay, su comercio, industrias, rentas y riquezas, narraciones históricas, rasgos biográficos de uruguayos célebres, etc.* (Montevideo: Impr. y Enc. de Ríos y Becchi, 1884); *Tierra de promisión: descripción general de la República Oriental del Uruguay* (Montevideo: Imp. a vapor de la Nación, 1896 [other edns 1900 and, expanded, 1904]).

<sup>10</sup> Here and elsewhere, underlining and strikethrough are in the original source.

Zubillaga mentions the volume being produced on Argentina as an example, and no doubt an inspiration. This is a work

de propaganda como nunca se ha hecho hasta hoy; descripción de la geografía, de la historia, del comercio, de la industria, de las ciencias, de las letras, de las artes, de la política; en una palabra, la descripción más completa e ilustrativa del país, y de su vida económica, intelectual, política.

The book on Uruguay would be published in Spanish and English, heavily illustrated with photographs of places and people from a variety of areas, and 'todo hecho con [lujo?] excepcional'. The business structure for the project would involve Walton in charge of obtaining the initial finance and of dealing with the publicity (mainly advertisements from businesses); Zubillaga would be the main writer of the contents, with the help of Rodó if he was willing. Rodó's main role, as deputy in the Uruguayan parliament, would be to seek official support and the government's subscription for the venture: 'la gestión de la subscripción oficial, por resolución parlamentaria, a un número determinado de ejemplares'. The price for the work would be 40–50 pesos and the run at least 10,000, as many copies would go abroad as publicity for the nation. The writing would take eight to nine months, and during that period—no doubt sweet music to the ears of cash-strapped Rodó—'se nos costearían todos nuestros gastos con una elevada mensualidad'. Moreover, the profits would be shared equally between the three partners. In his next letter, dated 22 March 1910, Zubillaga responds to specific questions from Rodó (the latter are not found in the Archive). Rodó seems happy in principle with 'el negocio' but would like more details: the cost of the work would be 60 pesos for individuals (so it has gone up by 10–20 pesos in a few days), and 17 pesos for the government, who should buy 3,000 copies at a cost of 51,000 pesos. Distribution of copies abroad would be undertaken by the publishers. Advertisements would cost 400 pesos, and advertisers would get a free copy of the work.

In his next communication, of 5 April 1910, Zubillaga discusses a major stumbling block probably brought up by Rodó in a previous letter: the fact that a project very similar to the one being planned by them is about to materialize, namely the Maeso work, which had already secured 15,000 pesos in committed purchases from the government. Zubillaga says that their work is superior and should therefore get more governmental backing—and this for further reasons. Firstly, the work would also be published in English, which would increase its readership; secondly, a high level of government subscription would make the project more commercially viable, 'porque [. . .] inspirará siempre más confianza en la seriedad y magnitud de la obra a los comerciantes e industriales y demás particulares que puedan interesarse en figurar en ella con sus personas o sus establecimientos'. The

third reason is one that seems very odd to us nowadays, as it probably also did to Rodó at the time, namely that Walton himself was prepared personally to distribute copies bought by the government while he was on his travels:

Otra cosa que me indica Walton y que me parece muy bueno, porque importa una ventaja más para el Gobierno, es que le ofreceríamos hacer nosotros mismos el servicio de reparto de la obra en el extranjero, de esta manera: Uno de nosotros, que en este caso sería Walton, recibiendo del Gobierno los libros que destinara al exterior, los llevaría personalmente a Europa, donde en las principales ciudades entregaría gratuitamente un ejemplar a cada hotel de importancia, a cada club, a cada centro de reunión público que lo mereciera para su mayor y más conveniente divulgación, trayendo al Gobierno el testimonio debidamente legalizado de todas las partes en que hubiera colocado los ejemplares.

In the draft of a letter to Zubillaga, dated 6 April 1910, Rodó seems persuaded by Walton of the potential of the project: 'El pasado domingo me entrevisté con el Sr. Walton. Después de los datos que él me proporcionó, mi fe en el resultado de la empresa ha aumentado. Creo que el éxito puede corresponder a nuestras esperanzas.' Rodó has also come to see the advantage, in terms of profit, of doing this outside the aegis of the Sociedad Internacional: 'Yo creía en las ventajas de la empresa ya constituida, para garantir la seriedad económica del proyecto, ante el Estado; pero el Sr. Walton me argumentó con que de esa manera nuestros beneficios disminuirían considerablemente.' Rodó thinks that this would work, because Walton would still be able to stand by his work for the International Society: 'hay conveniencia en la nueva forma ideada, pues para garantizar la propuesta ha de bastar con referencias comerciales fidedignas'. This settles 'la parte material' of the venture; for the rest, 'es claro que por lo que respecta a la seriedad de la obra en sí misma serán suficiente garantía nuestros nombres'. This is presumably an admission that Rodó himself would undertake at least a supervisory role in the writing of the work. He then reiterates his views on the level of the subscription, which he has stated in a previous letter (absent in the Archive)—namely that it should not be too high. He also thinks that the right person to approach the government about money would be Walton. Finally, he makes the rather shrewd point that it is important for publicity purposes to gain the support of the newspapers, and proposes that all newspapers be granted a half-page advertisement gratis: 'De esta manera, estaríamos en aptitud de esperar una propaganda unánime y constante, en favor de la idea.' He closes the letter promising that 'en cuanto tenga un rato desocupado pondré por escrito el proyecto de contrato para enviárselo'. He would in fact later produce such a draft contract.

In his response Zubillaga is glad that the interview with Walton has made



Rodó more inclined to support the project ('Me alegro mucho que el negocio, después de esa entrevista, le parezca más conveniente que en el principio'), and makes other points. Firstly, he disagrees with Rodó about Walton's role with regard to approaching the government. He and Walton think it should be Rodó who does this job:

es nuestra opinión sobre la subvención que Vd., conocedor de los hombres a quienes tiene que dirigirse, está más habilitado para convencerles de que, dada la naturaleza e importancia de la obra, interesa al país y al gobierno contribuir en la mayor forma posible para que se realice debidamente un trabajo destinado a ser de tanta utilidad nacional.

He then stresses the financial benefit to the three editors, a point made less forcefully in his previous letter:

No olvide que como le dije en la carta anterior, con las entradas de la colocación de avisos y de las subscripciones podremos costear la impresión de la obra, con beneficios para nosotros, y que el importe de la subvención en su totalidad quedaría destinado para nosotros tres, por lo cual es interés común en que la cantidad sea todo lo mayor que se pueda conseguir, aparte de que esto da más importancia y prestigio a la obra.

In other words: the subscription by the government to a set number of copies at a reduced price (17 rather than 60 pesos) would represent all profit, to be shared by the three partners. So Zubillaga and Walton are speaking from knowledge to a perhaps less worldly-wise Rodó at this point (he will learn, as we shall see). Thirdly, both Zubillaga and Walton very much like Rodó's suggestion that newspapers be offered a free half-page, 'pues eso aseguraría una propaganda permanente'. Finally, Zubillaga reports that he has met Mr H. A. Cartwright, the person who would supervise the printing of the work in London and would undertake the English translation. Like Walton, Cartwright has left the Sociedad Internacional.

Cracks in the venture soon began to appear, however. In another letter from Rodó to Zubillaga, dated 13 April 1910, of which we have a handwritten draft with several corrections, Rodó reports bad news and introduces the topic that will engage them in the next and final phase of the correspondence, namely the state of Maeso's project and its standing in official circles: 'La noticia confidencial que hoy puedo transmitirle es más bien desfavorable.' He reveals that the previous day he had found himself alone with one Rodríguez just before the start of the parliamentary session. Rodó suspects that someone has interfered ('juraría que alguien ha metido la pata'), and reports what Rodríguez has told him about Maeso's book: that a subscription had been requested the day before from the national mortgage bank (Banco Hipotecario); that the work was 'importantísima'; that it would be published in four languages: English, French, German, and Italian (in the event,

only in French), as well as Spanish; and that the state had ‘contribuido a ella, dándole, en cierto modo, carácter oficial’. This means that ‘la propuesta de una obra similar quizás pareciese inoportuna’. Rodó assures Zubillaga that he responded to Rodríguez’s claims with a vigorous defence of their own project:

Yo procuré, como es natural, contrarrestar estos argumentos, le ponderé las ventajas [cualidades?] de nuestro proyecto y le pedí que no prejuzgase hasta hablar con el empresario, que vendría de un momento a otro y le daría más datos sobre el particular, haciéndole conocer el modelo de libro y proyecto.

This last point confirms Rodó’s perspective of not wishing to appear as the businessman himself, preferring to leave that role to Walton. He seems unwilling to use his political influence as a deputy, against the expectations of his partners.

Rodó’s assessment is that the outlook is not favourable: ‘Pero lo vi bastante displicente y con mucho menos benévolas disposiciones que la primera vez, y me dejó algo alicaído.’ Rodríguez was still willing to see Walton, but he kept saying it would be difficult, because ‘Maeso le ha ganado de mano’. Rodó then adds that they were being too hopeful in anticipating an increase in the government’s contribution and that they should consider themselves very fortunate if they managed to get even 5,000 pesos. He then adds—though this is later crossed out, perhaps so as not to disappoint Zubillaga too much—that Maeso’s agents were now going around banks and other establishments drumming up support and subscriptions for their project. His next point is that Walton need not know about this, and that they should proceed as planned: ‘De todo esto no hay por qué enterarlo a Walton. Ya que estamos en ello, sigamos adelante y que sea lo que haya de ser! Pronto sabremos a qué atenernos.’ He hopes the outcome will not confirm his own recent words to a friend, uttered in the context of ‘la absoluta inhospitalidad’ towards any progressive initiative: ‘En este país no hay más que usura y guerra civil.’ After signing off with the comment ‘Disculpe el tono gris de esta carta’, Rodó adds the following gloomy afterthought to his friend living in neighbouring Argentina:

Por mi parte, le deseo de todo corazón que eche raíces allí y no vuelva a nuestra tierra más que de paseo y para visitar a los amigos. Vd. dirá, seguramente, como me lo digo yo mismo, que tratándose de gastos de propaganda por el país, en dos obras análogas pero no idénticas, es ridículo fijarse en \$5 o 6000 más. Pero ¿qué quiere Vd.? Así están hechos nuestros hombres.

The Archive contains a draft contract for the project in Rodó’s hand. This may have been drawn up at the request of the other two or by his own initiative, though given the general drift of the correspondence, the former, as a way of

luring him into the project by giving him such a crucial task, is more likely. The following are its most relevant features.

The aim of the contract is to ‘publicar una reseña descriptiva de la República O. del Uruguay, con arreglo a las siguientes bases’:

1. La razón social será la de Walton y Cía. [In other words, outside the aegis of the Sociedad Internacional.]
2. La obra será propiedad de los tres socios por partes iguales, debiendo repartirse, en la misma proporción, entre ellos, el importe de los beneficios. [Which shows an equal share between the three partners.]
3. ‘Los Sres \_\_\_\_ y \_\_\_\_ tendrán a su cargo las tareas relativas al plan, dirección y redacción de la obra. El Sr. \_\_\_\_ se encargará de la gestión administrativa [. . .] negociación de suscripciones y anuncios, los trabajos de propaganda, las relaciones con la casa impresora [. . .]. [This hints that Rodó would be more closely involved with the editing and writing than in Zubillaga’s original idea, according to which his task was mainly to gain official support, though he was also given the choice of editing and writing.]
4. El libro llevará el título de ‘El Uruguay en su primer centenario’ y formará un volumen de 600 a 800 páginas, ilustrado, impreso y encuadernado con arreglo al modelo de la obra intitulada *Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong Kong, Shanghai and Other Treaty Ports of China*.<sup>11</sup> La edición se hará en Inglaterra por la casa impresora de la referida obra-modelo.
5. La mitad de los ejemplares será impresa en castellano y la otra mitad en inglés, encargándose el señor \_\_\_\_ de gestionar la traducción a este idioma en condiciones que aseguren su fidelidad y corrección.
6. Después de anunciada por la prensa la publicación de la obra, se solicitará del Cuerpo Legislativo una subvención oficial. El precio de venta de cada ejemplar será el de \_\_\_\_\$, salvo modificación que ulteriormente se convenga. [Which means that Rodó is leaving this thorny aspect open to further discussion.]
7. Se admitirán anuncios de establecimientos industriales y comerciales [. . .]. Cada anunciador tendrá derecho a un ejemplar gratuito de la obra. [Leaving again a specific cost unstated.]
8. El importe de suscripciones y anuncios se cobrará, en parte, adelantado; y el dinero percibido por ese concepto será depositado en un Banco de Montevideo, de donde no podrá retirarse ninguna suma sin la conformidad de la mayoría de los socios.
9. El pago del costo de la impresión [. . .] así como cualquier otro gasto que fuere menester, se hará por acuerdo de los tres socios, y retirándose, al efecto, de los fondos depositados, la suma necesaria. [This shows, in effect, that any subsidies from government would be profit, as Zubillaga had indicated, since the cost of printing would be covered by the subscriptions.]

Clauses 10 and 11 deal with the contingency of one of the partners wishing to take out his earnings before the costs of the printing have been covered;

<sup>11</sup> According to the British Library catalogue, this work was published in London in 1908 by Lloyds Greater Britain Publishing Co. The editor was Arnold Wright, of the Yorkshire Post, and there is an added name, that of Henry Adolphus Cartwright, the same that was to undertake the editing and translation of Zubillaga, Walton, and Rodó’s project.

‘Y para que conste, firman tres de un tenor en Montevideo, a      de abril de 1910.’

In response, Zubillaga and Walton wrote on 15 April enclosing a typed and signed version of the contract, and asking for Rodó’s own signature. The letter also includes statements that exude commercial sagacity of a slightly uncomfortable kind. The style in general—assertive in a businesslike manner—and the specific fact that one Spanish word appears in English spelling (‘session’) suggest Walton as the likely main writer, though bearing in mind Zubillaga’s enthusiastic advice in other correspondence, he is also capable of firmness and cunning. The letter starts by warning Rodó to be cautious in front of Rodríguez, as he is a close friend of Maeso:

Queremos someterle a su opinión una consideración que se nos ocurre y que creemos de utilidad. Es muy posible que Rodríguez esté interesado en la obra de Maeso, pues les une una gran intimidad. Por eso podría tener sus peligros el informar muy detalladamente al primero respecto del plan y magnitud de nuestra obra.

Instead, they advise him to pursue his own influence in parliament, so as to affect the outcome of the commission which is to consider the project. They are at the outset quite blunt about this, proposing a two-pronged approach, firstly through personal contacts:

Acaso, fuera de mucha más utilidad que Vd. empleara su influencia con sus más íntimos amigos en la Cámara para convencerles de la superioridad de nuestro proyecto, y para conseguir su defensa y sus votos cuando informe la comisión a cuyo estudio se le someterá en la Cámara.

Secondly, Rodó should make use of his powers of oratory:

En cualquier caso, el día de la session [*sic*] correspondiente, ese contingente decidiría en gran parte, la corriente de la opinión, secundando lo que Vd. hubiera hecho favorablemente al usar de la palabra.

The two partners are therefore coming clean about the role of Rodó, as Zubillaga had stated in his first letter on the subject: Rodó is to influence government and parliamentary sources to support their project. But they then play down their bluntness by referring to the greater good to come out of this project:

Hay que tener en cuenta que es de la mayor honestidad, y hasta patriótica la defensa que se haga del mérito de nuestro libro, pues es muy fácil demostrar su valor intrínseco poniendo a la vista del que quisiera darse cuenta de ello, el ejemplar modelo que tiene en su poder; no se trata, como es natural, de una sorpresa, se dispone de hechos evidentes que no admiten lugar a duda y que prueban que implican un verdadero servicio para los intereses del país, cuyo gobierno no hace ninguna obra extraordinaria

con esa pequeña contingente con que va a concurrir a la edición de un libro que necesariamente tiene que ser muy costoso y del cual tantos beneficios va a recoger la nación.

In a letter sent from Buenos Aires to Walton (in Montevideo to start negotiations with the government), dated 22 April 1910, Zubillaga speaks rather furtively of Rodó's role: 'Él se me expresa muy agradado por el éxito relativo que Vd. alcanzara en ella, y yo lo felicito como por el primer triunfo.' He then stresses the potential of Rodó's connections in the press: 'Con la influencia de nuestro socio, le va a ser a Vd. muy fácil conseguir la propaganda de la prensa de allá; cuando publiquen algo envíemelo y a Rodó.' Then once again he displays his rather rash judgement on the matter of the cost of the work to the government, which has again gone up (from the original price of 17 pesos):

Respecto de lo que me consulta, le contesto: con mi desconfianza irreducible acerca de esas gentes, no puedo dejar de suponer que van a tomar pocos ejemplares, y por consiguiente es necesario establecer el precio en proporción con esa sospecha. Por eso, si yo creyese que iban a subscribirse a (1000) mil ejemplares, pediría treinta pesos por cada uno; si pensase que tomaran (2000) dos mil, fijaría el precio del volumen en veinte pesos; y si tuviera motivos para esperar sólo una suscripción de (500) ejemplares, entonces señalaría su costo en cuarenta pesos por libro.

He then continues, more shrewdly:

Vd. me dirá: '¿cómo saber el número que aceptarán?', y yo no tengo más que esta respuesta a eso: ese conocimiento nunca puede ser más que relativo, pues la cantidad de libros que el gobierno comprará sólo puede presumirse de las posibilidades que ante su juicio arrojen las conferencias con quienes decidirán eso. Es una cuestión de tacto, de pulso, de ojo clínico: es en los diagnósticos difíciles donde se prueban los mejores médicos. Cuando el caso es grave los galenos más célebres consultan: hagan pues, consulta con Rodó, y determinen con responsabilidad bipartita la [dosis?] de [*illegible*] que crean eficaz para [desenfadar?] el estómago demasiado cargado del presidente [Claudio Williman].

Walton wrote to parliament on 26 April 1910. The point of the letter is not to ask for a subsidy, but for a subscription to a set number of copies. He begins by stating that Uruguay is in an unfavourable position regarding its perception by the international community as compared with other neighbouring countries, notably Argentina and Brazil, though he does not mention precise titles,<sup>12</sup> and he refers specifically to recent books on Chile by Eduardo Poirier

<sup>12</sup> Possible candidates for each of the neighbouring countries, according to the British Library catalogue, are the following titles: Carlos María Urien and Ezio Colombo, *La República Argentina en 1910: estudio histórico, físico, político, social y económico*, 2 vols (Buenos Aires, 1910); Luis Raphael Vieira Souto, *O Brasil: suas riquezas naturais, suas industrias* (Rio de Janeiro: Centro Industrial do Brasil, 1907).

and on the Dominican Republic by Enrique Deschamps.<sup>13</sup> He then mentions his firm's commitment to distribute copies in relevant places, as Zubillaga had advised Rodó, though Walton says that those in charge of the distribution would be the firm's agents rather than himself, and he closes with the unit cost required for the government's subscription: £6 sterling. This, given that the constant pound-dollar exchange rate under the Gold Standard before 1914 was US\$4.86=£1, and that the peso in 1910 converted to US\$1.03, means that the cost per book was 30 Uruguayan pesos.<sup>14</sup> Walton was thus following Zubillaga's middle suggestion.

In the next letter, dated 28 April 1910, Rodó (signing himself as ' Próspero') reports to Zubillaga on the after-effects of Walton's approach to the Uruguayan parliament. His first point is that the official response to Maeso's work is strong: 'Puede darse por averiguado, en primer término, que la otra obra tiene más hondas raíces oficiales de lo que pensábamos.' His second point is that there is no chance of significant support for their own project. Rodó was informed by 'un amigo de confianza [. . .] en los corrillos de la Cámara' that in another committee, which was discussing financial support for a monument celebrating the first significant rebellion in the succession of events that led to the country's independence ('Grito de Asencio', of 28 February 1811), a deputy 'muy vinculado con el Presidente' reported that the latter had requested that no funds should be used for 'objetos imprevistos' during the current financial year. He further adds that even though the project has made a good impression among most parliamentarians, several feel that the prices quoted were too high: 'exagerados (y hasta disparatados)'. This, Rodó adds, echoes his own evaluation: 'Esta impresión confirma lo que yo sospeché siempre, como Vd. sabe.' In contrast, Maeso's prices are reasonable at 10 pesos per copy, and at 50 pesos per page for advertisements (as against Zubillaga and Walton's proposed 30 pesos per copy); and moreover, those against the new book say that it proposes the same format and page extent, and in contrast to Maeso's four languages it aims to appear in only two. The situation within the committee is thus not promising: 'En la Comisión tenemos amigos . . . y adversarios. Los primeros lucharán; los otros, es de presumirse que harán lo mismo.' Outside the lower house there is generally support, though the view is that after Maeso the demand for publicity will have diminished, especially given the higher prices requested by the new project. Rodó summarizes the overall impression as 'de duda, con cierto matiz de pesimismo'. His line is

<sup>13</sup> Édouard Poirier, *Chile en 1910: edición del Centenario de la Independencia* (Santiago de Chile, 1910); Enrique Deschamps, *La República Dominicana: directorio y guía general* (Barcelona, 1907).

<sup>14</sup> I owe the information on the pound-dollar exchange to Rory Miller, who also suggested OxLAD (Oxford Latin American Economic History Database) as a source for the peso-dollar exchange rate.

to continue to push the venture, but he is not hopeful. In fact he is explicitly concerned with saving face and dignity: 'Moveré las influencias que sean compatibles con la discreción y con la conveniencia de no recibir demasiado de frente el desaire de un fracaso.' He asks Zubillaga to pass on the details to Walton: 'Reserve ésta en la parte que le parezca, y trasmita, en esencia, lo demás.'

In a final letter on this project, Walton writes on 23 May 1910, supporting Rodó's justified caution in pushing their project:

Referente a nuestro asunto he notado todo lo que me indica y, como Vd., creo que no debíamos de arriesgarnos a una decisión adversa de ninguna manera y sobre todo tomando en cuenta el hecho de que es Vd. un miembro de la Cámara, y, por lo tanto, poniéndome en el caso de Vd., tratándose de una situación tan delicada, me conduciría de la misma manera.

So Walton is more reasonable than the over-enthusiastic Zubillaga. Nevertheless, Walton insists on the potential of the business:

Pero, vuelvo a repetir que este negocio puede llegar a obtener un éxito brillante y, por lo que Vd. ha tenido a bien manifestarme, sé que Vd. comparte la misma opinión y no perderá de vista todo cuanto pueda redundar a favor nuestro.

Both Walton's reasonableness and his keenness to continue with a potential business venture would no doubt play a part in Rodó's approach to him in his next venture.

This is the last letter on the business of the Uruguay book—nothing came of it in the end, and Walton seems to have returned to the fold of the Sociedad Internacional, having ceased his self-employment or moonlighting aspirations. The Archive does include a document, consisting of the coverless pages of a notebook, which contains a plan of the structure of the projected volume. It has headings and estimates of the number of days that each part would take to write, such as the following regarding the history section, dealing most probably with the essay on Artigas, Uruguay's national hero: 'Bauzá — S. Martín — Belgrano — C. M. Ramírez — Z. de San Martín.' A note adds the estimated time it would take to write this piece: '13 días'.<sup>15</sup>

We can conclude from this project, the most ambitious personally for Zubillaga, that (1) Zubillaga was rather over-enthusiastic and unrealistic, particularly regarding the financial expectations (estimated prices were too high, deadlines too tight); (2) Rodó was keen, as might be expected of a man in financial difficulties who was also interested in cultural projects, but he was more cautious, and when he took a hand in the project by drafting the contract, he put himself closer to the writing and further from the commercial negotiations, which he allocated fully to Walton; (3) Rodó did not refuse to use his influence

<sup>15</sup> The document is in an unnumbered folder; relevant folios are 563<sup>r</sup>–573<sup>v</sup>.

among his peers, but did so with care and stopped when he realized it was not reaping benefits and was placing him in an awkward situation; (4) the ultimate cause of the demise was Maeso's book, which indeed came to fruition, unlike this second failed venture of Rodó's.

Rodó did have some success with two other projects involving the Sociedad Internacional, which cannot be studied here: they are the *Biblioteca Internacional de Obras Famosas*, a twenty-four-volume anthology of world literature published in 1910; and the *Tesoro de la Juventud*, a twenty-volume encyclopedia for children (c.1916). These ventures, though generally unmentioned by Rodó scholars, involved the intellectual and pedagogical roles that we would readily associate with him rather than a managerial or marketing function, and hence do not belong to the same category as the schemes being discussed here. In both cases he acted as contributor and editor, and the projects did bring him some money, though not enough to relieve his penury for good. Between these two projects, Rodó attempted his own enterprise, along the lines of the unsuccessful counterpart to Maeso.

### *Project 3: 'La campaña del Uruguay'*

The trigger for the new venture seems to have been Rodó this time, and it involved both Walton and a landowner, a Mr Muiños. The correspondence is between Rodó and Walton, and took place mainly in April and May 1911, though after a period of silence there is also a rather enigmatic letter from Walton dated August 1913, which may be related to this subject. The project, also *manqué*, points to a new interest of Rodó's, namely the rural world, which is rather unexpected for a writer usually associated with urban life.

The first letter, from Rodó in Montevideo to Walton in Buenos Aires, is dated 'de abril 1911' (with a gap for the date), and is a handwritten rough draft on headed paper of the *Círculo de la Prensa*, Montevideo, of which he was President at the time. In it Rodó provides more details concerning a subject he had recently broached with Walton in person. The letter opens thus:

Cuando le hablé, en nuestra última entrevista, del proyecto relativo a la publicación de una obra sobre la campaña del Uruguay, ya hacía algún tiempo que venía meditando esta idea, pero nada le dije en definitivo porque faltaba todavía encontrar al hombre que, por sus vinculaciones con los propietarios rurales y ganaderos, y en competencia especial [*illegible*] pudiera sernos útil para dicha obra. Pues bien, ahora lo he encontrado. [. . .] Y por eso puedo decirle que envío estas líneas para que tratemos de cambiar ideas sobre el particular.

The rest of the letter shows that he has learnt from the previous, failed



attempt to compete with Maeso's volume, to which he makes explicit reference:

Se trataría, como ya se lo manifesté, de una obra expositiva de las riquezas y progresos de La Campaña del Uruguay, sobre un plan análogo al del libro que anteriormente habíamos pensado, pero especializándose en la ganadería y agricultura.

He is aware of the need for financial support, which will now come from the landowners whose own establishments would be described in the book:

La base económica la daría la contribución [~~en parte anticipada~~] de los hacendados por la publicación de reseñas de sus establecimientos. Los hacendados se cuentan, próximamente, en número de , entre los 19 departamentos de la República.

There would be no need at first for a subscription from the government, but this could come later:

La suscripción del Estado vendría por sí misma después de publicada la obra, pero no sería indispensable para que esta resultase un negocio afortunado. Bastaría para ello con la suscripción particular, que es segura.

The crucial person referred to above is a man called José A. Muiños, a partner in 'la acreditada firma "Victorica y Muiños"' and well known in rural Uruguay as 'representante comercial de los más importantes cabañeros y hacendados del país, y organizador de varias exposiciones y [premios?]' He also has the advantage of having been a journalist on a number of newspapers, including the major liberal daily *El Siglo*, where he wrote on 'las cuestiones rurales y ganaderas y ha recorrido muchísimas veces la campaña, que conoce perfectamente'. He is, 'en una palabra, el hombre que necesitamos para el caso'. Moreover, Mr Muiños himself is highly enthusiastic about the project:

me manifestó que estaba convencido de que era una gran idea y que no tenía la menor duda sobre el éxito brillante de un negocio así, contándose con los elementos de propaganda de la 'Sociedad Internacional' ~~en este momento~~ y con las vinculaciones y relaciones de él y ~~las mías~~ la dirección mía.

This last change in the draft is highly significant: Rodó decides against his own role as purveyor of connections, and chooses instead that of supervisor of the project. This might have been a slip of the pen, or it may demonstrate Rodó's discomfort over using his own influence: this would be consistent with his stance in the previous project. In any case, Rodó was not well connected with landowners, but rather with politicians, and this time such support was not needed, at least not at this initial stage.

The letter continues with a reference to the earlier project, as the new partners would act 'sobre la base de un contrato análogo al que habíamos hecho entre

Zubillaga, usted y yo'. Rodó adds that 'a pesar de mi criterio habitualmente pesimista' he feels confident about this scheme, and thinks it would be a pity not to take advantage of a time when 'la Sociedad Internacional está de moda y ha adquirido tanta popularidad', in what must be a reference to the success of the *Biblioteca Internacional de Obras Famosas* in which he has been involved. He ends by asking when Walton plans to come to Montevideo so that they can talk about this and meet up with Mr Muiños, and ends with a sense of urgency not devoid of humour, especially from the perspective of the received image of the unworldly Rodó, and with a piece of (misspelt) English:

No es bueno apresurarse demasiado, pero tampoco conviene perder tiempo, pues debemos temer que se presente algún nuevo Maeso que se nos adelante, o que la empresa Lloyd extienda su trabajo en campaña y nos incomode. 'Times ist money [*sic*]'.

Walton replied from Buenos Aires on 24 April 1911, in a typewritten letter on headed paper of the Sociedad Internacional. He plans to come to Montevideo the following week, and in the meantime he asks whether the book on rural Uruguay is to be in Spanish only, and whether Rodó can find out from Muiños how many landowners would be interested in supporting the project. Having heard from Zubillaga about the banquet in honour of Rodó that the *Círculo de la Prensa* is to give that same night, he expresses his congratulations. In the next letter, of 3 May 1911, this time handwritten, Walton asks whether Muiños is happy to form the society to publish the book, and suggests that as 'razón social' the name of the International Publishing Society should appear 'en Inglés, siempre imprimiendo dicho nombre en Inglés'. He also asks whether Rodó has managed to see the 'Presidente de la Asociación de Hacendados y el Ministro', and requests a prompt response. A new letter from Walton only days later, 9 May 1911, again handwritten, says that it is most important to concentrate on the production of a prospectus for the planned work. This will become 'el primer golpe y, por consiguiente, mucho dependerá del interés y simpatía que dicho prospectus puede atraer hacia nuestra empresa'.

Walton also thinks it is necessary to obtain letters from relevant people backing the project, including a particularly powerful unnamed landowner, and to include at the end of the prospectus 'personalidades como ser el Sr Ministro, Presidente de la "Sociedad Rural", ese Sr dueño del gran Establecimiento, etc'. Those landowners who read the prospectus will then respond to it by letter, and the letters would be gathered into a leaflet ('folleto') to be given to the travelling reps who would tour the countryside to gather subscriptions for the book. A further suggestion is to obtain photographs from that one very important *estancia* and its owner, again so as to add to the salesmen's portfolio:

Hago esta observación en la creencia de que tal vez sería mejor que entrara por los ojos. De todos modos, haciendo un buen grabado del Señor, mostrándoselo a otro

diciéndole que así aparecerá en el libro (siempre que así sea) el cliente o candidato no ha de querer figurar menos que Don Fulano.

Next in time is the typewritten contract, signed in Montevideo, May 1911 (no date added) by Rodó and Muiños. The working title of the project is 'La campaña del Uruguay: su riqueza y sus progresos'. The division of work is similar to that of the failed book on Uruguay, with Rodó in charge of the editing ('la dirección general de la publicación, y la redacción de los resúmenes generales que en ella se inserten, así como de las monografías históricas y descriptivas'), which was Zubillaga's role before. Muiños would be in charge of the pieces on each *estancia*: 'las reseñas particulares de cada establecimiento, así como también de proporcionar los datos relativos a la parte técnica agropecuaria'. Walton would look after the administration, the publicity, and relations with the printing press. An office, its workers, and the travelling sales team would work on percentages and commission. Contributions from other writers could be accommodated 'siempre que esto importe poco desembolso'. In a letter of 10 May 1911 Walton acknowledges receipt of the contract and agrees with the last point ('conviene solicitar el ayuda [*sic*] de especialistas siempre que el negocio lo permita'). He then talks about obtaining PO box numbers and about the most suitable style and signatures of the requests to landowners for inclusion in the book. He finally congratulates Rodó and Muiños for their efficient work: 'La verdad es que no han perdido mucho tiempo [...] y es nota bien grata tener esta manifestación de interés en nuestra empresa.'

The next item is a draft of a letter, dated 31 May 1911, from Rodó to the Minister for Industry. This is a very interesting document, as Rodó is addressing a lawyer and major historian of Uruguay, Eduardo Acevedo (1857–1948). Rodó writes in the plural, presumably on behalf of himself, Muiños, and Walton, as representatives of the International Publishing Society. The Society, he says,

proyecta dedicar sus poderosos elementos de propaganda a la publicación de una grande obra descriptiva e informativa de la riqueza agrícola y ganadera de este floreciente país, comprendiendo en ella todo lo que pueda concurrir a dar idea acabada de la importancia excepcional y creciente del Uruguay como país productor en aquel género de actividades.

He explains that the planned work will carry the title 'La campaña del Uruguay: su riqueza y sus progresos' and that its aim is to gather abundant and reliable information, presented attractively and efficiently in a manner which 'concilia con las exigencias de una obra elevadamente utilitaria y de propaganda nacional, las de un libro de consulta para los especialistas y de lectura para todos'. (It is interesting to see the term *utilitario* used in a positive sense by the author of *Ariel*.) The goal, he continues, is to provide 'la reseña fiel y circunstanciada de todos los establecimientos de campo del país que tengan

alguna importancia, como exponentes de su riqueza y de su progreso', adding that this is of itself a major means 'para realzar la dignificación de la obra en su carácter de medio de propaganda para el conocimiento mundial de las excelencias y ventajas del rico suelo uruguayo'. The theme of 'propaganda' for the country is thus insistently expressed. Rodó at first puts himself among the group of writers, but then, probably out of modesty, crosses his name out:

Caracterizados escritores nacionales tendrán a su cargo las distintas partes de la obra, ~~contando desde ya con el concurso que~~ [illegible] ~~don José Enrique Rodó para la parte histórica y descriptiva~~ y las fuentes de información serán siempre las más insospechables, fieles y abundosas.

Importantly, he asks the government not for financial support (as happened before) but for information, and for the Minister's opinion on the venture:

Al poner en conocimiento de V.E. nuestro referido propósito no es nuestro ánimo otro que el de solicitar a su benevolencia que, si considera tal pensamiento digno de su valioso apoyo, se digne recomendar a la oficina de su dependencia que se nos franqueen todos aquellos datos que puedan ser conducentes a la mejor realización de la obra, ofreciendo desde ahora someter a la aprobación de las mismas oficinas la publicación de los datos que en ellas se nos suministren. Al propio tiempo, agradeceríamos a V.E. su autorizadísima opinión sobre la conveniencia e importancia de la idea que nos proponemos realizar, si ello no ofrece a V.E. mayor dificultad.

No response from the Minister has been found in the Archive, and indeed there is no further correspondence on this subject. It seems not to have reached fruition. There is one further letter of 28 August 1913 from Walton which may possibly refer to the project (and there are three others before this one, on another subject—the short-listing of submissions for a new national monument to Artigas). It is now from an independent Walton and deals tantalizingly with a new proposal from Zubillaga, though no details are evident. Walton says that he has just received Rodó's letter of 25 August, and

referente al asunto tratado con el Sr Zubillaga, francamente no sabía a qué atenerme teniendo presente otras conversaciones con Vd. Sin embargo, cuando tuve el placer de recibirle al Sr Zubillaga, y como le manifesté a dicho Señor, en ese momento me era imposible a causa de mi trabajo a favor de la Sociedad Internacional.

He then says that he has now left the Sociedad Internacional and that after one piece of business he has to finish he will be free to deal with the new proposal, details of which are vague, though it seems to involve the original trio of men, at least in one version of the project:

Tenga la seguridad, Sr Rodó, que espero poder realizar un brillante negocio con Vd., y si bien parece que me demoro mucho, se debe simplemente a mi carácter de medir bien mis pasos y, a fin de conservar algunos buenos hombres con quienes tengo confianza,

he buscado algo que me parece servirá para proporcionarles las necesidades de la vida a la vez que deje algo para mí. Lo que yo no sé es si Vd. ahora se interesa más por lo propuesto por el Sr Zubillaga o bien por lo que fue motivo de nuestras conversaciones de antes.

No further details of this new project have been found, though the letter indicates that Rodó's inclination towards business enterprise has not expired altogether. In any case, the matter of the book on rural Uruguay seems to be closed. Rodó's attempt at pursuing a scheme of his own initiative has failed, but it shows that he has learnt from the fiasco of competing against Maeso not to depend on government funding.

*Project 4: The English translation of 'Motivos de Proteo' (1915–16)*

This involves correspondence with Walton's successor in the Buenos Aires office of the Sociedad Internacional, one C. S. Howell, possibly an American. Letters begin in July 1915, with Howell reporting on a conversation with Rodó in Montevideo, and offering to consult the president of the International Publishing Society, W. M. Jackson. A letter from Jackson himself indicates that he would be travelling from London to New York and would personally explore his contacts with American publishers during the trip. Such high-level involvement is a sign of Rodó's standing with the company, which is based on his work as editor and contributor to two of their larger and more successful projects in the Spanish-speaking world, the aforementioned *Biblioteca Internacional de Obras Famosas* and *Tesoro de la Juventud*. A letter from Jackson in New York (the only one in English among the correspondence dealt with here), dated May 1916, provides the bad news: because of the war, '[English] publishers in common with most business concerns are following a policy of the greatest possible conservatism and hesitate to undertake almost any new enterprise'. And in the United States, 'while conditions generally are much better, the prices of all materials used in publishing have advanced enormously and the publishers appear to be interested only in such propositions as those which promise them very large sales and consequently quick returns'. Jackson offers to provide his help 'in more settled times', when he has 'no doubt that a publisher for an English edition of your work could be found'.

Thus Rodó's hopes for an English translation of his *Motivos* were dashed. He was not to know about the American translation by the Puerto Rican Hispanist Ángel Flores that came out posthumously (New York, 1928, and London, 1929). It is noteworthy that Rodó chose this work rather than *Ariel* for his approach to these publishers (*Ariel* was to have its first English version in 1922, a second in 1988), which is a sign of the value he himself attached to this volume, undoubtedly his most ambitious and the one closest to his heart. In a final

letter from the Buenos Aires office, the replacement for Walton and Howell, Laureano Tuero, writes to Rodó on 11 July 1916 to send his best wishes for his imminent trip to Europe. He also tells him that if he were to visit London, he should call on Mr Jackson, 'quien tendrá sumo gusto en verle y serle útil en lo que pueda. Su dirección es: 22 York Place, London, N'.

*Project 5: 'Rapid-Fortune'*

Like 'Amambay', this venture seems to have no connection with culture, its main goal being financial gain. It does have one link with the main project discussed above, namely the participation of Zubillaga, with a new third partner called Felippone. The one surviving document (no. 33029) related to this project is an undated and unsigned letter, though it has the following added comment, in pencil, by Zubillaga at the end:

Rodó: Estos apuntes que me remite Felippone hoy confirman cómo sería lo que ya yo le decía anoche. Me dice Felippone que no es posible, pues, hacerlo con el Banco, y sí solo con la persona que Vd. tiene como candidato. Zubillaga. Hasta el lunes a las 11 y ½.

The letter deals with the establishment locally of a (presumably American) financial enterprise called 'Rapid-Fortune'. The letter uses an acronym, 'el B. de P. I.', which denotes a local bank, perhaps involving 'Industria' o 'Inversiones'. It appears to be a private rather than a state-run institution. The document is headed by the following statement: 'Motivos (que no son de Proteo), por los cuales no me parece conveniente proponer la fundación de "Rapid-Fortune", al B. de P. I.' The author then proceeds to list the reasons why the three partners should not approach the BPI for financial support, and they include (1) that the BPI would have to consult their own shareholders, which would take time and alert other potential capitalists to the proposed business; (2) that the BPI is the local agent of another financial institution, 'la B. de N.', whose interests would clash with those of Rapid-Fortune; (3) the likely aspiration of BPI to gain 50% of the income from Rapid-Fortune; (4) the BPI's unwillingness to invest money in something which—unlike their current links with the BN—is likely to carry risks. Instead, Felippone proposes that they should seek capital from elsewhere, preferably 'buscar una, dos, o tres personas, bien conceptuadas, para que contribuyan con la suma de \$4000 a la formación del capital inicial de "Rapid-Fortune"'.

Once again, there is no further information on this venture, and we must conclude that it also fell through, like the rest of the projects studied above.

Rodó's involvement with these various ventures provides a rather more complex picture of the man than we might have expected from reading his more famous work. It seems clear that he was no dweller in ivory towers when it came

to money. Firstly, we have seen that an interest in making funds for its own sake was present as early as 1897, with the Amambay venture, and continued into his later life, with the stab at Rapid-Fortune. Both of these schemes are evidence of a raw kind of entrepreneurship in him, whether caused by sheer financial penury (as at the time of the latter scheme) or not (as with the former).

A second finding, however, is that the bulk of his business-related work involved the spreading of culture: both 'El Uruguay en su centenario' and 'La campaña del Uruguay' show this expressly, as does his attempt at potentially profitable journalism while still a child, and his role as contributor and editor of the literary anthology and children's encyclopedia mentioned above. It is in this world of his own expertise that he was able to act more confidently. It is here too—and this is a third (though not so unexpected) aspect that follows from the above discussion—that we can ascertain his standing, both nationally and, especially, internationally. Moreover, the kind of work we saw Rodó willing to engage in, which involves writing for the masses rather than for the elite, is a further dent in his received image.

Finally, we can see in Rodó's attitude towards enterprise both constants and developments. Examples of the former are an unwillingness to cross certain professional and moral boundaries, such as using his parliamentary influence inappropriately; his caution and sensitivity towards prices and subscriptions, which bring him closer to the more pragmatic and focused Walton than to his more energetic but over-zealous friend Zubillaga; his conscientiousness and responsibility regarding contracts, which he tended to draft himself. A development is his growing confidence and *savoir faire* in dealing with government, as seen in his approach to the Minister regarding 'La campaña del Uruguay'.

What does this investigation tell the concerned Uruguayan economist mentioned at the start? He would probably contend that it shows Rodó was not a good businessman, which is a fair assessment, though he would have to acknowledge that there were serious obstacles to Rodó's financial plans. But he would also have to grant Rodó's determination to succeed and try new ventures. This is surely a good sign of entrepreneurship, and something our economist should be glad to discover also lay in the make-up of his country's most internationally celebrated intellectual.

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