



Ariel

José Enrique Rodó

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Ariel (1900) es un «sermón laico» dedicado a la juventud de América; tuvo una gran repercusión en América Latina, con su visión de los Estados Unidos como imperio de la materia o reino de Calibán, donde el utilitarismo se habría impuesto a los valores espirituales y morales.

Ariel Details

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From Reader Review Ariel for online ebook

Germano says

O livro não é importante por suas qualidades intrínsecas — que são poucas, afinal, pois se trata de um estilo datado e uma prosa empoeirada —, mas pelos debates que engendrou. A partir do Ariel de Rodó, muita tinta escorreu para definir o que seria a identidade latino-americana no concerto das nações.

Craig says

This landmark essay by Jose Rodo is not easy-reading, but its message is profound, and as relevant, if not more so, today as it was in the year 1900. The Uruguayan Rodo calls on his fellow Latin-Americans to reject the consumerism, materialism, and hedonism he sees personified by the U.S., the ultimate seducer and tempter.

The narrative, allegorically-inspired by Shakespeare's 'The Tempest,' sees the professorial 'Prospero' observe a debate between 'Ariel'-representing Latin America- and 'Caliban'-representing the the U.S.

Ariel denounces Caliban's materialism and Benthamian utilitarianism. Latin-American youth must not be seduced by the North American serpent; they must resist "nordomania."

Ariel was written shortly after the Spanish-American War and only a few years after Jose Marti's 'Nuestra America'. But Ariel is more than a criticism of the U.S. It is a treatise on humanity and society at-large.

Consider reading Ariel alongside Marti's work mentioned above and, for a more-contemporary, complimentary view, Noam Chomsky's 'Hegemony or Survival' and/or 'Latin America: colonization to globalization'.

Lana says

In cleaning through my apartment I have found an old treasure-trove of book related papers, including my "books read" list from 1999-2000. In addition to listing the books, I wrote about 2-3 sentences to myself – sometimes they were plot reminders, sometimes commentary on the books. They were not intended to be read by anyone other than myself. I don't imagine these will be very helpful to anyone else, but I'm posting them here for two reasons: first, to keep my reviews/comments in one place now and, second, because they're kind of a fascinating look at my younger brain.

Very interesting essay on whole man and the place of arts in education. Redemption of humans coming from intellectuals; tempered with a critique of materialism.

Paul A. says

José Enrique Rodó, perteneció a una generación literaria brillante del Uruguay, diferenciándose por su propuesta más ensayista y filosófica que narrativa.

Algo para destacar de su ensayo *Ariel*, es la belleza y delicadeza de su escritura, ese modernismo latente en su pluma, donde se ve claramente reflejada esa influencia de estilo francesa. En una parte de su ensayo, Rodó nos dice que la verdad debe estar acompañada de la belleza y para acentuar esa máxima, dota a su ensayo de una belleza de escritura sublime. Realizando la analogía con la obra "La Tempestad" de Shakespeare y haciendo uso de imágenes y evocaciones greco-latinas.

Penetrando directamente en el discurso filosófico de su ensayo, exalta las virtudes del saber y del amor. Inculcando el saber en lo individual y por medio del amor, compartirlo con la humanidad. Obviamente, este concepto del amor está influenciado por una concepción cristiana del mundo, pero complementando a su vez la labor del saber, de conocer, de pensar. Nos lleva de esa individualidad que conlleva el saber, el adquirir conocimiento, a lo colectivo-desinteresado de expresarlo y darle una utilidad altruista. Ser generoso, sin perder jamás la individualidad. Y luego, estas características individuales lo lleva netamente a lo social, dandole una amplitud macro, al exhortar a las sociedades a no perder sus identidades, ante el influjo extranjero, lograr, que lo propio y lo ajeno convivan en un mismo espacio. En esta visión también aparece una crítica al trabajo mecanizado, que busca la utilidad, despojando al individuo de ciertas virtudes, y promueve que ningún individuo deje la práctica de sus virtudes a pesar de la necesidad del trabajo, intentar cultivar las mismas, debería ser el objetivo principal y no el utilitarismo.

En un plano más político, nos ofrece su visión de la democracia, de la función de los estados en cuanto a los individuos. el problema del utilitarismo-democracia, y para resumir sus puntos de vista su visión sobre la sociedad norteamericana del momento, destacando algunas de sus virtudes, pero atacando seriamente sus objetivos y fines (O más bien, la carencia de fines futuros).

Una obra sin lugar a dudas de otro tiempo, sin pretender trascender mucho más allá de él, una análisis de un presente y una exhortación a futuro a una "juventud americana". Más allá de eso, muchas de sus ideas y contenido, son de una valiosa profundidad, expresados a través de una lectura sumamente agradable.

Dusty says

I picked up this English translation of José Enrique Rodó's admired and detested essay at Goodwill. No, the "Ariel" mentioned in the title isn't the redhead Disney mermaid. Rather, Rodó transforms his erroneous, idiosyncratic interpretation of Shakespeare's *Tempest* into an allegory for New World politics. In his configuration, he is himself the wizened Prospero, the old man -- what President Obama would probably call the adult in the room -- who observes the power play between dirty, opportunistic Caliban (the United States) and Ariel (Latin America), the boyish, artistic spirit whose idealism and altruism will ultimately allow him to triumph over the former.

Nevermind that it is, in fact, Prospero (and not Caliban) who enslaves Ariel in Shakespeare's original. And nevermind Prospero's daughter, Miranda, for womankind falls squarely in Rodó's blindspot; as Prospero, he surrounds himself exclusively with Uruguay's smartest, most open-minded boys. Insert joke about homosexual panic here.

Anyway, the best reason to buy/borrow this book is Carlos Fuentes's Prologue. Like just about everything else at Goodwill, it's clearly a product of the 1980s -- as he points out, the United States whose intervention in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines Rodó condemns is very much the same United States who is "currently" engaged in a Cold War against the Soviet Union -- but nevertheless he does a good job also addressing the many rhetorical maneuvers and contradictions that make *Ariel* a fascinating, infuriating read.

David Renderos says

No me gustó para nada este libro , critica mucho el imperialismo de los Estados Unidos .

Megan says

A criticism of North American culture and ethos from one of the most influential thinkers of Latin America. Written in 1898.

Alejandra Díaz says

"Ariel es la razón y el sentimiento superior. Ariel es este sublime instinto de perfectibilidad, por cuya virtud se magnifica y convierte en centro de las cosas la arcilla humana a la que viene vinculada su luz".

Este ensayo es realmente alentador. Habla sobre los defectos de la democracia, sobre explotar todo el potencial de nuestra naturaleza humana, sobre el utilitarismo, sobre los objetivos de la vida, sobre la esperanza...

Me encantó, sobre todo porque hay cosas que ya había pensado antes y este texto logra concretarlo.

Roiann says

I read this book three times for three different graduate classes. In Spanish & English. I'm about ready to burn it.

Drew Maher says

Had some interesting parts, but mostly not worth the time.

Daniel says

As the introduction (more intelligent, in many ways, than the actual essay) states, "this is a supremely irritating book." It has much to offer the student of Latin American culture, the armchair philosopher, or indeed any interested reader, but it is important to recognize it for what it is: an ultimately confusing mix between profundity and absolute nonsense.

The good parts of the essay are Rodó's musings on the value of the humanities and culture in general, and on the importance of looking towards the future and future improvements to society instead of luxuriating in the present. Ultimately, the society that he advocates for (though this is clearly stated only once) is one in which artistic and creative endeavors are valued and in which everyone is offered equal opportunities for success with the full knowledge that each individual will take a different path - a society that seems to me like it would be pretty alright!

However (and this is where we get to the bad parts), Rodó's verbiage works against him throughout the latter half of the essay. Here he masks even his best ideas in an elitist discourse that seems to advocate for the supremacy of the *man* who elevates *himself* above the Great Unwashed. (I emphasize his gendered language because it adds even another layer of elitism to his writing.) He does place this elitism within a paternalistic framework in which the elites take care of the non-elites, but elitism it still is and I shouldn't have to say that that's no good in any circumstances. It can and should be chalked up almost entirely to the elitism that was par for the course in late 19th Century academic discourse, but that still isn't any excuse for it, especially as it works against what I believe Rodó is ultimately arguing for.

So, yeah. A mixed bag for sure. It's worth a read - there is a lot of value to be found in this essay - but you'll have to wade through a whole lot of BS to get to it.

Scott says

Rodo, influenced by Plato, Renan, and a host of other authors (who are constantly referenced), sets his work in a Latin American classroom, where the wise teacher urges his young students to pursue idealism and excellence over materialism and utilitarianism. I need to understand more about Hegelian thought and Romanticism, but it is certainly in that stream of thought, where cultures contribute to the progress of the human spirit. It was a thought-provoking read, and according to Howard Wiarda it's a very influential book in Latin America.

Conor says

You know, it's a bit hard to be angry at a book when you were warned.

Line one, page one of the prologue, by Carlos Fuentes:
"This is a supremely irritating book."

He also goes on to praise the translation, which removes any doubts about the essay in English..

Then, however, there's Rodo, who's suggests a new identity for Latin America based on the classic cultures, instead of the mediocrity of the American enterprise. With French Philosophy in one hand, and Greek Geography in another, he builds a mountain of decorative language.

Which is all well and fine. It ends up a beautifully written essay, if a bit over wrought, which fits in with being published in 1900 by a eurocentric. Mind you, there's some little bits of racism, and misguided biological theory, but that's standard with essays of the time.

I'd give it more stars, but Latin American intellectual history is not something that I've ever researched. So I was reading it decontextualized from the basis of approach that the printers and translators were presenting it towards.

Which leads us to 5 stars for a well written essay. -1 for not being timeless enough to make a modern reader a bit ill with the style, and -1 for not being recommendable for any topic that I recommend books on.

I mean, he references some stuff I would like to read, and some stuff that inspired books that I have liked, but I'm not versed enough to get into the essay's world, and it's not good enough to pull me out of my world.

Does that make sense?
