



THE SWAN AND THE EAGLE

2.16

RUBÉN DARÍO (1867-1916)



- Poet, writer and journalist from Nicaragua.
- Spent only a few months in the US – New York, between 1893 and 1915.
- Criticism against US because of specific historical events:
 - Spanish-American War of 1898
 - Monroe Doctrine/ Manifest Destiny
 - Inciting the secession of Panama and the construction of the Canal (1903)
- Difference between his feelings towards US policy and government, and US culture and achievements.
 - Ideals of democracy and freedom (Walt Whitman)



US INTERVENTIONISM IN NICARAGUA

- Long history of US interventionism in Nicaragua:
 - The filibuster William Walker, proclaimed himself president (1850s)
 - US occupation because of the banana trade (1912-1933)
 - Sandino's revolt against US occupation (1927-1934)
 - First carpet-bombing by US ("empire's workshop")
 - Support of the Somoza family dictatorships (1936-1979)
 - "He may be a son of a bitch but he is our son of a bitch" - FDR, 1939.
 - Victory of Sandinista Revolution in 1979
 - Iran-Contra Affair (1980s) – US funding Contra, anti-Sandinista groups by selling weapons to Iran



Augusto Sandino

"TO ROOSEVELT" (1904)

- This poem is an example of Latin American *modernismo*:
 - Complex verses (i.e., Alexandrines)
 - Rejection of materialism, industrialism
 - Emphasis on beauty and the ideal (the Swan)
 - Notions of nature, the sensual and the feminine
 - Search for national identity – Pre-Columbian motifs
 - Metaphorical and allegorical language
- In general terms, what is the message this poem wants to convey? What is its tone?
- How does it remind you of José Martí's *Our America*? Similarities? Differences?



"TO ROOSEVELT" (1904)

- In groups, make a list of the descriptive adjectives, verbs and references the poem uses to contrast Spanish America

Spanish America	United States
Naïve Indian blood Light and fire Fragrance and love Catholic, Spanish Dreams, loves, vibrates Has God	Great Hunter Future invader Arrogant, strong, skilled Progress Giant Rich Dire Rifleman

Spiritual and
civilized

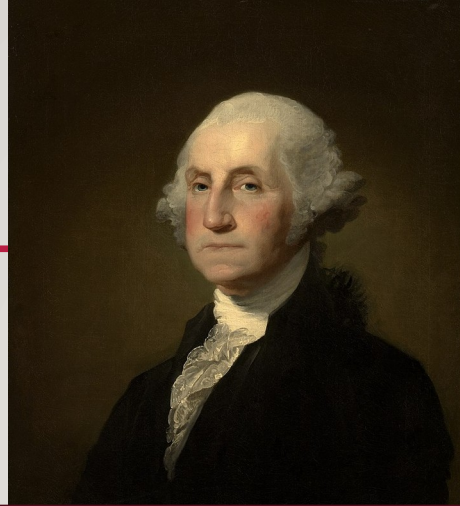
Materialistic
and barbaric



"TO ROOSEVELT"



Energy Professor?



Washington



Nimrod



Mammon



Alexander the Great



Nebuchadnezzar



Hercules

"TO ROOSEVELT"



Netzahuayalcotl

Mestizaje



Bacchus



Cuatemoc



Moctezuma



Columbus



The Inca

“TO ROOSEVELT” (1904)

- Opposition Spanish America vs. US
 - Spanish America – mix of Pre-Hispanic civilizations (Inca, Aztec) with European legacy (“Spanish cubs”, Greek and Roman). Emblem of civilization and love.
 - US – powerful and huge, concerned with money and progress through violence, therefore barbaric.
- Spanish America “alive and well” – ready for fight because it has God (and destiny) on its side.



Statue to Darío in
Nicaragua

NEXT CLASS

- Read “Saluting the Eagle”. How is this poem different?
- Notebooks/homework

"SALUTING THE EAGLE" (1906)

- In your own words, what is this poem about? How is it different from "To Roosevelt", written only two years earlier?
- In pairs, you are assigned two stanzas. Discuss the meaning of your lines, looking at specific words, metaphors and references. Get ready to share with the class.
 - Let's read out loud and discuss.



“SALUTING THE EAGLE” (1906)

- Themes:
 - Peace must come from strength (“necessary war”)
 - Fecundity and procreation - fertility
 - Eagle and Condor together
 - Anointed by God (Patmos – Revelation; living Cross)
 - Also draws back to classical civilization
 - References to Pre-Hispanic civilizations absent
 - Destiny, future triumph, joy



“SALUTING THE EAGLE” (1906)

Why the difference?

- Written during the 1906 Pan American Conference in Rio. Darío hears the speech of Brazilian poet and diplomat Fontoura Xavier: “May this grand Union have no end”. Gets pumped up.
- Captures the spirit of Pan Americanism of Elihu Root, Robert Lansing, and others.

What does this tell you about how Latin American intellectuals saw the US?

- Wasn't just love/hate. It could vary, depended on context.



GABRIELA MISTRAL IN THE US



- Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957) was a Chilean teacher and poet. She was the first Latin American (and only woman to date) to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (1945).
- Invited to the US in 1924 for a celebration of her work towards “Pan American unity”. Ceremony held in Pan American Union Building, Washington DC.
- Her speech is prefaced by other speakers, including the ambassador of Chile, her translator, other US officials. We are only reading her remarks (pg. 652-655). The entire text available for context.