

Facundo: Or, Civilization and Barbarism

Domingo F. Sarmiento



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Domingo Faustino Sarmiento was a writer and journalist who would become the seventh president of Argentina. His 1845 book, "Facundo: Or, Civilization and Barbarism" is considered a cornerstone of Latin American literature, a work of creative non-fiction that illustrates the region's development, modernization, power, and culture. Literary critic Roberto González Echevarría describes the work as "the most important book written by a Latin American in any discipline or genre." Sarmiento wrote "Facundo" while exiled in Chile primarily as a criticism of Juan Manuel de Rosas, the Argentine dictator at the time, and regional leader Juan Facundo Quiroga, a warlord from La Rioja. The book provides critical analysis of the development of the Argentine Republic. Following Argentina gaining its independence from Spain in 1810, the country struggled to find its political identity with separate factions wishing on one side for a more centralized government versus those wishing for more regional autonomy. These conflicts ultimately would lead to civil war and a period of instability for the country. Sarmiento's work which is part historical, part autobiographical, and part political criticism is a seminal work of Spanish American literary history which brilliantly illustrates this tumultuous time.

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