Title: EL PROCESO SEMIÓTICO DE UN HÉROE DECIMONÓNICO: UN ESTUDIO EN TORNO A LOS "TEXTOS-TUMBAS" DE ANDRÉS BELLO

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Abstract: In October of 1865, the body of one of the most prominent figures of the 19th century, Andrés Bello, was laid to rest in Chile, the country that had been deemed by various authors and, on occasion, by Bello himself, as his adopted homeland. However, the initial burial site did not remain a fixed one of corporal exhibition. By the turn of the century, the remains were exhumed and placed in a more splendid mausoleum that prompted a re-valuation of his signifier, as an array of discourses exemplify. In this analysis of Bello, the physical transition serves as a metaphor for the shifts in his textual re-presentations that were fashioned in a series of 19th century archives, and that culminate in his re-production as cultural and international hero (a signification that is generally accepted in current criticism and in his contemporary biographical sketches). Therefore, by tracing the displacements of his various signifiers created in archives that, based on the aforementioned metaphor, we denominate as "text-tombs", this study illustrates how several (unfavorable) representations of Bello were manipulated by authors, including Bello, to textually exhume and entomb him once and again as an international figure acclaimed for his many achievements. Bello's participation in politics during a time marked by hegemonic shifts, coupled with trends in historiography, leads to his re-production as a traitor of the patriots and of the Spanish government, signifiers that are subsequently exhumed and re-written to postulate him as a victim wrongfully accused of treason against the patriots. Through self-inscriptions created during his first exile in London, Bello builds his own image as a nostalgic exile in suffering and a self-conscious writer who anticipates a textual and personal improvement. These inscriptions ultimately lead to his re-configuration as a formidable scholar of Cidian studies and an illustrious composer of nationalistic poems. Finally, his representations as a foreigner in Chile were also utilized to later posit him as a cultural hero of many nations. From these semiotic shifts we arrive at a final inquiry: Who really was Andrés Bello, the self-inscriber who seemingly invited his own textual revisions by others?

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